

EAST OF EDEN

by John Steinbeck



THE AUTHOR

John Steinbeck (1902-1968) was born in Salinas, California, and grew up in the region made so memorable in the greatest of his novels. He entered Stanford University in 1919, but never graduated, supporting himself through the decade of the twenties with odd jobs, including writing for a newspaper. In 1929, he published his first novel, *Cup of Gold*. Two novels about migrant workers in California, *The Pastures of Heaven* (1932) and *To a God Unknown* (1933) followed.

He finally achieved commercial success with the publication in 1935 of *Tortilla Flat*. The late thirties witnessed the release of what many consider his finest fiction, including *Of Mice and Men* (1937) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939). A ceaseless experimenter with writing techniques and genres, he tried his hand at movie scripts, comedies, plays, travelogues, and a non-fiction work on marine biology. After the Second World War, he returned to long fiction with the semi-autobiographical *East of Eden* (1952). He received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962 despite the scoffing of critics who considered him a populist rather than a serious writer. He died in 1968.

Steinbeck always considered himself a man of the people, and he identified much more readily with the migrants about whom he wrote so frequently than with the intelligentsia who criticized his writings as too elementary in structure and language. He was a convinced supporter of democracy and an enemy of fascism, though conservatives thought him too much of a socialist and leftists argued that he should be more vociferous in his condemnation of the evils of the capitalist system. He did admit that he had probably been insufficiently outspoken during the McCarthy era, but he was never able to satisfy those who wished to force his politics into their mold.

East of Eden (1952), which Steinbeck considered the best of his novels and the culmination of all he had learned as a writer, is in broad strokes the story of Steinbeck's family and early life experiences. Samuel Hamilton was the author's maternal grandfather and Olive Hamilton was his mother; the author himself is the narrator. The setting reflects Steinbeck's experience of growing up in the Salinas Valley, but the book goes far beyond autobiography. He deals with large questions like good and evil and the perfectibility of man, grounding the entire narrative in the early chapters of the book of Genesis. The title itself is taken from Genesis 4:16, where Cain became a wanderer in the land of Nod, east of Eden, and the story contains two sets of brothers in conflict with one

another, Charles and Adam Trask and Adam's sons, Cal and Aron. The theme of the story is ultimately redemptive, incorporating Steinbeck's typical optimism about human nature despite its manifest flaws.

PLOT SUMMARY

PART ONE

Chapter 1 - The narrator, who is also the author, begins by describing the Salinas Valley - the mountains, the river, the soil, the flowers, the wind and the rain. The valley was settled consecutively by Indians, Spaniards, and Americans, the latter two giving names to the places they found and built. This was the place where the narrator's grandparents had settled.

Chapter 2 - The narrator's grandfather's name was Samuel Hamilton, and he and his wife Liza came from Ireland. He was a hard worker, but their land was poor and barely supported them in good years and bad. Samuel provided for his family by digging wells, threshing grain on other people's farms, and becoming a skilled blacksmith, though he was too kindhearted to demand compensation from his neighbors when they failed to pay their bills. He delivered all of his many children along with those of neighbors who lived too far from the doctor, and learned how to nurse his family's many injuries and ailments. He was a popular storyteller who frequently entertained visitors to his shop, but his wife was a dour Presbyterian who was suspicious of anything that vaguely resembled fun. A few of the settlers came with money and were able to buy good land and grow rich planting wheat. One such man was Adam Trask.

Chapter 3 - Adam Trask was born on a farm in Connecticut. His father Cyrus lost a leg during a brief encounter in the Civil War, carved his own wooden leg, and continued his wild lifestyle. He returned home and promptly shared a venereal disease with his wife, who forthwith committed suicide. Needing a woman to care for baby Adam, cook, clean, and share his bed, he soon married Alice, the seventeen-year-old daughter of a neighboring farmer. Cyrus soon became the local expert on the Civil War. Though he had only been in battle for thirty minutes, he researched all the details of the major battles until he was convinced, and was able to convince others, that he had been involved in them. He eventually used his acquired expertise to write letters and newspaper articles, and before long came to be recognized nationwide as an expert on all things military. He even became a secretary in the Grand Army of the Republic, traveling all over the country representing the organization. At home, he ran the family with military precision, never noticing that Alice had developed a bad case of consumption. The boys, Adam and his half-brother Charles, however, were exposed to the military life and were from infancy expected to make for themselves careers in the army.

Adam hated the military discipline and eventually discovered that his father was a loudmouthed fraud. He led a quiet life to avoid conflict, while his brother Charles was strong, competitive, and won every athletic contest in which he involved himself. In his quiet moments, Adam spied on Alice and found that she often smiled when she was alone. This unexpected discovery attracted him to his stepmother, so that he would often leave her small presents, which she never mentioned or acknowledged. As he grew, her tuberculosis became worse. Meanwhile, his attention turned to the day he dreaded, when he would be forced to enlist in the army.

Generally speaking, Adam and Charles got along well enough, but this only lasted as long as Charles could maintain his superiority. One day Adam beat him at a game of peewee, and Charles became so enraged that he knocked Adam unconscious with a baseball bat. After that, Adam made sure that he never won at anything. Soon Cyrus began preparing Adam for his military career by means of long lectures at night. Adam had no desire to join the army, but his father acted as if he really had no choice in the matter. He warned him that the army is a machine designed to drive all individuality out of a person. He promised, though, that if he was willing to submerge his individuality and go along with the program, he would emerge a stronger man for the experience. Once he learned to face death, he need never be afraid of anything again. Cyrus then told Adam that he did not intend Charles for a military life. Because of his lack of fear and humility, he had nothing to learn from the army and risked being turned into a monster. Much to Adam's surprise, his father then admitted that he always loved him better than Charles, which is why he hurt him so badly.

After dinner that night, Adam and Charles took a walk and Charles demanded to know what their father had said to him that afternoon. Adam's vague answer infuriated Charles, who proceeded to beat him to a pulp. Charles went home and returned with a hatchet, but by that time Adam had hidden in a ditch. Later he staggers back home and his father demands to know why Charles beat him up. Adam finally answered that he thought his father didn't love him. Cyrus grabbed his shotgun and ordered Alice to take Adam upstairs and clean him up. While she nursed Adam, Alice told him that Charles was really good at heart. As evidence, she spoke of the little presents that have been hidden for her to find; she assumed they were from Charles rather than Adam.

Chapter 4 - That night Charles went to a local bar and got drunk. When he heard that his father was looking for him with a shotgun he hid out, not returning home for two weeks to give Cyrus a chance to cool down. Meanwhile Cyrus enlisted Adam in the cavalry, partially for his own protection. The unit planned to head for Indian territory. In five years in the army, Adam never killed anyone intentionally; this was one of the advantages of being a sharpshooter. He often risked his life to save others, but detested the violence with which he was surrounded. He often received letters from Charles - about the farm, about Alice's death, and about his father's move to Washington to take a permanent position with the G.A.R. He felt that he and his brother were closer than they had ever been before because of these epistles.

Chapter 5 - The narrative now returns to the Hamiltons and their many children. Samuel is looked at with suspicion because of his Irish heritage, but also because he is a voracious reader. His oldest son George was quiet and virtuous, but suffered from anemia. Will was strong, energetic, and conservative, and had a knack for making money; everything he touched turned to gold. Tom, the third son, was bold, energetic, inventive, and had an inexhaustible sexual appetite. Joe, the fourth son, was lazy and somehow managed to get others to do his work for him. Samuel and Liza also had five daughters. Samuel, meanwhile, occupied himself with inventions, patenting them only to have his ideas stolen by unscrupulous manufacturers. Liza raised her children strictly and with a strong moral code and was widely respected by her neighbors. She had a lifelong hatred for liquor, but in her old age the doctor recommended a spoonful for medicinal purposes, and afterwards she rarely drew a sober breath, which made her much more relaxed and easygoing. The family was solid, but never escaped the edge of poverty.

Chapter 6 - Charles, now alone on the farm in Connecticut, made no progress in obtaining a wife. He was shy around girls and only felt safe in the company of prostitutes. The local innkeeper rented

his top floor rooms to a pimp named Edwards, who rotated new prostitutes into the rooms every two weeks. Meanwhile he worked hard on the farm, but was terribly lonely, especially after he had an accident that left a large scar on his forehead.

After Adam was discharged from the cavalry in 1885, he wandered aimlessly, trying to avoid going home. One night after getting drunk in a bar he decided to brave the journey to Connecticut. Instead he went to Chicago and reenlisted. Shortly thereafter he was posted to Washington, where he encountered his father, who was now powerful, but lonely like his younger son. The old man's wooden leg had been replaced by a mechanical prosthetic. He offered to use his influence to get Adam into West Point or obtain for him a permanent post in Washington, but Adam would rather return to his regiment despite the fact that he hated the army.

Anticipating Adam's return, Charles hired a woman to give his house a thorough cleaning. When he heard from his father that Adam had reenlisted, he quickly returned the house to its previous level of filth. All his energy was devoted to the farm, which he operated with sterling efficiency. Meanwhile, he and Adam resumed their regular correspondence.

Chapter 7 - Adam spent the next five years engaged in military busywork, seeing little action apart from a few engagements with Indian tribes. He was discharged in 1890, promised Charles that he would return home this time, but after three years still had not shown his face. Soon he ran out of money and lived the life of a tramp, begging food wherever he could get it and traveling with men in similar circumstances, with whom he never developed any relationships. He roamed the country as the weather changed, never staying in one place for long. He even served two six-month terms building roads on a chain gang in Florida. Three days before the end of his sentence he ran away, stole some clothing in Georgia, and pilfered enough food to sustain him as he traveled.

In 1894 Charles received word that his father had died. The old man left more than a hundred thousand dollars, to be shared equally by his sons. Charles, however, had no idea where Adam was. A few weeks later he received a telegram asking him to wire a hundred dollars to Valdosta, Georgia, so Adam could return home, which he promptly did.

When Adam got home, the brothers talked about their father's death and Charles confided that old Cyrus loved Adam best and didn't really like Charles at all. On the other hand, Charles loved his father and Adam hated him. Charles asked Adam if their father was an honest man, given the amount of money left to them in his will. He had also learned that all of his father's Civil War stories had been lies. They wondered if the fortune they inherited had been stolen somehow. Charles suspected that the money was dishonestly acquired, while Adam, somewhat perversely, not only thought the fortune was honest but also believed the tall tales his father told about his involvement in the war despite the proof to the contrary.

