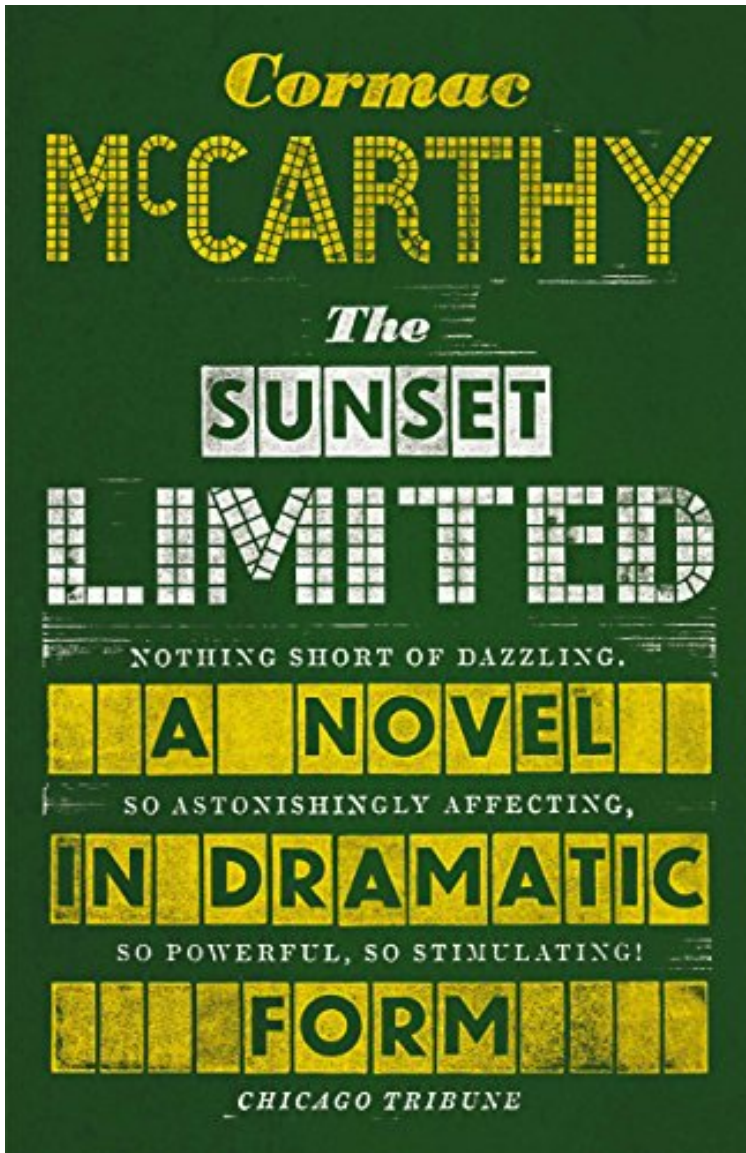


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The Sunset Limited: A Novel in Dramatic Form (English Edition)



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(Free pdf) The Sunset Limited: A Novel in Dramatic Form (English Edition)

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurFull of rich dialogue, Cormac McCarthy's insightful and philosophical play, *The Sunset Limited*, probes the deepest questions of human existence.A startling encounter on a New York subway platform leads two strangers to a run-down tenement where a life or death decision must be made. In that small apartment, 'Black' and 'White', as the two men are known, begin a conversation that leads each back through his own history - mining the origins of two diametrically opposing world views, they begin a dialectic redolent of the best of Beckett. White is a professor whose seemingly enviable existence of relative

ease has left him nonetheless in despair. Black, an ex-con and ex-addict, is the more hopeful of the men - though he is just as desperate to convince White of the power of faith as White is to deny it. Their aim is no less than this: to discover the meaning of life. Deft, spare, and full of artful tension, *The Sunset Limited* by Cormac McCarthy is a beautifully crafted, consistently thought-provoking, and deeply intimate work by one of the most insightful writers of our time.

This is a room in a tenement building in a black ghetto in New York City. There is a kitchen with a stove and a large refrigerator. A door to the outer hallway and another presumably to a bedroom. The hallway door is fitted with a bizarre collection of locks and bars. There is a cheap formica table in the room and two chrome and plastic chairs. There is a drawer in the table. On the table is a bible and a newspaper. A pair of glasses. A pad and pencil. A large black man is sitting in one chair (stage right) and in the other a middle-aged white man dressed in running pants and athletic shoes. He wears a T-shirt and the jacket--which matches the pants--hangs on the chair behind him.

