

# All the pretty horses

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



In William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and Corm McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses*, the characters have experiences with death and are victims of mature circumstances which lead them to ultimate moral reconciliation. Death is not a topic to be taken lightly, which the characters of *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding discover, stranded, adult-less, on a deserted island, the boys in the novel have a growing subconscious fear of a beast on the island.

When one character, Simon, discovers that the beast is nothing but the darkness within each of them, he races to tell the group and is unfortunately mistaken for the beast. The boys lump upon Simon, beating him with sticks and ultimately forcing him off a cliff to his death. The boys discover they have the power to kill upon Simon's death, causing them to reassess their strengths and abilities as a group of savages. Similarly, *All the Pretty Horses* by Corm McCarthy touches upon death and the forced self-assessment it provokes in a character.

Protagonist John Grady Cole gets in a physical fight while spending time at a penitentiary in Mexico. In an effort to save himself, Cole stabs his offender in the heart and, "the chiseler's knife clattered on the floor. From the red boutonnière blossoming on the left pocket of his [the cochlear] blue ark shirt there spurted a thin fan of bright arterial blood. He dropped to his knees and pitched forward dead into the arms of his enemy" (McCarthy 201). Cole, only sixteen years old, is forced to reassess his strength and necessary abilities in order to survive this fight.

His exposure to death, much like that of the characters of *Lord of the Flies*, signifies a new stage in life, a new outlook, and a reassessment of how

things are handled and how one reacts to certain things. Both Gilding and McCarthy utilize death as a tool to force characters to re; assess their motives, strengths, and moieties even sanity. Gilding's *Lord of the Flies* also stresses the abandonment of Innocence through experience. By the novel's close, protagonist Ralph has seen two friends die, the rest descend into savagery, and himself capable of going insane, experiencing pain, and inflicting pain unto others.

When the boys are finally rescued by chance from the Island, " Ralph wept for the end of Innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of a true, wise friend called Plugs; (Gilding 202). Rally's, and the other characters', exposure to savagery and parting with innocence give not only homeless but the reader a sense of moral reconciliation. Ralph realizes that things and weeps for his inability to be blind to his surroundings and his inability to control them. He learns that although one can try to make the best of a situation and make every effort to maintain control and order, things do not always go as planned.

Likewise, McCarthy *All the Pretty Horses* teaches its protagonist, John Grady Cole, the same lesson. Cole Journeys to Mexico in search of the glorified cowboy life many tried to get a hold of at the time, and returns home having lost a close friend, killed another human being, and heartbroken at being unable to be with the girl he loved. Upon his return, Cole does not have the innocence he set out with because his experiences and the circumstances under which they occurred have opened his eyes.

He is made to reconsider what he values, and settles with himself what his morals are, and what he believes in and stands for. All the Pretty Horses and Lord of the Flies force their characters and readers to learn a lesson, to reconcile their morals and values, and get a taste of extreme experience and circumstance. Experiencing the death of a friend and being forced to act maturely due to resistance led characters in William Gildings Lord of the Flies and Corm McCarthy All the Pretty Horses to self reassessment and moral understanding.

While often times coming to this point includes a happy close, the novels display a different angle, a lesson learned without the fairytale ending the reader is so much hoping for. Moral reconciliation and the ability to assess oneself comes with maturity, and the authors of Lord of the Flies and All the Pretty Horses prove that sometimes obtaining this maturity comes at a heavy and painful cost in parting with one's innocence.