Chapter 8 - The narrator muses about the possibility of some people being born with malformed souls in the same way some who suffer from birth defects are born with malformed bodies. He suspects that Cathy Ames is one such person, born without a conscience or any shred of human kindness. This wicked soul was housed in a lovely body - pretty, girlish even in her adulthood, with a sweet voice that was given to lying for her own benefit. Even in childhood she learned to use her sexuality as a weapon to accomplish her will. One day when she was ten her mother caught her in the barn with two older boys engaged in sex play; they apparently had stripped her to the waist and tied her hands. Later the doctor assured her parents that she had not been violated, but they demanded harsh punishment for the boys. Cathy, meanwhile, refused to speak about the incident. When the boys claimed that she initiated the games and tied herself up, they were whipped and sent

to a reform school. After that both boys and girls kept their distance, but she returned from solitary walks with surprising treasures. Her mother was completely taken in by her act, but her father had suspicions that he preferred to hide.

In high school she directed her eye toward James Grew, her Latin teacher. The man became increasingly troubled. One night he visited the Ames home and asked to speak to Cathy's father. He refused to talk to the young man, and Grew then went into the church and blew his brains out with a shotgun. Cathy quickly spread a rumor that he was in trouble with the educational authorities in Boston, and no one thought to doubt it. When she reached the age of sixteen, she refused to go to school despite the fact that she was an outstanding student and had dreamed of becoming a teacher. When her father got home, he delivered a stern lecture and made her promise to return to school. That night she ran away from home and took a train to Boston. Her father followed the next morning and quickly found her and brought her home, after which he administered the first whipping she had ever received. She feigned repentance and her father was taken in. Outwardly Cathy seemed to be a changed person; she was kind and helpful to her mother, smiled at her father and showed interest in his tanning business, and began to make plans for life after high school. One day her mother asked her to pick up the company payroll from the bank. She prepared chicken blood and scattered it around the barn with one of her hair ribbons. She then burns the house down with the doors locked and her parents inside, leaving the town convinced that she had been murdered and carried off prior to the arson. Later a feebleminded tramp confessed the deed, but an insightful judge realized that he was coached to claim acts of which he knew nothing. Cathy thus absconded with the cash while everyone was convinced that she was the victim of murder most foul.

Chapter 9 - Edwards, the pimp who supplied the prostitutes frequented by Charles Trask, built a thriving business that eventually reached thirty-three small towns in New England. His wife and sons, who lived a comfortable life in Boston, never knew what their husband and father did for a living. Not all went smoothly for Mr. Edwards; on one occasion he lost two sets of four girls in a train wreck, and another time his girls were converted by a traveling preacher. He needed to rebuild his stock, and this is when he encountered Cathy Ames, who called herself Cathy Amesbury. She came to him with an invented sob story and asked for employment. He tried to avoid pretty girls because young men tended to fall in love with them, but this one was unusual; he himself was smitten. He rented a house for her and eventually gave it to her. He was so much in love that he became physically ill and began to neglect his business. She manipulated him shamelessly. He gave her money and presents, and soon she began to steal from him. He knew she was doing it, but was afraid to mention it for fear that she would leave him. He often coaxed her to drink champagne, but she always refused. One day, however, she took a drink, liked it, and soon was drunk, after which she openly insulted him and cut his face with a broken champagne glass. He hired a man to find out where she hid the money she had stolen and later discovered that she had been responsible for the deaths of her parents. He took her out into the country, intending to whip her so thoroughly that she would be of no further use to anyone. He loses control and pummels her with his fists, finally hitting her with a rock. He is convinced that he has killed her, and quietly returns home and resumes his business as usual, determined never to make the same mistake again. She survives, however, and crawls to a nearby farmhouse, badly bruised and with a broken arm.

Chapter 10 - Charles and Adam quarrel constantly, both about the money, which Charles fears is dishonest, and about the farm, which Charles works diligently while Adam does so only grudgingly. One morning Adam has had enough and he walks out, spending the next eight months in Boston.

After he returns, they fall uncomfortably into a routine in which Charles works the farm and Adam handles the finances. After two years, Adam begins to badger Charles about moving to California. They quarrel again, and Adam takes off again; soon Charles is getting postcards from South America. Adam comes back after about a year and suggests building his own house on the property. Charles reminds him of the hundred dollars he sent him when he wanted to come home the first time, and Adam tells him the story of his tramping, chain gang experience, and escape.

Chapter 11 - Adam continues to propose using their money to travel the world, while Charles reminds him that they have a farm to run. One day a badly injured woman crawls up on their doorstep - Cathy Ames, after her beating at the hands of Edwards. Adam takes her upstairs to bed while Charles fetches the doctor. As he treats her wounds, Adam promises Cathy that she can stay with them as long as she wants. The doctor finds that she has a broken arm, three broken ribs, a broken jaw, a fractured skull, and several missing teeth. Adam offers to take care of her, but the doctor insists on telling the sheriff about what was obviously a vicious assault. Gradually Cathy remembers what happened to her. She is frightened because Edwards knew about the fire and wonders if anyone else knows, especially the sheriff, who keeps wanting her to answer questions. He gets her to write out answers. In the process, she denies knowing her name or remembering anything about her past or what happened to her.

Adam takes great pleasure in caring for Cathy; his life now has a purpose. She recovers quickly, but still maintains the charade of amnesia. One day she calls Charles into the room and bluntly asks him what he thinks of her. He doesn't trust her, doesn't believe she has lost her memory, and hopes to get her out of the house as soon as possible in order to protect his brother from what he sees as an unhealthy obsession. He calls her the devil and intends to throw her out in a week or so. If she refuses to go, he threatens to tell the sheriff what she said when she was drugged up (she actually said nothing, but she doesn't know that).

One day she is talking to Adam and admits that she didn't lose her memory. She implies that she has a secret she can't share in order to protect her father. He promises to protect her and not let Charles throw her out of the house. On an impulse, he asks Cathy to marry him, but she makes him promise that he won't tell Charles about his proposal. She makes him wait for her decision, but she has already decided to marry him. She knows she can manipulate him, but she is unaccustomed to the love he shows for her though she feels none for him. All she wants from him is protection and money.

Charles tells Adam that their neighbor, Alex Platt, had found a suitcase full of four thousand dollars, a purse, and some men's clothes buried in the woods on his property. He took it to the sheriff, but if no one claimed it, he would be allowed to keep it. Five days later Adam marries Cathy. Charles begs him to get rid of her, claims that she is a whore and will cause nothing but trouble, but Adam refuses to listen. Instead, he intends to take his new wife and move to California. That night, Cathy puts some of her opium in Adam's tea and goes to Charles' room, joining him in his bed.

PART TWO

Chapter 12 - With the arrival of 1900, a bitter century comes to a close, but something is lost in the process.

Chapter 13 - Cathy becomes the light of Adam's life, for he sees in her only what he wants to see. He sells his half of the ranch to Charles and heads for California. They take the railroad to the Salinas Valley. While Adam is exploring the land and looking for the best place to buy, he notices that Cathy seems weak and listless. One day he leaves her in the hotel and returns to find her suffering from severe loss of blood. When the doctor examines her, he finds that she is pregnant and has tried unsuccessfully to abort her baby. The doctor threatens to report her to the authorities, but she claims she did it because epilepsy runs in her family and she didn't want the child to inherit it. The doctor tells Adam about the pregnancy, but not about the attempted abortion.

Adam is considering buying a 900-acre ranch, but he is concerned about the water supply. He is advised to consult Samuel Hamilton, who lives on poor land himself but has raised nine children through hard work wherever he can find it. Samuel assures him that water can be found somewhere on the property and tells him about the richness of the soil. Adam goes home to be with his pregnant wife, and the next day agrees to buy the property in question.

Chapter 14 - In the Salinas Valley of the early twentieth century, the schoolhouse was the center of community life and the schoolteacher had great status in the region. Parents wanted their daughters to grow up to be schoolteachers and hoped that their sons would marry one. Samuel Hamilton loved learning and passed that love on to his daughters. One of them, Olive, became the schoolteacher at the Peach Tree School at age eighteen. She was responsible, not only for teaching every subject in grades one through eight, but also for hosting dances, organizing community celebrations, and heading up community charities. Such a heavy workload, combined with the high status of a schoolteacher, meant that most of them soon married and left the profession. Olive had no desire to become a farmer's wife but preferred to live in a city - at least a small one. She soon became frustrated with the limitations placed on her instruction by parents who were afraid that if their children learned too much, they would leave the farm for the city, so she did precisely that. She married a young man who owned a flour mill and eventually went with him to live in Salinas. The narrator was her only son; she also had three daughters.

When World War I arrived, Olive worked tirelessly in the war effort, knitting socks, rolling bandages, and selling war bonds. She sold so many that the War Department took notice and sent her war souvenirs, finally offering her a ride in an airplane. This idea terrified her. She made out her will, bought clean underwear, entrusted her diamond engagement ring to her oldest daughter, and was especially nice to her children. She was convinced that she was going to her death. The pilot decided to do stunts on the way back for the fun of it. When they landed, she went to bed for the next two days.

Chapter 15 - Adam puts much time and effort into transforming his new property into something of which he and his descendants can be proud. Like so many of the settlers in the West, he looks toward a glorious future he is sure will come. The same is true of Samuel Hamilton. Adam, however, finds present contentment, largely in his beautiful pregnant wife. Cathy, on the other hand, makes sure no one knows that she has no desire to live in California, no desire to be married, and certainly no desire to be pregnant. She bides her time until she can free herself from these unwanted conditions.

Adam worries when the dry season arrives despite the fact that old California hands have warned him that this is a regular occurrence. He sends word to Samuel Hamilton asking him to help him dig some wells on his property. He sends Lee, his Chinese cook, to pick up Samuel. During the ride, Samuel asks Lee why, if he was born in America, he still speaks pidgin English and dresses

in Chinese garb. Lee then switches to educated and unaccented English and explains that he is accepted better if he meets people's expectations. He tried blending in once, but found he was accepted neither by the white majority nor by his fellow Chinese. On a visit to China, matters were even worse; the Chinese treated him like a Western "foreign devil." Samuel then asks Lee why he remains a servant; he responds that, if done well, the occupation of servant is one of great power and security. This is a fact that Cathy fails to recognize or take seriously.

