**Close Reading Organizer - Chapter 1**

**Directions:** Read each summary entry and think about which themes listed in the Themes Key apply to it, then color in those themes in the Theme Tracker. Next, write a few sentences of Analysis to explain how the themes you chose apply to each summary section.



**Themes Key**

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| 1 | Philosophy, Morality, and Ethics |
| 2 | Fate, Chance, and Free Will |
| 3 | Justice and Higher Law |
| 4 | Changing Times: Past, Present, and Future |
| 5 | Corruption, Greed, and Power |

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| **Summary** | **Theme Tracker** | **Your Analysis** |
| The novel begins with a monologue from **Sheriff Ed Tom Bell.** Each of the following chapters begins with a similar monologue told from the present tense, after the story’s events. Bellspeaks about a nineteen-year-old man who is on his way to the gas chamber because of Bell’s testimony. The young man murdered his fourteen-year-old girlfriend. Bell meets with the young man before his execution. The papers have suggested that the murder was a crime of passion, but the young man tells him there wasn’t any passion to it. The young man tells Bell he knows he is going to hell. Bell wonders if this young man is “a new kind”, and wonders what society can say to a man who believes he has no soul. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| **Bell** believes there is a way to view the world that is different than his, and suggests that there is a true and living prophet of destruction walking through the world. Bell has crossed paths with the prophet, but doesn’t want to do it again. He reflects on his job as Sheriff, stating that you have to be willing to put your soul at risk to confront a man like the prophet, and he is unwilling to gamble with his soul. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| The narration then moves to the past, and cuts to **Anton Chigurh** who is handcuffed in the police station. The deputy, who has his back to Chigurh, calls **Sheriff Lamar,** a sheriff who serves in Sonora, and tells him Chigurh has an instrument that looks like an oxygen tank, but is connected to a bolt gun like the ones used to kill livestock in slaughterhouses. The deputy says he’s “Got it covered,” but even as he does so, Chigurh squats down and steps over the handcuffs, bringing them forward from behind his back. He has practiced this maneuver many times. Chigurh strangles the deputy with the handcuffs, pulling so hard the deputy’s carotid artery bursts, and blood sprays the walls. They fall to the ground, and Chigurh holds him there, breathing quietly as the deputy dies. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| **Chigurh** unlocks the cuffs, and puts the officer’s gun in his waistband. He cleans the wounds on his wrists in the sink. As he bandages his wrists, he studies his victim. Afterward, he takes the deputy’s money, leaving his wallet on the floor. Before he leaves, he grabs his air tank and bolt gun. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| **Chigurh** steals the deputy’s cruiser and drives down the interstate. He pulls over a Ford Sedan, and tells the driver to step out of the car. Chigurh sees the doubt come into the man’s eyes as he realizes Chigurh is not a police officer. Chigurh places his free hand on the man’s head “like a faith healer”, and kills him with the bolt gun. Before leaving, Chigurh tells the dead man he just didn’t want to get blood in the car. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| The narrative then moves to **Llewellyn Moss.** Moss positions himself on a ridge with his rifle and binoculars. It is early morning, and the desert is cast in shadows from the ridge and desert plants. Moss’s shadow is out there somewhere. Below him, he sees a herd of antelope. Further back, the mountains of Mexico rise from the south. He takes off his boot and lies down, resting the barrel of the rifle on it. The antelopes rear their heads, having spotted him. The sun is behind him, so they couldn’t have seen the reflection in the scope’s lens. He aims the rifle, noting that he knows the exact drop of the bullet in hundred yard increments, but the exact distance is uncertain. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| **Moss** fires. It takes the bullet a second to get there, but the sound takes twice that. He misses his shot and the bullet sends a plume of dust into the air. The antelope run. One of the antelope limps as it runs away, and Moss thinks the bullet must have ricocheted up and caught the animal in the leg. He stands and looks at the desert, noting that the dust kicked up by the shot is gone, as if nothing had occurred at all. He ejects the bullet casing and puts it in his pocket. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| **Moss** sets out across the desert. As he climbs another slope, he looks out and sees a pit-bull with cropped ears limping across the desert. The dog pauses and looks back before continuing forward. He continues up the path, passing some rocks etched in ancient pictographs. Moss notes they were carved by hunters like him, but there is no trace of these men except for their carvings. As he reaches the ridge, he sees three vehicles parked on the floodplain below him. He looks through the binoculars and sees men lying dead on the ground. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| **Moss** approaches the vehicles with his rifle drawn, and the safety off. Among the dead bodies, he sees another dog killed by gunfire. He checks two vehicles, finding one empty and one with a dead body inside. In the third vehicle, he discovers a severely wounded Mexican man. Moss stumbles back, raising the rifle. The man begs moss in Spanish for water, calling him buddy in Spanish, and asking in the name of God. Moss takes the man’s gun, and tells him he doesn’t have any water. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| **Moss** discovers bricks of heroin covered in a tarp in the rear of the truck. He covers the bricks again, and looks out over the desert. He begins wiping his fingerprints off of the surfaces he has touched, and then collects the several guns lying around. Returning to the dying man, he asks in broken Spanish if there are other guns. The man tells him there is one in his bag. Moss asks if the man speaks English, but he doesn’t answer. The man asks again in Spanish for water. Again, Moss tells him he doesn’t have any. As he leaves, the man asks him to close the door. He is worried about wolves and mountain lions. Moss says there aren’t any wolves, but he uses his elbow to close the door anyways. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| **Moss** realizes someone has survived the carnage, and discovers a trail of blood across the caldera. He begins to track the missing man, commenting that the man thinks he is going to escape, but he isn’t. Moss reasons that the man would have sought some shade and would not have climbed uphill if he were injured. He climbs a ridge, and from the top, to the north, he sees a tractor-trailer pass on Highway 90. Then, he spots something blue down below. He waits the better part of an hour, watching through his binoculars before he starts down. