



Long Change

Don Gillmor

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Don Gillmor's brilliant new novel, *Long Change*, examines the world of oil through the life and loves of one man; both stories are epic.

Fleeing his violent, Pentecostal father, as well as a crime he committed in the parking lot of the first bar he ever entered, Ritt Devlin leaves Texas at fifteen, crossing the border into Alberta. Big for his age, he soon finds work on an oil rig on the outskirts of Medicine Hat. But that's not the life he wants, and he saves up to study geology. By the time he's in his early twenties he's the head of his own oil company.

Spanning almost seventy years, and following the geology and politics of oil from Texas to the Canadian oil patch, to Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Azerbaijan, various political capitals, and the Arctic, *Long Change* is divided into three parts, each of them framed by one of Ritt's marriages. The first, to his great love, Oda, shows the beginnings of his company; that marriage is cut short when Oda dies of cancer while carrying their first child. His second wife is Deirdre, an elegant lawyer who helps Ritt expand Mackenzie Oil, but who needs more than business from her marriage. Then there is Alexa, a late middle age fling, a bad idea on both sides, in some ways as violent and delusional as the oil business.

The vision that drives Ritt throughout his life is to drill in pristine Arctic waters, and he pulls it off. But then comes the inevitable disaster. Ritt, now in his eighties, is not the man he was in any sense of the word. As he staggers away from the scene of the disaster, through the Arctic night, we know the dream of oil and of his own company is also burning in the night...

Long Change Details

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From Reader Review Long Change for online ebook

Wanda says

I received a copy of Don Gillmor's "Long Change" compliments of Goodreads Firstreads Giveaway and appreciated the opportunity.

The author shares the fictional portrayal of oil baron, Ritt Devlin, during the industry's boom and bust eras from the 1950's-2014. Beginning in America's proud state of Texas, a crime of defense leads Devlin to start a new life and name for himself in the Alberta oil-sands. The petroleum industry is unforgiving as Devlin navigates through the clashes for wealth and power. The struggles and triumphs that Devlin faces are introduced alongside the reflections of his three marriages, all distinct and influential. Devlin holds keen intuition and a knowledge for geology, an asset in this cut throat business where reputation can harbor risk.

This is smart writing that flows at a fast pace, captures your interest and keeps the pages turning. Notable character building that encompasses the raw emotions that exist across a tangled web of relationships. There is a certain level of mystery and intrigue that surrounds the main character. It pushes the reader to crave more insight into who he truly is and what motivates his actions.

This is an intellectual version of "Dallas" meets Canada! A 4/5 rating with recommendation for anyone seeking a closer view into the drama that surrounds the evolution of the oil industry.

Veronica says

I thoroughly enjoyed this well written novel and learned a lot about the oil industry. The characters are strong and the plot keeps you interested through the passage of 63 years.

Joy (joyous reads) says

To be honest, I don't know what it was about this book that attracted me when I read the review invite from Random House. Don Gillmor may be a Canadian household name, but I haven't read any of his book. Moreover, oil is something that doesn't really appeal to me. The only thing I know about it is, just like money, it's a necessary evil. It turns out, the industry is that much interesting that I ended up devouring this book in one weekend!

Long Change is the story of one man's life and loves as it correlates with the dog-eat-dog world of the oil business. Some could argue that his life was dictated by whichever way the oil flows. From the dry heat of Texas, to the frozen tundra of Alberta; and even as far away as the perilous remoteness of Africa, Ritt Devlin's life was an up and down roller coaster of triumphs and failures.

He escaped the clutches of his abusive, religious father at a young age of 17 in the 50s. From there, he worked in an oilfield in Abilene, Texas. He found himself on the run from the law after an altercation with a group of men looking for trouble. From Texas, he made his way to Alberta where the oil business was just getting off the ground. He also met his great love, Oda. A tall, bookish woman who would show him the love

of outdoors and the love of books.

Through the years, he'll experience great successes and disappointments. And yet even with all that, Ritt kept a cool disposition; never losing his temper or straying away from his goal. He had a way of distancing himself from situations – however minute, or consequential it may be. I almost felt like one of the women that passed by his life after Oda. When he didn't seem to feel a smidgeon of remorse for not trying hard enough to make a relationship work.

