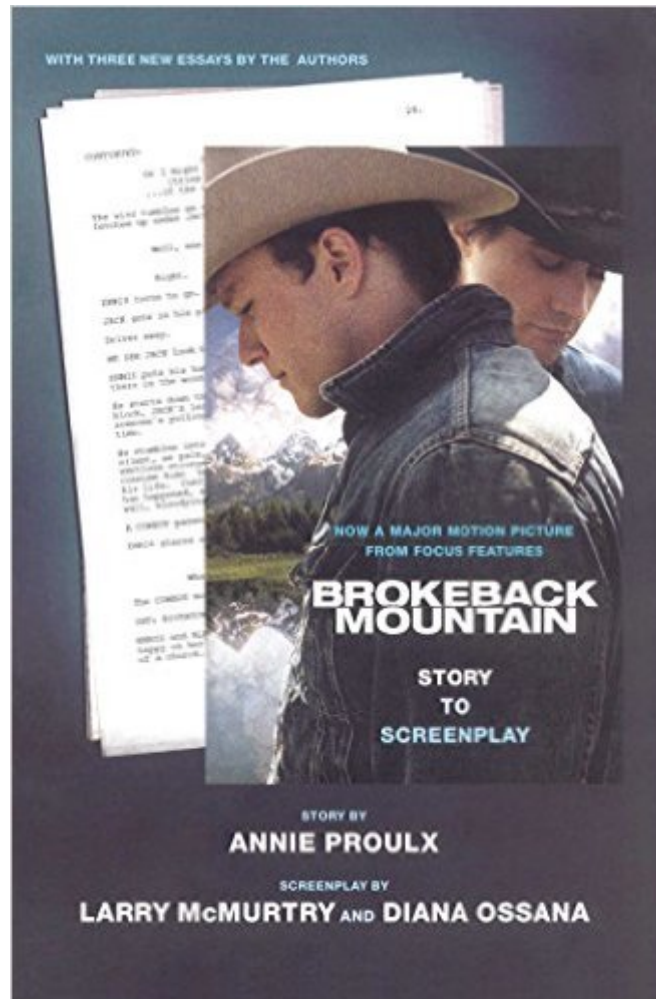


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Brokeback Mountain: Story To Screenplay



Synopsis

Annie Proulx has written some of the most original and brilliant short stories in contemporary literature, and for many readers and reviewers, *Brokeback Mountain* is her masterpiece. *Brokeback Mountain* was originally published in *The New Yorker*. It won the National Magazine Award. It also won an O. Henry Prize. Included in this volume is Annie Proulx's haunting story about the difficult, dangerous love affair between a ranch hand and a rodeo cowboy. Also included is the celebrated screenplay for the major motion picture "*Brokeback Mountain*," written by Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana. All three writers have contributed essays on the process of adapting this critically acclaimed story for film.

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Customer Reviews

Ang Lee's powerfully moving cinematic translation of Annie Proulx's masterful short story, "*Brokeback Mountain*", is obviously turning into a cultural phenomenon. So much so that not only is there the inevitable movie tie-in book (actually the original short story bound in a new softcover with the movie poster), but there is also a much-deserved resurgence in sales for her 2000 short story collection, "*Close Range*", which provides the broader context for "*Brokeback Mountain*" (it concludes the book). With the increasing success of the film in its smartly planned roll-out, we now have the story-to-screenplay tome. This would seem like overkill were it not for the fact that Proulx's original story is a remarkable piece of sparingly written fiction and that Lee's film, thanks to screenwriters Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana, is a wondrously faithful translation of her

vision. Through a series of narrative ellipses, Proulx presents a palpable love story about two ranch hands, Ennis del Mar and Jack Twist, who meet and become obsessed with one another. First published in the *New Yorker* in 1997 and greeted with much acclaim, the story is less about coming to terms about the characters' sexual proclivities and more about their inability to act upon those heretofore untapped emotions toward a greater happiness. Even though both men marry and have children, neither can fully acknowledge the love they feel toward each other because of the steep price that their love carries and they can only express themselves privately for more than twenty years. Suffice it to say the story is stunning in its preciseness and evocation of the contemporary West, but on first read, it hardly beckons a screen treatment.

Included in *BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN: STORY TO SCREENPLAY* are the original story by Annie Proulx and the screenplay by Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana. Additionally and most importantly there are essays by Proulx, McMurtry and Ossana on how both the story and the screenplay came about. All that is missing, unfortunately, are comments by Ang Lee that would have been helpful indeed. If you are interested in seeing how the movie was changed from the original story, you can follow both texts, should that meet your fancy. I for one am not inclined to read screenplays. I'd much rather take my chances on remembering differences from actually seeing the movie. The screenplay fleshes out the Proulx story and adds more scenes with both Ennis and Jack's families. There is one brilliant change near the end of the film that has to do with Ennis' shirt he had lost. In Proulx's story, when Ennis visits Jack's parents, he finds his dirty, tattered shirt hanging inside one of Jack's shirts in a closet. In the movie version, Ennis takes the shirts and then reverses them, putting Jack's shirt inside his own. (That's when even the bravest members of the movie audience cry.) By far the most interesting thing about this book is the essay by Ms. Proulx. She comes across as the person we suspected she is from having written such a powerful story. She makes it clear that this story, while a love story, is also about homophobia, Jack's and Ennis' and everybody else's. Rather than being about "two gay cowboys," as urban critics have said, Ms. Proulx states that she is writing about "destructive rural homophobia."

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