



No Country for Old Men by Cormac McCarthy
Reviewed by Shreyas



Literary Fiction

Give a summary without spoilers!

Set in 1980 around the Texas-Mexico border, a man by the name of Llewellyn Moss is out hunting and stumbles across a drug-deal gone wrong. He investigates the scene where he finds dead bodies, a load of heroin, and a briefcase full of \$2.4 million dollars. Moss takes the briefcase home with him, but when that amount of money goes missing there's bound to be somebody out there looking for it. Moss soon finds himself hunted by a number of different outlaws and bandits and must start a new life on the run. The most notable of which being the menacing Anton Chigurh. Chigurh seems to see himself as the harsh hand of fate. He will kill anyone in his way and will justify it as fate's doing. Moss doesn't want to kill anyone, but that could be hard when it seems the whole world wants to kill him. All the while the old sheriff Ed Tom Bell follows the carnage and hopes to stop Chigurh's rampage.

What drew you to this book?

The setting of the story was what first drew me to the novel. The solitude of the empty Southern Texas desert is the perfect setting to indulge the story of a man trying to escape everything life is throwing at him. McCarthy also does a great job of describing every scene to draw the reader into the story and feel like they are also immersed in the Western atmosphere. The characters are also all very well written. It is so easy to really feel the desperation of Llewellyn Moss as he knows that his life will always be an endless cycle on the run. McCarthy really makes the reader fear Anton Chigurh, a man who slaughters humans like animals using a cattle gun to end numerous people's lives. The reader is on the edge of their seat the whole time waiting to see if Moss can continue to stay one step ahead of Chigurh and the number of other bandits after him. The character of Sheriff Bell provides good insight into the story. All he wants to do is be a good man and help as many people as possible but the events which are going on throughout the novel seem beyond him.

Did it remind you of something that you've previously read?

The novel actually reminds me of the song "Riders on the Storm" by The Doors. The song has lyrics like "There's a killer on the road, His brain is squirming like a toad", which perfectly captures the aura of Anton Chigurh. The song has the perfect feel of driving

through Western America in the 1970s or 80s with its relentless bass guitar riff and haunting lyrics. When I listen to the song I imagine Llewellyn driving through the middle of nowhere on the run from psychopaths and bandits. The songs long breaks for instrumental with no lyrics also remind me of the times of silence in the novel where the desolate landscape of the desert takes center stage.

To whom would you recommend this book?

I would recommend No Country For Old Men to someone looking for a spin on the classic American Western genre. The novel is definitely a page turner and is incredibly compelling throughout. The story will engage the reader throughout not only with its action scenes but also the in between scenes with interesting and layered dialogue. The story is also great for anybody looking to indulge in a story full of double meanings and insight into the nature of America. With so much violence and drugs appearing throughout the novel the questions of whether America really is a great land and if society is slowly crumbling are brought up.

Overall, did you like it and would you recommend it to others?

Overall I loved this book and everything about it. It was truly one of the best novels I've read. The compelling and greatly written story with its many layers of philosophy and questioning of modern society provide a beautiful piece of media. The novel at times can be a little challenging to read but that is almost to its benefit more than harm as time a I reread a page new subtleties and meanings are revealed. Even though the novel is a bit of a tough read it was so compelling that I was able to finish it in just 5 days. The story can be quite violent at times so I wouldn't recommend it to you if you get squeamish at those sorts of things but otherwise I think that it would be an incredibly great read that will satisfy your need for action and substance.

Anything else that you would like to add to this review? What made you choose it? Did you like the cover? Was it recommended to you? Did you find it at the library?

One thing I would like to mention is the unorthodox style which McCarthy writes with. The author is a great writer however many of his writing mechanics stray from the conventions of a proper grammar. He does not use quotation marks to denote when someone is speaking and often uses incredibly long run-on sentences when describing things, locations, or people's actions. One great way to adjust to this strange writing style is by using the audio book. I listened to Spotify's audiobook narrated by Tom Stechschulte who did a great job capturing the southern accents of many of the characters as well as the monotone harshness which Chigurh speaks with as well as clearly differentiating when someone is speaking or the narrator is speaking.