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East of Eden

John Steinbeck

East of Eden

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East of Eden

JOHN STEINBECK

Level 6

Retold by Mary Gladwin

Series Editors: Andy Hopkins and Jocelyn Potter

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Introduction

I believe there is one story in the world, and only one, that has inspired and frightened us. Humans are caught—in their lives, in their thoughts, in their hungers and ambitions, in their greediness and cruelty, and in their kindness and generosity too—in a net of good and evil.

There is no other story. A man will have only one question left at the end of his life: was it good or was it evil? And all novels, all poetry, are built on the never-ending contest in ourselves between good and evil.

John Steinbeck explores these ideas in *East of Eden* (1952), which is part fiction and part personal history. It tells the story of two American families living in California between 1862 and 1918.

At that time, large numbers of immigrants were arriving in the United States from Europe. Many of them were poor, and they were hoping for better opportunities in the new country. Among these immigrants were the author's grandparents, Samuel and Liza Hamilton, who came from northern Ireland.

Like many others, the Hamiltons moved to the west of the United States in search of land. There they raised nine children, including Steinbeck's mother, on a poor farm. We hear Steinbeck's own voice as he talks about his memories of the Salinas Valley in California, the setting for many of his novels. By the 1950s, when *East of Eden* appeared, the population was growing and modernizing fast, and one of Steinbeck's aims in writing this novel was to describe the Salinas Valley of the past to his young sons, Thom and John.

In *East of Eden*, Adam Trask and his wife become the Hamiltons' neighbors. In contrast to the Hamiltons, they are wealthy. Adam buys a fine farm in the Salinas Valley and plans to create a new "Garden of Eden" for his family. Whenever he has difficulties, Samuel Hamilton gives him good advice.

We learn about Adam's complex relationship with his brother Charles, his disastrous marriage, and the birth of his twin sons, Cal and Aron. Every member of the Trask family is eventually affected by jealousy, love, and a desire for revenge.

Steinbeck raises a number of moral issues in this book. Through Adam's eyes, we become aware of the cruel treatment of the native people of America, who were often driven off their land and killed by European settlers. The last part of the story takes place during the First World War. The author asks questions which are relevant to any war. Is it fair that some young men are sent away to fight, but others are excused? And is it right or wrong to profit financially from a wartime situation? Steinbeck's own opinions are clear. More important, though, are Steinbeck's questions about human nature: "Are some people born good and others born evil? And can they change the way they are?"

We meet, for example, Cathy Ames, who was "born without kindness or a conscience... Her small, heart-shaped face and her wide-apart blue eyes made her look innocent. Nobody could see the evil in her soul." Will she pass on her cruelty to her sons, or can they freely choose to live good lives or evil ones? Writing about these timeless questions has assured John Steinbeck's place as one of the greatest American novelists.

In *East of Eden* Steinbeck refers to the Book of Genesis, in the Bible, which tells the story of Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve. There is jealousy between the pairs of brothers: Cain and Abel, Charles and Adam, and Cal and Aron. Three of these boys suffer their father's rejection, and seek revenge.

East of Eden covers an eventful period in American history and many of the characters are touched by national and international events. The issue of slavery split the country, and between 1861 and 1865 the northern and southern states were engaged in a bloody civil war. After the war ended, the country recovered and there was a period of rapid economic growth. Settlers moved

west to build new farms and adopted new mechanical methods of farming. The railroads expanded and opened up new production areas and markets. The United States soon became the world's leading agricultural producer.

By 1916, the country's population had passed 100 million. The war in Europe led to a demand for American products. Everyone, including farmers and unskilled workers, shared in the good fortune. In 1917, however, President Woodrow Wilson took his country into the First World War on the side of Britain and France. He said: "We look for no profit. We look for no advantage... We are fighting for what we believe and wish to be the rights of mankind and for the future peace and security of the world." Every man between the ages of twenty-one and thirty had to register for the army. Almost 1.5 million men took part in the fighting in Europe and 116,516 were killed in action or died of their wounds.

Steinbeck considered *East of Eden* to be one of his most important works. He said, "This is the big one as far as I'm concerned. Always before I held something back for later. Nothing is held back here." He later stated: "It has everything in it I have been able to learn about my... profession in all these years." He further claimed: "I think everything else I have written has been, in a sense, practice for this."

The novel became a best-seller and has never been out of print. In 1955 it was made into a film by Elia Kazan, starring James Dean as Cal.

John Steinbeck was born in Salinas, California, in 1902. His mother, Olive Hamilton, was a teacher who encouraged his interest in literature. He studied at Stanford University, but left without graduating. He did a number of different jobs, including work on ranches, and learned about the lives of agricultural workers at that time. He then moved to New York to begin a

career as a writer. However, he was not successful there, so he returned to California and worked on his first novel, *The Cup of Gold* (1929).

His first successful book was *Tortilla Flat* (1935), a series of humorous short stories. *In Dubious Battle* (1936) described a farm workers' strike in California. It was followed by *Of Mice and Men* (1937), a powerful story of broken dreams; four short stories about the growing awareness of a young boy, *The Red Pony* (1937), and another book of short stories, *The Long Valley* (1938).

Many of Steinbeck's novels examine social issues and draw attention to the problems of the poor. *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), one of his most famous novels, won the Pulitzer Prize. This is the story of a family of poor farmers who have to leave their home in Oklahoma as huge dust storms destroy the land. Between 1934 and 1938, there were more than 240 of these storms, which turned a vast area of land into the Dust Bowl. The Joad family moves to California to work as farm laborers. They believe that they will find wealth and security; instead they find a hell on earth where employers take advantage of their workers.

The Grapes of Wrath was made into a famous movie in 1940, starring Henry Fonda. The story caught the imagination of the American public. Many people put pressure on the government to take action and help poor workers. At the same time, however, the book angered many farm owners who had influence with the authorities. The novel is still banned in some schools in the United States.

The Grapes of Wrath, *The Red Pony* and *Of Mice and Men* are all Penguin Readers; *The Pearl* (1947), the tragic story of a poor Mexican pearl fisherman, can be found in the Penguin Active Reading series.

Steinbeck wrote about the Second World War for the *New York Herald Tribune*, and these articles were later published as *Once There was a War*. *Cannery Row*, another California novel, was published

in 1945. In *The Winter of our Discontent* (1961), he wrote about a poor but honest man who struggles with his conscience. For *Travels with Charley* (1962), Steinbeck traveled across America for three months with his dog, discovering the country and its people.

The Winter of Our Discontent, set in modern America, was Steinbeck's last major novel. The book was not well received by reviewers. Not even the Nobel Prize for Literature, which Steinbeck received in 1962, changed opinions. *The New York Times* asked why the judges for the prize could not have made a better choice. Steinbeck found this public criticism difficult. In later years he worked as a journalist and divided his time between New York and California. He also went to Vietnam to report on the war.

In his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize, Steinbeck spoke about the "high duties and the responsibilities of the makers of literature." He said that writers should show people's faults and failures so that they can improve themselves. But at the same time, they should "declare and celebrate man's proven capacity for greatness of heart and spirit."

John Steinbeck died of a heart attack in New York in 1968. His books, and the movies made from them, are enjoyed all over the world. There is a National Steinbeck Center in Salinas, which holds an annual Steinbeck Festival where people discuss the author's life and work.

Chapter 1 The New Americans

The Salinas Valley is long and narrow, and it lies between two mountain ranges in Northern California. The Salinas River twists and turns through the center until it falls at last into Monterey Bay.

I remember the Gabilan Mountains to the east of the valley. They were light and sunny and lovely, and they invited you to climb into their warm foothills. The Santa Lucias stood up darkly against the sky to the west, and they were unfriendly and dangerous. I always loved the East and feared the West, but I don't know why. Maybe it was because the morning came over the peaks of the Gabilans, and the night approached from the Santa Lucias.

The floor of the Salinas Valley was wide and flat. After a rainy winter, the valley was carpeted with spring flowers of all colors: bright blue and white, burning orange, red, and mustard yellow. In the shade of the oak trees, green plants grew and gave a good smell. In June the grasses on the hills turned gold and yellow and red. The soil in the valley was deep and rich, but in the foothills it was poor and thin.

There were good years, when the rainfall was plentiful, but there were also very bad years. The water came in a thirty-year cycle. There would be five or six wet, wonderful years followed by six or seven good years. Then came the dry years when the earth dried and cracked and the streams stopped. The grass was scarce, the cattle grew thin, and a hot, dry wind blew dust down the valley. Then the farmers and the ranchers hated the Salinas Valley. Some families would sell out for nearly nothing and move away. During the dry years, the people forgot about the rich years, and when the wet years returned, they lost all memory of the dry years. It was always that way.

