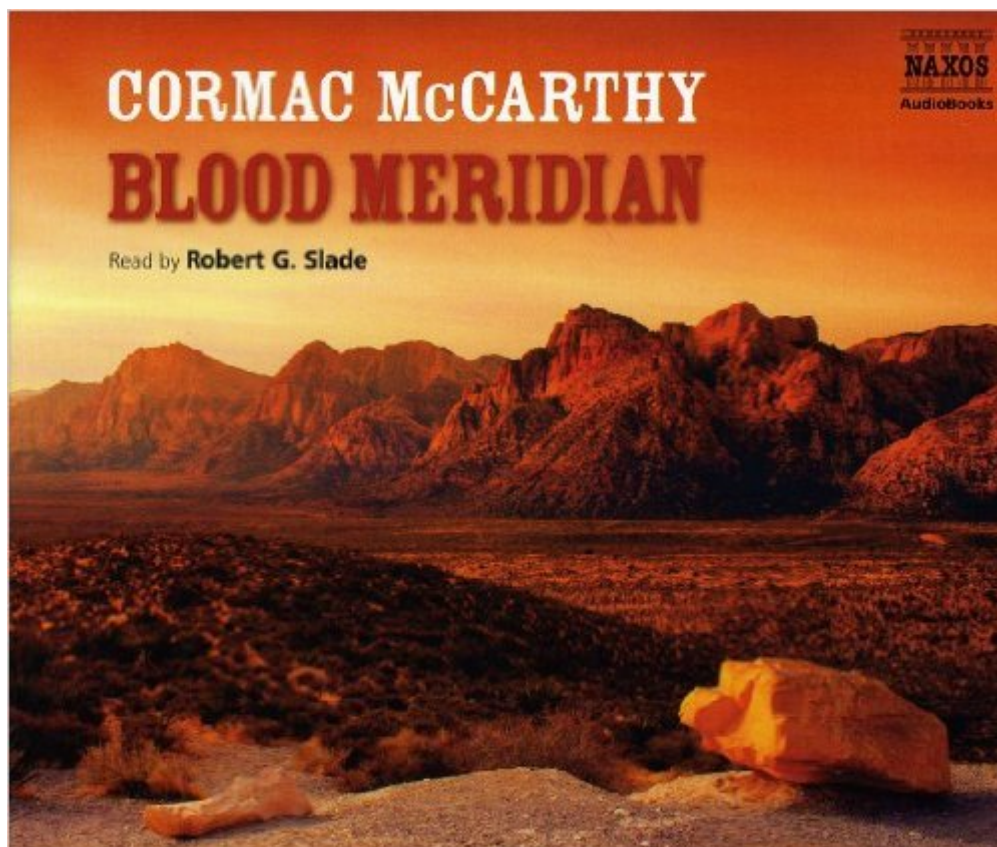


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Blood Meridian (Contemporary Classics)



Synopsis

Blood Meridian is widely recognised as the masterpiece of Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Cormac McCarthy. It is an historical epic, a compelling reinterpretation of the Western, and one of the great American novels of the twentieth century. It tells the story of a teenage runaway known only as the kid, who falls in with a group of notorious outlaws: the Glanton Gang. Violent, direct and extraordinarily powerful, the novel traces the destiny of the kid as he falls further and further from grace, and into the clutches of the mysterious and demonic Judge Holden.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (1,209 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

This was one of those things where I'd heard about the book, in bits and pieces, for years: namechecked by William Gibson in *Virtual Light* and by Garth Ennis in *Preacher*, yapped about by online friends, and requested every so often by customers at the bookstore where I once worked. You know how this kind of thing goes: after a while, all these name-droppings have a cumulative impact, flipping a little switch in your brain one day and sending you off in search of the item in question. So that's how I came to *Blood Meridian* - knowing the book by its notorious reputation alone and little else. Having finally finished it, I can say that its notoriety is richly deserved, but that's hardly the whole story. The premise could be described for the ADD among you as Huckleberry Finn meets *Natural Born Killers*, which hardly sounds flattering, I'm sure, but bear with me. The story opens on the peregrinations of the Kid, a vicious, knife-fighting fourteen-year-old runaway from Tennessee who in 1848 drifts down the Mississippi first to New Orleans and thence to Texas, where

he falls in with a rogue Army unit making a piratical raid into Mexico. After Apaches wipe out the unit in the Sonora desert, the Kid lands in a Mexican jail, where he meets and is recruited by a group of bounty hunters retained by the government to collect Indian scalps as retaliation for a string of Apache massacres in remote border villages. Here is where the story really begins.

I've read all of Cormac McCarthy's earlier books set in Tennessee, such as "The Orchard Keeper" and "The Outer Dark" and I've read his "Border Trilogy" which contained the wonderful, "All the Pretty Horses." Nothing, however, that this wonderful author has written can prepare the reader for the sheer brutality and the sheer lyricism of "Blood Meridian." The Old West portrayed in "Blood Meridian" is not the Old West of Zane Grey or even of Larry McMurtry. Images of the most horrific abound in "Blood Meridian," (charred human bones, blood-soaked scalps, a tree hung with the bodies of dead infants), all rendered in McCarthy's gorgeously lyrical writing. As far as I'm concerned, "Blood Meridian" is McCarthy's best book, by far. It doesn't have the "feel good" qualities sometimes found in "All the Pretty Horses" but I didn't expect it to. "Blood Meridian" is the book in which McCarthy makes crystal clear the one theme that runs through all of his writing: the undeniable presence of evil in the world. The fact that he writes about this evil in language so lyrical and so elaborately beautiful only intensifies the horror of it all. We feel as though we have left the real world behind and entered into some surreal place from which no escape is possible. "Blood Meridian," which takes place in 1847, is loosely based on actual events and is the story of a fourteen boy, known only as "the Kid." Drifting through the American Southwest, the Kid joins a disparate and bloodthirsty band of Indian-hunters-for-hire led by a mysterious and learned man called, Judge Holden. It is after the Kid joins Judge Holden and his band that McCarthy really hits his stride. Juxtaposed next to descriptions of the most horrific and grotesque are images of the most sublime beauty.

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