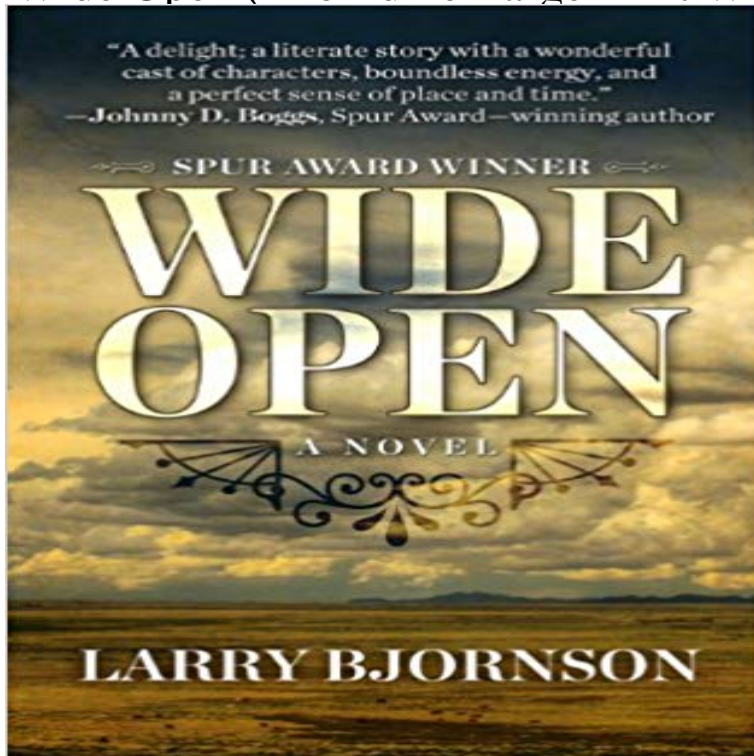


Wide Open (Thorndike Large Print Western Series)



Based on actual events, this is the epic story of Abilene, Kansas, at a time when the cowboy was king, might made right, and the future seemed as unsettled as the endless prairie. Abilene, 1871. Will Merritt is fiercely protective of the cattle trade that made his fathers fortune. Idolizing the cowboys who flood the streets each summer, Will and his friends are drawn to Abilenes exotic Twestown district--a powderkeg of saloons and brothels so notorious that the mayor has hired the Wests most famous gunman, Wild Bill Hickok, to police its streets. Yet even with Hickok as marshal, Abilene boils with deep divisions. The townsfolk resent the migrant settlers whose new farms are slicing up the rangeland. And no one is more intolerant than Wills best friend, Jasper, who delights in tormenting any farmer he encounters. But Will finds himself torn when he meets the beautiful and beguiling Anna, whose dignity and determination test his deepest beliefs. Then Wills father reveals a stunning secret that challenges Abilenes future, one that makes the Merritts outcasts. And when Wild Bills tenure as marshal comes to a violent head, Will realizes that everything--his family, his friends, and the only home hes ever known--could be gone in an instant, leaving only an empty wilderness once again.

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