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From the bestselling author of **The Bishop's Man**, winner of the Scotiabank Giller Prize, a brilliant, deeply wise and challenging new novel.

Why do men lie? Effie MacAskill Gillis, a self-sufficient woman of her time, is confident she knows. She learned the hard way—from a war-damaged father and a troubled brother who became a priest, through failed marriages and doomed relationships with weak and needy men. Men lie to satisfy the needs they never can articulate: for sex, for love and reassurance.

Now at middle age, she feels immunized against the damage men can do and enjoys a hard-won independence. But then a chance encounter with a man on a subway platform changes everything—an old friend looks like he, like her, has evolved into an assured and confident maturity. That he seems to have outgrown the need for telling lies is irresistible, and Effie gambles her emotional resources as she never has before. Only to learn that men *must* lie, and that the consequences of an unexpected lie can be disastrous.

From the Hardcover edition.

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From Reader Review Why Men Lie for online ebook

Georgina says

I think I would have enjoyed this book more if I'd read The Bishop's Man first. I may revisit my assessment of this book after reading the others in the series. A 3.5 for me.

Karen says

The first thing I have to say is that he is a beautiful writer. There were many times throughout this book that I had to stop and reread a particular line or paragraph. It wasn't just the physical descriptions that gave me pause for thought. It was also the insights and revelations the characters made. The impact of those words was visceral at times. I was especially impressed by MacIntyre's writing from the point of view of a woman. It was seamless.

I read The Bishop's Man and loved it. When I started on this book I was disappointed it was from Effie's pov. She had been a peripheral character in The Bishop's Man and I didn't particularly like her.

My opinion changed as the book progressed. I grew to like her and found her self-assessment and willingness to accept her culpability in the mistakes and poor choices she made to be thought provoking and inspiring.

She did seem to live a lot in the past and the format of the book was a bit jumbled as she crept back into memories. Another thing I found difficult were her expectations of the future. She kept fantasizing about how this reunion would be or how the future with JC would progress. It annoyed me because she clearly wasn't being realistic. I understood that my frustration meant that I had grown to like her. This habit of Effie's, created by MacIntyre, was a subtle device used to give insight into her nature.

The pacing was excellent. Just when I thought things were over or things were better, something else happened to notch up the tension. I was pulled though this book.

One line I found especially poignant was "The difference between solitude and isolation is autonomy."

This is great book!

Pamela Detlor says

Best selling author and Giller Prize winner, for The Bishop's Man, Linden MacIntyre delivers a thought provoking new work.

I wasn't sure what the point was when I started reading ***Why Men Lie***. The first 16 pages covered bits and pieces of a year, without a sense of where things were going. Though I wasn't sure if I liked the protagonist, *Effie MacAskill Gillis* (Sister to Duncan, from Bishop's Man), I did find the dialogue well written, and a

steady flow to the writing. My issue with Effie: she seemed somewhat jaded in her opinion of men. This based on a lifetime of failed experiences with men, including her father. I thought, *“If this is a story about a jaded, middle-aged, man hating woman, written from a man’s point of view, I’m not interested.”*

MacIntyre was brave to take on the “voice” of his female characters. It isn’t often that a man can write, believably, as a woman. **Larry McMurtry** did it brilliantly in, *“Terms of Endearment (1976).”* **Lawrence Hill** was also a master in, *“The Book of Negroes (2007).”* I’ve read other books that came across more like **“Penthouse Letters,”** of what men’s fantasies of women are as opposed to how we actually think. Both Effie and Stella are well portrayed. With their initial introductions, I wasn’t sure I liked either woman, by the end of the story I realized they were both strong women who were to be admired for being true to themselves.

Toronto and Cape Breton are featured beautifully in the story. Because I grew up in the Maritimes and spent 17 years in Toronto, I was first drawn in by the landscape of the character’s lives. I enjoyed the visual pictures MacIntyre painted of so many places I knew from personal experience.

There are many types of lies. Some lies self-serving and deceitful. There are lies of omission and half-truths. There are little white lies and lies told to protect another person. There are pointless lies. All of these are featured in this story. The Golden Rule: Never Tell A Lie: loosens some steam when we realize that every person on earth has told a lie, of some sort, in his or her lifetime. Perhaps you’re thinking, “I don’t lie!” How many times have you run into someone who said, *“Hello, How are you?”* And you replied, *“fine.”* But you weren’t. Maybe you felt awful, or your life was falling apart. Yet, you chose to lie. Perhaps you didn’t want to get into your business. Still... “Fine” is a lie when we’re not “fine.” It’s not the same and a malicious lie. Is that what you’re thinking?

“*Why Men Lie,*” provokes thought about differing sides of an argument. It looks at life from the perceived “middle” of our allotted time on earth, making us consider what we want out of life and relationships. Honesty is the best policy; yet, this story shines a light on the fact that not all lies are created equally.

Rebecca McNutt says

I love reading Cape Breton literature (CaperLit); I think everyone should read at least one book that takes place in where they’re from, and a large number of my book collection is CaperLit. *Why Men Lie* is the latest that I’ve bought, and it’s wonderful. Filled with vibrant Cape Breton scenery, Scottish/Canadian heritage and characters that feel alive, literally.

Cheryl says

Just a 2. It was a slog. The characters weren’t particularly likeable. They were superficial egocentric sketches, aimlessly ricocheting off of each other’s lives. Confusing, muddy, angst-ridden. Buried secrets, lies and perceived lies, all over-magnified into dramatic substrate.

Found these two books nestled against each other on my ereader:

Steven Langdon says

Linden MacIntyre's previous novel, "The Bishop's Man," won Canada's Giller Prize for the best novel of the year, so this book, which overlaps to some degree (its protagonist is the sister of the priest who is the Bishop's man,) comes with high expectations. And for the most part, "Why Men Lie" manages to meet those considerable standards. The central characters are vivid and interesting, the plot is sharp-edged and keeps you engaged, and the writing is excellent.

"The Bishop's Man" began in Cape Breton, and shifted later to the Toronto where so many Atlantic Canadians migrate. This novel begins in Toronto (and captures well the texture of the downtown city streets,) then shifts back to Cape Breton -- and the same interwoven, incestuous network of relatives and neighbours that came together in the previous book. Effie, a professor of Celtic languages, is building a new relationship with an old friend, JC Campbell -- while also continuing to come to terms with three previous sexual relationships that have shaped her life (with her first husband John, her second husband Sextus, and her longtime partner Conor.) Effie is also navigating her changing ties with her daughter, and sorting through her remembered tensions with her deceased father (and his wartime friends.)

But this is not just a novel about passions, present and past. It is a deep and probing rumination on violence and betrayal, and the failures of men (and women) to be honest with each other. I found that MacIntyre worked through these themes well, with a caring sympathy yet a tough sharpness. His characters are layered, capable of tenderness, yet also marked by harsh anger and hurtful deviousness in their unfolding lives -- there are no angels, yet there is no unremitting evil either. Men and women grope through mistakes and memories to form enduring connections, but only sometimes succeed.

There are questions I have about this book. Does the author succeed in writing from a woman's point-of-view? I'm not sure. Effie's ties to her daughter seem to me less fierce than they should be to be convincing -- and I think a woman like Effie would have far too strong an arsenal of street smarts to fall into the trap with Paul that afflicts her.

Also, is there a bit too much insider commentary on Cape Breton and its mythology? Perhaps. There is a veiled reference, for instance, to Alistair Macleod's famous writing on Cape Breton that adds nothing to the story, and can only be seen as a tribute to another author from the Island. Cape Breton has been a dramatic source of inspiration to literature, music and poetry in Canada -- but we don't need to have that taught to us in technicolour yet again.

Nevertheless, this is a strong novel, a well-written follow-up to "The Bishop's Man," and a book that will stay with me. Effie with her Gaelic will stand out as a remarkable central character -- and JC will endure as a tormented tragic figure, trying to come to terms with the execution of a US prisoner. As for Duncan, the Bishop's man, this book also carries his story forward, and perhaps previews a sequel to come.

Daniel Kukwa says

Emotionally exhausting, but that's the way with novels that are also compelling and engrossing human dramas. This is a book full of multi-faceted layers, revealing its secrets with great subtlety, and assuming the

reader is more than intelligent enough to read between many lines. There is nothing I appreciate more than a novel that appreciates an intelligent reader.

Ian says

Why Men Lie is the third in a loosely connected trilogy of novels, after The Long Stretch and The Bishop's Man. The novels share a cast of characters but are narrated from different perspectives and cover different time periods. The focus of this novel is Effie MacAskill Gillis, who, in her mid-fifties and in the midst of a successful academic career at the University of Toronto, seems content to be living on her own after a traumatic childhood and two failed marriages. Without exception the men in her life have been weak, selfish, and manipulative. Too often she has placed her trust in someone who has let her down, or done her real damage. But a new chance for emotional fulfillment comes her way when she encounters JC Campbell, a friend from her Cape Breton past who appears to have emerged unscathed from his wild youth. With a stable career as a journalist, he strikes her as much more mature and reliable than his contemporaries, a group that includes her two ex-husbands and her brother Duncan. With only the vaguest of misgivings she lowers her defenses and allows him into her life. What she discovers however is that his demons, though less tangible, are no less destructive. His is a restless soul; he is unable to settle and allows his work to drain him emotionally. He also has secrets. It doesn't take long for Effie and JC to grow apart, but it is an awkward and reluctant estrangement. The novel's tragic ending is precipitated by his efforts to dig into the darker corners of his own past. This is a novel that builds slowly, in the manner of a symphony, to a crescendo that resonates with the sadness of unavoidable truth. Linden MacIntyre's novel does indeed explore the question of why men lie, but it also provides a perspective on broader themes like responsibility and mortality. It is a quietly brilliant work, lacking dramatic fireworks but rich with wise commentary on the human condition.

Lara says

I am a big fan of Linden MacIntyre's journalism, and I did try to read this book in his wonderful voice, but I kept getting distracted. I was distracted, too, by the fact that I was living in Toronto at the time the story is depicted, so I was trying to piece together my own little memoir of that time. (BTW, and *ahem*, there was no snowstorm on December 31st '98. It was bitterly, bitterly cold, but it was clear. I had gone to a swanky NYE party and I remember the band played 'Party like it's 1999' (of course) and I was wearing a cocktail dress and this horrible witch co-worker who was also at the party stole my cab right out from under me (the last cab in Toronto) and left me shivering on the side of the road in the Quays at 3am. The night was hell, not something you forget. I do remember the Army coming to dig us out later that winter, though. Thanks, Mel Lastman.)

I wonder if the story of JC and Sam was inspired by Mr. MacIntyre's own experiences with inmates at the Kingston Pen, especially that poor fella who shot himself.

In this book, the phone is a character in its own right. If I were going to write a paper on 'Why Men Lie', I'd probably use that as my thesis.

I kept waiting for the Lurid Big Reveal about Effie and her father, and I was glad that the details remained in the shadows. We are told as much as we need to know, and to share more would only be sensationalistic and demean the work.

Bonnie Parkins says

I wish I had read the trilogy in order and that I had not waited so long after I read *The Bishop's Man* to read *Why Men Lie*. The former was about Father Duncan MacAskill and his job getting priests out of trouble. He's a character in this one too, but it's basically told from the viewpoint of the protagonist, Effie, Duncan's sister. It tells the arc of her romance with JC Campbell and the rest of her life and loves along the way. I think MacIntyre does a fine job of getting inside a woman's head. There's a lot of mysterious stuff going on. People don't talk to each other when they should. There are a lot of lies to be explained. It's kind of like a soap opera in that regard -- so many misunderstandings because people don't talk to the important people in their lives.

