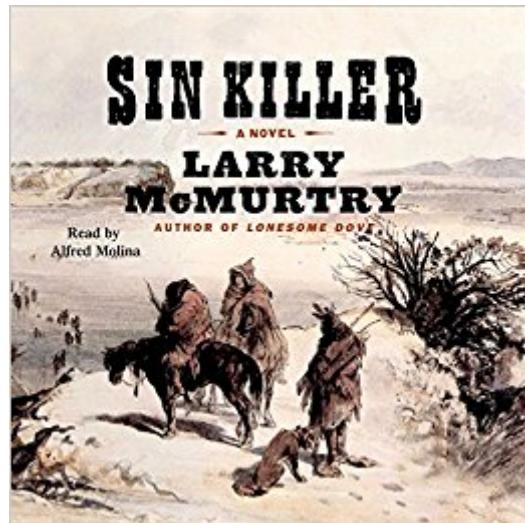


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# Sin Killer (Western Series)



## Synopsis

It is 1830, and the Berrybender family -- rich, aristocratic, English, and fiercely out of place -- is on its way up the Missouri River to see the American West as it begins to open up. Lord and Lady Berrybender have abandoned their palatial home in England to explore the frontier and to broaden the horizons of their children, who include Tasmin, a budding young woman of grit, beauty, and determination, her vivacious and difficult sister, and her brother. As they journey by rough stages up the Missouri River, they meet with all the dangers, difficulties, temptations, and awesome natural scenery of the untamed West. At the very core of the story is Tasmin's fast-developing relationship with Jim Snow, frontiersman, ferocious Indian fighter, and part-time preacher. Known up and down the Missouri as "the Sin Killer," he's the handsome, silent Westerner who eventually captures her heart. Against the immense backdrop of the American West, Larry McMurtry tracks this engaging family as they make their way up the great river, surviving attacks, discomfort, savage weather, and natural disaster. *Sin Killer* is an adventure story full of incident, and suspense, as well as a charming love story between a headstrong and aristocratic young Englishwoman and the stubborn, shy, and very American Jim Snow. As big as the West itself, this is the kind of story that only Larry McMurtry can write.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Larry McMurtry's *Sin Killer* is a wildly entertaining ride through the untamed Great Plains. The first installment of a proposed tetralogy, *The Berrybender Narratives*, *Sin Killer* follows the adventures of

the Berrybenders, a large, noble English family traveling the Missouri River in 1832. This deeply self-absorbed and spoiled family leaves England for the unknown of the American West, based solely on a "whim" and Lord Berrybender's desire to "shoot different animals from those he shot at home." The novel joins the family as they make their way toward Yellowstone aboard a luxury steamer, accompanied by a motley assemblage of servants, guides, and natives. Along the way, this "floating Europe" and its bickering, stubborn passengers encounter constant adversity, including warring natives, hellacious weather, accidental deaths, and kidnappings. Thanks largely to Sin Killer's gallery of colorful personalities, McMurtry keeps most of the action firmly in the realm of fish-out-of-water farce. One such character is the independent and opinionated eldest daughter Tasmin, who, frustrated by her family's conventions, escapes the steamer, whereupon she meets and falls in love with Jim Snow, a.k.a. Sin Killer. Snow, an Indian killer raised by natives, is a stoical, God-fearing man who won't tolerate blasphemy. With prose that flows as naturally as the Missouri, McMurtry weaves together a large cast and vast setting into a thoroughly exciting, hilarious adventure novel. Though Sin Killer focuses on a love story and contains plenty of realistic violence, McMurtry's efficient voice and matter-of-fact perspective leaves little room for tragedy or sentimentality, instead emphasizing high comedy. This is wonderful storytelling from a narrator in perfect agreement with his subject. Sin Killer should please McMurtry's many fans, who now have much to look forward to. --Ross Doll --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Part western, part satire of the English class system contrasted with rugged frontier society, the first volume of this proposed tetralogy gets off to a shaky start as McMurtry introduces the randy, bumbling Berrybender clan, a rich but inept aristocratic British family that journeys up the Missouri River to try to capitalize on the land boom of the 1830s. The early romantic subplot shows promise when beautiful but flighty Lady Tasmin Berrybender, temporarily separated from her group, is rescued by Jim Snow, a quiet, religious trapper known as the Sin Killer, both for his piety (I'm hard on sin ) and for his fierce fighting skills. Snow returns Tasmin to the family vessel, and his sudden marriage proposal delights Tasmin, until she discovers that he already has two Indian wives. The other narrative lines aren't nearly as entertaining, as McMurtry veers back and forth between outlining the war between various rival Indian tribes and trying to generate comic sparks with the Berrybenders' ongoing series of pratfalls. He has some brief success in the later chapters when Tasmin defies her pompous father, Lord Berrybender, as he tries to undo the marriage to keep the family bloodline pure, and Jim Snow remains an intriguing figure throughout. But much of the light

comedy lands with a thud, and the introduction of a raft of mostly superfluous characters takes the edge off McMurtry's prose and makes the Berrybenders seem silly and inane rather than charming. McMurtry does plant a few promising plot seeds for the ensuing books, but it will take a more focused and genuinely humorous effort the next time out to make this concept work. While the narrative fails to satisfy as a true western, readers should enjoy McMurtry's portrait of the terrain bordering the Missouri River. Future volumes will be set on or beside three other rivers, the Yellowstone, the Rio Grande and the Brazos. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