Black: So what am I supposed to do with you, Professor?
White: Why are you supposed to do anything?
Black: I done told you. This aint none of my doin. I left out of here this mornin to go to work you wasnt no part of my plans at all. But here you is.
White: It doesnt mean anything. Everything that happens doesnt mean something else.
Black: Mm hm. It dont.
White: No. It doesnt.
Black: What's it mean then?
White: It doesnt mean anything. You run into people and maybe some of them are in trouble or whatever but it doesnt mean that you're responsible for them.
Black: Mm hm.
White: Anyway, people who are always looking out for perfect strangers are very often people who wont look out for the ones they're supposed to look out for. In my opinion. If you're just doing what you're supposed to then you dont get to be a hero.
Black: And that would be me.
White: I dont know. Would it?
Black: Well, I can see how they might be some truth in that. But in this particular case I might say I sure didnt know what sort of person I was supposed to be on the lookout for or what I was supposed to do when I found him. In this particular case they wasnt but one thing to go by.
White: And that was?
Black: That was that there he is standin there. And I can look at him and I can say: Well, he dont look like my brother. But there he is. Maybe I better look again.
White: And that's what you did.
Black: Well, you was kindly hard to ignore. I got to say that your approach was pretty direct.
White: I didnt approach you. I didnt even see you.
Black: Mm hm.
White: I should go. I'm beginning to get on your nerves.
Black: No you aint. Dont pay no attention to me. You seem like a sweet man, Professor. I reckon what I dont understand is how come you to get yourself in such a fix.
White: Yeah.
Black: Are you okay? Did you sleep last night?
White: No.
Black: When did you decide that today was the day? Was they somethin special about it?
White: No. Well. Today is my birthday. But I certainly dont regard that as special.
Black: Well happy birthday, Professor.
White: Thank you.
Black: So you seen your birthday was comin up and that seemed like the right day.
White: Who knows? Maybe birthdays are dangerous. Like Christmas. Ornaments hanging from the trees, wreaths from the doors, and bodies from the steampipes all over America.
Black: Mm. Dont say much for Christmas, does it?
White: Christmas is not what it used to be.
Black: I believe that to be a true statement. I surely do.
White: I've got to go.
He gets up and takes his jacket off the back of the chair and lifts it over his shoulders and then puts his arms in the sleeves rather than putting his arms in first one at a time.
Black: You always put your coat on like that?
White: What's wrong with the way I put my coat on?
Black: I didnt say they was nothin wrong with it. I just wondered if that was your regular method.
White: I dont have a regular method. I just put it on.
Black: Mm hm.
White: It's what, effeminate?
Black: Mm.
White: What?
Black: Nothin. I'm just settin here studyin the ways of professors.
White: Yeah. Well, I've got to go.
The black gets up.
Black: Well. Let me get my coat.
White: Your coat?
Black: Yeah.
White: Where are you going?
Black: Goin with you.
White: What do you mean? Going with me where?
Black: Goin with you wherever you goin.
White: No you're not.
Black: Yeah I am.
White: I'm going home.
Black: All right.
White: All right? You're not going home with me.
Black: Sure I am. Let me get my coat.
White: You cant go home with me.
Black: Why not?
White: You cant.
Black: What. You can go home with me but I cant go home with you?
White: No. I mean no, that's not it. I just need to go home.
Black: You live in a apartment?
White: Yes.
Black: What. They dont let black folks in there?
White: No. I mean of course they do. Look. No more jokes. I've got to go. I'm very tired.
Black: Well I just hope we dont run into no hassle about you gettin me in there.
White: You're serious.
Black: Oh yeah. I'm serious.
White: You cant be serious.
Black: I'm as serious as a heart attack.
White: Why are you doing this?
Black: Me? I aint got no choice in the matter.
White: Of course you have a choice.
Black: No I aint.
White: Who appointed you my guardian angel?
Black: Let me get my coat.
White: Answer the question.
Black: You know who appointed me. I didnt ask for you to leap into my arms down in the subway this mornin.
White: I didnt leap into your arms.
Black: You didnt?
White: No. I didnt.
Black: Well how did you get there then?
The professor stands with his head lowered. He looks at the