I still haven't read *The Long Stretch* which was the first in the trilogy. I loved reading about Cape Breton, the few Gaelic words thrown in.

I'm about to read *Maddadam*, likely out of order -- part of Margaret Atwood's Sci-fi trilogy. Wish me luck

Ryan McKenna says

Interesting to have MacIntyre tell this story from a female perspective. Love the mix between Toronto and Cape Breton as the book's locations. A nice end to this east coast trilogy.

Linda Tuplin says

I didn't realize this was #3 of a trilogy. I mostly enjoyed it, except I felt like the pieces were never put together. Maybe I need to find the first two books.

Laura says

Why do we lie? Is it to make ourselves look better? To reinstate emotional boundaries? To hide secrets? To protect ourselves? To protect others? More importantly why do we tend to tell the greatest lies to those closest to us? And, given that this is true, do we ever really know someone? The theme of deception, among other affairs that tend to complicate personal relationships, is deftly explored through Linden MacIntyre's latest novel *Why Men Lie* (Random House Canada, 2012). *Why Men Lie* is the the third installment in a trilogy beginning with his 2006 piece *The Long Stretch*. (His last book, *The Bishop's Man*, won the Scotiabank Giller Prize. MacIntyre is also the co-host of the CBC's flagship news documentary program the fifth estate.)

Why Men Lie examines the life of Fay (Effie) MacAskill Gillis, originally from Cape Breton Island, now longtime Toronto resident, professor of Gaelic Studies, and department head at a major university. She is the ex-wife of John Gillis, protagonist from *The Long Stretch*, and sister to Duncan MacAskill, the priest from *The Bishop's Man*. (Both characters appear in the third installment.) As an independent, confident, and successful middle aged woman, Effie is well aware of disappointments that accompany romantic relationships. She is also attuned to the innate ability of men to lie. When Effie is introduced she is writing

off her second (and most philandering) husband Alexander Sextus Gillis after she hears of his latest illicit liaison. This fallout is diverted by a chance encounter with a handsome, seemingly well-adjusted, old acquaintance JC Campbell. JC and Effie begin, what seems like, a healthy, mutually respectful relationship. The novel becomes an open examination of her three past relationships and a dissection of her most recent romance with this gentleman from her past.

Throughout the novel, Effie also grapples with the issues of secrecy, infidelity and solitude. Comfortable in her hermetic state, but aware of the unbearable lightness caused by isolation, Effie tries to determine which she possesses. At one instance she concludes that the difference between “isolation and solitude is autonomy.” But she comes to see that when we allow ourselves to become emotionally vulnerable, while engaging in a relationship with another, we always give up some of that autonomy. MacIntyre draws us into becoming fully immersed observers watching Effie slowly give up some of her self-governance. As time passes, JC also reveals secrets, insecurities, and troubles. Some of those issues are revealed when JC, a journalist, covers the story of a Canadian man, Sam, on death row in Texas for a murder. His devotion to the case becomes his personal obsession. After an altercation on New Years Eve leaves her partner hospitalized, Effie begins to suspect that JC is satisfying his carnal impulses outside the relationship. While her presumption turns out to be false, the issue remains: she knows very little about JC. *Why Men Lie* is a fascinating examination of the contrasting opinions on the truth.

