

# The road – cormac mccarthy



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Imagine a desolate and dismal world that deteriorated with scarce supplies of food and shelter and there is only a few survivors left—including yourself and one of your family members. In hopes of survival, what measures would you take? Would you go to the extreme by cannibalism or committing suicide? On the other hand, would you choose to be on an ethical route by grasping on life delicately? In the midst of the unflinching and empty world with virtually no hope, the father and son in the novel, *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy, choose to be the “good guys” by staying alive and refraining from cannibalism and thievery. They tried desperately to remain alive by roaming as nomads looking for shelter, edible foods, and avoiding the “bad guys” from preying on them for food. The unconditional love between the father and son sustained their struggle to live and try to stay ethical as possible.

The father and son search for shelter and food in idle commercial stores and the son encounters many dead bodies and questions whether if they were also going to die. The boy is paralyzed by the adversity and suffering he had faced throughout his ruthless journey with his father. The boy questions their fate. He is implying that he is worried for the future. When the boy woke up from his tranquil sleep, he innocently asked his father if “[they] were going to die” (11).

His father retorted, “Sometime but not now” (11). The father bluntly answered the question, knowing that he could not hide the inevitability of death. However, the father insisted that they should strive to stay alive regardless of how poor the circumstances will entail. The father wants to hold on to life delicately, even in the midst of a dangerous and isolated world.

The father's motive to stay alive is to spend time with his son and not to lose hope. The father was very adamant about keeping the fire alive and keeping hope to stay alive. The son believes his father and follows his ideals of keeping the determination. His mother, unfortunately, lost the hope. In the midst of contemplating on suicide, the mother states that " sooner or later they will catch [them] and they will kill [them].

They will rape [her]. They'll rape [the boy]"(101). The mother confidently states that they will be raped and killed by the blood-hungry thugs. She does not want to face the violence and misery from the blood cults. She knows there's prevalence in cannibalism. She knew that the worst of humanity will be unleashed and that her family will be the victim of it.

She should not have committed suicide; it was very selfish act to her family. If she remained alive, the father and son would not have suffered as much. Moreover, the son would not worry about his father's uncertain health and the fear of the bad clans. The mother could have protected her son from the morose state the father and son was in and provided complacency with her motherly nature. The boy needed his mother for survival and emotional safety.

Instead she commits suicide which becomes a paradox for the boy questioning if he, too, wants to remain alive. For instance, the boy exclaimed to his father, " I wish I was with my mom" (93). The father replied, " You mean you wish you were dead" (93). The son confirms and the father retorted, " Don't say it, it's a bad thing" (93). The mother sets a bad example for her son and now he is questioning the purpose of life. The father knows

his hypocrisy but he believes life is sacred and it is worth the emotional exhaustion and distress to stay alive.

The son is confused on distinguishing between the “ good guys” and the “ bad guys. He is naive on how atrocious one can be to humanity. The father and son roamed around the road, they come across many other survivors such as dangerous gangsters also known as the “ blood-cults. ” They have to run for their life to survive from their terrorism and possible cannibalism.

They came across a member from the blood-cult and the member “ dove and grabbed the boy rolled and came up holding him against [the boy’s] chest with the knife at [the boy’s throat]” (66). The father immediately shot and killed. As the father and son ran away and recovered from it, the father said, “ You wanted to know what the bad guys looked like. Now you know. It may happen again. My job is to take care of you.

I was appointed to do that by God. I will kill anyone who touches you. Do you understand? ”(75). The son nodded and asked, “ Are we still the good guys? ”(75). The man replied, “ Yes. We’re still the good guys” (75).

The conversation reveals the unconditional and blatant love the father has for his son, while simultaneously revealing the son’s growing concerns about their actions as the “ good guys. ” The lines occur after the man has shot and killed the attacker who threatened the boy with a knife at his throat. The passage also conveys the hypocrisy in morality between the man and the boy. The man believes his killing was justified because it was committed in the act of saving his son; God assigned a responsibility he says. The boy is

concerned about the nature of the act. The son is confused if they can still be considered the good guys since his father killed a man.

Even the son's doubt of his father's motive, the father believes he needs to protect his son—regardless of the circumstances. The son is shaken anticipation and fear for how the future will unfold, especially if he is going to be tortured.