chair and then turns and goes and sits down in it. Black: What. Now we aint goin? White: Do you really think that Jesus is in this room? Black: No. I dont think he's in this room. White: You dont? Black: I know he's in this room. The professor folds his hands at the table and lowers his head. The black pulls out the other chair and sits again. Black: Its the way you put it, Professor. Be like me askin you do you think you got your coat on. You see what I'm sayin? White: It's not the same thing. It's a matter of agreement. If you and I say that I have my coat on and Cecil says that I'm naked and I have green skin and a tail then we might want to think about where we should put Cecil so that he wont hurt himself. Black: Who's Cecil? White: He's not anybody. He's just a hypothetical . . . There's not any Cecil. He's just a person I made up to illustrate a point. Black: Made up. White: Yes. Black: Mm. White: We're not going to get into this again are we? It's not the same thing. The fact that I made Cecil up. Black: But you did make him up. White: Yes. Black: And his view of things dont count. White: No. That's why I made him up. I could have changed it around. I could have made you the one that didnt think I was wearing a coat. Black: And was green and all that shit you said. White: Yes. Black: But you didnt. White: No. Black: You loaded it off on Cecil. White: Yes. Black: But Cecil cant defend hisself cause the fact that he aint in agreement with everbody else makes his word no good. I mean aside from the fact that you made him up and he's green and everthing. White: He's not the one who's green. I am. Where is this going? Black: I'm just tryin to find out about Cecil. White: I dont think so. Can you see Jesus? Black: No. I cant see him. White: But you talk to him. Black: I dont miss a day. White: And he talks to you. Black: He has talked to me. Yes. White: Do you hear him? Like out loud? Black: Not out loud. I dont hear a voice. I dont hear my own, for that matter. But I have heard him. White: Well why couldnt Jesus just be in your head? Black: He is in my head. White: Well I don't understand what it is that you're trying to tell me. Black: I know you dont, honey. Look. The first thing you got to understand is that I aint got a original thought in my head. If it aint got the lingerin scent of divinity to it then I aint interested. White: The lingering scent of divinity. Black: Yeah. You like that? White: It's not bad. Black: I heard it on the radio. Black preacher. But the point is I done tried it the other way. And I dont mean chipped, neither. Runnin blindfold through the woods with the bit tween your teeth. Oh man. Didnt I try it though. If you can find a soul that give it a better shot than me I'd like to meet him. I surely would. And what do you reckon it got me? White: I dont know. What did it get you? Black: Death in life. That's what it got me. White: Death in life. Black: Yeah. Walkin around death. Too dead to even know enough to lay down. White: I see. Black: I dont think so. But let me ask you this question. White: All right. Black: Have you ever read this book? White: I've read parts of it. I've read in it. Black: Have you ever read it? White: I read The Book of Job. Black: Have. You. Ever. Read. It. White: No. Black: But you is read a lot of books. White: Yes. Black: How many would you say you read? White: I've no idea. Black: Ball park. White: I dont know. Two a week maybe. A hundred a year. For close to forty years. The black takes up his pencil and licks it and falls to squinting at his pad, adding numbers laboriously, his tongue in the corner of his mouth, one hand on his head. White: Forty times a hundred is four thousand. Black: (Almost laughing) I'm just messin with you, Professor. Give me a number. Any number you like. And I'll give you forty times it back. White: Twenty-six. Black: A thousand and forty. White: A hundred and eighteen. Black: Four thousand seven hundred and twenty. White: Four thousand seven hundred and twenty. Black: Yeah. White: The answer is the question. Black: Say what? White: That's your new number. Black: Four thousand seven hundred and twenty? White: Yes. Black: That's a big number, Professor. White: Yes it is. Black: Do you know the answer? White: No. I dont. Black: It's a hundred and eighty-eight thousand and eight hundred. They sit. White: Let me have that. The black slides the pad and pencil across the table. The professor does the figures and looks at them and looks at the black. He slides the pencil and paper back across the table and sits back. White: How do you do that? Black: Numbers is the black man's friend. Butter and eggs. Crap table. You quick with numbers you can put the mojo on you brother. Confiscate the contents of his pocketbook. You get a lot of time to practice that shit in the jailhouse. White: I see. Black: But let's get back to all them books you done read. You think maybe you read four thousand books. White: Probably. Maybe more than that. Black: But you aint read this one. White: No. Not the whole book. No. Black: Why is that? White: I dont know. Black: What would you say is the best book that ever was wrote? White: I have no idea. Black: Take a shot. White: There are a lot of good books. Black: Well pick one. White: Maybe War and Peace. Black: All right. You think that's a better book than this one? White: I dont know. They're different kinds of books. Black: This War and Peace book. That's a book that somebody made up, right? White: Well, yes. Black: So is that how it's different from this book? White: Not really. In my view they're both made up. Black: Mm. Aint neither one of em true. White: Not in the historical sense. No. Black: So what would be a true book? White: I suppose maybe a history book. Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the

Roman Empire might be one. At least the events would be actual events. They would be things that had happened. Black: Mm hm. You think that book is as good a book as this book here? White: The bible. Black:

The bible. White: I dont know. Gibbon is a cornerstone. It's a major book. Black: And a true book. Dont forget that. White: And a true book. Yes. Black: But is it as good a book. White: I dont know. I dont know as you can make a comparison. You're talking about apples and pears. Black: No we aint talkin bout no apples and pears, Professor. We talkin bout books. Is that Decline and Fall book as good a book as this book here.

Answer the question. White: I might have to say no. Black: It's more true but it aint as good. White: If you like. Black: It aint what I like. It's what you said. White: All right. The black lays the bible back down on the table. Black: It used to say here on the cover fore it got wore off: The greatest book ever written. You think that might be true? White: It might. Black: You read good books. White: I try to. Yes. Black: But not the best

book. Why is that? White: I need to go. Black: You dont need to go, Professor. Stay here and visit with me. White: You're afraid I'll go back to the train station. Black: You might. Just stay with me. White: What if I promised I wouldnt? Black: You might anyways. White: Dont you have to go to work? Black: I was on my way to work. White: A funny thing happened to you on your way to work. Black: Yes it did. White: Will they fire you? Black: Naw. They aint goin fire me. White: You could call in. Black: Aint got a phone. Anyways, they know if I aint there I aint comin. I aint a late sort of person. White: Why dont you have a phone? Black: I dont need one. The junkies'd steal it anyways. White: You could get a cheap one. *Revue de presse* Nothing short of dazzling. So astonishingly affecting, so powerful, so stimulating. --The Chicago Tribune His prose bites. --The Evening Standard