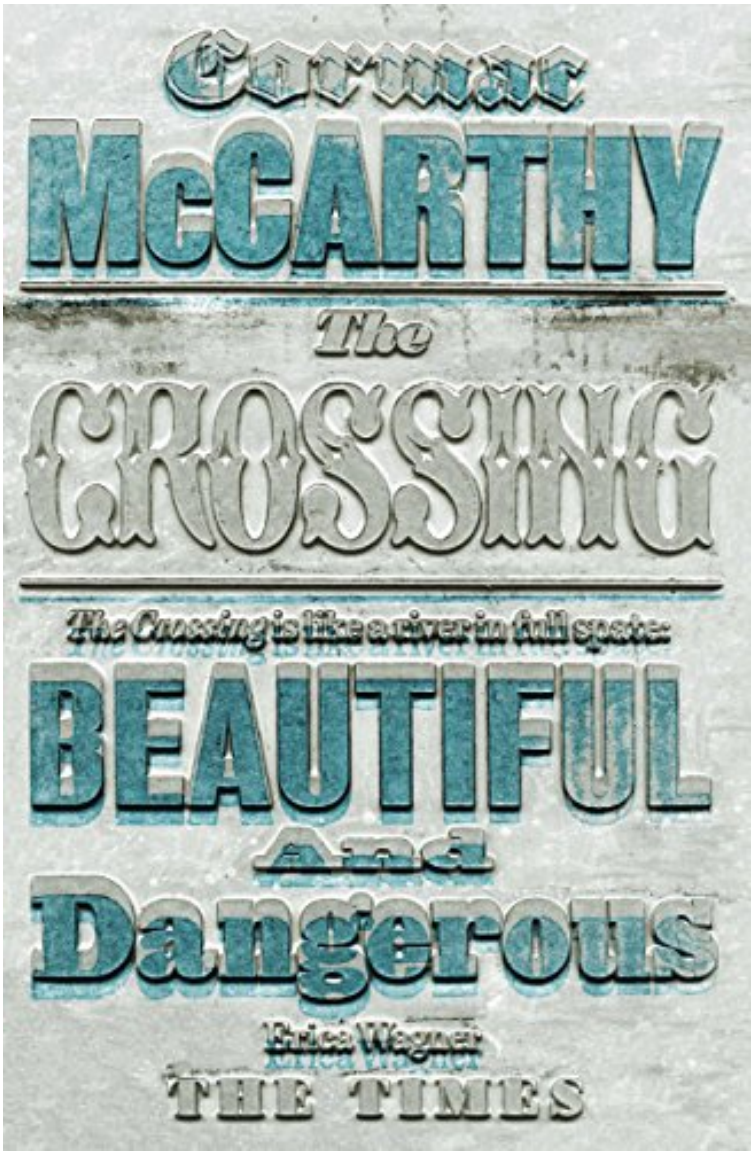
The Crossing



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Dtails sur le produit Rang parmi les ventes : #293597 dans eBooksPubli le: 2010-12-10Sorti le: 2010-12-10Format: Ebook Kindle

Par Cormac McCarthy : The Crossing before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Crossing:

Description : Description du produitIn The Crossing, Cormac McCarthy fulfills the promise of All the Pretty Horses and at the same time give us a work that is darker and more visionary, a novel with the unstoppable momentum of a classic western and the elegaic power of a lost American myth.In the late 1930s, sixteen-year-old Billy Parham captures a she-wolf that has been marauding his family's ranch. But instead of killing it, he decides to take it back to the mountains of Mexico. With that crossing, he begins an arduous and often dreamlike journey into a country where men meet ghosts and violence strikes as suddenly as heat-lightning--a world where there is no order "save that which death has put there."An essential novel by any measure, The Crossing is luminous and appalling, a book that touches, stops, and starts the heart and mind at once.