That afternoon Samuel and Adam ride the property and Samuel uses his dowsing rod to find likely places to drill wells. He concludes that Adam has chosen his land well, and Adam insists that he intends to make his property another Garden of Eden, largely as a way of repaying the blessings he has received since Cathy came into his life. He praises her to the skies as the source of all his happiness. Samuel realizes that somehow his illusions need to be shattered for his own good, but doesn't know how to go about it. At dinner, he sees that there is something strange about Cathy, though he can't put his finger on it. Before he leaves, Lee asks him if he needs a cook; he, too, knows that something is very wrong in paradise. After dinner, Cathy tells Adam that she doesn't want to be in California and intends to leave as soon as she can. He refuses to believe her, assuring her that she will get used to it in time, especially after the baby is born.

Chapter 16 - Samuel rides home in darkness, enjoying the moonlight and the creatures of the night. As he rides, he mulls over his uneasy feelings during dinner. He realizes that Cathy was the cause of those feelings, in particular her eyes. He had only seen dead eyes like that once before, on a criminal whose hanging he had witnessed as a child. That cold look portended some awful evil within. At breakfast, Liza asks him about the Trask family. He gives vague answers about Adam and Cathy, but speaks glowingly of the land and the profitable job he has been offered to dig wells and erect windmills. He intends to take Tom and Joe to help him with the work.

Chapter 17 - As the Hamiltons dig their wells, Cathy's pregnancy moves toward its end. She says little; one would never know she carries a baby she doesn't want for a husband she doesn't love while living on a land she hates. One day the diggers encounter something hard thirty feet underground. Samuel suspects it is a meteorite, which would be tremendously valuable to mine if it were large enough. As they prepare to head home to mend the drill blade, Lee comes riding up to inform them that Cathy is having her baby. Samuel accompanies Lee back to the ranch while his boys attend to the drill.

The first thing Samuel does is throw Adam out of the room so he doesn't get in the way. Cathy has been preternaturally quiet, and Samuel notices that her eyes are filled with hatred. He tells her that if she continues to snarl at him, he'll leave and she'll be on her own. She quickly transforms herself into a compliant, sweet little woman, but it doesn't last long. At one point she viciously bites Samuel's hand, drawing blood, but then apologizes. The baby comes faster than Samuel expects; it is a little boy. Then, much to everyone's surprise, a second boy follows the first. Samuel leaves the room filled with despair at what he has seen and Lee treats his badly injured hand. Samuel sends for his wife, knowing her feminine insight can be helpful in the light of the horrors he has just experienced. Liza sends him packing to the doctor's in King City, and by evening he has a raging fever, which causes him to spend the next three days in bed. Liza stays at the Trask ranch for a week, cleaning the place thoroughly and putting the babies on a sound routine. She finds Lee helpful, Adam useless, and Cathy quiet and complacent. Neither parent pays much attention to the babies. Lee, whose true character Liza discerns, is the one who cares for the children. A week later, Cathy sends Lee to King City, then announces to Adam that she is leaving, telling him that he can

throw the babies in the new well for all she cares. He locks her in her room, but she pulls out her pistol, shoots him in the shoulder, and stalks out of the house.

Chapter 18 - Horace Quinn, the deputy sheriff, gets word of the Trask shooting and goes out to the ranch to investigate. He finds Adam sick in bed. When he asks him what happened, Adam tells him that his gun went off while he was cleaning it. Quinn doesn't believe it for a minute, but Adam sticks to his story. Quinn asks to speak to Cathy, but Adam tells her she is away from home and he doesn't know where she went. As Quinn continues to probe, Adam tells him that he doesn't know his wife's name or where she came from and is only able to describe her in the vaguest terms. The deputy is beginning to suspect that Adam killed his wife, and heads for the Hamilton place to get a description of Cathy from Samuel and Liza. They give him a thorough description, after which Quinn visits the sheriff. There he discovers that the town's newest bordello has just acquired a new employee, and she sounds an awful lot like Cathy Trask. The sheriff and his deputy decide that the best thing to do at this point is to say nothing to anyone, especially not to Adam. Shortly thereafter Samuel visits Adam, prepared to continue work on the wells. Adam says he doesn't want them anymore, but Samuel encourages him to go through the motions of being alive and that one day he really will be. This is necessary, especially for the sake of the boys.

Chapter 19 - The narrator begins the chapter by drawing comparisons between churches and brothels, noting their contributions to the welfare of a western town. The new brothel, opened by a woman named Faye, was the third in Salinas, but each one had its own distinct character and thus they did not compete with one another. Faye's house was the one to which Cathy fled when she left Adam. Faye questions her extensively, but Cathy, who introduces herself as Kate, is such a smooth liar that the madam discovers little about her. She turned out to be an ideal contributor to the house, however. She drew in regular customers and went out of her way to help the other girls. Soon she took over marketing, meal-planning, and laundry - all areas in which she brought about significant improvements and economies. At the end of a year, Kate has made herself indispensable and Faye begins to think of her as her daughter. Because of this budding intimacy, Faye asks Kate to stop whoring. One day the sheriff visits Kate and lets her know that he is fully aware that she is Cathy Trask and that she has shot her husband and abandoned her twin babies. He has no intention of arresting her, but strongly advises her to keep her new identity, dye her hair, and avoid contact with anyone from her old life. By the time the conversation is over, Kate actually likes and respects the sheriff. Faye dislikes her new hair color, but agrees when Kate explains that she doesn't want someone from her past to get hurt.

Chapter 20 - The more Faye begins to think of Kate as her daughter, the less she likes the idea of her servicing customers. Kate insists, however, that she needs the money and refuses to stop "going upstairs." That night hardly anyone shows up at the whorehouse. After they close, Kate goes up to Faye's room and is surprised to find that she has planned a private party, complete with decorations and cake. Kate gives Faye the watch she had received from Adam, claiming it was from her mother. Faye's present to Kate is her new will, in which she leaves everything, worth more than sixty thousand dollars, to her new "daughter." After a few glasses of champagne, Kate loses all inhibitions and begins to insult Faye and tell her that she intends to turn the bordello into an S&M palace and raise the prices, making money hand over fist. Faye tries to throw her out, but is too drunk to do so and soon passes out. Kate drugs her, undresses her, and watches beside her bed.

Chapter 21 - Kate gradually lets word out about Faye's will, making sure to blame the cook for spreading the news. Kate behaves in a humble and gracious way that allays the fears of the other girls in the house. Soon she becomes ill and visits the doctor. She arrives before the doctor, breaks into his office, and steals pills; after he gets there, he gives her more for Faye. Meanwhile, Kate showers the girls with presents and the bordello runs more smoothly every day. Faye is still weak, and Kate keeps introducing innovations like canning fruit for the winter months. Faye suggests that she and Kate take a trip to Europe the following summer, and Kate agrees. Later Kate poisons both Faye and herself; she, being younger and stronger, recovers, but Faye does not, passing away after a long, drawn-out illness. Before Faye dies, Kate crushes and buries the vials containing the poisons, then makes sure that she is incapacitated when the sad event occurs.

Chapter 22 - Adam Trask falls into a deep depression after Cathy's departure. He hardly notices the twins and ignores his neighbors when they reach out to help him. Lee takes care of the boys, and Samuel Hamilton tries to encourage Adam, but Liza soon forbids him from going there because he returns in such a dark mood. One day Samuel sprains his back and goes into town to see the doctor. There he meets Lee, who tells him that Adam has not even named the twin boys yet, fifteen months after their birth. Samuel decides that drastic steps must be taken. He dresses up in his best suit of clothes, takes a small Bible full of good names, and heads for the Trask place. Adam tries to throw him out and Samuel gets angry, chokes and punches him, then sorrowfully rebukes him for deserting his boys to such an extent that he has not even named them. Adam thanks him for intervening, and soon Lee brings the boys out and sits them at the table. They are both dressed in Chinese fashion for their naming day. Adam and Samuel have a long discussion about names, then Samuel reads the story of Cain and Abel from his Bible. The three men talk about the story and its meaning and decide it has universal significance. Finally they decide to name the boys Caleb and Aaron.

PART THREE

Chapter 23 - The narrator describes his family, the Hamilton clan: Una, Samuel's favorite daughter, a quiet girl who married a photographer, moved north, and died young; George, who sold insurance; Will, making a fortune in business; Joe, who went into advertising; and Tom, who never married and never really settled down, but was the favorite uncle to John, the narrator, and his sister Mary, a tomboy who never forgave her uncle for telling her that she couldn't become a boy. Tom brought gum for John and Mary and took John fishing - lasting memories for both of them. Then there was Dessie, Tom's favorite sister, a cheerful spinster who ran a dress shop in Salinas. Only once did she fall in love, and it ended badly.

In 1911, the Hamilton clan met for Thanksgiving; all were present except Joe, who was in New York, and Una, who had by that time died. Samuel and Liza were showing their age and went to bed early. Their children and their spouses sit around, struggling to imagine a world where their father is getting old and might not be with them anymore. Tom tells them that Samuel's decline is attributable to Una's death, which he has never gotten over. They decide that their parents should come to live with one of them, but realize that Samuel would never agree to give up the ranch. Instead, they devise a scheme of inviting Samuel and Liza to visit each couple in turn. When Samuel gets a letter from Olive inviting him and Liza to visit her for a "vacation," including tickets to a Chautauqua meeting to hear Billy Sunday and William Jennings Bryan, he knows perfectly well what's going on, but sees the love behind it. They agree to go, leaving Tom in charge of the ranch.

Chapter 24 - Samuel knows what Liza does not - that they will never return to the ranch again. He sets out to visit his longtime neighbors, saving Adam Trask for last. The twins are now eleven years old and are very different. Caleb is sharp and quiet and Aaron is open and likeable, though they now go by the names of Cal and Aron. Adam still has little motivation to keep the farm going, though he is doing better with the boys. He asks Samuel if he has heard the rumor that Cathy is in Salinas. Samuel has heard it, but doesn't believe it. Adam has never gotten over Cathy, though he no longer thinks about the shooting. Samuel urges him to get on with his life, and a new woman, and look to the future rather than the past. He then tells Adam that he intends to leave, and Adam begs him to stay for the sake of the ranch and their friendship. At dinner Samuel meets the boys; Cal looks forward to having his own small plot of land to farm, while Aron raises rabbits.

