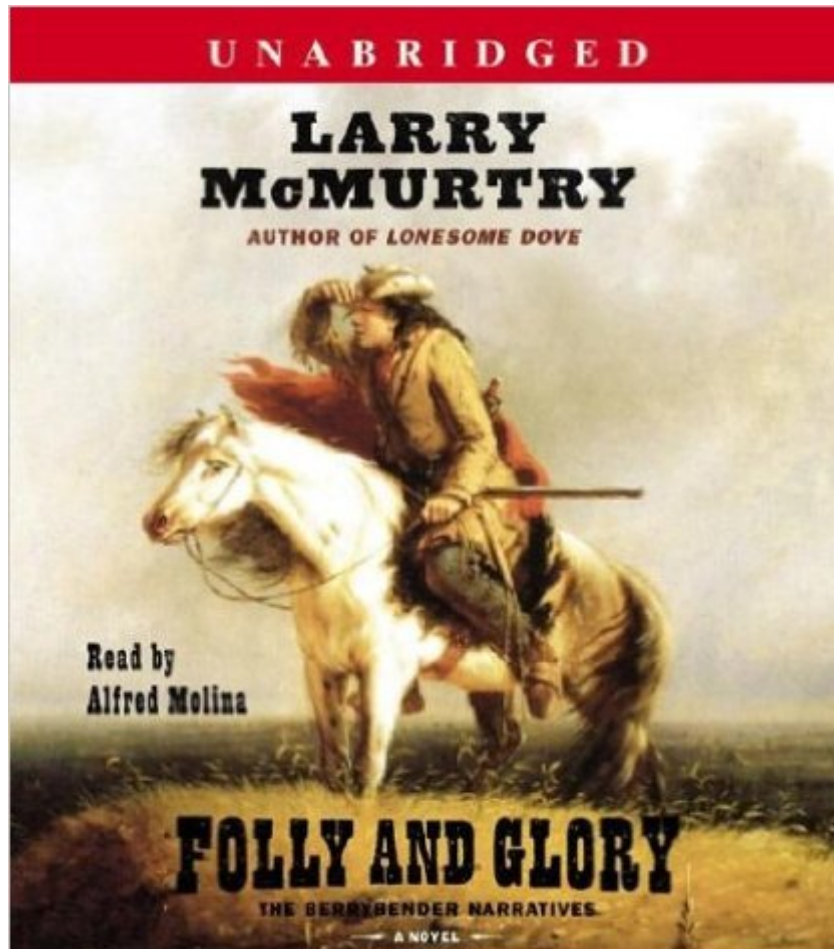


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Folly And Glory: A Novel (Berrybender Narratives)



Synopsis

In the final volume of The Berrybender Narratives, Tasmin and her family are under arrest in Mexican Santa Fe. Tasmin, who would once have followed her husband anywhere, is no longer even sure she likes him, or knows where to go to next. Captain Clark, of Lewis and Clark fame, is puzzled by the great changes sweeping over the West, replacing red men and buffalo with towns and farms. Jim Snow, Kit Carson and one of Lord Berrybender's many illegitimate offspring make their way back to Santa Fe. But even they are unable to prevent the Mexicans from carrying the Berrybender family on a long and terrible journey across the desert to Vera Cruz. Beset by Indians and hounded by their Mexican guards, the Berrybenders endure all the horror of the Jornada del Muerto -- the legendary Dead Man's Walk. The Mexican commander of the party falls in love with Tasmin, with unhappy consequences. Starving, dying of thirst, they finally make their way to New Orleans, where Jim Snow has to choose between Tasmin and the great American plains. And after all her adventures, Tasmin must finally decide where her future lies.

Book Information

Series: Berrybender Narratives

Audio CD

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Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (117 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

It's so nice to see some high-profile Western projects popping up. The first was SIN KILLER, which marked the beginning of Larry McMurry's four volumes of The Berrybender Narratives. The second was the announced republishing of the works of Louis L'Amour, commencing with a number of short story collections and continuing with the recent publication of a new edition of the immortal HONDO. And the third is the television series "Deadwood," which, in spite of its occasionally gratuitous use of

crude, earthy language, may well be the best-written show currently on television. Things now come full circle with the publication of FOLLY AND GLORY, the fourth and final (at least for now) volume of The Berrybender Narratives. It is a pleasure to find that it sustains, and even surpasses, the energy of its predecessors. The Berrybender Narratives are not something you can jump into. While McMurtry is incapable of writing badly, this series is best read from the beginning, as it is most definitely a sequential narrative. FOLLY AND GLORY begins with the Berrybenders under a forced yet luxurious house arrest in Santa Fe, Mexico. The mood of the party, particularly Tasmin Berrybender's, is somewhat subdued due to the murder of Pomp Charbonneau at the hands of a deranged Mexican Army captain. The party as a whole, however, passes the time in relative comfort. Their somewhat idyllic incarceration is abruptly ended, though, when it is learned that the Mexican authorities plan to arrest them --- for real this time --- and, in all probability, execute the entire party. Lord Berrybender plans to proceed to Texas, and the party effects a hurried exit out of the compound. Danger and death await at every turn, not only from pestilence but also from a party of slavers.

Folly and Glory, book four of McMurtry's Berrybender Series, continues the saga of the foppish English family and their hangers-on through the mountain man American West. This book is both thinner and less well developed than book three of the series. The Berrybender gang start with their genteel imprisonment in Spanish Santa Fe and end up -- much reduced through cholera, Indian attacks and other ghastly means of death -- at the end of the story. I won't give it away, but there is a much reduced cast, new players, surprising relationships and improbable outcomes. The story is gritty, with lots of hardship and a portrayal of how nasty and short frontier life could be. Historical figures populate this book (Sam Houston, Kit Carson, Jim Bowie, the Bent Brothers), but are used rather loosely and not constrained by their actual lives. This isn't a problem, their appearance certainly adds flavor to the story. Purists may mind that some of the famous die in the book decades before they did in real life, but their use to flavor the story is consistent with McMurtry's approach to this whole whimsical series. While this book still hangs on Tasmine's whims and management of the story, she is much less a commanding and energetic figure. Occupied by children, bereaved by the death of a lover whom she couldn't quite reach in life anyway, still bewildered by her husband Jim Snow, the Sin Killer, Tasmine hasn't the energy to cause the entire encampment to rotate around her axis as she did in the previous books. Her sisters come somewhat more to the fore as do some new characters introduced in this final installment. The way the Berrybender crowd reacts to circumstance and meets life with their unusual expectations continues to propel this story forward.

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