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This book is one of the current flood of "mini-novels" so prevalent on . The book is very short. Problem is there is no such warning; I expected better form Mr. McMurtry, given his previous illustrious work. This "booklet" is written at Jr. high level at best. It's overrun with characters, mostly poorly developed. The entire Berrybender saga (4-books), might have made one decent sized novel. This appears to be another attempt by to divide books into smaller volumes in order to increase sales. I am very insulted, and I expected better from such a respected author as Mr. McMurtry. I will be more wary in the future.

I made it through this first of the four books in the series, somehow, but it took a lot of effort. Definitely not McMurtry at his best! Whimsically and capriciously written by McMurtry.

I love Larry McMurtry but you have to get through the first part of the book before you get used to the way the story is told. Its a bit improbable there is just too much shoved into the story but after a while you get hooked into the book and the series. What I don't like is how each book in the series ends- reminiscent of a commercial break on TV- where the story breaks at an exciting point- then you have to buy the next book and after a short re-cap of what went on previously you read on. I think the story could have been told in one large book with a little condensing, but then, that doesn't make as much does it?

I absolutely loved this book, and the entire 4 book Berrybender narratives. I listened to all of the books on CD while commuting, and the actor who read the books was terrific. There were so many characters, but you always knew immediately which part he was portraying. These books have everything; tremendous humor, history, wonderful characters that you care about, sex, and adventure. My carpool buddy and I would sometimes sit in the car in the office parking lot to finish a

chapter before heading up to our office. We couldn't wait to start the drive home and listen to the book. One day we sat in the car crying because one of our favorite characters was killed. It's that good. I wish HBO would buy the option for the series, it would be a tremendous story. Love you Larry! Thank you!

It's 1832, and Lord Albany Berrybender has chartered a steamboat to take him up the Missouri River on a hunting expedition. Albany is one of the richest aristocrats in England, and also a dissolute, selfish, old fool. Along for the ride are his wife Constance, six of their fourteen spoiled children, fifteen of nineteen servants, an aging parrot named Prince Talleyrand, the staghound Tintamarre, and a gaggle of American talent hired to ease their way, including Toussaint Charbonneau, the guide for the Lewis and Clark Expedition many years previous. The first noticeable feature of *SIN KILLER*, the start of a four-book series, is the lengthy cast of players requiring a two-page character list. In addition to all those on the boat, there's a couple dozen ashore - Indians, trappers, and such - to provide local color. Chief among these is the *SIN KILLER*, a young trapper named Jim Snow, who has an exaggerated sense of God-fearing righteousness and an awkward way with women. Since McMurtry's tales of the Old West are, for its characters, affairs perilous to life and limb, I immediately expected some of the English crowd to soon become victims of misadventure. (After all, such a large number is a heavy load to carry.) I wasn't disappointed. It's apparent early on that the main protagonist of the book, and I suspect the series, is Tasmine, Lord Berrybender's independent and willful oldest daughter. Nothing scares her, not even her Old Man. And I expect the villain of the piece, the cruel, old Aleut-Russian squaw Draga, who passes herself off as a sorceress, won't scare Tasmine either if and when their paths cross. (Draga is a psycho in the grand tradition of other McMurtry psychos such as Blue Duck and Mox Mox. Remember them?) Judging from this first installment, there are a couple of reasons I don't think the Berrybender saga will be the author's best work. First of all, crucial events happen relatively quickly without too much plot or character development. Perhaps, as McMurtry gets older, he's driven to get it written and published faster. (You never know when you're going to be ambushed and scalped by savages.) Secondly, a lot of the action and dialogue has a slapstick quality about it that seems forced. However, at 300 pages, *SIN KILLER* is a quick, engaging read. I loved McMurtry's *LONESOME DOVE* trilogy. (The 1989 miniseries adaptation of that title starring Robert Duvall is my favorite western of all time.) While perhaps not presaging such excellence, this first volume of the Berrybender epic left me looking forward to the next. Oh, and I hope Prince Talleyrand continues to survive. Like Gus's pigs in LD, he's very cool.

After reading all the books in the Lonesome Dove series I was excited to begin this new journey through the old west with Larry McMurtry. I must admit I was a little disappointed in the beginning; I didn't relate to the main characters and found the story a little thin in its scope. But that was just at the start, because by the end of the book I was loving it and even though it differs from Lonesome Dove in style and atmosphere, it does go a long way to equaling it. Now I can't wait to begin on the second of Berrybenders narrative. Everyone who enjoyed Lonesome Dove should read this book and not judge it until it is finished.

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