Author Linden MacIntyre

The book is also lined with introspective musings from Effie combined with flashbacks from the past. She reveals fragments of her childhood under the guardianship of a war-damaged father while reminiscing about her own lies told to her first husband John, the one she left for his cousin Sextus. Instant karma followed this break up when Sextus soon began compulsive affairs that were accompanied with further deceit. To escape Sextus’ affairs, Effie moved on with a man named Conor, whom she lives with until his untimely death. Conor claims to never lie, but instead believes in the necessity of “benevolent deception.” Throughout the novel, lies get analyzed, justified, and condemned. “It’s only what we know that matters,” is a mantra that continually reappears in the guise of that age-old ‘what we don’t know won’t hurt us’ philosophy. MacIntyre raises the question as to whether or not lies are used for protection. When examining the ones told by Sextus, it is obvious that they are part of his veiling of insecurities, or vain attempts to remedy those insecurities. The morality of lying is also examined by Effie’s brother Duncan as he exclaims that “morality resides in motivation. A well-motivated lie, by that standard, can be okay, maybe even good.”

The grey area between deception and secrets is also examined. Throughout the book, JC may not explicitly lie to Effie, at least not in the same way Sextus has, but he does not reveal his full self. Is this a lie? “Secrets are funny,” Duncan reveals to Effie. “They demand fidelity regardless of their worth. Even an unworthy secret is a test of character. That’s why I never messed with your secrets.” It can be debated whether secrets are but untold lies. Would this mean that all of us with secrets are subsequently liars? “We rarely see another human in his moral nakedness,” Effie concludes one morning while wondering about the actions of her counterpart.

Why Men Lie provides a potent emotional landscape that is a worthy addition to Canadian Literature. The novel offers not only a story, but a lesson in how we come to represent ourselves. Since geography always plays such a leading role in the genre, the shift in settings between Toronto and Nova Scotia resonates memorably. The characters, although troubled, struggle to be strong, respectable, and true-to-life. They face moral dilemmas, similar to those we all face, and each deal with them within their own capacities. *Why Men Lie* asks many questions. While it may not have answers to all the troubling questions about men, women, relationships, and lying, it has a way of keeping those questions burning in us as well.

Ruth Seeley says

The third novel in the loosely linked trilogy that includes *The Long Stretch* and *The Bishop's Man*, this novel focuses on Duncan's sister Effie (Duncan is of course *The Bishop's Man*). I think it fails as both a character study of Effie (in many ways the glue that holds together her generation's male triumvirate of Sextus, John Gillis and Duncan, which parallels the trio of males who are the focus of *The Long Stretch* - Sextus, John and Duncan & Effie's fathers) and as a novel. Effie remains a somewhat shadowy and implausible character, and this time the murkiness is just frustrating. I suppose it's a good thing for discussion purposes that the reader is left unsure of precisely why (and precisely how) Effie's father used to terrorize her, but I found myself annoyed by the obliqueness (obliquity?) of the 'evidence' provided. MacIntyre is asking a lot of his readers in this one, and I'm not sure it's fair to do so.

I also found JC's character shady and under-developed and Effie's devotion to him - given the mysteries of his life which he doesn't share with her until it's way too late - hard to swallow. There also seemed to be inconsistencies in Duncan's character (although I confess it's been a couple of years since I've read *The Bishop's Man*). Hard to believe he'd withhold 'material evidence' from his sister and keep JC's secrets when the 'evidence' he's withholding so profoundly affects Effie's life choices.

Still, MacIntyre writes beautifully and the novel's worth reading for that alone. One caveat: I think it's possible to understand *Why Men Lie* without having read *The Bishop's Man*, but I'm not convinced it's possible to understand this novel without having read *The Long Stretch* though - a lot of necessary background would be missing.

Louise Gleeson says

I am always drawn to books by Canadian authors and thoroughly enjoy immersing myself in a familiar landscape. This book is set in both Toronto and on the East Coast. It is a beautifully told story, which is accessible to all readers. MacIntyre's ability to write from a female perspective was astounding. I was continuously surprised by the voice of Effie and developed a great fondness for her character. And even though we are meant to dislike her former husband for his indiscretions, MacIntyre captures his vulnerability and beautifully weaves the shared childhood of the characters in a way that makes the reader root for all of them.
