
All The Pretty Horses: The Theme Of Friendship

All the Pretty Horses by Cormac McCarthy gives an interesting take on the friendship that can exist between two teenagers in the late 1940s. John Grady Cole and Lacey Rawlins are inherently each other's foil; where John Grady is far more mature and lives by a strict type of code that encompasses loyalty and morality, Rawlins is less stoic and the louder one of the two. There are "roles" to be taken in any friend group, the most commonly noted being the "Mom" friend, and the purpose of them is to retain balance within the group. It is this balance between both friends that is showcased throughout the story as well as throughout my life.

It is John Grady's decision to run away from home after the decision to sell his grandfather's ranch is made that takes both him and Rawlins to Mexico: "If I don't go will you go anyways? John Grady sat up and put his hat on. I'm already gone, he said" (pg. 22). Rawlins is aware that he does not have much keeping him in Texas, but also not much of a reason to leave. We specifically see this when he discusses the prospect of leaving with John Grady: "I could understand if you was from Alabama you'd have ever reason in the world to run off to Texas. But if you're already in Texas. I don't know... What the hell reason you got for stay in? You think somebody's goin to die and leave you somethin? Shit no" (pg. 21-22). It is Rawlins loyalty to John that in the end pushes him to run off with him. One of the first times we really see a contrast between the two boys is when Jimmy Blevins showcases his fear of lightning. As Jimmy Belvins' rides off, Rawlins decides that Belvin's decision exempts them from any responsibility towards what happens to him. John Grady, however, feels a stronger sense of loyalty toward the boy and goes after him, and, later, tries to talk sense into him while Rawlins stands by what he had said. Although Rawlins has a strong sense of loyalty towards John Grady, stretched to the point of almost snapping after getting arrested, this moment shows that Rawlins is not subscribed to the same moral code as John Grady. Throughout the novel, we see John Grady and Rawlins as a dynamic duo, but after getting sent to jail, Rawlins has a hard time even looking John Grady in the eyes: "He ate and he watched Rawlins who squatted a little ways off but Rawlins would not meet his eyes" (pg. 128). Yet, despite this and despite going their separate ways after being set free, John Grady still makes the point to steal back not only his horse but Rawlins' and Blevins' horses as well. His loyalty to both his friend and his horse runs deep.

Now unlike John Grady and Rawlins, my friends and I have never made the (arguably) rash decision of going to Mexico in order to find a job as cowboys because of our romanticization of the West. Nor have I ever really had what John and Rawlins have either; I've never had one best friend, but rather a group of friends that I'm close with in different ways. Not to mention that I am no longer friends with anyone I was friends with during elementary school while John Grady "...[knew Rawlins] all [his] life. [They] were raised together" (pg. 140). Despite not having that one specific person, my friend group balances out my personality much how John Grady and Rawlins balance each other out. One of my friends' more introvert personality is a contrast to my outgoing one, and while she makes me slow down and see the bigger picture I help her get out of her comfort zone. Another one of my friends' is hilarious and while she helps me not take things so seriously, I help her make sure to take moments to be focused. Rawlins is far more practical than John Grady and often tells things as they are and as they might become (often being right due to his realist nature). They are the epitome of a dynamic duo up until they

are imprisoned, but even after that they have much love and care for each other, same as I do for many of the people I am no longer friends with. I believe that that is one of the most relatable aspects of their relationship, that despite all their hardships, and eventually drifting apart, they still want nothing but the best for each other.

Overall, it is John Grady's and Rawlins' loyalty to one another that sets their friendship apart. Not only do they balance each other out, but they bring out aspects of one another that might otherwise go unnoticed if not for the contrast they provide each other with.