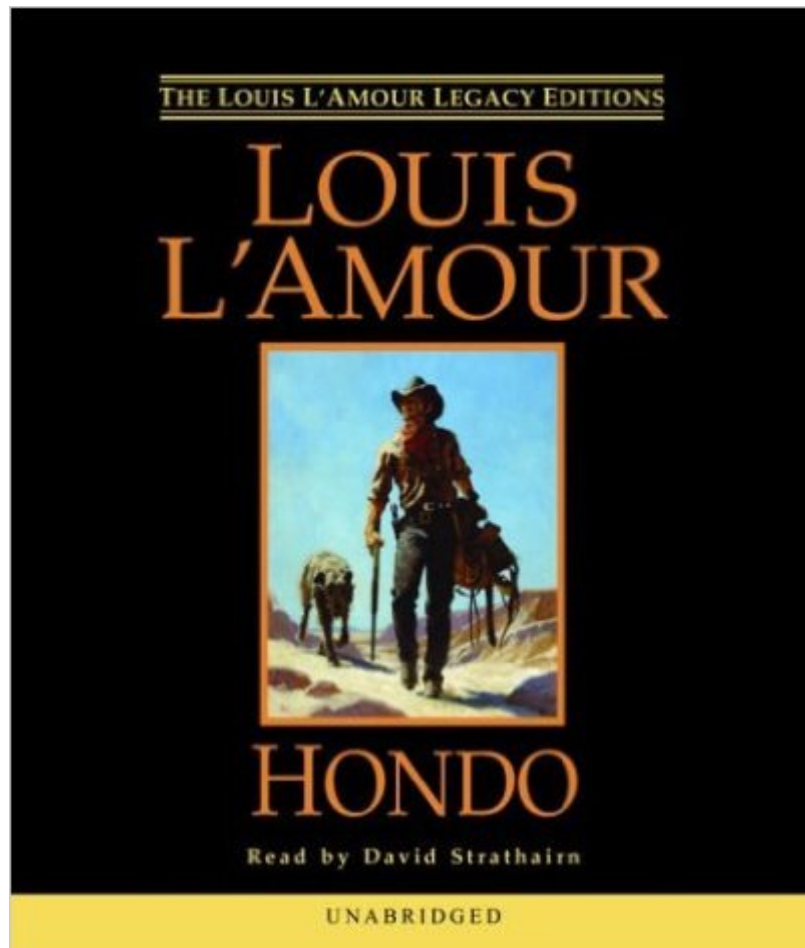


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Hondo (Louis L'Amour)



Synopsis

He was etched by the desert's howling winds, a big, broad-shouldered man who knew the ways of the Apache and the ways of staying alive. She was a woman alone raising a young son on a remote Arizona ranch. And between Hondo Lane and Angie Lowe was the warrior Vittorio, whose people were preparing to rise against the white men. Now the pioneer woman, the gunman, and the Apache warrior are caught in a drama of love, war, and honor. From the Paperback edition.

Book Information

Series: Louis L'Amour

Audio CD: 5 pages

Publisher: Random House Audio; Unabridged edition (April 27, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0739310925

ISBN-13: 978-0739310922

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1 x 6.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (172 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,116,413 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #119 in [Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > Westerns](#) #2156 in [Books > Books on CD > General](#) #2734 in [Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > Unabridged](#)

Customer Reviews

I've really got a thing for these Louis L'Amour books at the moment. They hardly take a moment to read, but they are well-crafted and excellent reads. Hondo seems to be the ultimate Western man - he has lived at least part of his life with Apache, is a scout for the Army, and comes up against the Apache both as friend and foe. Hondo comes across a farm run by a woman and her son, she lies to him and tells her that her husband is away in the hills rounding cattle - Hondo knows that isn't true as there are no tracks leaving the place. He tries to convince her to come with him to the safety of the fort but she refuses. She has always been friends with the Apache and wants to remain on the property even though her husband has gone and is probably dead. Returning to the fort Hondo realises that things are bad and the woman and boy out there alone will probably die so he returns against orders, but not without the tacit consent of the fort's commander. He is tracked from the fort by two men intent on killing him - one of them is Ed Lowe, the woman's husband. Unfortunately for them group of Apache track them to the springs and the two men die trying to ambush Hondo -

Hondo manages to kill two of the indians along with Ed Lowe. However one indian has escaped to raise the alarm - and now Hondo is in danger, tracked by one of the vicious roaming Apache bands. This is very much the story of a man who knows his own code of justice and righteousness and is prepared to live and die by that code. His dog, Sam, is like him. A loner, but one who is loyal and trustworthy.

The best Western novel I have ever read. -John Wayne Hey look, I'm not about to argue with the Duke. Louis L'Amour is probably the best-selling Western writer of all time and Hondo his first big, and perhaps his best, novel. It is reminiscent of Shane (see Orrin's review) and Riders of the Purple Sage (see Orrin's review), but with Apaches on the warpath taking the place of hostile cattle ranchers or intolerant Mormons. Hondo Lane is the gun fighter, Army dispatch rider, hero who, along with his feral but loyal dog Sam, meets Angie Lowe and her young son Johnny who are homesteading in Apache territory in late 1800's Arizona. Angie has been abandoned by her low down snake of a husband, but refuses to leave her land. Hondo must ride back to the Fort to warn the Cavalry that the Apache chief Vittorio is on the move, but then returns to help defend woman and child. If the story does not quite reach the lofty literary heights of Shane--perhaps because the focus is so much on what Hondo needs from Angie and Johnny, as opposed to the way in which Shane was the object of the Starrett family's affection--it is still quite enjoyable. Three elements that really stand out and offer a contrast to the easy caricature of the genre are the respectful portrayal of the Apaches, the centrality of the romance angle to the story and the blithe depiction of the difficulty and brutality of frontier life. Even in so formulaic a tale as this one, the American Western demonstrates a level of maturity and nuance that critics seem bent on denying. With the possible exception of the romance novel, there is perhaps no other genre of fiction which the critics and academia take less seriously than the Western.

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