

Plot of a novel by cormac mccarthy

[Transportation](#), [Road](#)



In Cormac McCarthy's novel, *The Road*, the man and his son are traveling along a road in a post-apocalyptic world. Over and over, McCarthy references the ash and fire that cover every inch of the road and its surroundings. He never tells the readers what brought about the apocalypse in this case, but it is widely accepted that the cause for this disaster is nuclear war. There are other theories floating around as well, but another plausible theory for the end of the world as we know it is asteroid strikes, claiming most of the living things in one section of the world. The condition of the rest of the world is left unknown, because the man and the boy are only traveling along one road, in one relatively small slice of the country. Based on the evidence in the text, as nuclear winter seems to be the most likely situation for McCarthy's characters to be traveling in.

As the man and the boy work their way south, they are always noticing the destruction around them, and being very careful not to run into others in their path. There is always the overabundance of ash being discussed as they push their cart through the remains of whatever the fire had touched. The man and the boy wear masks made of whatever they could find in order to breathe in as little of the floating ash as they could manage. Everything they see is either black or gray as they pass forests, towns, cities, and highways. They avert their eyes as they pass by the remains of humans and animals, plants and trees, stores and homes. The wave of destruction left nothing untouched, and left very little life behind as it rolled through anything and everything.

The man and the boy can still see the fires on higher ground as they look ahead to scout the road ahead of them. They see billowing smoke coming

from the remains of forests, and smaller columns of smoke coming from campfires in the distance. They are careful to stay away from those, because other people could be the end of their journey. Along their road, the man and the boy have several sickening encounters with other people, such as the thieves that the man is forced to shoot to save the boy, or the cannibals who had to keep their food alive as they cut off bits and pieces to eat. The most dangerous enemy that the son and his father came up against was the fire that claimed so many lives, and so many resources. If the fire would burn slower, or if there were anything left to fight it with, then humans would have a fighting chance to survive something so horrible, but there was nothing left, and nobody to stop the rapid spread of the flames.

The final piece to the puzzle of this devastation was the toxic fumes that were spoken of, which points to nuclear warfare being the cause. In addition to the fumes that were in the air, the condition of the bodies that are seen lying by the edge of road, moved from their places of death by other travelers, or still sitting in their cars where they died, is possible evidence of radiation from the atomic bombs. No natural disaster or even asteroid strike would have been able to cause such consistently widespread damage across miles and miles of terrain. A natural disaster would be centrally devastating, with lessening damage as one gets farther out from the epicenter of the disaster. The land was desecrated by fires that just kept igniting over and over again as the few survivors lived the only way they knew how; hunting, scavenging, killing, and fleeing.

Throughout this dark and lonely book, the man and the boy leaned on each other to push themselves through the ashes of the world the man used to know, and the man gave his life to make sure that his son would have the skills to continue on his journey to a warmer and safer place. The son and his father made sure to never give up hope or humanity in the face of horrific circumstances. The fires that scorched the land and took away every living thing in their path still could not take away the love they had for each other.