The first people who lived in the Salinas Valley were the Indians. They lived on insects, nuts, and shellfish. Then came the soldiers and priests sent by the King of Spain. They explored the land greedily for gold and souls. They made maps and named everything they saw. Buena Vista was a beautiful view, Laguna Seca was a dry lake, and Salinas was white like salt.

After that came the Americans, even greedier because there were more of them. They occupied the valley land first, then moved into the foothills. Soon there were wooden farmhouses and growing families wherever there was water. The farmers planted square fields of corn and wheat, and long lines of trees to protect the topsoil from the wind. The trails between the farms became roads. Stores and workshops opened along the roads, and little towns grew up around them—Bradley, King City, Greenfield.

And this is the way the Salinas Valley was when my grandfather brought his wife and settled in the foothills east of King City. I must depend on stories, old photographs, and memories to tell you the story of the Hamiltons.

Young Samuel Hamilton and his wife came from the north of Ireland in around 1870. He was the son of small farmers, not rich but not poor. They were well-educated and well-read, and they were related to great families as well as humble ones.

I do not know why Samuel left that green land. He was not a political man, so he surely was not a rebel. He was perfectly honest, so it was not the police. In my family, they whispered that he loved a woman who was not his wife.

Samuel was good-looking and charming, with very blue eyes. He came to the Salinas Valley with his hard, little Irish wife, Liza, who was as humorless as a chicken. She had a strict moral code, and she disapproved of everything that was pleasant. We never knew how Samuel met and married her. He was a man full of love, but his wife never showed her feelings.

When they arrived in the Salinas Valley, all the good land was taken, so they settled on the poor land in the hills to the east of King City. Samuel took one piece of land for himself, one for his wife, and another for their unborn child. Over the years nine children were born, four boys and five girls, and more land was added to the ranch each time. If the land had been good, the Hamiltons would have been rich. But the soil was poor and there was no water, so their cattle stayed thin even in good years.

Samuel was full of energy and invention. He built a house and a barn and a blacksmith shop. He was a good carpenter and clever with his hands, but he never made any money. He built a machine for digging wells, and he found water on other men's land but not on his. And he invented another machine that harvested other farmers' wheat. Other men took Samuel's ideas and made money from them, but he never did.

Men came from all over the valley to his blacksmith shop. He repaired their tools and replaced their horseshoes, but he was not a businessman. His customers promised to pay him after the harvest, then after Christmas. Then they forgot and he did not know how to remind them.

Men also came to the blacksmith shop just to visit Samuel. They loved to listen to his rich, deep voice as he talked about the world outside the Salinas Valley. He had a gift for telling stories, and there were always three or four men standing around him as he hammered. They brought whiskey, too, and drank it away from Mrs. Hamilton's watchful eye.

Samuel was a good listener and people trusted him with their secrets. He had some knowledge of medicine as well, and a gentle touch. He delivered all of his own children, and neighbors often called him to help with a difficult birth. There were not many doctors at that time.

Soon all the land was settled in the foothills around the Salinas Valley; it was given by the government to people who agreed to

build on it. Many settlers took more land than they needed because in Europe land meant wealth. In California, though, some men owned large farms but they were still poor.

Although many people arrived penniless in the Salinas Valley, others arrived with money to start a new life. They bought the best land in the valley, built fine houses, and planted wheat. Adam Trask was one of these men.

Chapter 2 Brothers and Rivals

Adam Trask was born on a farm near a little town in Connecticut in 1862, six months after his father Cyrus joined the army. It was the time of the American Civil War. Cyrus Trask enjoyed his short training period, and the drinking and gambling and women that were part of army life. Then, he marched south with the Connecticut soldiers.

He first saw the enemy at eight o'clock on a spring morning. At eight-thirty, a bullet tore through his right leg, and an army doctor cut the leg off below the knee. It was painful, but he recovered quickly and returned home six weeks after Adam's birth with a wooden leg that he'd made himself. He also brought back a disease that a woman had given him in the army camp. When his wife caught this disease, she asked herself why. She believed that it was the result of some forbidden dreams she had had during her husband's absence. She then punished herself by holding her head under the shallow water of a muddy pool until she drowned.

Cyrus drowned his sorrow in whiskey, and when baby Adam cried he gave him whiskey too. After three days, Cyrus bought a goat and the baby drank its milk. Adam not only survived, but was also strong and healthy.

Cyrus wanted a woman to look after Adam and himself, so a

month later, he chose the seventeen-year-old daughter of a neighboring farmer. Two weeks after that, they were married and she was pregnant. The neighbors were not surprised. Men often had three or four wives in a normal lifetime.

Alice Trask had many good qualities. She kept the house clean and she never complained. She never spoke unless someone spoke to her. She never gave an opinion, and when a man talked she listened. For Cyrus, these were Alice's finest assets. These qualities helped him as he ran the farm and made up stories about his life as a soldier. The first person he told about his time in the army was Alice. As she listened quietly, his war experiences grew. He read books and newspapers and studied maps. Soon he knew the names of the battles and the officers who led them.

Alice and the two little boys sat silently and respectfully as he talked about the fighting he had seen. At first, he knew he was lying, but soon he began to believe that he had been there. And not only had Private Trask fought in every important battle in the Civil War, he had also given advice to the generals and even President Lincoln himself!

In time, he became a genuine military expert. He wrote letters to the War Department that criticized the army and the way they had fought the war. He wrote articles for magazines, and the government consulted him about the organization of the army. He later went to work for the Grand Army of the Republic, and traveled all over the country to attend meetings. And so he entered public life.

Cyrus Trask organized a military life for his family. Alice survived by staying quietly in the background, but Adam and his half-brother Charles could not escape his discipline. Cyrus was sorry that he could not be a permanent soldier because of his wooden leg, but he decided that the army was the only honorable profession for his sons. He began their training early. He made them do exercises and march for miles carrying bags

full of stones on their backs. They practiced shooting for hours.

Adam hated their military life. He realized that his father was not doing it for them, but for himself. He was not a great man at all. Adam was an obedient child and he wanted to avoid trouble, so he kept these thoughts to himself.

His brother Charles was a little more than a year younger than Adam. He was more aggressive, like his father, more athletic and more competitive. Charles beat Adam easily at any contest, so he preferred to compete with other children. He felt sorry for Adam because he was weak, so he fought other boys who challenged his brother.

Adam admired his brother for his strength and intelligence, but they were not close. He never wanted to share his secret thoughts with him. He depended on his brother, but there was no feeling of love.

As Adam grew up, he was afraid of one thing in particular; he feared the day he would be sent to the army. His father spoke of it often. "It'll make a man of you," he repeated.

Charles was almost a man, and a dangerous man, even at fifteen. One evening, Adam won a game he was playing with Charles, and his brother beat him until he was unconscious.

After that, Adam made sure that he never won at anything. Neither the boys nor Alice ever told Cyrus about the beating, but he seemed to know. In the months that followed, he was gentle with Adam, and he did not punish him anymore. He spoke to him alone every night about the nature of a soldier, and he did not permit Charles to listen.

"There are so many things I want to tell you," said Cyrus late one afternoon. "From the day a child is born, he's taught to protect his own life. But when he becomes a soldier, he has to put his life in danger without going mad. If you can face death, then you'll never be afraid again. That's the greatest reward of all. Think about that."

"Why don't you talk to Charles about it?" asked Adam. "He'll be a better soldier than I will."

"Charles won't be going into the army," replied Cyrus. "He doesn't need to. Charles isn't afraid of anything, so he could never learn anything about courage. And the army would release things in him that should be controlled."

Adam complained, "You never punished him, you let him live his own life, you praised him, you didn't hate him, and now you let him stay out of the army." He stopped, frightened of his father's anger.

His father did not reply. He walked to the kitchen door and stopped. "You want to know why, don't you?" he said quietly. "Well, maybe I shouldn't tell you, but I will. You aren't clever. You don't know what you want. You let other people walk over you. You're weak, and sometimes I think you'll never do anything with your life. But I love you better. I always have. And that's why I hurt you. Now shut your mouth and go in to your supper. I'll talk to you tomorrow night. My leg aches."

There was no talk at supper. Adam thought his brother watched him secretly. He finished eating and pushed back his chair. "I'm going for a walk," he said.

Charles stood up. "I'll go with you."

The two boys walked down the dark road together. "What did he say to you this afternoon? I saw you walking together."

"He just talked about the army, like always."

