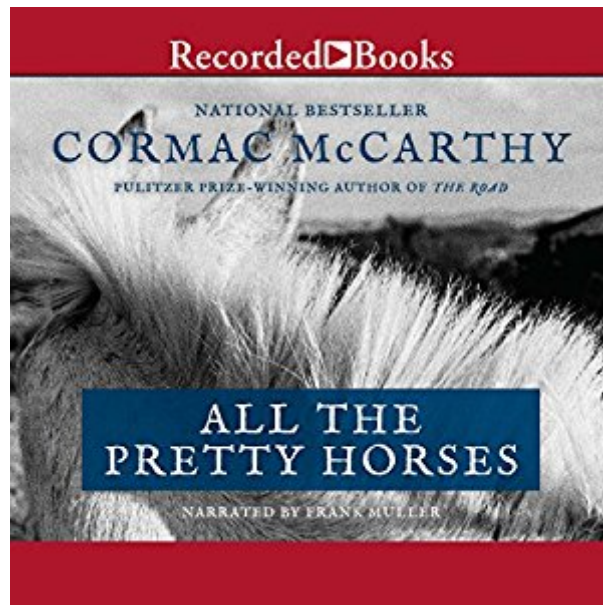


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All The Pretty Horses: The Border Trilogy, Book One



Synopsis

Cormac McCarthy is a quiet, unassuming presence in American fiction today, but like the slow, measured voices of many of his characters, he speaks with an authority and conviction that demands an audience. *All the Pretty Horses*, McCarthy's sixth novel, is a cowboy odyssey for modern times. Set in the late 1940s, it features the travels and toils of a 16-year-old East Texan named John Grady Cole, caught in the agonizing purgatory between adolescence and adulthood. At the start of the novel, Cole's grandfather has just died, his parents have permanently separated, and the family ranch, upon which he had placed so many boyish hopes, has been sold. Rootless and increasingly restive, Cole leaves Texas, accompanied by his friend Lacey Rawlins, and begins a journey across the vaquero frontier into the badlands of northern Mexico. In spite of its hard realities and spare telling, *All the Pretty Horses* is a lyrical and richly romantic story, chronicling - along with the erosion of the frontier - the loss of an era.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Here are three amazing books, and one amazing saga, all together in one brimming volume you can throw into a backpack. The first novel, "All the Pretty Horses" is one of the most beautifully told stories I've ever read. Not only is the writing here packed with imagery, and the story one of McCarthy's most accessible, but the textures of the words used to describe the images are as lush and as enfolding as anything F. Scott Fitzgerald ever wrote--even when McCarthy's describing the driest of desert plains, the most desolate of ruins, or the emptiest of lives. The book tells the story of two young friends who leave home in 1948 Texas to ride south into northern Mexico in search of

SOMETHING. What happens along the way is tragic and amusing, lovely and gripping, real and amazing. McCarthy seems to paint every scene perfectly, yet he does so using the fewest amount of words possible, and the simplest of details. "The gray and malignant dawn." "Stars falling down the long black slope of the firmament." "The shelving clouds." "Their windtattered fire." "Narrow spires of smoke standing vertically into the windless dawn so still the village seemed to hang by threads from the darkness." Long sentences shroud the reader in the events of every scene, and the author's trademark quote-sign-less dialogue gives every conversation a very biblical feel. The trilogy's second book, "The Crossing" has only thematic and geographical elements in common with the first. The story deals with a completely different character, Billy Parham, a son in a late-1930s New Mexican ranching family. Billy traps a wolf that has been killing his father's cattle but realizes he morally can't kill it and has to return it to its home in the mountains of old Mexico.

You read the first sentence of a Cormac McCarthy novel and you know that this is not Grisham or Connolly or Child or Crichton or King, certainly not Patterson, or anyone else writing fiction today. And before the first page is turned he has launched into one of his frenetic poetic riffs that lurches and rambles and stops and starts and doesn't care about punctuation and you can almost hear your high school English teacher scolding about grammar and run-on sentences but you know that she could never even hope to string words together like this even if she dared. And then you realize that maybe you've actually never really understood the English language at all because no one before has ever ripped it and bent it and twisted it as beautifully as McCarthy does while making it all look so easy. So were it not for McCarthy's ferocious prose, "All the Pretty Horses" may have been just another coming of age story. But in McCarthy's special corner of hell, along with the obligatory introduction to "young love", passage to adulthood may include exile in a foreign country, being hunted on horseback across a barren desert, variously stabbed, shot, tortured, or imprisoned. John Grady Cole is a sixteen year-old son of a Texas rancher who, up until his grandfather's death, worked the ranch and developed an uncommon kinship with horses. With his grandfather gone, his father dying, and his mother flitting around the cultural scene in post-WWII San Antonio, John Grady sets out on horseback for Mexico with buddy Lacey Rawlings.

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