

Part Nine

In Part Nine of "Blood Meridian," the narrative unfolds as Glanton and his company cross the desolate playa, marked by its smooth terrain and the barren mountains in the east. As they move deeper into this stark landscape, the men, including Toadvine and the Kid, observe the silence of the playa, interrupted only by the haunting sounds that echo around them. Soon, the group spots a distant line of warriors, appearing like phantoms against the shimmering heat of the horizon, their movements resembling an eerie and ghostly procession.

As the warriors approach, Glanton signals a shift in strategy, preparing to engage as arrows launch into the blue sky. The Kid, lying low, fires his weapon methodically as the figures blur in the distance, vanishing into the environment around them. After the tense encounter, the men regroup under creosote bushes, reloading their firearms and tending to their horses, some of which bear the marks of previous conflicts.

They come across a dead man in a sandy wash, his body adorned with symbols and displays of his past battles. The Judge examines the man's belongings, stripping them of anything useful while contemplating the deeper meanings hidden within the items. He claims a calculus, an eyeshield made from a raven's wing, and other trinkets before discarding the body to its fate.

The narrative continues as Glanton's company traverses various landscapes, including a surreal lake of gypsum where they remain unmarred by their passage. As dust devils churn in the distance, tales of former pilgrims become infused with the fear of the harsh elements that can upend even the liveliest of individuals. That night, amidst the bleakness of their surroundings, the men share a sparse meal, haunted by their circumstances.

The following day, they find a diligence abandoned in the terrain, leading to an exploration where they battle futility against time and decay. After pillaging what they can from this neglected site, they ride into the mountains, navigating through ghostly remnants of civilization long passed. In a brief encounter with fellow travelers, the relationships formed are tenuous, underscoring the theme of isolation and survival prevalent throughout their journey. The chapter closes with evocative images of their surroundings enveloped in darkness as they continue on their relentless path.