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| The dead man is leaned up against a rock. A government issue .45 automatic and a leather briefcase rest beside him. **Moss** takes the gun and tries to wipe the blood off the grip but it is too well congealed. He looks across the desert again, and then approaches the briefcase. He knows there is money inside, and feels scared in a way he doesn’t understand. He takes the briefcase a short distance away, and opens it. The briefcase is full of hundred dollar bills, fastened with bank tape stamped $10,000. He sits and closes his eyes, seeing his whole life there in front of him, day after day from dawn till dark until he was dead. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| Before leaving, **Moss** considers the dead man and the way his life ended in this place. Then Moss sets out, taking the briefcase with him, and weighing the dangers of his escape. He could be bitten by a rattlesnake or arrested for carrying the illegal weapons he took from the scene, but worst of all, he realizes that someone will be looking for the money he has taken. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| **Moss** walks for several hours before reaching his truck. He leaves his headlights off until he reaches the highway, then he turns them on and begins home. He checks the speed limit every mile of the way. He stops once for a pack of cigarettes for his wife **Carla Jean**. When he reaches his trailer he sees the lights are on. He sits in the car for a moment and realizes the importance of this day. He will never experience another one like it. As soon as he says it he feels sorry. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| Inside, **Moss** finds **Carla Jean** sitting on the couch. She asks what is in the briefcase. He tells her it is full of money, but she doesn’t believe him. He hides the briefcase beneath the bed, and goes out to the truck to get her cigarettes, returning with his binoculars, rifle, and the pistol he took from the murder scene. Carla Jean asks where he got the pistol, and Moss tells her he found it. Again, Carla Jean doesn’t believe him. She tells him she doesn’t even want to know where he was. He tells her it’s better not to know. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| **Moss** wakes up at 1:06am and sits up. He looks at **Carla Jean**, still asleep, and pulls the blanket up over her shoulder before going into the kitchen. He takes a drink of water, and stares out the window toward the highway. He goes back into the bedroom and takes out the briefcase. Opening it, he reaches in and figures that it holds about 2.4 million dollars. He tells himself he has to take this seriously; he can’t treat it like luck. He looks back out the window, realizing it wasn’t the money that woke him, but the man he left out in the desert without any water. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| **Carla Jean** wakes up as **Moss** is getting dressed. She asks him where he is going, and he tells her he is about to do something incredibly stupid, but is going anyways. He tells Carla Jean that if he doesn’t return, to tell his mother he loves her. She reminds him his mother is dead, and he says he will tell her himself then. He fills a gallon jug of water at the sink. Carla Jean follows him into the kitchen, telling him she doesn’t want him to go. He says he doesn’t want to go either, but he has to. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| **Moss** stops at a filling station to study a map of the terrain. He has all terrain tires on his truck, but he notes that the landscape is treacherous. He drives out on the deserted road, noting that he is so far out the radio won’t even receive static, it is completely dead. When the moon is up, he shuts out his headlights and continues driving into the desert. Before he reaches the man, he parks the truck and sits for a moment, thinking about what he is about to do. He asks himself why he risking his life for a Mexican drug dealer, but justifies it by saying everyone is worth something. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| Before **Moss** parks the car, he takes the bulb out of the dome light. He takes the jug of water and the pistol and starts out toward the man. As he approaches, he notes that his shadow was more company than he would have liked. He is out there among the dead, but he attempts to stay calm, reminding himself he is not yet one of them. When he gets close to the truck, he sees the door is open. He immediately recognizes his mistake, calling himself a “dumbass,” and noting that he is too stupid to live. He finds the man leaned over, with fresh blood coating the interior of the truck, and discovers the heroin and the weapons are missing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| As **Moss** makes his way back to his truck, he sees someone standing beside it. He realizes what a fool he is for coming back, and believes he is going to die. He lays flat on the ground, trying not to think about the snakes and spiders that call this place home. The truck circles around him, searching with a spotlight. As the spotlight sweeps past him he thinks it would be better for everyone if he were put out of his misery. He moves again, realizing he will never see his truck again, and in that moment thinks there are many things he will never see again. As he tries to escape, he berates and mocks himself for his decision to help the man. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| **Moss** runs toward the sound of a river, realizing that he needs to be somewhere with cover before daylight. As he runs, he notes that he has had this feeling before, in another country, and he thought he’d never feel it again. As he reaches the flood plain, the truck begins to approach him from behind. He takes the gun from his belt, and sets off, running as fast as he can. The men in the truck begin firing shots at him. He hears the buckshot fly over his head, and is struck in the back of the arm, though he doesn’t notice until later. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |
| **Moss** falls down a steep bank, and lands hard letting out a groan. Two men appear against the sky on the ridge above him and he fires at them until they flee. He dives into the river, and emerges from the water a mile down stream. He hides some vegetation called “river cane”, and when he looks back and sees the truck is gone. He sees the men up river, but thinks about his truck abandoned in the desert. He knows within 24 hours, the men will be able to call the courthouse with the vehicle number and get his information. He understands they will never stop looking for him. He thinks of his brother in California, and wonders how he will explain the danger he is in. Eventually, he runs east forward Langtry, Texas, realizing, as the river drops away behind him, that he didn’t even take a drink. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |