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B Band

A New Passage on the Same Road

I don't want to go there.

No one is there.

I don't want to go.

I don't want to leave you.

Okay.

Okay. You can hold my hand.

The duo walked up the stairs as the delayed creaks strengthened the boy's grip on the man.

The only people here are us okay?

Okay.

The scent of their cooked food simmered on the second floor while they brought up the last of their green beans and sat in the master bedroom of the house. A smaller chandelier hung over them as the man reached into the pocket of his damp parka and unfolded the water-spotted paper plates he dusted off from the train.

Do you think those people were going to eat the baby?

I don't know.

Do you think they wanted to kill it to save it from living?

Maybe, but they could have done a better job.

Do you think she would have done the same to me if she gave birth to me later than she did?

No. She wouldn't have done that to you. She would have taken us all at the same time.

Do you think we should have left with her?

The man coughed. A small drip of blood tainting the green of his plate filled with cold green beans.

If we did, that would mean that I would be alive and you would be dead for a moment.

And you said you would never leave me.

I did say that.

My stomach hurts.

The man sat the boy up against the head of the bed and wrapped him in a new blanket. He removed his shoes and the wrap around them before setting them on the ground with a creak as loud as the weight of the shoes.

Explanation

The dialog that introduces the passage is a variation of the exchange held on page 203 before the man and the boy went to the 2nd floor of the new house the boy spotted. The repetition of "I don't want to" was used to show how the dialog, specifically on page 203, begins with the same words from one character's perspective until the other character takes them on to

use them against them. This can be seen through the boy saying “I don’t want to, I’m not hungry” and the man ending the discussion with “I just know” even though the beginning of his sentences started with “we.”

The detail of the “water spotted paper plates” was written to show how McCarthy’s descriptions focus on objects instead of living people. The most detailed people are the dead, with their absence of vitality replaced with objectification.

The conversation between the man and the boy about the burned baby is a juxtaposition between the duo’s discussion of immediate events and an absence of past reflection. The conversation starts off like the one about the cannibals, with the boy trying to think of the reasoning behind their actions as well as the action of the cannibals. The deviation from the format arises when the boy asks if his mother would have burned him if she had the ability to. The man’s response is inspired by his conversation with the mother before she died, in which she wanted all of them to die with her. The boy’s question of their choice to stay alive is answered by the man referencing his agreement to stay with the boy forever. Consistently, the degree of larger questions is lessened by the man putting it in the context of his relationship with the boy, as seen on page 197 when a potential trap does not outweigh the man and boy’s need for food.

The ending of the passage illustrates the normalcy the man and boy still experience despite the world’s disarray, with the man using sleep as a remedy for the boy’s stomach ache.