Charles moved closer to his brother. "You're lying!" he said suspiciously. "He was talking to you the way he talks to his friends. You're trying to take him away from me, aren't you?"

Adam backed away, breathing deeply to control his fear. Charles's voice rose. "And what happened on his birthday? I bought him a pocketknife with three blades and a pearl handle, made in Germany. It cost me seventy-five cents! 'Thanks,' he said. Just 'thanks.' And where is it now? He never uses it. Did he give it

to you?" Adam heard the cold anger in his voice. "And what did you do? You picked up a little dog from the side of the road and you gave it to him. He laughed like a fool and said it'd make a good bird dog. That dog sleeps in his room. He plays with it while he's reading. And where's the knife? 'Thanks,' he said. That's all."

Charles spoke in a whisper and his eyes were cold. There was a little smile on his face. Adam jumped back desperately and guarded his face with his hands.

Charles drove his fist into Adam's stomach. Adam dropped his hands. His brother hit him methodically in the head, the heart, the nose, the stomach, then the head again. Adam watched Charles through blood and tears, not understanding. Once he swung wildly at Charles, but his brother avoided it easily and continued working like a machine.

Pain flashed through Adam's body. He wondered why he was still standing and conscious. Suddenly the darkness came over him and he fell. Charles stood over Adam, breathing hard, then he turned and walked quickly back toward the house.

As consciousness came back quick and frightening to Adam, he heard rapid footsteps on the road. He pushed himself onto his knees, crawled through the long grass at the side of the road, then slid into the wet ditch. The footsteps came close, then stopped. Charles lit a match and looked through the darkness. In his right hand shone a long knife. He moved on and struck another match and then another. Finally he gave up and went away. He threw the knife far into a field.

Adam crawled out of the water and stood up. He walked slowly back to the house, almost fainting. He stood in the doorway. Cyrus looked at his bloody face in surprise.

"Why did he do it?" he asked.

"I don't know," said Adam.

His father stood up angrily. He grabbed Adam by the arm and squeezed it hard. "Tell me! And don't lie to me!"

Adam searched for the answer through his pain. "He thinks you don't love him."

Cyrus picked up his shotgun from its place in the corner of the kitchen and checked that it was loaded. "Alice, help Adam to bed," he said quietly, and went out the door.

Charles spent some time laughing and drinking with his friends in the hotel in town, then they moved on. But he heard about the shotgun, so he hid for two weeks before returning home.

Adam stayed in bed for four days. On the third day his father showed his power with the military. He did this for his own pride, and as a reward for Adam. An army captain and two sergeants in blue dress uniforms came to the house. Two privates waited outside with the horses. Cyrus watched with tears in his eyes as Adam was enlisted in the army.

"You're going to Indian country, son," he said proudly. "There's a lot of work to be done."

"Yes, sir," replied Adam.

Adam had always hated violence, and during his five years as a soldier he learned to hate it even more. At that time the army was taking the Indians' land for settlement. When the Indians rebelled, they were killed and the survivors were forced to live on the poorest land.

When Adam shot at a man, he shot to miss. He knew that he was not a good soldier, but he did not care. It was more important for him not to hurt anyone. But he was not a coward. He risked his life more than once to save wounded men, and he volunteered to do extra work in the field hospital.

Charles wrote regularly to his brother. He told him about the farm, about Alice's death and their father's move to Washington. Charles wrote many things that he could never say, and a closeness grew that neither of them could have imagined.

Adam kept one letter because he did not understand it.

Charles gave all the news, then the handwriting changed. "I want to talk about something. Why didn't our father use that knife? It was a good knife, and he needed one. If he'd even kept it in his pocket, I wouldn't have gone after you. But I had to. I've never thought like this before. Now I feel like something's not finished. I should be there and you should be here." The letter was unsigned. Maybe Charles had not intended to send it. Adam shivered every time he read it, but he did not know why.

Chapter 3 Growing Up

On the ranch, the little Hamiltons began to grow up, and every year there was a new one. The first boy was George, a tall, handsome boy, gentle and polite, and the sinless boy grew to become a sinless man.

After him was Will, short and heavy and full of energy. He was a hard worker, and he wanted to be like everyone else. He was suspicious of new ideas. Maybe that was because his father was different from other men, and Will was embarrassed. When he was growing up, the people of the Salinas Valley still did not trust Samuel. He was not only a foreigner and an Irishman, but he also had strange ideas. He was interested in philosophy and music and poetry and art and he loved to read. Those things were only for the rich, not for the poor. In time, the Salinas Valley grew fond of Samuel, but Will's ideas were already formed.

Will made money easily. When he started raising chickens, the price of eggs went up. He bought a share of a little store, and soon he had stores in several different towns. He bought a bicycle shop, and before long he started selling Ford cars.

Tom, the third son, was full of energy and ideas. When he was happy, he was very happy, but when his dog died the world ended.

Joe was the last son. He was lazy, and he preferred

daydreaming to working on the farm. When he had failed at every job, his father asked him to look after their sixty sheep. This was the least difficult job of all but he lost them—lost sixty sheep in the hills. Soon his family stopped asking him to work.

There were five Hamilton girls in the family. Lizzie, who was named after her mother, was the oldest. She married young and went away. Next came Una, a studious, dark girl. Then there was Dessie, who loved to laugh, then Olive, my mother. And last was Mollie, who was a little beauty with lovely blonde hair and deep blue eyes.

Liza was a good woman and she raised good children. Year after year she produced them and fed them and baked bread, made their clothes, and clothed them in good manners and morals too. She had no knowledge of the world except what she read in the Bible. Everyone respected her, but they did not have warm feelings for her.

By the end of the century, all of Samuel and Liza's children were nearly grown up. Una was a student, and Samuel was proud of her. Olive was preparing to become a teacher. This was a great honor for the family. Joe was going to college because he was not good at anything else. Will was making a fortune without really trying. Tom was trying new ideas and sometimes failing. Dessie was studying dressmaking. And Mollie, pretty Mollie, would obviously marry a rich man.

It was a good, well-balanced family, and Samuel was pleased with them. Some liked to build and others liked to dream. Some wanted the world to stay the same, and others wanted it to change. They were not rich and they were not poor, and they all belonged to the Salinas Valley.

After Adam joined the army and Cyrus moved to Washington, Charles lived the life of a bachelor. The house was dirty and

quiet. He talked about finding a wife, but he was too shy to ~~disappointment~~ on his father's face, and knew that he was lonely meet any girls. When he wanted sex, he paid for it. He was ~~in Washington~~.

lonely, and he missed his brother. He worked hard on the farm to keep busy.

One day, in his third year alone, he had an accident. He was using an iron bar to move a big stone out of a field. When it did not move, he became angry and pulled down on the bar with all his strength. The bar slipped, and the upper end crashed hard into his forehead. After a few weeks, his wound healed, but it left a long, dark scar that began at his hairline and ended between his eyebrows. Charles hated the scar. "It looks like somebody marked me like a cow," he wrote to Adam. "And it's getting darker. People are always staring at it and talking about it. I don't even want to go to town anymore."

Adam left the army in 1885, after five years' service, and began traveling home. He arrived in Chicago, stayed two days, went to Buffalo then Niagara Falls. He felt that he was sleepwalking. He missed the daily routines that he hated when he was in the army. He missed the company of other men and he did not want to go home. He went back to Chicago and re-enlisted in the army for five more years.

Adam was changing trains in Kansas when a soldier put a message into his hand. It ordered him to report immediately to the office of the Secretary of War in Washington. His father found him there.

Adam hardly recognized him. He looked and talked like a great man. They walked to the hotel where Cyrus lived. "Why are you going?" he asked Adam.

"I didn't want to go home."

"I have influence," said Cyrus. "I can have you sent to Washington. You can work for me."

Adam felt like a little boy again, but he resisted the feeling. "I want to go back where I was," he said quietly. Adam saw the

~~disappointment~~ on his father's face, and knew that he was lonely ~~in Washington~~.

"Why don't you bring Charles here?" he suggested.
"No, he's better where he is," replied Cyrus.

Charles had looked forward to Adam's return. He had hired a woman from the town to clean the house from top to bottom. He waited and waited, but his brother did not come. Adam finally wrote a year later, but Charles did not reply right away. Time had done its work, and the brothers were strangers.

Time passed quickly for Adam. He followed the familiar routines of the army without thinking, and he became a sergeant. Just before leaving the army in 1890, he wrote to Charles, "This time I'm coming home." Charles did not hear another word from him for three years.

