

APPENDICES

SYNOPSIS

Synopsis of Willa Cather's O Pioneers!

The novel starts on one winter day in Hanover, Nebraska, in the period between 1883 and 1890. Alexandra Bergson, the protagonist in the novel, belongs to one of many families that move from the previous area of living to a new land called the Divide. Not long after they move to the new land, Alexandra's father is dying and he tells his two elder sons that he gives his trust to Alexandra in order to cultivate and preserve their farmland and all the possessions he has gained since his immigration from Sweden. Taking the responsibility to cultivate the farmland, Alexandra proves her ability and strength in overcoming all the problems. Undeniably, she experiences three years of dealing with the wild lands, drought and depression strike the area; yet, she decides to stay and deal with the circumstances. Though most of the other families prefer to sell their farms and move away, she believes in the success behind the untamed land. Furthermore, she convinces her brothers to buy more tracks of land as well as to develop the innovative farming techniques.

Her strong will and her persistence in conquering the new land are paid with a remarkable development of her farm. Indeed, her farm becomes the most prosperous on the Divide. Unfortunately, her personal life is shaken with some trouble. Her relationship with her two elder brothers, Oscar and Lou, is ruined when

they find out Alexandra's intimacy with Carl Linstrum, Alexandra's friend since she moves to the Divide. The reason is simply that they are afraid this relationship might threaten their own children's prospects of inheriting Alexandra's farm. Her condition gets worse when her younger brother, Emil, is murdered; this incident makes her sad deeply and bitter. Nevertheless, once again she proves her strength and ability to deal with hard circumstances and recovers from her sorrow. She continues her life and manages to overcome the problems and her deep sadness. Sometimes later after passing all the difficult situations, she marries Carl and both of them start a new life. They stay at Alexandra's prosperous farm and together they cultivate the land.

Synopsis of Cormac McCarthy's All the Pretty Horses

After his grandfather's death sometime in 1949, as a person who loves and idealizes the cowboy's way of life, John Grady Cole decides to sell his grandfather's ranch in Texas and moves away. Although he is still sixteen years old, John Grady encourages himself to run away from his hometown. Together with his friend, Rawlins, they pass the Mexican border on horseback. They continue their travel to the south, and eventually, at the new land they find work as cowboys on a ranch owned by Don Hector. John Grady quickly proves himself a remarkable cowboy with an intuitive understanding of horses. Impressed, Don Hector puts him in charge of breeding the ranch's horses. However, when Don Hector knows that John Grady is falling in love with Alejandra, Hector's daughter, he sends him and Rawlins to prison in the town of Saltillo. In prison the Americans are marked as victims, and forced to

fight constantly to survive. Fortunately, John Grady and Rawlins survive the attacks; however, they are badly wounded and end up in hospital's infirmary.

Only partially recovered, they are suddenly released by the prison commander, who has been bribed by Alejandra's aunt. While Rawlins returns to Texas, John Grady is intent on reuniting with Alejandra. He goes back to the ranch and meets Alejandra. They spend a short day together but in the end she decides that she cannot abandon her family for him. John Grady, shattered, refuses to leave Mexico without his horses. He goes back to Encantada and reclaims the horses. Though he is wounded severely, he manages to rescue himself and crosses back into Texas. Back to Texas, he finds that he no longer has a home: his father is dead, the ranch is sold, and his friend Rawlins seems like a stranger. Thus, he decides to move to the west and starts all over a new journey.

BIOGRAPHIES

Biography of Willa Cather

The eldest child of Charles Cather and Mary Virginia Boak Cather, Willa Cather was born on December 7, 1873 in Back Creek Valley, Virginia. The family traced its ancestors to Ireland, their homeland before they settled in Pennsylvania in the 1750's. In 1883 the Cather family moved to join Willa's grandparents and her uncle in Webster County, Nebraska. A year later they moved to Red Cloud, a nearby railroad town. Willa Cather graduated from Red Cloud High

School in 1890 and she soon moved to the state capitol in Lincoln in order to study for the entrance to the University of Nebraska. She was accepted and she spent time editing the school magazine as well as publishing articles and play reviews in the local papers. In 1892 she published her short story "Peter" in a Boston magazine. The story later became part of her novel My Antonia. After graduating in 1895, she returned to Red Cloud and afterwards she was offered a position editing Home Monthly in Pittsburgh.

In 1906 she moved to New York to join McClure's Magazine, initially as a member of the staff and ultimately as its managing editor. In 1912, she left the magazine to have time for her own writing. O Pioneers! was published in 1913 and she wrote My Antonia in 1917. By 1923 she had won the Pulitzer Prize for her One of Ours, and in this year her modernist book A Lost Lady was published. Later on, she managed to write some of her greatest novels, such as The Professor's House (1925), My Mortal Enemy (1926), and Death Comes for the Archbishop (1927). She maintained an active writing career, publishing novels and short stories for many years until her death on April 24, 1947. She was buried in New Hampshire.

(Adapted from: GradeSaver)

Biography of Cormac McCarthy

He was born in Rhode Island on July 20, 1933. He is the eldest son born to Charles Joseph McCarthy and Gladys Christina McGrail. In 1937, his family moved to Knoxville and in 1967, they moved from Knoxville to Washington, D.C.

Cormac McCarthy went to the University of Tennessee in 1951-1952. Before his first novel, The Orchard Keeper, was published, McCarthy had received a traveling fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 1965, he left America on the liner *Sylvania* and by the year 1976, McCarthy moved to El Paso, Texas, where he still lives now.

He started writing his second novel, an apocalyptic western story set in Texas and Mexico during the 1940s. It is based heavily on actual historical events. Blood Meridian was published in 1985, but it received little review attention at the time. Now, however, it is considered a turning point in his career. Some critics prefer his recent western writing, of which Blood Meridian is the first example. But Blood Meridian, followed closely by Suttree, is generally regarded as McCarthy's finest work to date. McCarthy did extensive research for the novel, Suttree, which is based quite heavily on actual events. The author visited all the locales of the book and even learned Spanish to further his research. All the Pretty Horses, the first volume of The Border Trilogy, was published by Knopf in 1992. Unlike McCarthy's earlier books, this one became a publishing sensation, garnering many excellent reviews. It became a New York Times bestseller, and was sold 190,000 copies in hardcover within the first six months of publication. It finally gave McCarthy the wide readership that had eluded him for many years. He kept on writing up until now.

(Adapted from: GradeSaver)