

Fools crow essay

[Life, Relationships](#)



“ The Bonds that Strengthen” James Welch’s Fools Crow is a novel about coming of age amid the hardships of the Pikunis people and tensions between them and the Napikwans. It also tells of vivid dreams, honor, loss and changes. Some things that change are the relationships within the tribe as in the bond between father and son with Fools Crow and Rides-at-the-door.

Fools Crow better known as White Man’s Dog in the beginning starts off as a very unfortunate boy that struggles to find his place within society. He daydreams about women and wealth both of which he has none. It only takes one person to believe in him to turn his luck around. “ In spite of his unlucky reputation, there was a steadiness, a calmness in White Man’s Dog that Yellow Kidney liked” (21).

He is a very honorable young man that always tries to do the right thing. He has always liked Kills close to the lake but he puts the feelings aside because she is his father’s wife. He hunts for Yellow Kidney’s family during his absence even though he could possibly face ridicule for helping which shows his compassion for others. During this time he slowly comes to know Red Paint then finally takes her as his bride. At this point he has become a respected member in his community because he is a war hero, is married and training to be a healer. Rides-at-the-door is a much respected person within the Lone Eaters village.

He has three wives and two children. He is one of the few within the village to speak English so he is able to hear what the white men are saying when they visit the Lone Eaters camp. From the way he deals with the situation

that arises between his wife and son it shows that he has compassion as well. “ I have wronged you, my young wife, and I ask for you to forgive me” (342). Rides -at- the- door saw what he had done to make his wife act the way she did. He shows his wisdom later in the book when he uses his knowledge of the Napikwans and acts as a go between which is influential in him becoming chief after Three Bears dies. In the beginning of the novel it looks as though there is only a slight relationship between White Man’s Dog and Rides-at-the-door even though they are father and son.

Rides-at-the door has concerns for his son because White Man’s Dog is depressed and withdrawn. Gossip spreads throughout the Lone Eater’s camp that his son will be weak and never strike an enemy. In his heart, he wonders if it might be true. When the raid on the Crow’s camp is planned White Man’s Dog sees hope for his future, and Rides-at-the-door senses a change in his son. As a father, he hopes it is a real beginning and the boy does return changed.

His father is proud of him and holds a feast to honor the return of his son. When White Man’s Dog tells him about the dream of the white-faced girl, and how he feels responsible for what happened to Yellow Kidney, Rides-at-the-door assures his son that what happened to Yellow Kidney is not his fault. Rides-at-the-door’s relationship continues to grow with White Man’s Dog, and when they raid the Crow camp to avenge the mutilation of Yellow Kidney, he sees his son earn war honors and his new name Fools Crow. This relationship has always had a certain amount of strength which I liked.

It showed us that Rides-at-the-door always had love for his son but he was only unsure about his ability to fit in. On the other hand it took Fools Crow being a war hero to make him proud. All in all Rides-at-the-door was always a father to Fools Crow by providing him with what he needed but only became a father when he was successful.