

Cities of the Plain: Book 3 of Border Trilogy (The Border Trilogy)

By Cormac McCarthy

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Cities of the Plain: Book 3 of Border Trilogy (The Border Trilogy) By Cormac McCarthy

In this final volume of The Border Trilogy, two men marked by the boyhood adventures of *All the Pretty Horses* and *The Crossing* now stand together, in the still point between their vivid pasts and uncertain futures, to confront a country changing or already changed beyond recognition.

In the fall of 1952, John Grady Cole and Billy Parham--nine years apart in age, yet with a kinship greater than perhaps they know--are cowboys on a New Mexico ranch encroached upon from the north, at Alamogordo, by the military. To the south, always on the horizon are the mountains of Mexico, looming over El Paso, Ciudad Juárez and all the cities of the plain. Bound by nature to horses and cattle and range, these two discover that ranchlife domesticity is compromised, for them and the men they work with, by a geometry of loss afflicting old and young alike, those who have survived it and anyone about to try. And what draws one of them across the border again and again, what would bind "those disparate but fragile worlds," is a girl seized by ill fortune, and a love as dangerous as it is inevitable.

This story of friendship and passion is enfolded in a narrative replete with character and place and event--a blind musician, a marauding pack of dogs, curio shops and ancient petroglyphs, a precocious shoe-shine boy, trail drives from the century before, midnight on the highway--and with landforms and wildlife and horses and men, most of all men and the women they love and mourn, men and their persistence and memories and dreams.

With the terrible beauty of *Cities of the Plain*--with its magisterial prose, humor both wry and out-right, fierce conviction and unwavering humanity--Cormac McCarthy has completed a landmark of our literature and times, an epic that reaches from tales of the old west, the world past, into the new millennium, the world to come.

From the Hardcover edition.

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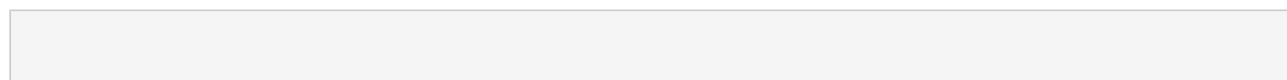
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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

On a ranch in southeastern Texas, soon after World War II, a group of solitary, inarticulately lonely men gathers to work animals as the sun sets for good on the mythic American West. All of these men nurse losses both personal (siblings or wives) and collective (a shared lifestyle and philosophy). Among them is John Grady Cole, the adolescent hero of the first book in Cormac McCarthy's Border trilogy, *All the Pretty Horses*. John Grady remains the magnificent horseman he always was, and he still dreams too much. On the ranch, he meets Billy Parham, whose own tragic sojourn through Mexico in *The Crossing*, the second book of the set, continues to quietly suffocate him. The two form a friendship that will nurture both but save neither from the destiny that McCarthy's characters always sense lurching to meet them.

Soaked in storm-heavy atmosphere but brightened by the ranch-hands' easy camaraderie and gentle humor, *Cities of the Plain* surprises with its sweetness. The awkward doomed-romance plot at the center of this tight, concise novel fails to convince, but, remarkably, does little to undercut the book's impact. What lingers here, and what matters, are the brooding, eerie portraits of the plains and the riders, glimpsed mostly alone but occasionally leaning together, who slip across them, over the horizon into memory. --*Glen Hirshberg*

From Publishers Weekly

This volume concludes McCarthy's Border Trilogy?the first two books being *All the Pretty Horses*, which won the National Book Award in 1992, and *The Crossing*, published to great acclaim in '94. Devoted McCarthy readers will know not to expect any neat or dramatic resolution in *Cities of the Plain*, for the author is more of a poet than a novelist, more interested in wedding language to experience in successive moments than in building and setting afloat some narrative ark. *Cities*, like the other books, takes place sometime shortly after WWII along the Texas-Mexico border. John Grady Cole, the young, horse-savvy wanderer from *All the Pretty Horses*, and Billy Parham, who traveled in search of stolen horses with his younger brother in *The Crossing*, are now cowhands working outside El Paso. John Grady falls in love with Magdalena, a teenage prostitute working in Juarez, Mexico; determined to marry her, he runs afoul of her pimp, Eduardo. That is basically the narrative. Along the way, McCarthy treats the reader to the most fabulous descriptions of sunrises, sunsets, the ways of horses and wild dogs, how to patch an inner tube. The cowboys engage in almost mythically worldly-wise, laconic dialogues that are models of concision and logic. Although there is less of it here than in the earlier books, McCarthy does include a few of his familiar seers, old men and blind men who speak in prophetic voices. Their words serve as earnest if cryptic instructions to the younger lads and seem to unburden the novelist of his vision of America and its love affair with free will. If a philosophy of life were to be extracted from these tales, it would seem to be that we are fated to be whatever we are, that what we think are choices are really not; that betrayals of the heart are always avenged; and that following one's heart is a guarantee of nothing. There is not much solace in McCarthy-land; there is only the triumph of prose, endlessly renewed, forever in search of a closure it will not find save in silence. 200,000 first printing; BOMC alternate; simultaneous audio, read by Brad Pitt. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From School Library Journal

YA-The final book in a trilogy that began with *All the Pretty Horses* (1992) and continued with *The Crossing* (1994, both Knopf). John Grady Cole and Billy Parham still love the life of the cowboy, but by 1951 they recognize that this lifestyle is fast disappearing. They work on a ranch near the Mexican border that will eventually be taken over by the federal government for use by the military. On a trip south of the

border, John Grady sees a beautiful young woman in a whorehouse and becomes obsessed with her. She has been in bondage since she was barely in her teens and suffers from epileptic seizures. Much of the novel follows his efforts to free her and take her back to New Mexico. His efforts are doomed, however, for her powerful pimp will not let her go, and the story ends in tragedy. Despite the serious and even depressing subject matter, the novel is both arresting and entertaining in its depiction of the southwest in all its serene beauty and its realistic look at ranch life and the characters who choose it.

Molly Connally, Kings Park Library, Fairfax County, VA

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Doris Moreno:

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Deidra Hird:

A lot of people always spent their very own free time to vacation or go to the outside with them household or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent that they free time just watching TV, or perhaps playing video games all day long. If you need to try to find a new activity that is look different you can read the book. It is really fun for yourself. If you enjoy the book that you read you can spent 24 hours a day to reading a publication. The book *Cities of the Plain: Book 3 of Border Trilogy (The Border Trilogy)* it is extremely good to read. There are a lot of people who recommended this book. These folks were enjoying reading this book. If you did not have enough space to bring this book you can buy typically the e-book. You can m0ore quickly to read this book from your smart phone. The price is not too expensive but this book provides high quality.

William McNeill:

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