After the boys leave, Samuel and Lee recall the story of Cain and Abel and discuss it again. Lee had discovered that the King James Version and the American Standard Version translated Genesis 4:7 differently. He took his question to wise Chinese scholars in San Francisco who took the time to learn Hebrew in order to research the matter. After two years of study, they decided that the end of the verse, instead of promising that Cain would triumph over sin (KJV) or commanding him to do so (ASV), told him that he was able to triumph over it; in other words, the matter was in his own hands.

Before he leaves, Samuel tells Adam that Cathy is indeed in Salinas, that she goes by the name of Kate and runs the most depraved bordello in the West, catering to the lusts of twisted men and ruining the young women she controls. Adam at first refuses to believe it, then runs off like a madman. Samuel believes this medicine will cure him once and for all of his depression, though Lee is concerned that it might kill him. Samuel, knowing that he has not much more time to live, has made a choice to help his friend and thanks Lee for giving him the courage to do so.

Chapter 25 - The weather that winter was perfect and everything grew in abundance, even on the Hamilton farm. One day Tom gets a telegram telling him that his father has died. Adam Trask attends the funeral and afterward is feeling miserable at the loss of his friend. He wanders into Salinas, drinks more than he should, and asks the bartender how to get to Kate's. Despite the bartender's warning, he goes to the bordello and asks to see Kate. Much to the surprise of her "receptionist," Kate agrees to see him. She takes out her pistol just in case, but soon finds she doesn't need it. Adam just wants to see her as she really is so he can forget her. She finds that she can no longer manipulate him and it makes her furious. She gets drunk and loses control, which is something she never does. She gets angry and insists that all men are corrupt and hypocritical, then shows Adam pictures of prominent men who visit her house to engage in all sorts of perversions. She uses them to blackmail her clients and eventually intends to move to New York, marry a rich old man, and kill him slowly for his fortune. She tries to seduce Adam but fails. She then tells him that his twin sons are not his, but were fathered by his brother Charles. Adam realizes that he doesn't care whether it's true or not. Kate completely loses control and screams for the bouncer to beat Adam senseless, but after one punch he refuses to go farther. Adam crawls slowly from the room, a look of triumph on his face, and Kate realizes that she has lost.

Chapter 26 - After leaving Kate, Adam visits Will Hamilton in his garage. They discuss Samuel's funeral, then Adam asks about purchasing a car. Will is surprised, but immediately shifts into salesman mode. As Adam travels home, he feels a freedom he has not known for many years. When he gets home, he tells Lee about his trip and describes his feelings of freedom. Lee then asks if he can have his freedom as well; he wants to move to San Francisco and open a bookstore in

Chinatown. Adam gives his blessing, but asks that he first help settle matters around the farm, particularly with regard to the twins.

Chapter 27 - Lee has taught the boys to hunt rabbit with bows and arrows. Cal kills one with his first shot, then the two argue about who should take credit for the kill. They decide they'll both take credit for it. On the way home, they talk about their mother. Aron believes she is dead, but Cal heard men talking about her and thinks she is very much alive; he intends to find her one day and bring her home. On the way back to the house, they get caught in a thunderstorm and are drenched by the time they reach home. They find that visitors have sought shelter from the storm - Mr. and Mrs. Bacon and Abra, their young daughter. When the rain stops, the children go outside to play. Bacon drones on and on about the value of education while Adam's mind wanders. He suddenly makes up his mind to take the boys to visit Charles, whom he hasn't seen in ages. Meanwhile, the children find that the rain hasn't stopped at all. Abra tells the boys they don't look like twins, but they explain that they came from two different eggs. She then teases them about being fried or poached. Cal offers her their rabbit, which she accepts as long as they clean it up and put it in a box. Soon Abra and Aron are in the early stages of falling in love, but Cal is determined to punish her for liking his brother better. He tells her that Aron intends to put something alive in the box with the rabbit, then warns her that Aron's back is covered with scars from the beatings he has received from Lee. As soon as their carriage leaves the ranch, Abra throws the box out the window. Aron is mortified, especially since he had included a letter in the box asking Abra to marry him.

Chapter 28 - For the first time in his life, Adam shows a real interest in his sons that night at dinner. They tell him about the rabbit, being careful to share credit, and Aron confesses that he gave it to Abra, along with a letter asking her to marry him. Cal immediately finds a way to undermine his brother, telling their father that Abra wanted to know where their mother's grave was so she could make wreaths for them to put on it. Adam lies to them, telling them that she was buried back east in her hometown. He then asks the twins if they would like to move to Salinas so they could go to school there. Aron is immediately taken with the idea because Abra lives in Salinas. After the boys go to bed, Lee goes over the accounts with Adam and warns him that the lie about the boys' mother could lead to real trouble, both because they might find out the truth in Salinas and because they would then begin to mistrust everything Adam had ever told them.

Lee then tells the sad story of his own parents - how his father came from China to work on the railroad to pay off a debt, how his mother disguised herself as a man to follow him, how she discovered she was pregnant, how they planned to escape to allow the child to be born in a safe place, how his father broke his leg and was unable to get away, how his mother went into early labor and was raped to death by the sex-starved Chinese workers, and how Lee was rescued from the womb and raised by his father and the same men who had killed his mother. Adam then sits down and writes a letter, inviting his brother Charles to come west for a visit.

Chapter 29 - Adam is restless and impatient as he waits for an answer to his letter to Charles. He annoys the boys by his constant bungling attempts to involve himself in their lives. Soon Will Hamilton delivers the car Adam ordered, which is a novelty and a mystery to its new owners. The next day a nineteen-year-old mechanic comes out to the ranch to teach them how to start the car. They listen and observe carefully, but don't understand a word he's saying.

Chapter 30 - A week later, Adam drove his new Ford into King City. He stops at the post office and finds a letter from a law firm in Connecticut informing him that Charles recently died. He has amassed a considerable fortune in excess of a hundred thousand dollars, which he left to be divided evenly between Adam and his wife. After dinner, Adam sends the boys to bed so he can talk to Lee about Charles' will. Adam doesn't want to give Kate \$50,000 because he knows she would use it in a destructive fashion. Lee argues that Kate wouldn't dare claim it because that would force her to reveal her true identity, but he knows that Adam cannot in good conscience keep it from her. Cal has been eavesdropping on the conversation and now knows, not only that his uncle was rich, but also that his mother is still alive and runs a bordello in Salinas. When Aron asks him what Lee and his father discussed, Cal lies to him, then prays to God that he would not be the mean, lonely person he feels himself becoming.

Chapter 31 - The next day Adam goes to see Kate. He shows her the letter, and she is convinced that he is trying to trick her in some way; she can't accept the fact that he is simply being honest. Later he visits the Steinbeck home in order to pay his respects to Liza Hamilton, Samuel's widow. When he tells her that he is thinking of moving into Salinas, she advises him to stay on the farm but does mention that her daughter Dessie is looking to sell her house. She also asks him to visit her son Tom, who is struggling with his father's death.

Chapter 32 - Dessie Hamilton was beloved of all who knew her. She had the capacity to make people laugh. After losing her first and only love, followed shortly thereafter by the death of her father, however, she lost both her joy and her ability to bring joy to others. Soon her business began to fail, and she decided to sell it and move back to the ranch with Tom. Will tries to talk her out of it, warning her that Tom has been strange since Samuel's death, but she is determined to make the move. Tom picks Dessie up at the train station and the two greet one another joyfully. Dessie tells him that Adam Trask is buying her house in Salinas so the boys can go to school there. When she reaches the old homestead, she finds it full of memories both happy and sad. That night, she feels pain as she tries to sleep.

Chapter 33 - With Dessie on the farm, Tom is a changed man. Instead of moping around, he works hard and transforms the place. Dessie is glad to see him so happy and energetic and tries hard to hide her pain from him. One night Dessie asks Tom why he has never married. He brushes the question aside. Then she begins talking about her desire to travel abroad. He sees how much this means to her and promises that they can do it the following summer. To raise money, Tom plans to buy a hundred pigs to fatten up and sell. He ponders the possibility of inventing a machine to collect acorns, but Dessie suggests that holding an acorn-collecting contest for the local children would get the job done much more efficiently. The next day Tom tries to borrow money from Will to buy the pigs, but Will throws cold water on his idea, insists it will never work, and makes no promise concerning the loan. Will decides to offer Tom the loan, but intends to keep the profits of the operation for himself. When Tom gets home he finds Dessie lying on the sofa in pain; she can't hide it no longer. By morning she is much worse. Tom calls the doctor, who realizes that Dessie is dying. After her funeral, Tom returns home and can do nothing but sit and recount his sins. The worst in his mind is that he gave Dessie a salt concoction that only made her condition worse; he blames himself for her death. Tom thinks of killing himself, but can't bring himself to do it. Instead, he writes letters to his mother and his brother Will.

PART FOUR

Chapter 34 - The narrator muses on life and death, good and evil, and concludes that the value of a man's life is determined by the sadness or pleasure his death brings to the world.

Chapter 35 - Lee helps Adam and the boys move to Salinas and then announces that it is time for him to go to San Francisco. He leaves with barely a word, but is back a month later after discovering that he cannot tolerate the loneliness of living by himself.

Chapter 36 - Cal and Aron adapt well to their new school, where they excel in their studies. Cal is respected, but Aron is loved. At the end of the first day of school, Aron follows Abra home. After her friends go their own way, she leads him to a pump house under a flowing willow tree. There they talk about getting married some day, and she suggests that the pump house was a good place for them to pretend to be husband and wife. Suddenly Aron starts crying because he misses his mother. Abra then tells him that she overheard her parents saying that his mother isn't dead after all. Before Abra runs home, she kisses the astounded Aron on the mouth. After she leaves, Aron contemplates all that has happened. He finally decides that his mother is really dead, for to believe otherwise would be to know that his father and Lee were liars.

