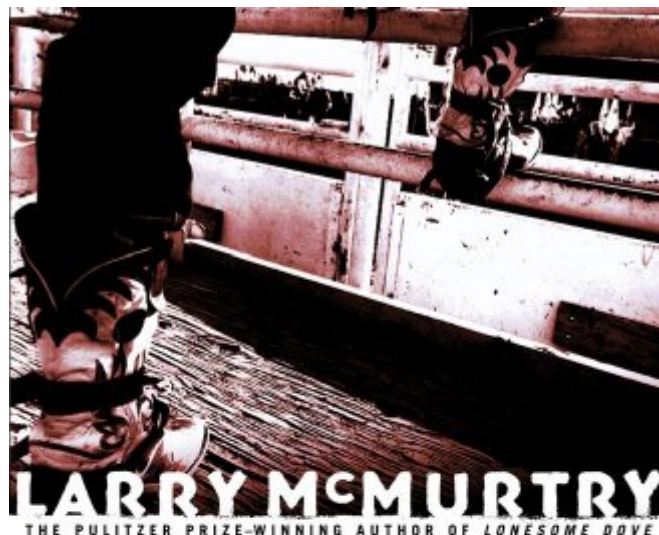


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# Moving On: A Novel



M o v i n g   O n

A N O V E L

"A novel of monumental honesty. . . . Attention must be paid." —*The New York Times*



## Synopsis

With a riotously colorful cast of highbrows, cowpokes, and rodeo queens, in its wry humor, tenderness, and epic panorama, *Moving On* is a celebration of our land by Larry McMurtry, one of America's best-loved authors. *Moving On* is a big, powerful novel about men and women in the American West. Set in the 1960s against the backdrop of the honky-tonk glamour of the rodeo and the desperation of suburban Houston, it is the story of the restless and lovable Patsy Carpenter, one of Larry McMurtry's most unforgettable characters. Patsy "young, beautiful, with a sharp tongue and an irresistible charm" and her shiftless husband, Jim, are adrift in the West. Patsy moves through affairs of the heart like small towns "there's Pete, the rodeo clown, and Hank, the graduate student, and others" always in search of the life that seems ever receding around the next bend. *Moving On* is vintage McMurtry.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is an early McMurtry novel, a long, rambling story with young Patsy Carpenter at the center of a large cast of characters that includes graduate students, ranchers, rodeo cowboys, a Hollywood writer, Haight-Ashbury hippies, and wealthy Texans - both new and old money. Written in the late

1960s, and published in 1970, "Moving On" is interesting for its attempt to capture the subtly shifting moods of its central characters instead of focusing on action and storyline. As page follows page, McMurtry describes his characters' feelings of self-assurance, annoyance, boredom, frustration, and sexual tension. And often moods degenerate into tears - Patsy's in particular. There's more than a bit of Henry Miller in much of the novel, as characters attempt to match up their levels of sexual passion, often finding that they are rarely feeling the same thing for each other at the same time. Seduction is often unsuccessful or unsatisfying, a rendezvous full of romantic promise may turn into an argument leaving both parties exhausted. A pass made after several drinks at a party or over a milk shake at a soda fountain may elicit an exchange of bitterness and barbed recriminations. A married couple talks openly of their infidelities. A wife accuses her husband of being neglectful, while she routinely meets a colleague of his for sex. For readers who like action and narrative development, this book will seem very slow going. For some, the many shifts of mood and ironies of thwarted intentions will make the story seem flat and the central characters unfocused. By contrast, the marginal characters, especially an old widowed rancher, a rodeo clown and his young barrel-racer girlfriend, and a teenage bronc rider spring from the page fully realized.

It's hard to describe *Moving On*. The book was not a success when it was released, sales weren't strong and the reviews were largely bad. And to a certain extent that's understandable, since it's a structural mess, with what might seem like too many stories going on, too many narrative side trips, an unfocused, erratic plot, and at times, honestly, it's boring. Yet something funny happens as you keep reading. It's not just that McMurtry has an eye and an ear for his characters--some of them eccentrics, some of them ordinary people, and many of them both at the same time--or for the places he puts them in. It's that one has a sense, more than just about any novel from its time, that one is reading about real people with real problems, not characters in an artificial world created for aesthetic purposes. The story bursts out in all directions because the people are too true, and too interesting, to let go of. Patsy can seem incredibly frustrating. Whatever her husband does, whether he ignores her or adores her, is wrong and alienating to her. It takes her forever to realize what would be obvious from the start to an outsider: they simply shouldn't be married or have gotten married in the first place. She's the central embodiment of the struggle nearly everyone in the novel faces, some with success, some not, trying to make a life work that is essentially unworkable and unsatisfying. There are so many great characters here, fascinating, funny people most of whom you love, some you don't. There's Pete the rodeo clown and Boots his young wife, the barrel chaser. There Sonny Shanks the cruel alpha-male rodeo star and Eleanor Guthrie, the owner of a large

cattle ranch, whom he hurts, uses and probably loves.

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