

## Fire in the Darkness

Society has fallen into a hopeless and desolated world where murderers, cannibals, and thieves litter the roads of a dark post-apocalyptic wasteland. All hope is gone, and the people that haven't killed themselves off yet have turned into savages, desperate for survival without even the slightest care of how they survive. In this world a man and a child take the ruthless and relentless road east in search of safety, and apart from the occasional canned meal that they find, are constantly facing challenges of this broken and unsatisfying world. Through all the challenges that they face, they refuse to go down the path that other savages have taken, keeping their morals and wills intact, while facing the horrors of the wasteland. In "The Road" Cormac McCarthy always uses symbolism to convey the main message of the whole story, which is the strength of the human's will power and hope. "The Road" tells the story of a man and his child walking through a civilization in ruins, while carrying "the fire" through a tragic society. The protagonists and their inner human strength are depicted through "the fire" that they carry, the boy, and even the trout that was mentioned at the end of the book.

In this world where people not only kill, but eat other people, the man and the child are the ones who still hold on to their morals and carry "the fire" in their spirit throughout the story. "The fire" that they carry is made up of hope, perseverance, self-discipline, and the morals of society that came before. "The fire" was represented in the beginning when the man dreamed about seeing a shining light in the dark of a cave. In contrast to the thieves and cannibals who exploit and take advantage of others on the road, the man and the child continually find other ways of getting past whatever threat

that they come across, whether it be starvation, or the bitter cold. The boy continually asks and also reminds the man “if they are the good guys” and wants to know if what they are doing are is “what the good guys would do”. Instead of modeling after the rest of the soulless population that surrounds them, both of the characters do what is right, and keep “the fire” burning in this new desolated world.

The boy is a constant symbol of what “the fire” represents, sound morals, and ambition. The child is kind-hearted, curious, sympathetic, and always wants to do what is right, even in the hell that surrounds him. He carries all the traits that have been lost in this new world. The boy also helps brings out his dad’s good side when asking questions about if what they are doing is right, and begging his dad to help other people. The boy is able to get his dad to do what is right, and constantly nudges the man towards to being one of the “good guys” when things get rough for the two. Once during their long journey they encountered an old man named Ely. Even though the man was skeptical, and saw Ely as a shadowy figure who lied to them, the boy begged his dad to give the starving old man some food, and to help him by companying Ely for the night. During a conversation with Ely the man compares the boy to god by saying “You thought he was an angel? What if I said that he was a god?” Being a child, the boy not only remains strong in a world where a normal children could not survive, but also stays intact with his morals while pushing them on to his father. After the father dies, the Man tells the boy about how he is “the fire”, and he will carry it on because the “the fire” is inside of him.

At the end of the book Cormac McCarthy writes about the trout that were swimming in the streams before the end of the world. "Of a thing which could not be put back. Not be made right again. In the deep glens where they lived all things were older than man and they hummed of mystery". In "The Road" these last few sentences give the feeling of that the world is going to restart and rebuild itself. The negative connotations of past tense represent what in the old world has died, for example the trout. The last sentence "In the deep glens where they lived all thing were older than man and they hummed of mystery." the "mystery", which will live on to be older than man symbolizes the unseen hope that is still left in the future. After the death of the old world, the trout which represents what was left of the old, a new life will start from scratch all over again with people like the boy who help "carry the fire" to rebuild it.

Throughout the book civilization sat on the brink of extinction, but Cormac McCarthy's "The Road" showed how two characters, a man and his child, was able to succeed on carrying and delivering "the fire" through the journey they traveled. The strength of their spirits not only pushed them through a civilization in ruins, but in the end also contribute to building a new one.