Chapter 37 - Lee, having decided to give up his bookstore dream and stay, remakes the house with all the latest modern conveniences. Adam, with plenty of time on his hands, becomes interested in refrigeration. He consults Will Hamilton with his idea to use refrigerated railroad cars to ship fresh vegetables to the East coast in the winter, but Will immediately shoots down the idea as impractical and advises Adam to plant imperishables like beans instead. Adam gives it a try anyway, and the idea is roundly praised as a rousing success, at least until Adam tries to put it into practice. The first shipment is repeatedly delayed through no one's fault and the lettuce is ruined before it arrives in New York; Aron has now lost most of his considerable fortune. Despite universal criticism from the businessmen in town, he decides to persevere. Aron shares his fears with Abra, but she assures him that she still wants to marry him,

Chapter 38 - Because Cal is not loved in the same way Aron is, he tries to compensate, and when his attempts are rejected, he builds a wall of self-sufficiency around himself as a defense mechanism. He has no friends. He begins to take long walks through Salinas at night. One night he meets an old acquaintance who is stone drunk and doesn't recognize him. The man is determined to take advantage of the most famous bordello in town and invites Cal to join him. On the way, he describes the madam - Kate was Adam Trask's wife and the father of his children, but she shot him and ran away to become a whore. This is too much for Cal to resist, so he follows the man into Kate's place. After seeing her and watching what she does, he goes home and begins to question Lee, who tells him the truth about Kate and her relationship with Adam. Cal now hates his mother, partly because he sees so much of her in himself. Lee warns him not to excuse his bad traits because of his heritage, insisting that he has the good qualities of his father in him as well. He loves his father deeply and wants to protect him. Aron, meanwhile, is oblivious to all of this and has decided that he wants to pursue the ministry as a career. Abra follows him into the Episcopal Church, and when he tells her that he intends to live a life of celibacy, she quietly goes along with him, trusting that he will eventually change his thinking on the subject.

Chapter 39 - One night Cal gets arrested in a raid on a gambling establishment. Adam bails him out of jail and the two have the first honest conversation they have ever had. Adam wants to know his son better and fears that he has been a bad father. They start to talk about Aron, whom Cal thinks is nearly perfect. Cal tries to protect Aron from anything that would hurt him, including knowledge of his mother and what she is doing with her life. Cal tells his father that he wants to run the ranch and earn the money needed for Aron to go to college. By the time the conversation is over, father and son have developed a level of trust and affection entirely new to them.

Cal applies himself to his schoolwork more than ever, but is most interested in learning more about his mother. He spies on her from across the street, observing her movements. He discovers that she leaves her house every Monday afternoon at 1:30 and goes to the bank, a dress shop, a beauty parlor, a doctor's office, and a candy store before returning home. After following her for eight weeks, she confronts him and asks the meaning of his stalking. He identifies himself as her son and she invites him inside. He asks her why she shot Adam and ran away from them. She didn't want to be beholden to anyone and wanted to do anything she chose. She thinks she and Cal have a lot in common, but he assures her that his meanness is all his own and has nothing to do with her. He perceives that she is afraid and is glad for it.

Chapter 40 - Kate ponders the shock of Cal's last words for some time after he leaves. One day she gets a letter from Ethel, one of her former girls. Ethel claims to have evidence that Kate had murdered Faye and promises to keep quiet if Kate pays her a hundred dollars a month. Kate gives her the hundred, but then arranges for her to be arrested for robbery and escorted from the county with orders never to return. Kate nevertheless worries that Ethel still has the broken pieces of bottle containing the poison she used on Faye. The accuracy of Cal's perception frightens her even more.

Chapter 41 - As war approaches on the horizon, Aron talks about going to college and never coming back to Salinas. Cal suggests that he work hard, finish high school a year early, and then offers to finance his college education. When Cal wants to visit the ranch, Lee suspects that he has some idea about going into farming and offers him five thousand dollars if he needs help. Later Cal goes to Will Hamilton for advice on how to make enough money to cover his father's losses on the lettuce fiasco. Will senses in Cal a kindred spirit and offers him a partnership if Cal can bring some money into the relationship. Cal remembers the five thousand dollars Lee had offered him and says he is willing to put that up. Will's idea is to offer local farmers a price they can't refuse to plant beans, then sell the beans to the British army for twice the price.

Chapter 42 - The war begins, and soon gets close to home as local boys die on the fields of France. The initial optimism is crushed by the reality of casualties and the suspicion that the government is hiding the truth from the people. Beans, however, are selling like crazy and Will and Cal are making a fortune.

Chapter 43 - Adam finds out that Aron is planning to finish high school a year early, but still knows nothing of Cal's business venture. As Rolf, the local rector, helps Aron with his studies, the two discuss Aron's calling. The boy not only wants to espouse celibacy, but would heartily desire the existence of an Episcopal monastery if such a thing was to be found. Then Rolf reveals to Aron that Kate, heavily veiled, has been attending services, sitting in the back so as not to be seen. He hopes and prays for her salvation.

Aron passes his exams and Adam plans to throw a party and present him with an engraved gold watch, but Aron hasn't told him about the exams yet. Lee insists that he do so, and Aron finally agrees to break the news the next morning.

Chapter 44 - After Aron leaves for college at Stanford, Abra spends a lot of time with the Trask family and gets to know them better, especially Adam and Lee. Cal is still a puzzle, however. Aron's daily letters are an encouragement to her, since he expresses his love more forthrightly than he ever did in person. Abra fears that he has fallen in love with a girl of his own imagination rather than the person she really is. She opens her heart to Lee every day; he is the only person with whom she can be truly honest. She hopes Aron changes his mind about being a minister because she wants to marry him. Finally she asks Lee if Aron's mother is still alive, and he promptly changes the subject, then eventually tells her that Mrs. Trask is indeed alive. Cal then bursts into the room with a check for the money he borrowed from Lee and announces that he now has the money to pay his father back for what he lost in his abortive effort to sell lettuce on the East coast.

Chapter 45 - Joe Valery is Kate's "hatchet man," and she manipulates and controls him the way she does everyone else around her. He was the one who arranged for Ethel to be expelled from the county. Kate, often awake at night because of worsening arthritis pain, worries about Ethel and the damaging knowledge she possesses. She decides to send Joe to find Ethel. He soon discovers that she has drowned, presumably thrown overboard by a drunken fisherman after turning a trick. He realizes that Ethel has something that Kate fears and wonders how he might use the knowledge to his advantage. When he returns to Salinas, he tells Kate that he couldn't find Ethel, but had heard a rumor that she had come back to Salinas.

Chapter 46 - The war in Europe is not going well, and almost everyone on the home front is engaged in the war effort in some way or another. A German tailor in Salinas is persecuted by the adults and mocked by the children. War profiteers feel righteous because they spend some of their ill-gotten gains on war bonds.

Chapter 47 - Adam is appointed to the local draft board, largely on the basis of his experience long ago in the Indian wars, but he feels guilty about sending boys off to what seems to him a virtually certain death sentence. He can't wait for Aron to come home from Stanford for Thanksgiving, but doesn't realize that his son is homesick, hates college, and is seriously considering dropping out, marrying Abra, and taking over the farm.

Chapter 48 - One day when Joe is talking to the town gossip, he learns that Kate might have been responsible for Faye's death and that she was really Adam Trask's wife. Joe again ponders how this information might be used to his benefit. When he gets back to Kate's, she again asks him to find Ethel, insisting that she had mistakenly thought she had done her harm, had realized her error, and wished to apologize and make things right.

Chapter 49 - Aron is coming home from Stanford for Thanksgiving, and the family debates about whether they should let Abra meet him alone or whether they all should go. Their curiosity about how much he has changed wins out, and they all head for the train station. The reunion is a joyful one, though the family notices that Aron has cut his hair and is dressed more stylishly than usual. After dinner Aron walks Abra home, but she warns him that her father is opposed to their

relationship. When he gets home, he increasingly feels the weight of his father's ambitions for him and decides to tell Cal that he doesn't want to go back to college. Cal tries to talk him into going back, suggesting that the two go into partnership in a business, but Aron wants to run the farm. Cal, meanwhile, has enough money to pay off his father's debt and intends to present him with the cash the next morning. In his room, Cal seethes with anger at his brother; he is jealous because his father loves him more and is afraid that his noble act of generosity will be lost in the celebration surrounding Aron's return. The next morning, he takes Aron for a walk and buys some champagne to send to his father in Aron's name. After a sumptuous Thanksgiving dinner, Cal gives Adam his present - fifteen thousand dollars he made by buying and selling beans. Adam shocks him by refusing the gift because it is the result of war profiteering and insists that Cal give it back to the farmers from whom he made the profit, though he does appreciate the thought that went behind it. Cal storms out of the room and shuts himself in his bedroom. He is furious, especially because Adam had praised Aron's gift of a good life while rejecting Cal's money. He eventually calms down and goes out for a walk. He meets Aron on the way back from walking Abra home and tells him that he wants to show him something. The next morning Aron enlists in the army, lying about his age.

Chapter 50 - Kate is still stunned from her visit with Cal. She is not used to not being in control of every situation. Joe comes in with some tea and reminds her about Ethel. She offers him ten thousand dollars to "take care of the situation," then writes a note to the sheriff to keep an eye on Joe. He sends one of the girls out to mail the letter and buy some candy, toothbrushes, and tooth powder. Kate soon falls into a reverie about her lonely childhood and the solace she found in *Alice in Wonderland*. She tells the girls that she plans to sleep for a long time, then goes to her room, writes a will in which she leaves everything to Aron, carefully cleans and grooms herself, then takes a pill to end her life. Joe meanwhile has a big night on the town and returns, prepared to confront Kate with the news that Ethel is already dead. He figures it's time to leave Salinas and find a new job, perhaps in Reno. The next morning he goes into Kate's room and finds her dead. He quickly ransacks the place for anything that looks like it might be of value. Before he can get away, a policeman asks him to come down to the station. Joe runs instead, and the officer shoots him dead as he tries to escape.

Chapter 51 - When the Sheriff Quinn goes through Joe's pockets, he finds Kate's will and a set of incriminating pictures of prominent citizens in compromising positions. He calls a lawyer - one of the men in the pictures - to his office. The man assures him that Kate's will is legal, then is shocked when the sheriff shows him the picture in which he plays a starring role. The sheriff writes down the names of all the men in the pictures, burns the photos and their negatives, then tells the lawyer to contact each of the men and inform them that they are no longer in danger of blackmail. Because of the power of the men involved, the sheriff knows that he will lose his job at the next election simply because he knows their secrets. He then goes to the Trask house to let Adam know about Kate's suicide. He also shows him the will. Adam admits that he had never told Aron that Kate was his mother and insists that Aron would want nothing to do with the profits of prostitution. He proposes burning the will, but Quinn tells him that he had opened Kate's safe-deposit box and found it stuffed with money - more than a hundred thousand dollars, along with a marriage certificate. Quinn advises Adam to tell Aron everything, but when he calls for his son, he discovers that he is nowhere to be found.