Adam wandered from one town to another, and by spring he had no money. He joined the army of restless men who were moving around the country in the nineties. Sometimes they worked, and sometimes they begged or stole. They followed the sun, moving north and east in spring, then south and west in fall. They walked or hid on the trains, and they camped outside the towns at night.

Adam became an expert tramp. He worked when he could, or he knocked on doors and asked for food. Sometimes he stayed with a woman. He spoke like the people around him, so he did not attract attention. He learned how to avoid the police, until one day when he was arrested for vagrancy.

He was in Florida, on his way home. The sheriff's men put him in jail, and the judge sentenced him to six months on a road gang. That is how the roads were built in those days. The prisoners were guarded by men with shotguns by day and chained together at night. The guards whipped a man if he resisted or rebelled. Adam knew that they were afraid of the men. He had learned from his days in the army that a frightened man

is a dangerous man, so he stayed calm at all times. But as soon as they released him, he was arrested again. They gave him six more months.

During his second six months, he completely hid his personality. The guards were not afraid of him, so they trusted him. They put him to work cleaning the camp and filling the water buckets. Then, three days before the end of his sentence, he escaped by swimming down the river. He broke into a store five days later, and stole some clothes. He traveled by night, and ate vegetables and fruit from farms.

Charles received very few letters, so when a thick letter arrived from a firm of attorneys in Washington, he sat down at the kitchen table and read it carefully. His father was dead. The attorneys were sorry about his father's death, but they were excited, too. There was more than a hundred thousand dollars in Cyrus Trask's bank account. In his will, he had left half to Adam and half to Charles.

Charles was puzzled. He did not want to think about it. He wanted Adam to come home. He put the letter into a drawer in the kitchen table. But he kept asking himself the same question: where had his father got it?

A few weeks later, a boy brought him a telegram from the train station. "Urgent. Send one hundred dollars. Coming home Adam."

When Adam came walking out from the village, Charles hurried up to him and shook hands.

"Father's dead," said Charles.

"I know," replied Adam. "They told me at the station."

"It was a big funeral," said Charles. "The Vice President was there and the President sent flowers." He went on talking, but Adam was not listening.

He looked at his brother, suddenly amazed. "I'm not afraid of him anymore!" he thought. "Why not? Was it the army? Or the

~~chain gang? Or Father's death?" He smiled happily as he spoke. "Charles, I know you want to tell me something, so hurry up and say it!"~~

~~Charles raised his head. "I can't beat him anymore," he thought miserably. "I want to ask you one question first," he said. "Did you love our father?"~~

~~Adam was surprised, but he decided to answer. "No, I didn't. Sometimes he scared me. Sometimes I respected him, but most of the time I hated him. Now tell me why you want to know."~~

~~Charles shook his head. "I don't understand it. He loved you. He loved everything you gave him, but he didn't love me. Remember that knife I gave him? It's here, in his desk. He didn't even take it to Washington. And that dog you gave him? It was at his funeral. A general was holding it—it was blind, couldn't walk. They shot it after the funeral."~~

~~"I don't understand," Adam said. "What are you saying?"~~

~~"I loved him," Charles replied. He began to cry. A little of the old fear came back, so Adam did not go to him. He walked to the open doorway.~~

~~When Charles spoke again, his voice was tired. "Tell me, do we think our father could have been dishonest?" he asked.~~

~~"I don't know," Adam said quickly. "No one ever said it. Now tell me what's on your mind."~~

~~"Father made a will. He left us over a hundred thousand dollars."~~

~~Adam laughed. "You're crazy," he said. "Don't you mean a hundred dollars?"~~

~~"No," said Charles. "I mean a hundred thousand dollars. I don't understand it. His salary was \$135 a month. Where did it come from?"~~

~~"Maybe he invested it," suggested Adam. "He knew some big men in Washington."~~

~~"And there's more," said Charles unhappily. "Our father went~~

into the Union Army in June, 1862. He had three months ~~there~~ ~~secretly~~. Cathy knew how to recognize them in other training here in Connecticut. He finished in September. ~~He~~ ~~and she~~ used this information for her own gain. She was marched south. On October 12 he was hit in the leg and sent ~~very young~~ when she discovered that sex is the most disturbing the hospital. He came home in January. He wasn't at any of the ~~age~~ that humans have, causing feelings of jealousy, pain, and battles he talked about."

Adam shook his head in disbelief.

"What are we going to do?" Charles asked anxiously.
"Everyone will know that our father stole the money."

"I don't believe that he stole it," replied Adam, "and I believe ~~experimented~~ on other people, and so developed her power. that he fought in the war." He thought for a minute. "Anyway, it ~~doesn't~~ matter. We'll use the money well. Maybe we'll stay here ~~an~~ excellent student. One of her teachers was a pale, serious young man called James Grew, who had had a religious education and ~~little~~ experience of the world. Then, one day, it was noticed that a flame leaped in him and some force shone in his eyes. James Grew became a man. He walked on his toes and sang to himself. He was never seen with Cathy and no relationship was even suspected.

"I couldn't ever leave here," said Charles.

"We'll see," said his brother. "There's no hurry."

Chapter 4 An Evil Beauty

There was something wrong with Cathy Ames when she ~~wake~~ morning. She was born, but nobody knew because it was invisible. She was born, and nobody knew why he had done it. The whole town without kindness or a conscience. She was a pretty child, ~~with~~ talking about it.

lovely golden hair, and she became a pretty woman. She had ~~At dinner~~ ~~she~~ turned to her. "You saw him every day at school, Cathy. delicate arms and legs and tiny hands and feet. She spoke soft ~~mother~~ and sweetly, especially when she wanted something. Her small ~~he seemed~~ sad lately? Did you notice anything?" heart-shaped face and her wide-apart blue eyes made her look innocent. Nobody could see the evil in her soul. ~~Cathy~~ looked down at her plate and then up. "I thought he ~~was sick~~," she said. "Yes, he has looked bad. And somebody at

Cathy was a liar, but she did not lie like other children do. ~~He~~ ~~I don't remember who~~—said that he was in some kind lies were not daydreams, when a child imagines that something ~~of trouble~~ in Boston. I didn't hear what kind of trouble. We all real. Those lies are harmless. She lied to escape punishment, ~~and Mr. Grew~~."

work, or responsibility. She was a good liar because she stayed close enough to the truth that one could never be sure. ~~That was~~ Cathy's method. Soon everyone knew that James ~~new had been~~ in trouble in Boston, and nobody could imagine

Everyone in the world has hidden desires and vices that ~~that~~ Cathy had started the rumor. Even Mrs. Ames had forgotten are ashamed of. Most people control these feelings, or satisfy ~~she~~ heard it.

Soon after her sixteenth birthday, a change came over Cathy. ~~she was changed~~. Always she had been a good student, One morning she did not get up for school. Her mother went into her room and found her in bed, staring at the ceiling. "Hurry up!" she said. "You'll be late!"

"I'm not going to school," Cathy said calmly. "I'm never going to school again."

Her mother's mouth fell open. "What do you mean? What are you going to do?"

"I don't know yet," said Cathy. "I think I'll go away."

"You wait until your father comes home!"

Cathy turned her head very slowly and looked at her mother. Her eyes were expressionless and cold. And suddenly Mrs. Ames was afraid of her daughter. She went out quietly and closed the door.

That evening, Mr. Ames, hating what he had to do, gave a lecture to his daughter. He spoke of her duty to her parents. Toward the end of his speech he noticed that she was not listening. He became angry and began to threaten her. He reminded her that she was under the authority of her parents and the state, and God. He had her attention then. She stared straight into his eyes and he had to look away. He threatened to whip her if she did not obey him.

At the end his threats weakened. "I want you to promise that you'll go to school tomorrow," he said.

Her face was expressionless. "All right," she said.

In the morning, she was gone. Her father put on his hat and walked quickly to the train station. The station agent was certain. Cathy had taken the early morning train to Boston.

Mr. Ames brought her back and gave her the first whipping of her life. "Now will you ever do that again?" he said.

"No, oh, no! Forgive me!" Cathy said. She turned away so her father could not see that there were no tears in her eyes.

