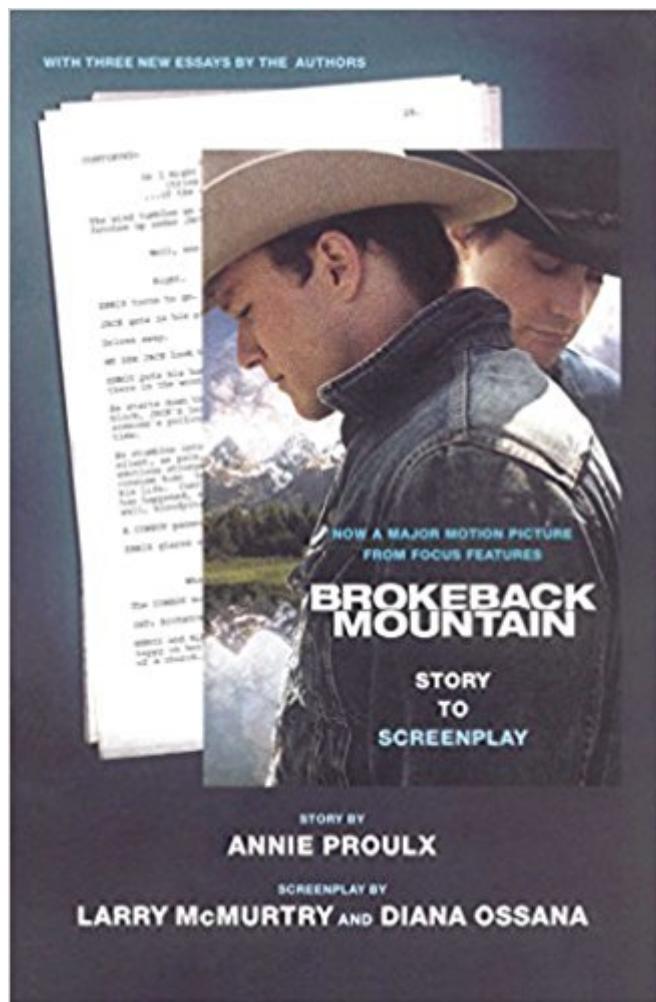


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# Brokeback Mountain: Story To Screenplay



## **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.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Annie Proulx is the author of eight books, including the novel *The Shipping News* and the story collection *Close Range*. Her many honors include a Pulitzer Prize, a National Book Award, the Irish Times International Fiction Prize, and a PEN/Faulkner award. Her story "Brokeback Mountain," which originally appeared in *The New Yorker*, was made into an Academy Award-winning film. Her most recent novel is *Barkskins*. She lives in Seattle. Larry McMurtry is the author of twenty-nine novels, including the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Lonesome Dove*, three memoirs, two collections of essays, and more than thirty screenplays. He lives in Archer City, Texas. Diana Ossana has written two novels, more than a dozen screenplays and numerous essays.

After the emotionally stunning experience of seeing the movie Brokeback Mountain, I wanted to read the story on which it was based. When my search on turned up this book, I did not have to look further. The book contains not only Annie Proulx's original story, but also the Larry McMurtry/Diana Ossana screenplay, and brief essays from all three authors on the process of turning the story into a movie. Reading the story and screenplay in juxtaposition enables one to appreciate how carefully the spirit and intensity of the former is preserved in the latter--the screenplay often adopts the exact language of the story for both dialog and descriptive passages--as well as illuminating the structural changes and expansions employed to flesh a short story out into a movie. Ms. Proulx's essay is a fascinating expedition into the influences and intentions behind the story, and the author's experience of the process of having her work turned into a motion picture. If you were profoundly affected by the movie, get this book. If you have not seen the movie, get it anyway. Either way, it is a rich and meaningful read.