After Cal had taken Aron to Kate's place of business and told him that Kate was his mother, Aron had punched him hard and run away. Cal then got drunk, unable to handle the guilt of what

he had done to his brother. When he got home, he burned the fifteen thousand dollars he had intended to give to his father. When Lee sees what is going on, he waits for Cal to unburden himself. Cal knows that Aron ran away, but he is afraid that his brother has killed himself. Lee then tells him about Kate's suicide. Finally Cal pulls out a letter he picked up at the post office letting them know that Aron has enlisted in the army.

Chapter 52 - In the winter of 1917-18, the war was not going well for the Allies. Adam, meanwhile, takes a leave of absence from the draft board because of declining health. He frets constantly about Aron, from whom he has heard nothing. Cal is consumed with guilt, blaming himself for Aron running away. Abra has made no attempt to contact the family, avoiding Cal whenever he tries to talk to her. Lee encourages him to invite her over and she agrees to come, but first she shows Cal a postcard she got from Aron; he insisted that he was not good enough for her and warned her to stay away from his father. She confesses to him that she knew about Kate for a long time and that she no longer loved Aron because he was obsessed with his made-up story into which she was supposed to fit. Instead, she has fallen in love with Cal. When she gets home, she burns Aron's letters. Her father, like Adam Trask, is sick.

Chapter 53 - Lee now needs to help Adam with the simplest of tasks. The next morning he reminisces about his father and confesses to Lee that the old man was a thief. Lee muses about the irony of Adam, the most honest man he knew, living off the profits of embezzlement, and Aron, stern and upright, inheriting a fortune from a house of prostitution. Adam decides to pay a visit to the draft board, and Abra arrives, finding only Lee in the house. The two shyly confess their love for one another; Lee wishes that Abra were his daughter and Abra wishes that Lee were her father. Lee goes to his room and brings back a jade button - his only keepsake from his mother - and gives it to Abra. She tells him that she burned Aron's letters and that she has agreed to go to with Cal to see the wild azaleas in bloom. When she leaves, he is waiting for her on the porch and walks her home.

Chapter 54 - The winter weather is bad and the azaleas are late in blooming. Adam seems to be gradually improving, though Lee still spends most of his time caring for him. In Europe, the tide of the war turns with the arrival of American troops. At home, the azaleas finally bloom at the end of May and Cal and Abra skip school to go on the long-anticipated picnic. As they sit by the stream, she confesses that her father is not sick, but terrified that his embezzlement of money from his company will land him in jail. Lee, meanwhile, receives a telegram that he is reluctant to show Adam.

Chapter 55 - the telegram contains news of Aron's death in France. When he reads it, Adam has a stroke. He is paralyzed and the doctors don't know if he can see, hear, or communicate. Cal goes into his room and tells Adam that he is responsible for Aron's sudden departure, and thus for his death and Adam's stroke. A nurse comes to take over Adam's care, and Lee encourages Cal to go to Abra. At Abra's house, his mother forbids him to enter, but Abra sneaks out the back door to see him. She insists that they return to his house, where Lee imparts his wisdom. The nurse tells them that Adam is awake, and the three of them go into his bedroom. Lee tells Adam what Cal did and asks for him to forgive his son and give him his blessing. This Adam does, just before he breathes his last breath.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

- Cyrus Trask - The patriarch of the family, his greatest ambition is for Adam to follow in his footsteps - something in which his elder son has no interest. After a very brief encounter during the Civil War, he lies about his war record and eventually becomes an important figure in Washington. The wealth he amasses and leaves to his sons was likely ill-gotten gain, which Adam is unable to accept.
- Alice Trask - Cyrus' wife.
- Adam Trask - The elder son of Cyrus and Alice, he is quiet and introverted. After serving in the army during the Indian wars and wandering aimlessly for a number of years, he moves to California and buys the best piece of land in the Salinas Valley, though he has little interest in farming. He marries Cathy Ames when he finds her wounded and bleeding on his doorstep, but she shoots him after bearing twins and leaves to work in a brothel. He remains distant from his sons, though he clearly loves Aron more than Cal - a source of considerable friction in the family.
- Charles Trask - Adam's younger brother, he is a bully who remains in the East and becomes a wealthy and successful farmer.
- Cathy (Ames) Trask (Kate) - The representation of evil in the story, she burns down her house with her parents inside, becomes a prostitute, marries Adam Trask, shoots him after bearing twins that might have been fathered by his brother Charles, turns again to prostitution, kills the madam and takes over the brothel, and eventually commits suicide when she comes face to face with the two sons she deserted.
- Edwards - A New England man who runs a prostitution ring, hires Cathy, falls in love with her, then nearly beats her to death when he finds out that she murdered her parents.
- Faye - The madam of the brothel in Salinas where Kate finds employment, she is ultimately poisoned by Kate so the latter can take over the business.
- Joe Valery - The bouncer at Kate's brothel, he gradually gains control over her as her health declines. When she commits suicide, he steals her money, but is gunned down by the sheriff when he tries to flee town.
- Lee - Adam's Chinese-American servant, he is the greatest source of wisdom in the book, befriendng in turn Samuel Hamilton, Adam and Aron Trask, and Abra Bacon.
- Caleb (Cal) Trask - The aggressive twin, he is more like his mother than he is willing to admit. He spends his life trying to win his father's love, but only at the end of the book does he perceive some hint of forgiveness and acceptance.
- Aaron (Aron) Trask - Quiet like his father, Aron wants to become an Episcopal priest, which complicates his lifelong love for Abra Bacon. Contrary to his father's wishes, he goes to

Stanford, but drops out after a year, deciding that he and Abra should marry and take over the family farm. When Cal introduces him to his mother, the madam of the most corrupt whorehouse in Salinas, Aron runs away to join the army and is killed in the First World War.

- Abra Bacon - The daughter of a neighbor of the Trask family, she and Aron decide as children that they are meant for each other. She is the dominant member of the couple and can't understand why Aron suddenly runs away and joins the army, for which he is manifestly unsuited. After Aron dies in battle, she and Cal fall in love.
- Samuel Hamilton - Along with Lee, Samuel is the source of wisdom in the story. An Irish immigrant who brings his family to California, he buys the worst piece of land in the Salinas Valley and never makes it profitable, though he keeps his large family together with his many inventions and the handyman work he does for his neighbors. He was in reality John Steinbeck's grandfather.
- Liza Hamilton - Samuel's wife, she is tough and stern and brings stability to a family that sorely needs it.
- Will Hamilton - The second son of Samuel and Liza, he becomes a wealthy businessman and forms a partnership with Cal that allows the latter to accumulate money that he hopes will pay off his father's debts.
- Olive (Hamilton) Steinbeck - One of Samuel's many daughters, she becomes a schoolteacher and eventually marries, bearing a son named John.
- John Steinbeck - Olive's only son, he is the narrator of the story though he plays only a minor role in the plot.

NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

"I always found in myself a dread of west and a love of east." (ch.1)

"Charles had one great quality. He was never sorry - ever." (ch.2)

"[Adam] developed a love for poor people he could not have conceived if he had not been poor himself." (ch.7)

"Won't you get rid of her? Please, Adam. Throw her out. She'll tear you to pieces. She'll destroy you, Adam, she'll destroy you." (Charles, ch.11)

"The world was changing, and sweetness was gone, and virtue too. Worry had crept on a corroding world, and what was lost - good manners, ease, and beauty? Ladies were not ladies any more, and you couldn't trust a gentleman's word." (ch.12)

“In our time mass or collective production has entered our economics, our politics, and even our religion, so that some nations have substituted the idea collective for the idea God. This in my time is the danger.” (ch.13)

“This I would fight for: the freedom of the mind to take any direction it wishes, undirected. And this I must fight against: any idea, religion, or government which limits or destroys the individual.” (ch.13)

“Some men are friends with the whole world in their heart, and there are others that hate themselves and spread their hatred around like butter on hot bread.” (Samuel, ch.13)

“You’d go a good long road before you’d find a man, and he very old, who wished to bring back a golden past. Men were notched and comfortable in the present, hard and unfruitful as it was, but only as a doorstep into a fantastic future.” (ch.15)

“Cathy had the one quality required of a great and successful criminal: she trusted no one, confided in no one.” (ch.15)

“You’re going to pass something down no matter what you do or if you do nothing. Even if you let yourself go fallow, the weeds will grow and the brambles. Something will grow.” (Samuel, ch.18)

“I would be disappointed if you [Joe] had not become an atheist, and I read pleasantly that you have, in your age and wisdom, accepted agnosticism the way you’d take a cookie on a full stomach. But I would ask you with all your understanding heart not to try to convert your mother. Your last letter only made her think you are not well. Your mother does not believe there are many ills incurable by good strong soup. She puts your brave attack on the structure of our civilization down to a stomach ache. It worries her. Her faith is a mountain, and you, my son, haven’t even got a shovel yet.” (Samuel, ch.22)

“To you she was [beautiful] because you built her. I don’t think you ever saw her - only your own creation.” (Samuel, ch.22)

“Names are a great mystery. I’ve never known whether the name is molded by the child or the child changed to fit the name.” (Samuel, ch.22)

“Two stories have haunted us and followed us from our beginning. We carry them along with us like invisible tails - the story of original sin and the story of Cain and Abel.” (Samuel, ch.22)

“Because we are descended from this. This is our father. Some of our guilt is absorbed in our ancestry. What chance did we have? We are the children of our father. It means we aren’t the first. It’s an excuse, and there aren’t enough excuses in the world.” (Adam, ch.22)

“The greatest terror a child can have is that he is not loved, and rejection is the hell he fears. I think everyone in the world to a large or small extent has felt rejection. And with rejection comes

anger, and with anger some kind of crime in revenge for the rejection, and with the crime guilt - and there is the story of mankind.” (Lee, ch.22)

“There are many millions in their sects and churches who feel the order, ‘Do thou,’ and throw their weight into obedience. And there are millions more who feel predestination in ‘Thou shalt.’ Nothing they may do can interfere with what will be. But ‘Thou mayest’! Why, that makes a man great, that gives him stature with the gods, for in his weakness and his filth and his murder of his brother he has still the great choice. he can choose his course and fight it through and win.” (Lee, ch.24)

“Aron was content to be a part of his world, but Cal must change it.” (ch.27)

“Humans are caught - in their lives, in their thoughts, in their hungers and ambitions, in their avarice and cruelty, and in their kindness and generosity too - in a net of good and evil. I think this is the only story we have and that it occurs on all levels of feeling and intelligence.” (ch.34)

“Money’s easy to make if its money you want. But with a few exceptions people don’t want money. They want luxury and they want love and they want admiration.” (Lee, ch.49)

“Riches seem to come to the poor in spirit, the poor in interest and joy.” (Lee, ch.53)

“I had to find out my stupidities for myself. These were my stupidities: I thought the good are destroyed while the evil survive and prosper. I thought that once an angry and disgusted God poured molten fire from a crucible to destroy or to purify his little handiwork of mud. I thought I had inherited both the scars of the fire and the impurities which made the fire necessary.” (Lee, ch.55)

“Timshel.” (Adam, ch.55)

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. The title of John Steinbeck’s *East of Eden* is taken from Genesis 4:16, where Cain, after killing his brother Abel, is sent away by the Lord and settles “in the land of Nod, east of Eden.” What is the significance of the title of the novel? Who lives or is sent “east of Eden”? Does Steinbeck picture it as a place to which the wicked are exiled, or as the place where all of humanity resides? Support your analysis with specifics from the novel.
2. The title of John Steinbeck’s *East of Eden* is taken from Genesis 4:16, where Cain, after killing his brother Abel, is sent away by the Lord and settles “in the land of Nod, east of Eden.” The symbolism of the early chapters of Genesis plays a major role in the narrative. Discuss how Adam Trask and his wife Cathy, later known as Kate, are like Adam and Eve. Be sure to point out both similarities and differences and incorporate specifics from the plot of the novel.