There seemed no doubt that it was what Cathy needed. Even

~~she began to make plans for the future. She talked to the examiner about taking the examinations for her teaching certificate a year early.~~

~~In the weeks that followed, she helped her mother in the kitchen and offered to help more than was needed. A childlike smile was constantly on her lips while she made her preparations.~~

~~She had all the time in the world. She cleaned the basement, and~~

~~put newspaper in all the cracks where the air came in. She fixed~~

~~all the doors so they opened and closed quietly, and put oil in the~~

~~locks so they turned easily. She filled the lamps from a big can of kerosene oil she kept in the basement.~~

~~And it was not only at home either. She went to the factory to~~

~~see her father, and he was amazed at her questions about~~

~~business. "She's smarter than some men I could name," he~~

~~thought proudly. "She might be running the business one day."~~

~~He explained about the loans and the billing and the pay, and he~~

~~showed her how to open the safe.~~

~~One day, when she returned home from school, her mother~~

~~saw her at the front door. "Cathy, I have to go out," she said.~~

~~Her father wondered if you would go to the bank, pick up the~~

~~money for the workers, and take it to the factory."~~

~~"I'd like to," said Cathy.~~

~~The fire broke out at about three o'clock the next morning.~~

~~The Ames house went up like a rocket. By the time it was~~

~~burned, there was nothing left. When the volunteer firemen dug~~

~~through the coals, they found what remained of Mr. and Mrs.~~

~~Ames. But there was neither tooth nor bone where Cathy's room~~

~~had been.~~

~~When the accountant went to the factory, he found the safe~~

~~open and papers scattered all over the floor. A broken window~~

~~showed how the thief had entered.~~

~~He returned to the house with this news. "The fire wasn't an~~

accident!" Fear and anger spread through the crowd that had gathered.

And where was Cathy? Had she been taken away? They searched the fields and lakes for her body, but they found nothing. They questioned the wandering men who were traveling by road and by rail, but soon they stopped looking. What could they do? They couldn't prove anything without a body.

I don't know how Cathy Ames heard about Mr. Edwards, but it was not very difficult for a girl to find him.

Mr. Edwards was a successful businessman. He lived in a big house in a good neighborhood of Boston with his wife and two children. He was a large, powerful man in his late forties, getting a little fat, but then many successful men were. He spent as much time as he could with his family, although he had to travel a lot on business.

Mr. Edwards's business was women. He supplied whores to small-town hotels all over New England, avoiding the cities because the police were greedier there. He preferred stupid girls because the smart ones did not stay long. They opened their own houses or married rich men. He did not want very pretty girls, either. A local young man might fall in love with a pretty whore and there would be trouble. He kept the girls in one place for two weeks, then moved them on to the next town.

Mr. Edwards was not feeling well when the girl who called herself Catherine Amesbury came to see him. If he had not been weak, he would have sent her away immediately. She was much too pretty for his business. Her voice was low, she was small, almost delicate, and her skin was lovely. She was not Mr. Edwards's kind of girl at all. He knew this in his mind, but his body told him to let her stay.

He looked at her, puzzled, as she gave him a cat-like smile. He never mixed business and pleasure, but he wanted this one for

himself. He fell into the trap. "Never, never believe anything a **whore** tells you." That was his rule, but he believed every word **she** said. "I can't understand why a girl like you . . ." he began.

Catherine lowered her eyes. "My father's dead. He borrowed a **lot** of money from the bank. My mother can't pay it back, so **they're** going to take away the farm. I just want to help her."

Mr. Edwards heard himself saying, "Well now, my dear, maybe **we** can find some way for you to get the money." Mr. Edwards, as cold-blooded as any whoremaster that ever lived, fell hopelessly, miserably in love with Catherine Amesbury.

He rented a sweet little brick house for her, and then gave it to **her**. He had never been so unhappy. He wanted to trust her because he loved her, but he knew from experience that he could not. He tried to buy her love with presents and with money. When he was away from her, he was sick with jealousy. Was she seeing other men? His business suffered.

Catherine knew how to make him jealous. When she knew he was coming to visit, she was never there. When she would return in the late afternoon and find him waiting for her, she would explain, "I was shopping. I have to go shopping, you know." She made it sound like a lie. She let him know that she was not quite satisfied with their sexual relations. He became nervous and unhappy.

She needed money, so she stole it from him. She sold the jewelry he had bought her, then said she had lost it. She could not sell the house, so she mortgaged it. Mr. Edwards knew, but said nothing. He was too afraid of losing her.

One evening his key did not fit the lock. She said she would give him the key, but she never did. When he went to see her, he never knew if she was home or not.

Catherine was clever, but she made one serious mistake. One night, Mr. Edwards offered her a glass of champagne. "No, thank you," she said. "I can't drink it. It makes me sick."

Mr. Edwards started thinking. "Why doesn't she ever drink with me? I don't know anything about her. Maybe if she has a drink, she'll tell me about herself."

"That's not very friendly," he said. "Just have one glass."

"I can't," she repeated.

His voice hardened. "Drink it!"

She took the glass and poured it down and stood still. She poured another glass for herself and another. Her eyes became hard and cold, and Mr. Edwards felt afraid.

"I didn't want to do it. Remember that," she said softly. "You fat worm. What do you know about me? Do you think I can't read every rotten thought you've ever had? Want me to tell you? You wonder where a nice girl like me learned tricks. You wanted me to talk, and I'm talking. I'll tell you. I worked in whorehouses all over the country for four years."

"Catherine," he protested. "You don't know what you're saying!" He watched her, unable to move. She walked slowly toward him, drank the last of the champagne, delicately broke the glass on the table and pushed it hard into his cheek. As he finally ran away from the house, he could hear her laughing.

Mr. Edwards wanted to believe in Catherine's goodness, but he could not. He had to find out the truth. He had her followed, he hired detectives, and soon he knew where she hid her money. One day, he packed his suitcase as usual and rang Catherine's doorbell. She answered it immediately. "I'm going out," she told him.

"No, you're not," he said, pushing past her into the house. He went down to the basement and returned carrying a small wooden box. He put it into his suitcase.

"That's my money!" she cried. "What are you doing?"

"You're coming with me on a trip," he answered coldly. "We're going to a little town in Connecticut. You told me once you wanted to work. You're going to work."

"I don't want to!" she cried. "You can't make me. I'll call the police!"

He smiled terribly. "Maybe you'd rather go back to your home town. They had a big fire there several years ago. Do you remember that fire?"

She could think of only one plan—she must go along with him and wait for a chance. She thought about the knife in her purse.

In the small town they got off the train at dusk, then walked down a dark street and into the country. Mr. Edwards thought he knew what he intended to do. He meant to whip her and put her in one of the rooms at the hotel, whip her and move her to another town, until she was of no use anymore. Then he would throw her out.

He grabbed the purse out of her hand and threw it over a wall. He knew about the knife. He was in love with Cathy, but he was also afraid of her. Love and fear made him cruel.

He hit her twice with the whip, but that was not enough. He used his fists again and again as she lay on the ground, but soon they too were not enough. His hand found a stone and a red wave of rage washed over him. Later, he looked down at her beaten face and listened for her heartbeat, but heard only his own. He ran away crying, leaving the whip, the suitcase, and the box of money.

Catherine was lucky to be alive. She was a long time unconscious and a long time half-conscious. She realized her arm was broken and that she must find help if she wanted to live. She dragged herself along the dark road, looking for help, turned in at a gate, and almost reached the steps before she fainted.

◆

Adam and Charles Trask were finding it difficult to live together, as two men often do. For the first few months after their father died,

they were busy investing his money. They went to Washington to visit his grave, then they did not talk about him anymore.

They followed the same routine every day. Charles got up at four-thirty every morning and worked outdoors. Adam kept the house clean and did the accounts. They talked about old times and the times when they were apart. They argued about little things and lost their tempers. There were long, ugly silences, then they were too polite to each other, then their anger flashed again.

When Adam could not stand it anymore, he would leave for some time: eight months in Boston, two years in South America. But he always returned, and the brothers fell back into their old ways. One day was the same as another, and the years passed slowly.

But Adam was still restless. One morning he asked Charles, "Why are we working so hard? You've bought the farm next door, and four buildings, and the hotel in town. Did you ever think that we have enough money to do anything we want to do? We could go to Europe, we could walk around Paris."

Charles was not listening. "What's that noise?" he said. He opened the kitchen door. A dirty bundle of rags and mud was slowly trying to crawl up the steps. There was a muddy face with cracked lips and eyes looking out of blackened and swollen eyelids. There was a deep cut in the forehead, and blood ran back into the knotted hair.

Adam kneeled beside the figure. "Come on, let's get her in," he said. "Here—look out for that arm. It looks broken."

She fainted when they carried her into the house. "Put her in my bed," said Adam. "Now I think you'd better go for the doctor. I'll stay here with her."

She was very badly hurt. Her arm was broken, as well as several other bones. Her jaw was cracked, and she had lost all the teeth on the left side. The bone was also cracked under the cut on her forehead. The doctor did what he could, and gave her some drugs for the pain.