Most professional writers regard short stories as a singularly difficult genre. The brevity involved requires a unique gift for precision, a gift that many authors lack. First published in 1997 in the New Yorker, as printed here Annie Proulx's story runs to slightly less than twenty eight pages; nonetheless, the story spans some twenty years and encompasses numerous and very vividly created characters--and it presents an unflinching tale. Proulx's prose is quite stark in directness and drive, and she presents her story with a remarkable clarity and grace. Ennis Del Mar and Jack Twist are two uneducated, itinerant ranch hands who meet when they are hired to tend sheep on Brokeback Mountain in the summer of 1963. Alone on the mountain, they begin a sexual relationship which they regard as 'just sex'--but which very quickly develops into a love which, given their backgrounds and era, neither can accept as such. When the summer ends, they go on to lives in the greater world, marriages, children, and all the things that a man is expected to do; even so, their need for each for each other will not be so casually dismissed, and in their failure to recognize it for what it is, and in society's refusal to allow them leeway, they will self-destruct in the most bitter way imaginable. The short story received considerable attention in 1997, and it soon fell into the hands of screenwriter Diana Ossana, who in turn passed it to partner and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Larry McMurtry. Recognizing the power of the story, the two acquired the rights to adapt the story into a screenplay. Many who read the screenplay praised it--but in truth, it raised more eyebrows than practical interest. Few producers were remotely interested in a script about gay men, much less gay men in a western setting. In time, however, the screenplay came to the attention of film producer Michael Costigan and the details began to fall into place. Directed by Ang Lee and

starring Heath Ledger and Jake Gyllenhaal, BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN began filming in 2004. Budgeted a fourteen million dollars, it was considered a "small" film that might do well in urban markets, at least well enough to make back its cost, but nothing more. The film opened in limited release in December of 2005--and critical reception was astonishing. With so many accolades, a savvy marketing campaign was developed to place the film before an ever-expanding market, a host of Academy Award nominations further fueled interest, and within slightly less than three months \$118 million dollars world wide. It was a truly astounding, truly unexpected reception. While the Hollywood media machine has inevitably focused on the actors, critics have praised the script as an almost miraculous adaptation of the original story, and it is here published for the first time. Like the story itself, it is remarkable for fusion of sparse dialogue and unexpected poetry, and it reads extremely well. McMurtry and Ossana truly deserve the many critical accolades laid at their feet. The short story and the screenplay are accompanied by three essays by Proulx, McMurtry, and Ossana. All are interesting in their own way, with McMurtry commenting on the issues that surround adaptation of literary material to the screen and Ossana focusing on the processes that eventually brought the script to the screen; the most interesting essay, however is by Proulx, who discusses her inspirations for the story and the sources from which the numerous ideas and images it contains arose. The short story "Brokeback Mountain" is available in several editions, including a stand-alone printing and in Proulx's memorable collection of short fiction, CLOSE RANGE. I would personally recommend the latter--but if you are specifically interested in the screenplay as well, this is your chance. Recommended. GFT, Reviewer

Kindle edition is a disgrace and completely inaccurate. Lines are missing from the articles and screenplay; new lines are added that never occurred in the original screenplay. This would be bad enough in a normal book but this is a script -- every word needs to be accurate; that's what people are buying it for. Contacted Kindle about it and they told me to fix it myself with the Kindle edit function... Really? That's what I'm paying ten bucks for? Smh.

First, I must say how much I loved BBM--the film. It effected me so much, I can't stop thinking of it. Powerful, heartbreak love story. Direction, acting, etc., etc. superb. So very sad. Now - the short story. I did find Ms. Proulx's original story just a tiny bit disappointing. It's so short!! And because I always had the images of the film before me and, of course, the images of the young and handsome Heath and Jake. But I am not denigrating the short story at all; I say this only because I found the descriptions of Ennis & Jack in the short story not as "handsome" as I thought they might

have been. (Hope I made this clear)! But Ms. Proulx's essay at the end of the book gave me a much greater understanding of her sparse and concise writing. Now - the screenplay. It is just great. For Mr. McMurtry and Ms. Ossana to take this short story, words off pages, flesh it all out, and turn it into such a great screenplay for film is just amazing. I weep at the fates of both Jack and Ennis; the fact of their not being together effects their entire lives and the other characters in their lives. So awfully sad. And - Mr. McMurtry's and Ms. Ossana's essays at the end of the book are just as informative and satisfying.

Loved the movie, first and foremost for the theme, and then I watched it again for the superb directing and acting. Then, when I ran across this book on with both original short story and screenplay in one volume, I really wanted to see how it was translated from story to screenplay to film. It really is amazing how well it was done at every level, and how such a stark, terse, and simple short story could be packed with such deep meaning and emotion, and how the expertise of great storytellers and film makers could carry it right on through to the film. Excellent.

I was introduced to the short story and screenplay via the movie, and having the chance to read these has added immensely to the emotional depth of an already beautifully created film. Having another journey with the characters is always great, as this story is really one that communicates grand life lessons. The collection of the short story, screenplay, and letters from the author and screenwriters is fantastic. Kudos to all of those creative minds involved in the making of this story in its different iterations.

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