

Part Twenty

In this chapter of "Blood Meridian," Toadvine and the Kid engage in a desperate and hazardous flight from the Yumas along a river, enduring physical pain and dire circumstances. The Kid has been injured, an arrow lodged in his leg, yet this does not deter them from continuing their escape. They traverse desolate landscapes of sand dunes and scant vegetation, all while dealing with their dwindling water supply and the constant threat from their pursuers.

As they navigate this treacherous terrain, their interactions reveal a sense of frustration and uncertainty about their next steps. Toadvine queries the Kid about his ability to walk and their limited water. With little choice but to move forward, they eventually encounter the Yumas, who begin to launch arrows at them. This prompts them to take up defensive positions, using whatever they can to protect themselves. The Kid displays bravery and skill as he fires back, taking down one of the attackers, which temporarily disrupts the onslaught.

They reach a well called Alamo Mucho, where they find the expriest Tobin, alone and unarmed. They quench their thirst in the scant remaining water, while watching the unfolding chaos of their situation as the Yumas regroup. The expriest engages the Kid in conversation about resources and ammunition, while the ongoing threat from the Yumas looms heavy in the background.

As night falls, they find themselves surrounded by the silhouettes of their enemies, enduring a tense vigil that stretches into the darkness. The chapter culminates in the reappearance of the Judge and an imbecile, both resembling figures of exile and power amid the desolation. The Judge's exchange with Toadvine regarding trade—particularly for Toadvine's hat—illustrates a stark interplay of survival and materialism, underscoring the brutality and moral ambiguity of their circumstances.

The tension is palpable as they navigate both the physical dangers of the desert and the psychological threats posed by each other, culminating in a landscape rife with conflict and desperation. Ultimately, the chapter paints a grim picture of survival among the damned, set against the unforgiving backdrop of the American West.