"Someone tried to kill her," he said to Adam and Charles. "Do you know her?"

"Of course not," said Charles angrily. "And she can't stay here!"

Now Adam was angry. "Yes, she can! This is my house too!"

The two men looked at him in surprise. "Who's going to look after her?" asked the doctor.

"I am!" said Adam.

"I'll have to tell the sheriff," the doctor warned.

"Do that!" said Adam. "But she can't talk to anyone until she's well!"

Adam watched over Cathy day and night. She was only partly conscious from shock and drugs, but she was aware of the people around her. Very slowly, she remembered the last days. She had never been so afraid in her life.

One day, she heard three men talking in the next room.

"Adam, I want to ask her some questions."

"Leave her alone, Sheriff. She can't talk. Her jaw's broken."

"Give her a pencil and paper," suggested another voice. "She can write the answers."

Cathy's mind worked quickly. "Why's the sheriff here?" she asked herself. "Does he know about the fire?" The man called Adam wanted to protect her, but the others were not on her side. Not yet.

They came into the room. "I'm the sheriff, Miss," said the tallest man. "I want to ask you some questions. Can you write on this paper?"

Cathy painfully nodded "yes."

"What's your name?" She closed her eyes and wrote, "I don't know" in huge letters.

The sheriff gave her a fresh sheet of paper. "Here. Now, what do you remember?"

Cathy's hand moved slowly across the page. "All black. Can't think." Her face became tragic. "Help me," she wrote.

"You poor child. I'll leave you alone now," said the sheriff.
"He's on my side now," she thought, "but the other man isn't." Charles was watching her and rubbing the dark scar on his forehead. Their eyes met.

"You'll have one just like mine," he said. She smiled at him and he looked away.

Adam had never been so happy. He did not know her name, but it was not important. "Call me Cathy," she had said. He cooked for her, and soon she was recovering well.

One day, she and Charles were alone in the house. "Why don't you like me?" she asked him.

"Because I don't trust you," Charles replied. "I don't believe you lost your memory. I think you're a devil, and I don't want you in the house anymore."

"What are you going to do?" she asked.

"If you don't leave, I'll talk to the sheriff," he replied. "I heard you talking in your sleep when you took all those drugs. I know a lot about you."

Now Cathy was frightened. What could she do? She had to find a plan.

"Adam, I'm alone and afraid," she cried when he returned, "and your brother wants me to leave." She smiled weakly.

"She's so helpless!" Adam thought. He felt a rush of love.

He took her hand. "Will you marry me?"

She held his hand tightly. "Please, let me think about it," she whispered, "and please don't tell your brother."

Cathy had already thought about marrying Adam. "He's rich and he'll protect me," she thought. "And I can control him, but I must never lose control of myself." She shivered as she thought of Mr. Edwards. "I'll never do that again."

Five days later, Adam and Cathy went into town and were married by a judge.

"I thought she was gone," said Charles when they returned.
"We got married," said Adam.

"What?" shouted Charles. Cathy went into the bedroom.
"You're crazy! She's no good! She's a whore!"

"Charles!" Adam said angrily. "Don't talk about my wife like that!"

"Wife!" said Charles. "That's not a wife! That's an alley cat! I won't live under the same roof as her!"

"You won't have to," replied Adam. "You can buy my half of the farm. We're leaving."

Charles went out and banged the door behind him. Cathy made two cups of tea and took them into the bedroom.

"Don't worry," said Adam. "We're going to California."

"I don't want to go to California," said Cathy.

"You're my wife," said Adam softly. "I want you to come with me."

Cathy lowered her eyes. "Adam, I can't really be your wife until I'm well."

"I know," he said. "I'll wait." He finished his tea. "My tea has a funny taste. Does yours?"

"Oh, no!" she cried. "You took the wrong cup! That one had my sleeping medicine in it!"

Adam was fast asleep when his brother came home drunk. Charles threw off his clothes, got into bed, and tried to get comfortable. When he opened his eyes, Cathy was standing by his bed.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"What do you think? Move over a little."

"Where's Adam?"

"He drank my sleeping medicine by mistake."

Suddenly Charles laughed. "The poor bastard!" he said, and he threw back the blanket to receive her.

Chapter 5 New Lives

In 1900, the year of a fresh new century, Adam Trask was a new man. All his life had been dull and gray, full of disappointment and regret, then a kind of glory lit up his mind. His spirit rose flying and released him from fear and bitter memories. All the nerves in his body came alive, colors were brighter, and every breath was sweet.

And this glory came to Adam through Cathy. I have said that Cathy was evil, but that does not matter because we all have evil hidden away inside us. But when Adam saw Cathy, he saw an image of beauty and tenderness, a sweet and holy girl, and a clean and loving wife. Nothing she said or did could change his mind. He could not see the anger in his brother's eyes or the way he looked at Cathy.

He sold his share of the farm to Charles, took half his father's money, and left for California with Cathy. He had read the railroad companies' advertisements for the beauty and richness of the West, so they took the train across the continent to the Salinas Valley.

Adam wanted to put down roots and start a family, so he took his time. He bought a horse and carriage and drove happily from farm to farm, talking to the earlier settlers about soil and water, climate and crops, prices and equipment. The people of the valley listened to his plans and dreams, and they were pleased that he had come to live there.

He had only one worry, and that was for Cathy. She was not well. One morning she stayed at the hotel while Adam went out. When he returned, he found her almost dead from loss of blood. When Dr. Tilson arrived, he examined Cathy, then he asked Adam to wait downstairs.

The doctor closed the door behind him and came back to the bed. "Why did you do it?" Cathy's mouth was a thin, tight line.

"Does your husband know you're pregnant?" Her head moved slowly from side to side. "What did you do it with?" He looked around the room, then picked up a knitting needle. He shook it in her face. "You're a fool! You've nearly killed yourself and you haven't lost your baby." Her eyes were as cold as glass.

He pulled a chair up beside her bed. "Why don't you want to have the baby?" he asked softly. "You've got a good husband. Don't you love him?" Her lips did not move and her eyes looked straight into his.

"My dear," he said. "Can't you see? You must not destroy life." This woman puzzled him. There was something inhuman about her. "All right!" he cried. "You won't speak—you don't have to. But I'm going to tell you. Your baby's safe. And I'm telling you this—you're going to have this baby. What you did is against the law, and if you lose it, I'll make sure that you're punished. And I mean it."

Cathy licked her lips with her little pointed tongue. The cold went out of her eyes and a weak sadness took its place. "I'm sorry," she said. "You don't understand. There's a disease in my family, and I don't want my baby to have it."

Dr. Tilson's anger disappeared. "My poor child," he said softly. "Your baby will probably be fine and healthy. All right then, I won't tell your husband what you did."

Adam was waiting anxiously downstairs. "How is she? What is it?"

The doctor made his standard joke. "Your wife is sick, but she has the only good sickness there is. She's going to have a baby." Adam ran past him up the stairs.



Adam's attention narrowed to the Bordoni ranch, a few miles south of King City. Rich, green fields lay on both sides of the river and reached into the foothills. There was an old mud-brick

house that stood in a narrow opening in the foothills, a tiny valley fed by a precious spring of sweet water. Huge oaks shaded the valley, and the earth had a richness and a greenness foreign to this part of the country. The old house seemed to have grown out of the earth and it was lovely. Bordoni used it for a cow barn. He was a Swiss, and he built a clean new wooden house some distance away.

Adam Trask refused to buy in a hurry, and Bordoni was asking a high price, pretending not to care whether he sold or not. Bordoni knew Adam was going to buy his land long before Adam knew it.

Where Adam settled, he intended to stay and to have his unborn children stay. He drove and rode and walked over every foot of the land and picked up the soil in his hand. He inquired about the small wild plants of field and riverside and hill. In damp places he knelt down and examined the animal tracks in the mud. Mr. Bordoni watched him and poured him glasses of wine made from his own grapes.

Over and over Adam asked Cathy's opinion of the place. "Do you like it? Would you be happy there?" He did not notice that she did not reply. He thought that she shared his enthusiasm. He spoke about it to the men who gathered in the King City Hotel. "It's water I'm thinking about," he said one evening. "I want to farm this land. I wonder how deep you'd have to dig to bring in a well."

"Ask Sam Hamilton," said a rancher. "He knows all about water. I'll take you to see him tomorrow."

The two men drove the horse-cart past the wooden house to the blacksmith shop. Adam saw a big man with a white beard and laughing blue eyes. He wore clean work clothes, but his hands were black.

"This is Mr. Adam Trask, from the East," said the rancher. "He's come here to settle."