Ritt Devlin has a very passionate relationship with Geology. He understood it, he respected it, and he more or less took advantage of it. Even still, I rooted for him. I wanted him to find the ultimate success that eluded him. This novel had me in its grips. It's not a suspenseful read, but the power of Gillmor's writing is that he captures the readers from the first page. He had me interested in an industry that I hate but could not live without. The plot moved steadily, but with relentless passion. Passion in Ritt's relationships – personal, business, and more importantly, with the land.

Linda Klages says

Easy to read, very interesting - took lots of research.

Steven Langdon says

The transnational oil industry has reshaped the world economy, impacted Canadian society and threatens to devastate our climate. Yet it remains an arcane sub-culture, distant from most people and driven by geological and corporate forces that are mysteries to most of us.

Don Gillmor gives us a driven novel that provides significant insights into the industry and its dynamics, even as it traces out the drama of one man's life and loves amid the wells, derricks and pipelines of the petro-world. Ritt Devlin is an original character, a 15-year old refugee from Texas escaping a harsh family background and the possible death of an opponent in a fight, who comes to Alberta as oil is beginning to gush, and ends up building his own company with ties to the Arctic, Africa and northern Russia. He is also something of a romantic, as his three marriages trace out over the course of his life -- a man whose love affairs are fraught with passion but also tragedy.

The panorama of petro politics and economics in this book is sweeping, informative and penetrating in terms of environmental understanding of the dangers of uncontrolled expansion of this industry. For Canadians, too, there are some interesting reminders of the way this country's 1982 National Energy Program restructured the oil sector, giving Canadians much more ownership and control than in the past. There is also a chapter where Ritt visits Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea in Africa that is harrowing (and accurate) in its depiction of the devastation associated with petroleum development in those countries.

"Long Change" refers to the time gap, for an oil worker doing seven-day a week shifts, between the day shifts one week and starting the night shift the next week; workers try to fit what personal life they have into that 18 hours. In the same way, Ritt's personal life fits around his corporate petro-passion -- and is inevitably distorted by that reality -- as shows up dramatically in the first explosive chapter of this novel.

This is a surprisingly good book, well-written with some indelible characters, providing a striking portrait of an industry and the forces shaping it -- even as it warns of the dangers that petroleum development brings with it. It's worth reading and pondering.

Shadoh says

A great story packed with information on geology, oil exploration, strange locals and characters.

Colleen Foster says

This book interested me because of the subject matter -- similar to that of Will Ferguson's 419, which I read (and loved) earlier this year. When I saw that Ferguson had actually written the blurb on the cover, it gave me even more confidence in giving Long Change a chance.

Don Gillmor's writing is smooth and comprehensible while still throwing out the odd surprise and skillful turn of phrase. Where I was disappointed with this novel was in the fundamental boringness of the main character. I mean, if you make a 15-year-old Texan a murderer (possibly) within the first section of the novel, I start to have expectations. Unfortunately, I felt like that was the big climax of his life; he never really took risks like that again. Heck, he wasn't even active. He was a passive agent in his own life and anything interesting that happened was happening to other people.

I would have loved to see Ritt more involved in the various places he travels for business. I enjoyed 419 so much because of the shifting perspectives and locations. It gave oil a complex story, and to paraphrase Ritt in Long Change, he IS oil, so I wanted him to be equally multi-faceted and unpredictable.

By the end of the novel, my main feeling was apathy, so maybe it aligned with how Ritt felt. Hard to say. I would have enjoyed this novel a lot more if I had read it back to front.

Steven Buechler says

Gillmor brilliantly tells the story of oil production through the life of Ritt Devlin. We witness Ritt's early life in Texas in the 1950s where he is first introduced to the oil industry. Then we see his "escape" to Alberta and his rise in field, first as a rigger then on to study geology and then starting his own company. Not only do we witness Ritt's passion for the industry but his personal passions -- his three loves of his life and their endings. There is a great mix of a personal drama and the history of an industry in this book.

<http://tinyurl.com/ncczal9>

Margborne says

Interesting story of the geopolitics of the oil industry.

Darren says

I won this book as a good reads giveaway. It is an advance copy of the book that is due to come out next month. It was a good book. I liked the variety of characters in it. It was a well written book.
