

The Road

By Cormac McCarthy

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The Road By Cormac McCarthy

A searing, postapocalyptic novel destined to become Cormac McCarthy's masterpiece.

A father and his son walk alone through burned America. Nothing moves in the ravaged landscape save the ash on the wind. It is cold enough to crack stones, and when the snow falls it is gray. The sky is dark. Their destination is the coast, although they don't know what, if anything, awaits them there. They have nothing; just a pistol to defend themselves against the lawless bands that stalk the road, the clothes they are wearing, a cart of scavenged food—and each other.

The Road is the profoundly moving story of a journey. It boldly imagines a future in which no hope remains, but in which the father and his son, “each the other's world entire,” are sustained by love. Awesome in the totality of its vision, it is an unflinching meditation on the worst and the best that we are capable of: ultimate destructiveness, desperate tenacity, and the tenderness that keeps two people alive in the face of total devastation.

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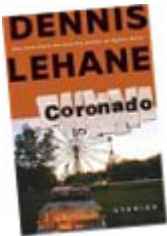
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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Best known for his Border Trilogy, hailed in the San Francisco Chronicle as "an American classic to stand with the finest literary achievements of the century," Cormac McCarthy has written ten rich and often brutal novels, including the bestselling *No Country for Old Men*, and *The Road*. Profoundly dark, told in spare, searing prose, *The Road* is a post-apocalyptic masterpiece, one of the best books we've read this year, but in case you need a second (and expert) opinion, we asked Dennis Lehane, author of equally rich, occasionally bleak and brutal novels, to read it and give us his take. Read his glowing review below. --*Daphne Durham*

Guest Reviewer: Dennis Lehane



Dennis Lehane, master of the hard-boiled thriller, generated a cult following with his series about private investigators Patrick Kenzie and Angela Gennaro, wowed readers with the intense and gut-wrenching *Mystic River*, blew fans all away with the mind-bending *Shutter Island*, and switches gears with *Coronado*, his new collection of gritty short stories (and one play).

Cormac McCarthy sets his new novel, *The Road*, in a post-apocalyptic blight of gray skies that drizzle ash, a world in which all matter of wildlife is extinct, starvation is not only prevalent but nearly all-encompassing, and marauding bands of cannibals roam the environment with pieces of human flesh stuck between their teeth. If this sounds oppressive and dispiriting, it is. McCarthy may have just set to paper the definitive vision of the world after nuclear war, and in this recent age of relentless saber-rattling by the global powers, it's not much of a leap to feel his vision could be not far off the mark nor, sadly, right around the corner. Stealing across this horrific (and that's the only word for it) landscape are an unnamed man and his emaciated son, a boy probably around the age of ten. It is the love the father feels for his son, a love as deep and acute as his grief, that could surprise readers of McCarthy's previous work. McCarthy's Gnostic impressions of mankind have left very little place for love. In fact that greatest love affair in any of his novels, I would argue, occurs between the Billy Parham and the wolf in *The Crossing*. But here the love of a desperate father for his sickly son transcends all else. McCarthy has always written about the battle between light and darkness; the darkness usually comprises 99.9% of the world, while any illumination is the weak shaft thrown by a penlight running low on batteries. In *The Road*, those batteries are almost out--the entire world is, quite literally, dying--so the final affirmation of hope in the novel's closing pages is all the more shocking and maybe all the more enduring as the boy takes all of his father's (and McCarthy's) rage at the hopeless folly of man and lays it down, lifting up, in its place, the oddest of all things: faith. --*Dennis Lehane*

The Road is now a major motion picture based on the novel by Cormac McCarthy, starring Academy Award-nominee Viggo Mortensen, Charlize Theron, Robert Duvall, Guy Pearce, and Kodi Smit-McPhee. Enjoy these images from the film, and click the thumbnails to see larger images.



From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Violence, in McCarthy's postapocalyptic tour de force, has been visited worldwide in the form of a "long shear of light and then a series of low concussions" that leaves cities and forests burned, birds and fish dead and the earth shrouded in gray clouds of ash. In this landscape, an unnamed man and his young son journey down a road to get to the sea. (The man's wife, who gave birth to the boy after calamity struck, has killed herself.) They carry blankets and scavenged food in a shopping cart, and the man is armed with a revolver loaded with his last two bullets. Beyond the ever-present possibility of starvation lies the threat of roving bands of cannibalistic thugs. The man assures the boy that the two of them are "good guys," but from the way his father treats other stray survivors the boy sees that his father has turned into an amoral survivalist, tenuously attached to the morality of the past by his fierce love for his son. McCarthy establishes himself here as the closest thing in American literature to an Old Testament prophet, trolling the blackest registers of human emotion to create a haunting and grim novel about civilization's slow death after the power goes out. *250,000 announced first printing; BOMC main selection.* (Oct.)

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From [The New Yorker](#)

In his new novel, McCarthy exchanges the bleak Western setting of previous works for an even bleaker post-apocalyptic one. As usual, lawless space engenders violence, but here a nuclear holocaust has reduced everything to ash, mummifying all but a few unlucky souls, who must kill or be killed (and eaten). The main characters are a father and his son, who was born a few nights after the bombs fell. "We're still the good guys," the man repeatedly assures the boy as they scavenge their way south for the winter, trying to avoid "bad guy" survival techniques. Even by McCarthy's standards, the horrors here—an infant "headless and gutted and blackening on the spit"—are extreme, and, deprived of historical context, his brutality can seem willful. But McCarthy's prose retains its ability to seduce—the deathscape is "like the onset of some cold glaucoma dimming away the world"—and there are nods to the gentler aspects of the human spirit.

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Users Review

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Adrian Woodson:

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Edgar Foley:

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