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Ms. Giknis

English 4

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**The Road: Close Reading Analysis**

Here is the passage I will be closely reading:

“In the floor of this room was a door or hatch and it was locked with a large padlock made of stacked steel plates. He stood looking at it.

Papa, the boy said. We should go. Papa.

There's a reason this is locked.

The boy pulled at his hand. He was almost in tears. Papa? he said.

We've got to eat.

I'm not hungry, Papa. I'm not.

We need to find a prybar or something.” (Page 108)

Most of this passage is dialogue between the boy and the man, but before that, there is a brief description of the hatch in the room they are in. This small bit of description sets up mystery, posing the question to our characters of what is inside the hatch? It's heavily sealed, reinforced with a lock and several steel plates, clueing the characters into its significance. It is a narrative device used to prod the characters into further exploring the setting they currently find themselves in, and the character's reasoning is backed up by their own internal logic as well.

The man realizes the potential significance of the hatch, stating “There's a reason this is locked.” The man's curiosity is piqued, and despite the risk of danger, he wants to discover

what's on the other side of the hatch. This is not only because they are scrounging around for food, but because the man himself has a desire to explore the landscape of this desolate world, specifically with houses. This was also seen while they were exploring his childhood home earlier in the story, the man was enamored with his surroundings and would not leave despite the warnings from the boy or any potential danger. "We should go, Papa, he said. Yes, the man said. But he didnt" (26.) They're at the house to find food, but something about the location interests the man beyond that pretense, he's very invested in "the hunt" for resources while exploring the house.

Contrasting the man, the boy is terrified, and constantly tries to convince the man that they should leave. The boy is consistently terrified of his surroundings, influenced by the hostility of others and normalized experiences of danger, and the house is what has currently scared him the most. He cries and begs for the man for them to leave, more than he has begged for anything before. He even goes so far as to try and convince the man that he isn't hungry, to get rid of their reason for being there, which is to find food, despite earlier examples of the boy commenting on how hungry he usually is. It's clear the boy is lying, because scarcity of food is a constant problem for the boy and the man, along with the timing of when he says it, it's obvious the boy is lying just to leave the house faster. It's unclear exactly what it is about the house that scares the boy so much, he's been in scary situations before but this is the first time he's been so vocal about it. Later, as they progress further into the house, they discover the horrors hiding within it, and promptly escape. The boy was right to advise them to leave, despite them having found no resources, but with no proof of danger, only from his own intuition. Perhaps, the boy has acquired his own personal sense of intuition through his experiences trekking along the road,

his own personal sixth sense to protect him from potential dangers. It would explain how he, at the perfect time, advised the man to leave.

**Work(s) Cited:**

McCarthy, Cormac. *The Road*. 2006.