3. The title of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* is taken from Genesis 4:16, where Cain, after killing his brother Abel, is sent away by the Lord and settles "in the land of Nod, east of Eden." The symbolism of the early chapters of Genesis plays a major role in the narrative. The story contains two sets of brothers who are in conflict with one another. Evaluate the extent to which Charles and Adam Trask are like Cain and Abel. What parallels is the author seeking to draw? Be sure to note also how the two differ from the biblical siblings.
4. The title of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* is taken from Genesis 4:16, where Cain, after killing his brother Abel, is sent away by the Lord and settles "in the land of Nod, east of Eden." The symbolism of the early chapters of Genesis plays a major role in the narrative. The story contains two sets of brothers who are in conflict with one another. Evaluate the extent to which Cal and Aron Trask are like Cain and Abel. What parallels is the author seeking to draw? Be sure to note also how the two differ from the biblical siblings, both in their characters and in the outcome of the story.
5. John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* contains two sets of brothers who fit into the Cain and Abel motif that dominates the narrative. Compare and contrast Charles and Cal, the two Cain figures. In what ways are they like the biblical Cain and in what ways are they different? In what ways are they like and unlike one another?
6. John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* contains two sets of brothers who fit into the Cain and Abel motif that dominates the narrative. Compare and contrast Adam and Aron, the two Abel figures. In what ways are they like the biblical Abel and in what ways are they different? In what ways are they like and unlike one another?
7. John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* contains many characters who are desperately seeking love from those who seem to them unwilling to give it. Choose three such characters and discuss how they go about seeking love and the extent to which they succeed or fail.
8. John Steinbeck, the author of *East of Eden*, grew up in the Salinas Valley in California where the novel takes place. His love for the region is evident from the first chapter of the novel and throughout the story. Discuss, being sure to cite specifics, how the author's love for the novel's setting appears in both the descriptive passages and the impact of the setting on the narrative.
9. Critics of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* have often argued that Cathy, or Kate, is too thoroughly evil to be credible. Do you agree? Does she ever demonstrate any redeeming qualities? Is she more like Eve, who in the Bible succumbed to temptation, or the serpent, who was responsible for introducing evil into Paradise?
10. John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* contains two characters who are noted for their wisdom, Samuel Hamilton and Adam Trask's Chinese cook Lee. Compare and contrast the wisdom of the two men and the ways that wisdom impacts the characters with whom they interact. Be sure to cite specifics as you develop your arguments.

11. In John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, three members of the Trask family, Cyrus, Adam, and Aron, get involved in warfare in the military. The outcomes of those times in the army is very different for the three men. Discuss how military experience affects the three and what this indicates about the author's view of war.
12. In John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, Cathy, or Kate, manages one evil deed after another and never seems to get punished for what she does. Is this really the case, or does she ultimately suffer the consequences of her wickedness? If so, how? If not, why not?
13. In John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, Cal Trask is overwhelmed with guilt because he believes he is responsible for his brother's death. To what extent does he bear that responsibility? Does he, unlike Cain in Genesis 4, find forgiveness and redemption? Why or why not?
14. A key concept in John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* is *timshel*, which Lee argues is a Hebrew word meaning "you may choose," though no such Hebrew word exists. How does the idea of *timshel* affect the plot and characters in the novel? Choose three characters who are faced with the need to choose their own fate and discuss their choices and the consequences of those choices. What does Adam Trask mean when his last word before dying is *timshel*?
15. Virtually the last word in John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* is *timshel*, spoken by Adam Trask on his deathbed. Steinbeck wants the reader to conclude that each individual faces the choice between good and evil and is not predestined by his parentage, upbringing, or experience in a way that makes change impossible. Evaluate this idea on the basis of Scripture, being sure to use specific quotations from the Bible as well as from the novel.
16. Free will, embodied in the concept of *timshel*, is central to John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*. He believes that the existence of the capacity of each individual to choose either good or evil is a source of great hope, not only for people like Cal Trask, but for humanity as a whole. Evaluate this idea from a biblical perspective, being sure to consider the presence of and the need for grace in the two systems of thought.
17. In Genesis 4:7, the Lord warns Cain that sin is crouching at his door, but he must rule over it. This verse is the source of the concept of *timshel* in John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*. There Lee argues that the verb has been mistranslated and should refer to choice rather than rule. Does the change in reading really make any difference in the meaning of the verse? Is God not setting before Cain a choice? Compare and contrast the ways this concept is used in the Bible and in the novel.
18. In John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, Abra Bacon falls in love with Aron Trask and, after Aron's death in World War I, with his brother Cal. In the end, she argues that she is more suited to Cal, who describes himself as bad, than to the virtuous Aron. Do you agree? Why or why not? With which of the twin brothers would she have made a happier marriage, and why?

19. John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* has much to say about the struggle between good and evil, in society at large, within families, and within individuals. Choose three characters who struggle with the good and evil they find within themselves and describe those struggles. Do any of them find resolution, or is the conflict within an unending one? In your discussion, incorporate what Scripture says about the struggle between good and evil in the individual in Romans 7:15-25.
20. In John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, trouble and conflict frequently occur when a father favors one son over another. While Steinbeck draws this from the story of Cain and Abel in the Bible, Scripture contains many other examples of paternal favoritism and its deleterious consequences, such as Abraham favoring Isaac over Ishmael, Isaac favoring Esau while Rebekah favors Jacob, and Jacob favoring Joseph over his brothers. Drawing on both the examples in the novel and those in Scripture, discuss the dangers and consequences of parental favoritism.
21. In John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, Cathy Trask, or Kate, is a master manipulator, controlling others for her own gratification. On several occasions in the story, however, she finds that her power over someone no longer exists, most notably with Adam and Cal. Discuss what causes her to lose her power over these men. What does this say, not only about Kate, but also about the overall conflict between good and evil in the world?
22. In John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, inherited wealth plays a significant role in the development of many of the characters. Charles and Adam inherit a fortune from Cyrus, Adam and Cathy inherit Charles' accumulated wealth, and Cathy leaves her entire fortune to Aron. To what extent is this inheritance, in each case representing ill-gotten gains, passed down through the generations of the Trask family a symbol of original sin and its consequences? Evaluate the theological implications of the symbolism.
23. In John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, Lee refers to Aron as a coward when he learns of his death in battle in World War I. What does he mean by this? Does Aron's consistent pattern of withdrawal from conflict rather than confronting evil mark him as a moral coward, or ought his behavior be interpreted in some other way?
24. In John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, the main characters, with the exception of the vile Cathy Ames, are morally complex, neither fully good nor fully evil. Discuss the Cain figures, Charles and Cal, and evaluate the extent to which they deviate from the example of Cain in the Bible by displaying aspects of goodness in their characters.
25. In John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, the main characters, with the exception of the vile Cathy Ames, are morally complex, neither fully good nor fully evil. Discuss the Abel figures, Adam and Aron, and evaluate the weaknesses that make them well-rounded people rather than paragons of virtue.

26. John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* contains many contrasting characters or foils. One contrast that may be less than obvious, yet is essential to the development of the plot, is that between the patriarchs of the two central families, Samuel Hamilton and Cyrus Trask. Compare and contrast the two men, discussing not only their personalities and behavior, but also the impact they have on their children and grandchildren.
27. Sibling rivalry is a theme that appears in many works of literature. Compare and contrast the roles of conflict between brothers in John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* and Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*. Consider the ways in which the brothers portray the conflict of good versus evil and how they demonstrate the respective authors' views of that conflict and its role in human life.
28. Sibling rivalry is a theme that appears in many works of literature. Compare and contrast the roles of conflict between brothers in John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae*. Consider the ways in which the brothers portray the conflict of good versus evil and how they demonstrate the respective authors' views of that conflict and its role in human life.
29. Sibling rivalry is a theme that appears in many works of literature. Compare and contrast the roles of conflict between brothers in John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* and Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*. Consider the ways in which the brothers portray the conflict of good versus evil and how they demonstrate the respective authors' views of that conflict and its role in human life.
30. John Steinbeck's novels consistently display a warm affection for humanity, especially those who are poor and downtrodden. While his earlier works display the nobility of the characters in the midst of tragic circumstances they are unable to change, his later works are more openly optimistic about human potential. Along those lines, respond to the following statement: "While *The Grapes of Wrath* shows the ability of mankind to survive and rise above suffering, *East of Eden* portrays them as capable of gaining victory over evil, both in the world around him and in his own heart." Support your analysis with specifics from both novels.
31. John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* contains two love triangles that help to bring out the jealousy that divides the two sets of brothers. In the first, Adam loves and marries Cathy while she sleeps with Charles. In the second, Aron loves and plans to marry Abra while she eventually falls in love with and presumably marries Cal. What do these triangles say about the pairs of brothers, their characters, and their relationships to one another? How do the two women help to bring out these qualities?
32. John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* provides insight into the casual racism that characterized early twentieth-century America. How does the novel portray attitudes toward and treatment of the Chinese and Indians during that period in history? What is the author's attitude toward these matters? Be sure to cite specifics in developing your arguments.

