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### A Childs Place in The Road

In the novel "*The Road*" by Cormac McCarthy, the man and the boy encounter many strange people on their journey. Throughout the whole book, there are few encounters with people where they actually stop and can talk to them. The most bizarre, however, has to be the old man called Ely. This interaction with Ely was a miracle; we can see how other people in the novel perceive the boy and what makes him unique.

The man and the boy find Ely one passage while getting ready to set up another camp. They had been walking for a while now and were preparing to stop at the top of a hill. As they are walking towards the campground, the boy spots a figure in the distance, and while his dad is very cautious of other people, they can get closer. When first encountering each other, the old man thought he was getting robbed, but to his surprise, the man and the boy were peaceful. Even though the man was suspicious of the man, the boy convinced him to let Ely spend the night with them. During a conversation with the man and Ely, Ely says: "When I saw that boy, I thought I had died." The man replied, "You thought he was an angel?" To that, the old man says, "I didnt know what he was. I never thought of seeing a child again. I didnt know that would happen." As we can see from Ely, children are scarce on the road. In one other case, we saw a child; even the boy was so amazed that he wanted to drop all caution of danger and see the other

child. The other point where we've seen evidence of children is at the camp where the man and the boy scared the campers away; their left was the body of an infant they were cooking. This could explain why children are rare. Their chance of survival must be so slim already. People find it more useful if they just use them as nutrients to keep them alive.

Later, talking to Ely, the man asked him about the boy. "What if I said that he's a god?" The old man shook his head and responded. "I'm past all that now. Have been for years. Where men can live, gods fare no better. You'll see. It's better to be alone. So I hope that's not true what you said because to be on the road with the last god would be a terrible thing, so I hope it's not true." This conversation leaves you with a dark reality of the road. How can someone justify the existence of a god if the world has come to this outcome? Would they not have stepped in to prevent this apocalypse if there were gods? The interaction with Ely lasted only a few pages. Still, the ideas introduced carry their effect throughout the rest of the novel; hope and belief in something better become less common as our protagonists go on their journey. Eventually, leaving us with disbelief in any savior.