"I'm glad," said Samuel.

"He's brought you a little present," continued the rancher.

Samuel looked quickly toward the house. "You can bring it into the shop, but don't let the sun shine on it," he said.

The three men sat down and passed around the bottle. "I want to ask you about water," said Adam.

"I can find water nearly everywhere except on my own land," replied Samuel. "I'll come and look at it."

The next day Adam drove out and shook hands with Bordoni, and the ranch was his.

Adam sat like a contented cat on his land. He looked at the green line of trees along the river, then over the golden fields on the other side to the rounded foothills. The gardener planted vegetables and channeled the spring to water it. The workers were building a new barn for the animals he wanted to keep. He had come to start a family and to stay, and he wanted the best of everything.

In the corner of his room there was a pile of advertisements for farm machinery, seeds, and fruit trees. He was glad now that his father had left him a rich man. When he remembered his father's house, the farm, the town, and his brother's face, everything was black. He shook off the memories and planned for the future.

He was also happy in the present. When he saw Cathy sitting in the sun, her baby growing inside her, he was filled with joy. If Adam was like a contented cat, Cathy was cat-like too. She knew how to wait. She did not want to be married, she did not want to be in California, and her pregnancy was an accident. She spoke when Adam spoke to her, but she was not interested in his plans. She did not intend to stay.

The Chinese cook, Lee, came near her chair under a tall oak tree. "Missy likee tea?" he asked politely.

"Yes," she replied, looking at him carefully. She could read any

man's mind, but not his. His face was lean and pleasant, and he had a broad, intelligent forehead. His long black hair was tied back with a piece of black silk. He wore narrow cotton pants, flat black shoes, and a blue Chinese jacket. Cathy looked suspiciously at Lee as he left. She was not afraid of him, but he made her uncomfortable.

Later that summer, Adam sent Lee to the Hamilton place with a note for Samuel. Adam asked him to come and talk about digging a well for him.

Samuel sat in the carriage with Lee, and his old horse followed behind them. "What's your name?" Samuel asked.

"Lee. Got more name. Lee father's family name. Call Lee."

"I've read a lot about China. Were you born in China?"

"Born here."

Samuel was silent for a long time. "Lee, why do you talk like that?"

Lee grinned. "Me talkee Chinese talk."

Samuel shook his head. "You don't have to talk like that, Lee. Maybe you have your reasons. Anyway, it's not my business."

Lee smiled. "I talk like that because I'm Chinese and I'm a servant. People don't expect me to speak good English."

"But why are you a servant?" asked Samuel.

"There's nothing wrong with being a servant," replied Lee. "A servant is fed, clothed, and protected, so he doesn't worry about anything. And it's a position of power. A good servant can control his master. He can make him afraid or make him happy."

As they approached Adam's house, Lee turned to Samuel. "Please don't talk this way when other people are listening. It would confuse them."

"All right," said Samuel, "but isn't it a lonely life?"

"Yes, it is," replied Lee. "I'm thinking of moving to San Francisco. I'd like to start a bookstore. I probably won't do it, though. I've gotten used to being a servant."

Samuel and Adam rode over the land until they reached a flat place. "Do you think there's water there?" asked Adam.

"I don't know," said Samuel. "I'll see." He held a long, thin y-shaped stick in his hands and walked forward with his arms straight in front of him. Adam watched the end of the stick. First it moved up and down just a little. Samuel walked forward, then back, then turned. Then, the stick seemed to be pulled down toward the ground. "I can get water here," Samuel said, "and it isn't very deep."

"Good," said Adam. "I want you to dig wells for me and pump the water. I want to make a garden here. Remember my name is Adam, and I've never had an Eden."

"That's a good reason," said Samuel. "What does Eve think?"

"She'll be pleased with anything I do," said Adam. "Her name is Cathy. I want the water so I can make a beautiful garden for her. I want to repay her for making me so happy."

When they returned to the house, Lee had prepared a cold supper. They waited at a table outside under an oak tree until Cathy came out. She looked at Samuel and Adam without speaking.

"You haven't met Mr. Hamilton, dear," said Adam.

"How do you do?" said Cathy, and shook his hand.

"I'm glad to meet you," replied Samuel.

Samuel looked into her eyes, but they communicated nothing. There was a heavy silence at the table as they ate. Samuel made a few attempts at conversation, but finally gave up. Something was wrong, and he finished his supper quickly. "Ma'am, if you'll excuse me, I'll ride off home," he said. "Thank you for your kindness."

Adam jumped to his feet. "Please come back soon. I want you to start the wells. Cathy, this will be the most beautiful place in the world."

"That will be nice," said Cathy, but her face showed no

emotion. Samuel shivered when he saw it. He said goodnight and quickly rode away.

After he left, Cathy said, "Adam, I didn't want to come here. I am not going to stay here."

"Oh, nonsense." He laughed. "You'll get used to it and you'll love it. Everything will change when the baby is born. You'll see."

Samuel Hamilton rode back home in the moonlight. There were shadows and the sounds of night creatures all around him, and he felt a strange sadness. He thought about Adam and Cathy. "Do I envy them? No, it isn't that. It's Cathy, but what about her? Her eyes. I've seen those eyes before, but where?"

Samuel went back in his mind to when he was a small boy in Ireland. He was with his father in a big city. A crowd had gathered where a man was going to be hanged. The man looked into Samuel's eyes. His eyes had no depth—they were not like other eyes, not like the eyes of a man. They were like a goat's eyes.

Now Samuel knew. "I've seen eyes like that only twice in my life," he thought. But then he felt guilty that he had such ugly thoughts about Cathy. "I'll do everything I can to help with the Salinas Valley Eden," he promised himself.

Cathy sat quietly in her chair under the oak tree waiting for her pregnancy to be over, living on a farm she did not like, with a man she did not love. Her stomach grew very big, but the rest of her body was unchanged. She spoke very little and her eyes were far away. It was as if she had gone away, leaving an empty shell in her place.

There was activity all around her. Adam was happily planning his Eden. Samuel and his sons Tom and Joe dug the first well to forty feet and lined it with expensive new metal, since Adam wanted the best. They moved to another place and started another hole. They slept in a tent beside the work and cooked over a campfire.

The Hamiltons had just finished their lunch of bread and

cheese and coffee. "Somebody's coming, coming fast," said Joe. They could see a horseman riding at full speed toward them. When he came a little closer, they saw that it was Lee.

He was breathing heavily. "Missy Adam say come! Missy Cathy bad—come quick, Missy scream."

Samuel rode back to the ranch with Lee. He went upstairs, tapped lightly at the bedroom door, and went in. The curtains were closed and blankets were hung over the windows. He started to pull down a blanket, but Adam stopped him.

"Leave it," he said fiercely. "The light hurts her eyes."

Samuel pulled down the blanket and let in the golden afternoon light. "Adam," he said firmly, "I'm going to ask you to go out of the room and stay out." He turned the key in the lock.

"He's upset," he said to Cathy. "He loves you." He had not looked closely at her until now. And he saw true hatred in her eyes, unforgiving, murderous hatred. He stared at her. "I did not come by choice except as a friend," he said. "I don't know your trouble and I don't care. Maybe I can save you some pain—who knows? But if you look at me like that I'll leave you here alone."

She made a great effort. It made him shiver to see her face change until it became young and innocent and bravely hurt. It was like one person replacing another. She said softly, "The water broke at dawn."

"Good," replied Samuel. "Have you had hard labor?"

"Yes." Suddenly her eyes were unseeing and her body went stiff. He waited for her cry, but only a series of low noises came from her throat. After a few seconds, her body relaxed and the hatred was back in her face. Then, she threw her head from side to side as the labor struck again.

"Good, good, my dear," he said. "I think it won't be long until your baby's here." He put his hand on her forehead where her scar showed dark and angry. "How did you get that hurt on your head?" he asked.

Her head came up suddenly and her sharp teeth closed on his hand. He cried out in pain and tried to pull his hand away, but her head twisted and turned. He hit her across the cheek, but it had no effect. Automatically he did what he would have done to stop a dogfight. His left hand went to her throat and he cut off her breath. She struggled and tore at his hand before her jaws relaxed and he pulled his hand free. The flesh was torn and bleeding. He stepped back from the bed and looked at the damage. He looked at her with fear. And when he looked, her face was calm again and young and innocent.

"I'm sorry," she said quickly. "It was the pain."

Samuel laughed shortly. "I had a dog that did that once," he said. The hatred came briefly back into her eyes. "I'd better put something on it. Humans are more poisonous than snakes. Have you got any whiskey?"

"In the second drawer."