33. In John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, Samuel and Liza Hamilton had nine children, all of whom are very different from one another. To what extent do these children represent types that serve to portray the variety of characters that populated the Old West? What is the author communicating when he describes those who die and those who survive?
34. In John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, much is made of the secret that Kate is the mother of the Trask twins. Why is that knowledge so carefully concealed? How does becoming aware of the truth of their parentage affect Cal and Aron, and why does it affect them so differently? What does this aspect of the plot indicate about the author's belief in determinism - that the identity of someone's parents, though long unknown to them, in reality affects his or her destiny?
35. John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* is extremely binary, identifying characters as either good or evil. As the novel draws to its conclusion, this simplistic concept of human nature begins to change, particularly with regard to the Trask twins. In what ways does the "good" son, Aron, show signs of weakness or even selfishness, while the "evil" son, Cal, begins to make choices that show that he is rejecting what he had originally seen as his blood-bound destiny and opting for good rather than evil? What incidents in the story contribute to these changes?
36. John Steinbeck clearly modeled *East of Eden* on the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4:1-16, but it also contains elements of Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). Consider the two sets of brothers at the center of the story and discuss how they illustrate aspects of Jesus' parable.
37. Discuss the roles played by Lee in the Trask family in John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*. Consider his relationships to Adam, Aron, Cal, and even Abra in your analysis. To what extent does he serve as the moral center of the novel?
38. In John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, Cal and Adam Trask are presented as Cain and Abel figures, though their characters and relationship become more complex as the novel reaches its conclusion. What is often forgotten, however, is that their real names - Caleb and Aaron - are also taken from biblical figures. In what ways are the boys like their real namesakes? Be sure to include details, both from the novel and from the biblical narratives involving the characters in question.
39. John Steinbeck, in speaking of *East of Eden*, said "I will tell...the greatest story of all - the story of good and evil, of strength and weakness, of love and hate, of beauty and ugliness. I shall try to demonstrate...how these doubles are inseparable." To what extent did he achieve his end in what is considered his greatest novel? Give special attention to the idea that the doubles he describes are inseparable. What did he mean by this, and how does the novel illustrate it?

40. In John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, the Hamilton family is Steinbeck's own, while the Trask family is fictional. Steinbeck wrote the book for his two young sons, intending to give them a vivid picture, both of the Salinas Valley he loved and the family from which they had sprung. Many critics, however, have noted that the Hamilton family plays a relatively small part in the novel, which really focuses on the Trasks. To what extent is this a valid criticism? What contributions do the Hamiltons make to the plot and themes of the novel?
41. One critic described John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* as "casually misogynistic." Do you agree? Analyze the author's treatment of women. Be sure not to give your entire attention to Cathy and Abra, but consider the minor female characters as well and the ways in which they are presented.
42. One study guide on John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* suggested that a key theme in the novel is that "Humans can choose to overcome sinful decisions but not our sinful natures." To what extent is this statement a fair summation of a key idea in Steinbeck's masterpiece? To what extent is it biblical?
43. In John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, the two Abel figures, Adam and Aron Trask, are otherworldly, naive, and out of touch with reality in many ways. One of the ways this appears is in their inability to make accurate judgments about the people around them, especially the women in their lives. Compare and contrast the idealistic views Adam and Aron have of Cathy and Abra, respectively. How do these idealistic pictures ultimately undermine their relationships?
44. Critics of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* generally acknowledge that the real protagonist of the sweeping narrative is Cal Trask, the son who at the end of the story finally receives his father's deathbed blessing. What should we conclude from the fact that one of the Cain figures turns out to be the hero of the story rather than one of the Abel figures? What is Steinbeck trying to convey by structuring the narrative in this way?
45. In a number of cases in John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, children fear that they will become like their parents. Choose three parent-child pairs in the story and discuss ways in which they are both like and different from their parents. What is Steinbeck saying about the legitimacy of inherited traits from one generation to the next?
46. The concept of *timshel* in John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* implies that ultimately each individual is responsible for his own salvation. From a biblical perspective, what would be the consequences of living according to the precept the author advocates? Make use of both the novel and the Scriptures in developing your arguments.
47. John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* contains ethnic stereotypes common to the era in which he was writing, with his treatment of Lee being the prime example. Yet at the same time he undermines those stereotypes. How does he do so? Consider not only the way Steinbeck transcends the ethnic stereotypes of his day, but also the ways in which his characters do so, Lee included.

48. In chapter 12 of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, the author bemoans the changes that have taken place in the world by the beginning of the twentieth century (ironically, he is describing the very time during which he was born). As he reminisces, one of the ways in which he deplors the new age is this: "The world was changing, and sweetness was gone, and virtue too. Worry had crept on a corroding world, and what was lost - good manners, ease, and beauty? Ladies were not ladies any more, and you couldn't trust a gentleman's word." To what extent does this criticism fit the early years of the twenty-first century as well? Are such critiques universal - do people always think that the "good old days" were better than the world in which they now live? Why or why not?
49. In chapter 13 of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, the narrator criticizes the changing worldview of the early twentieth century with these words: "In our time mass or collective production has entered our economics, our politics, and even our religion, so that some nations have substituted the idea collective for the idea God. This in my time is the danger." In what ways was this true of the early twentieth century? In what ways is it even more true of the time in which we live? Why did Steinbeck consider this mode of thought so dangerous? Is it still dangerous today? Why or why not?
50. In chapter 13 of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, the narrator voices one of the basic themes of the novel: "This I would fight for: the freedom of the mind to take any direction it wishes, undirected. And this I must fight against: any idea, religion, or government which limits or destroys the individual." Discuss how this assertion of radical human freedom and individualism appears throughout the novel and evaluate it biblically. Why is this as dangerous as the collectivism he deplors earlier in the same chapter?
51. In chapter 15 of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, the narrator says, "You'd go a good long road before you'd find a man, and he very old, who wished to bring back a golden past. Men were notched and comfortable in the present, hard and unfruitful as it was, but only as a doorstep into a fantastic future." The novel contains many dichotomies, the principal one being the struggle between good and evil. But Steinbeck also divides people into those who look to the past and those who look to the future. Choose one character from the novel who fits each of the descriptions, show how he or she fits it, and discuss which approach Steinbeck favors. How does this relate to the optimistic or pessimistic outlook of the novel?
52. In chapter 18 of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, Samuel Hamilton tries to bring Adam Trask out of his deep depression after he is shot and deserted by his wife. Adam has been ignoring his twin sons, but Samuel warns him that doing nothing is in reality doing something: "You're going to pass something down no matter what you do or if you do nothing. Even if you let yourself go fallow, the weeds will grow and the brambles. Something will grow." Adam does not emerge from his depression for many years. To what extent does Samuel's prophecy come true in the lives of the boys?

53. In chapter 22 of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, Samuel Hamilton's son Joe goes off to Stanford and rejects the Christian faith in which he has been raised. Samuel's response is an interesting one: "I would be disappointed if you [Joe] had not become an atheist, and I read pleasantly that you have, in your age and wisdom, accepted agnosticism the way you'd take a cookie on a full stomach. But I would ask you with all your understanding heart not to try to convert your mother. Your last letter only made her think you are not well. Your mother does not believe there are many ills incurable by good strong soup. She puts your brave attack on the structure of our civilization down to a stomach ache. It worries her. Her faith is a mountain, and you, my son, haven't even got a shovel yet." Analyze Samuel's homespun critique of the philosophical and religious rebellion characteristic of youth. Is he right to minimize Joe's new worldview, arguing that his "brave attack on the structure of our civilization" hasn't even armed him with so much as a shovel in the face of a mighty mountain? Relate this to the forms of rebellion we find among the young people of today.
54. In chapter 22 of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, Samuel Hamilton tries to open Adam's eyes to the true nature of Cathy, his wife. "To you she was [beautiful] because you built her. I don't think you ever saw her - only your own creation." In what ways did Adam fall in love with an idealized version of Cathy that had nothing to do with who she really was? To what extent may the same be said of Aron's love for Abra later in the book? What is the danger of worshipping a self-made idol in the form of another person?
55. In Bible times, names given to children had meaning; fathers were thought to play a prophetic role in naming their children and thus defining their characters. In chapter 22 of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, Samuel Hamilton reflects on the significance of this practice when he says, "Names are a great mystery. I've never known whether the name is molded by the child or the child changed to fit the name." Which is the case in the novel? Choose three characters who are named after people in the Bible and discuss whether the name shapes the man or the man gives new meaning to the name.
56. In chapter 22 of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, Adam Trask gives vent to his despair over what he sees as his unalterable destiny: "Because we are descended from this. This is our father. Some of our guilt is absorbed in our ancestry. What chance did we have? We are the children of our father. It means we aren't the first. It's an excuse, and there aren't enough excuses in the world." Discuss the validity of his comment. Consider the biblical teaching on original sin, the idea that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, and the author's thematic emphasis on *timshel* in your analysis.
57. In chapter 22 of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, the author puts in the mouth of the Chinese servant Lee his basic understanding of the cause of evil in the world. He argues that rejection, or lack of love, leads to anger, some form of criminal revenge, and ultimately guilt. He concludes that "if rejection could be amputated, the human would not be what he is." Evaluate this assessment of the roots of human sin and guilt from a biblical perspective. Be sure to use specific passages from Scripture as well as details and quotations from the novel.

58. In chapter 24 of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, Lee says, "There are many millions in their sects and churches who feel the order, 'Do thou,' and throw their weight into obedience. And there are millions more who feel predestination in 'Thou shalt.' Nothing they may do can interfere with what will be. But 'Thou mayest'! Why, that makes a man great, that gives him stature with the gods, for in his weakness and his filth and his murder of his brother he has still the great choice. he can choose his course and fight it through and win." Here he contrasts three approaches to life - legalism, fatalism, and free will. Why are all three of these contrary to Scripture? How would you have sought to console Adam in the midst of his confusion and despair?
59. In the final chapter of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, Lee says, "I had to find out my stupidities for myself. These were my stupidities: I thought the good are destroyed while the evil survive and prosper. I thought that once an angry and disgusted God poured molten fire from a crucible to destroy or to purify his little handiwork of mud. I thought I had inherited both the scars of the fire and the impurities which made the fire necessary." Evaluate this statement from Scripture. Consider both Asaph's complaints in Psalm 73 and what the Bible says about both the purifying and destructive uses of fire in the hands of God. Does Lee understand any of these things? Why or why not?