Prsentation de l'diteurThe Crossing forms second part of Cormac McCarthy's critically acclaimed Border Trilogy, that began with All the Pretty Horses and concludes with The Cities of the Plain. Set on the south-western ranches in the years before the Second World War, Cormac McCarthy's The Crossing follows the fortunes of sixteen-year-old Billy Parham and his younger brother Boyd. Fascinated by an elusive wolf that has been marauding his family's property, Billy captures the animal - but rather than kill it, sets out impulsively for the mountains of Mexico to return it to where it came from. When Billy comes back to his own home he finds himself and his world irrevocably changed. His loss of innocence has come at a price, and once again the border beckons with its desolate beauty and cruel promise..comThe opening section of The Crossing, book two of the Border Trilogy, features perhaps the most perfectly realized storytelling of Cormac McCarthy's celebrated career. Like All the Pretty Horses, this volume opens with a teenager's decision to slip away from his family's ranch into Mexico. In this case, the boy is Billy Parham, and the catalyst for his trip is a wolf he and his father have trapped, but that Billy finds himself unwilling to shoot. His plan is to set the animal loose down south instead. This is a McCarthy novel, not Old Yeller, and so Billy's trek inevitably becomes more ominous than sweet. It boasts some chilling meditations on the simple ferocity McCarthy sees as necessary for all creatures who aim to continue living. But Billy is McCarthy's most loving--and therefore damageable--character, and his story has its own haunted melancholy. Billy eventually returns to his ranch. Then, finding himself and his world changed, he returns to Mexico with his younger brother, and the book begins meandering. Though full of hypnotically barren landscapes and McCarthy's trademark western-gothic imagery (like the soldier who sucks eyes from sockets), these latter stages become tedious at times, thanks partly to the female characters, who exist solely as ghosts to haunt the men. But that opening is glorious, and the whole book finally transcends its shortcomings to achieve a grim and poignant grandeur. --Glen HirshbergExtraitIWhen they came south out of Grant County Boyd was not much more than a baby and the newly formed county they'd named Hidalgo was itself little older than the child. In the country they'd quit lay the bones of a sister and the bones of his maternal grandmother. The new country was rich and wild. You could ride clear to Mexico and not strike a crossfence. He carried Boyd before him in the bow of the saddle and named to him features of the landscape and birds and animals in both spanish and english. In the new house they slept in the room off the kitchen and he would lie awake at night and listen to his brother's breathing in the dark and he would whisper half aloud to him as he slept his plans for them and the life they would have.On a winter's night in that first year he woke to hear wolves in the low hills to the west of the house and he knew that they would be coming out onto the plain in the new snow to run the antelope in the moonlight. He pulled his breeches off the footboard of the bed and got his shirt and his blanketlined duckingcoat and got his boots from under the bed and went out to the kitchen and dressed in the dark by the faint warmth of the stove and held the boots to the windowlight to pair them left and right and pulled them on and rose and went to the kitchen door and stepped out and closed the door behind him.When he passed the barn the horses whimpered softly to him in the cold. The snow creaked under his boots and his breath smoked in the bluish light. An hour later he was crouched in the snow in the dry creekbed where he knew the wolves had been using by their tracks in the sand of the washes, by their tracks in the snow.They were already out on the plain and when he crossed the gravel fan where the creek ran south into the valley he could see where they'd crossed before him. He went forward on knees and elbows with his hands pulled back into his sleeves to keep them out of the snow and when he reached the last of the small dark juniper trees where the broad valley ran under the Animas Peaks he crouched quietly to steady his breath and then raised himself slowly and looked out.They were running on the plain harrying the antelope and the antelope moved like phantoms in the snow and circled and wheeled and the dry powder blew about them in the cold moonlight and their breath smoked palely in the cold as if they burned with some inner fire and the wolves twisted and turned and leapt in a silence such that they seemed of another world entire. They moved down the valley and turned and moved far out on the plain until they were the smallest of figures in that dim whiteness and then they disappeared.He was very cold. He waited. It was very still. He could see by his breath how the wind lay and he watched his breath appear and vanish and appear and vanish constantly before him in the cold and he waited a long time. Then he saw them coming. Loping and twisting. Dancing. Tunneling their noses in the snow. Loping and running and rising by twos in a standing dance and running on again.There were seven of them and they passed within twenty feet of where he lay. He could see their almond eyes in the moonlight. He could hear their breath. He could feel the presence of their knowing that was electric in the air. They bunched and nuzzled and licked one another. Then they stopped. They stood with their ears cocked. Some with one forefoot raised to their chest. They

were looking at him. He did not breathe. They did not breathe. They stood. Then they turned and quietly trotted on. When he got back to the house Boyd was awake but he didnt tell him where he'd been nor what he'd seen. He never told anybody.The winter that Boyd turned fourteen the trees inhabiting the dry river bed were bare from early on and the sky was gray day after day and the trees were pale against it. A cold wind had come down from the north with the earth running under bare poles toward a reckoning whose ledgers would be drawn up and dated only long after all due claims had passed, such is this history. Among the pale cottonwoods with their limbs like bones and their trunks sloughing off the pale or green or darker bark clustered in the outer bend of the river bed below the house stood trees so massive that in the stand across the river was a sawed stump upon which in winters past herders had pitched a four by six foot canvas supply tent for the wooden floor it gave. Riding out for wood he watched his shadow and the shadow of the horse and travois cross those palings tree by tree. Boyd rode in the travois holding the axe as if he'd keep guard over the wood they'd gathered and he watched to the west with squinted eyes where the sun simmered in a dry red lake under the barren mountains and the antelope stepped and nodded among the cattle in silhouette upon the foreland plain.They crossed through the dried leaves in the river bed and rode till they came to a tank or pothole in the river and he dismounted and watered the horse while Boyd walked the shore looking for muskrat sign. The indian Boyd passed crouching on his heels did not even raise his eyes so that when he sensed him there and turned the indian was looking at his belt and did not lift his eyes even then until he'd stopped altogether. He could have reached and touched him. The indian squatting under a thin stand of carrizo cane and not even hidden and yet Boyd had not seen him. He was holding across his knees an old singleshot 32 rimfire rifle and he had been waiting in the dusk for something to come to water for him to kill. He looked into the eyes of the boy. The boy into his. Eyes so dark they seemed all pupil. Eyes in which the sun was setting. In which the child stood beside the sun.He had not known that you could see yourself in others' eyes nor see therein such things as suns. He stood twinned in those dark wells with hair so pale, so thin and strange, the selfsame child. As if it were some cognate child to him that had been lost who now stood windowed away in another world where the red sun sank eternally. As if it were a maze where these orphans of his heart had miswandered in their journey in life and so arrived at last beyond the wall of that antique gaze from whence there could be no way back forever.From where he stood he could not see his brother or the horse. He could see the slow rings moving out over the water where the horse stood drinking beyond the stand of cane and he could see the slight flex of the muscle beneath the skin of the indian's lean and hairless jaw.The indian turned and looked at the tank. The only sound was the dripping of water from the horse's raised muzzle. He looked at the boy.You little son of a bitch, he said.I aint done nothin.Who's that with you?My brother.How old's he?Sixteen.The indian stood up. He stood immediately and without effort and looked across the tank where Billy stood holding the horse and then he looked at Boyd again. He wore an old tattered blanketcoat and an old greasy Stetson with the crown belled out and his boots were mended with wire.What are you all doin out here?Gettin wood.You got anything to eat?No.Where you live at?The boy hesitated.I asked you where you lived at.He gestured downriver.How far?I dont know.You little son of a bitch.He put the rifle over his shoulder and walked out down the shore of the tank and stood looking across at the horse and at Billy.Howdy, said Billy.The indian spat. Spooked everthing in the country, aint you? he said.We didnt know there was anybody here.You aint got nothin to eat?No sir.Where you live at?About two miles down the river.You got anything to eat at your house?Yessir.I come down there you goin to bring me somethin out?You can come to the house. Mama'll feed you.I dont want to come to the house. I want you to bring me somethin out.All right.You goin to bring me somethin out?Yes.All right then.The boy stood holding the horse. The horse hadnt taken its eyes from the indian. Boyd, he said. Come on.You got dogs down there?Just one.You goin to put him up?All right. I'll put him up.You put him up inside somewheres where he wont be barkin.All right.I aint comin down there to get shot.I'll put him up.All right then.Boyd. Come on. Let's go.Boyd stood on the far side of the tank looking at him.Come on. It'll be dark here in just a little bit.Go on and do like your brother says, said the indian.We wasnt botherin you.Come on, Boyd. Let's go.He crossed the gravel bar and climbed into the travois.Get up here, said Billy.He climbed out of the pile of limbs they'd gathered and looked back at the indian and then reached and took the hand that Billy held down and swung up behind him onto the horse.How will we find you? said Billy.The indian was standing with the rifle across his shoulders, his hands hanging over it. You come out you walk towards the moon, he said.What if it aint up yet?The indian spat. You think I'd tell you to walk towards a moon that wasnt there? Go on now.The boy booted the horse forward and they rode out through the trees. The travois poles dragging up small windrows of dead leaves with a dry whisper. The sun low in

the west. The indian watched them go. The younger boy rode with one arm around his brother's waist, his face red in the sun, his near-white hair pink in the sun. His brother must have told him not to look back because he didnt look back. By the time they'd crossed through the dry bed of the river and ridden up onto the plain the sun was already behind the peaks of the Peloncillo Mountains to the west and the western sky was a deep red under the reefs of cloud. They set out south along the dry river breaks and when Billy looked back the indian was coming along a half mile behind them in the dusk carrying the rifle loosely in one hand.How come you're lookin back? said Boyd.I just am.Are we goin to carry him some supper?Yes. We can do that I reckon.Everthing you can do it dont mean it's a good idea, said Boyd.I know it.HE WATCHED the night sky through the front room window. The earliest stars coined out of the dark coping to the south hanging in the dead wickerwork of the trees along the river. The light of the unrisen moon lying in a sulphur haze over the valley to the east. He watched while the light ran out along the edges of the desert prairie and the dome of the moon rose out of the ground white and fat and membranous. Then he climbed down from the chair where he'd been kneeling and went to get his brother.Billy had steak and biscuits and a tin cup of beans wrapped in a cloth and hidden behind the crocks on the pantry shelf by the kitchen door. He sent Boyd first and stood listening and then followed him out. The dog whined and scratched at the smokehouse door when they passed it and he told the dog to hush and it did. They went on at a low crouch along the fence and then made their way down to the trees. When they reached the river the moon was well up and the indian was standing there with the rifle yokewise across his neck again. They could see his breath in the cold. He turned and they followed him out across the gravel wash and took the cattletrail on the far side downriver along the edge of the pasture. There was woodsmoke in the air. A quarter mile below the house they reached his campfire among the cottonwoods and he stood the rifle against the bole of one of the trees and turned and looked at them.Bring it here, he said.Billy crossed to the fire and took the bundle from the crook of his arm and handed it up. The indian took it and squatted before the fire with that same marionette's effortlessness and set the cloth on the ground before him and opened it and lifted out the beans and set the cup by the coals to warm and then took up one of the biscuits and steak and bit into it.You'll black that cup, Billy said. I got to take it back to the house.The indian chewed, his dark eyes half closed in the firelight. Aint you got no coffee at your house, he said.It aint ground.You cant grind some?Not without somebody hearin it I caint.The indian put the second half of the biscuit in his mouth and leaned slightly forward and produced a beltknife from somewhere about his person and reached and stirred the beans in the cup with it and then looked up at Billy and ran the blade along his tongue one side and then the other in a slow stropping motion and jammed the knife in the end of the log against which the fire was laid.How long you live here, he said.Ten years.Ten years. Your family own this place?No.He reached and picked up the second biscuit and severed it with his square white teeth and sat chewing.Where are you from? said Billy.From all over.Where you headed?The indian leaned and took the knife from the log and stirred the beans again and licked the blade again and then slipped the knife through the handle and lifted the blackened cup from the fire and set it on the ground in front of him and began to eat the beans with the knife.