He splashed whiskey on his bleeding hand and rubbed it in. He was shaking and he felt sick, and he was afraid to look back at the bed. He took a swallow of whiskey to steady himself.

Samuel told Adam afterwards, "The birth happened before I was ready. Popped out like a seed. I didn't have the water ready to wash him."

He pulled the door open, called Lee and demanded warm water. When he returned, he pointed to a bundle in a laundry basket. "Wash him, Lee," he said, "and don't let him get cold."

Samuel turned back to the bed. "Now, dearie, I'll get you cleaned up." He saw something, stared, and went quickly to work. "My God, it's another one!" Like the first birth, the second was very quick. Lee took the second baby, washed it, wrapped it, and put it in the basket.

"You have two sons," Samuel said. "Two fine sons. They aren't alike. Each one was born separately. I'll show them to you."

"No," Cathy said coldly. "I don't want them. Take them out of

the room and send Adam in." In a moment came the sound of tapping from the bedroom. Adam was nailing the blankets over the windows again.

For a week, Cathy rested and gathered her strength. One Saturday, she stayed in her bedroom all morning. Adam tried the door and found it locked. "I'm busy," she called, and he went away. In the late afternoon she sent Lee to King City to buy a baby bottle, then she went back to her room as evening fell.

At seven-thirty, Adam knocked. "I've got you some supper, dear," he said. The door opened as if she had been standing waiting. She was dressed in her neat traveling dress, with a jacket and big black buttons. On her head was a wide black hat. Adam's mouth dropped open.

She gave him no chance to speak. "I'm going away now."

"Cathy, what do you mean?"

"I told you before. I'm going."

"The babies—"

"Throw them in one of your wells."

He cried in alarm, "Cathy, you're sick! You can't go—not from me."

"I can do anything to you. You're a fool."

He heard the word through his confusion. Without warning, his hands reached for her shoulders and pushed her backwards. As she lost her balance, he took the key from the inside of the door, shut the door, and locked it.

He stood breathing heavily with his ear close to the door, and a sickness poisoned him. A drawer opened and a thought leaped in him—she's going to stay.

He jumped as her voice came through the door. "Dear, I didn't know you would feel that way. I'm sorry, Adam." His hand trembled, trying to turn the key, and it fell out on the floor after he had turned it. He pushed the door open. She stood three feet away. In her right hand she held his gun, and it was pointed at

him. He took a step toward her, and he saw it was ready to fire.

She shot him. The heavy bullet struck him in the shoulder and tore out a piece of bone, and he fell to the floor. She moved slowly toward him, cautiously, as if he were a wounded animal. He stared up into her eyes, which inspected him without interest. She threw the gun on the floor beside him and walked out of the house. He heard her steps on the dry oak leaves on the path, and then he could hear her no more. But he could hear the cry of the twins, wanting their dinner. He had forgotten to feed them.

Horace Quinn was the new deputy sheriff assigned to look after things around King City. When he heard that Adam Trask had been shot, he left for the ranch right away.

There was no sound and no movement as he rode in under the oaks. All the workers had been sent away. Adam lay in the big bed where the twins had been born. He was leaning against a big pile of pillows, and a thick, homemade bandage covered the left side of his chest and his shoulder. The skin on his face was pulled tight over his bones and his eyes were shiny with sickness.

Horace said, "Hello, Mr. Trask. Heard you got hurt. Just wanted to see how you were doing. How'd it happen?"

An eager look came over Adam's face. "I was cleaning my gun and it went off. I'm not very used to guns."

Horace looked away from Adam. "Mr. Trask, you served in the United States Army. Their weapons are rifles and guns. What happened, Mr. Trask?"

Adam's eyes seemed to grow larger, and they were red around the edges. "It was an accident," he whispered.

"Anybody see it? Was your wife with you when it happened?" Adam did not reply. "I'd like to talk to her."

Adam closed his eyes. "My wife is away on a visit."

"That's interesting," said Horace. "Your wife had a baby—two babies—two weeks ago, and now she's gone on a visit. And she didn't take the babies." Horace leaned over the bed. "Trask!" he

said loudly. "This isn't just curiosity. This is the law. Now you open your eyes and tell me what happened or I'll take you in to the sheriff even if you are hurt."

Adam opened his eyes and they were blank like a sleepwalker's eyes.

"My wife went away," he said.

"Where did she go?"

"I don't know."

"We'll have to find her. How long have you been married?"

"Nearly a year."

"What was her name before you married her?"

There was a long pause, and then Adam said softly, "I won't tell. I promised."

"Where did she come from?"

"I don't know."

"Mr. Trask, you're talking yourself right into the county jail. Let's have a description. How tall was she?"

Adam's eyes shone. "Not tall, little and delicate."

"That's just fine. What color hair? Eyes?"

"She was beautiful."

"Was?"

"Is."

"Any scars?"

"Oh, God, no. Yes—a scar on her forehead."

"You don't know her name, where she came from, where she went, and you can't describe her. And you think I'm a fool."

Adam said, "She had a secret. I promised I wouldn't ask her." And without warning Adam began to cry. His whole body shook, and his breath made little high sounds. It was hopeless crying.

Horace went into the other room, feeling miserable. He did not know what to think. He wondered if Adam Trask was crazy. And had he killed his wife?

The next morning, Horace went to the sheriff's office in Salinas. "Well, sir," he said, "I had to come up and get your advice." And he told his story in great detail. The sheriff listened with his eyes closed and made no comment. "Well, there I was," Horace continued. "I couldn't find out what happened. I couldn't even find out what the woman looked like. I went to see Sam Hamilton."

The sheriff opened his eyes. "Did Sam give you a description?" he asked.

"He did, and his wife did. She went over to help at the Trask place after the birth." Horace took out a piece of paper from his pocket and read a detailed description of Cathy. "Got any ideas?"

"Well, yes. Over across the tracks down by Chinatown there's a row of whorehouses."

"I know."

"There's a woman called Faye who opened a nice, quiet place about three months ago. She sent me a note Sunday night. She's got a new girl and she doesn't know what to think of her. What puzzles Faye is that she looks like a runaway girl except she knows all the answers and all the tricks. I went down there and looked her over, and I can't find a thing wrong with her. She's old enough and nobody's made a complaint. So what do we do about it?"

"You're pretty sure it's Mrs. Trask?"

The sheriff said, "Wide-apart blue eyes, yellow hair, and a scar on her forehead, and she came in Sunday afternoon."

Adam's tearful face was in Horace's mind. "Sheriff, you have to get somebody else to tell him. I can't do it."

The sheriff stared into space. "You say he didn't even know her name, where she came from. She really fooled him, didn't she?"

"The poor bastard," Horace said. "He's in love with her."

"You listen to me, Horace. There are only three people in the

world that know—her and you and me. I'm going to warn her that if she ever tells I'll run her out of the county. And Horace—before you tell anybody, even your wife, you think about those little boys finding out their mother is a whore."

Adam sat in his chair under the big oak tree. His left arm was expertly bandaged so that he could not move his shoulder. Lee came out carrying the basket. He set it on the ground beside Adam and went back inside. The twins were awake, and they both looked up seriously at the wind-moved leaves of the oak tree.

Adam did not hear Samuel's horse until it was almost in front of him. Samuel sat down quietly and waited. "I thought I'd better get back to the wells," he said softly.

"No," Adam said. "I don't want any wells. I'll pay you for what you did."

"Let me give you some advice, Adam," said Samuel. "Act out being alive, like a play. And after a while, a long while, it'll be true."

"Why should I?" Adam asked.

Samuel was looking at the twins. "For them. They're going to grow."

Adam did not answer, and Samuel stood up. "I'll be back," he said. "I'll be back again and again."

Behind the barn, Lee held his horse while Sam got on. "There goes your bookstore, Lee," he said.

"Oh, well," said the Chinese, "maybe I didn't want it much, anyway."

Chapter 6 Killing with Kindness

The girl Kate puzzled Faye—she was so young and pretty, so ladylike, so well-educated. "I hope you don't mind me asking,

dear," Faye said, "but why did you come here? You could get a husband and a corner house in town, no trouble."

Kate smiled shyly. "It's so hard to explain. I hope you won't insist on knowing. I'm sorry, I can't talk about it."

Faye was a nice woman, not very bright, highly moral, and easily shocked. People trusted her and she trusted everyone. She ran a fine house, as the sheriff knew. Faye soon became a solid and desirable citizen of the growing town of Salinas.

Kate went to work right away, and she soon had her own group of regular customers. There were two questions Faye asked about every new girl. First, will she work? And second, will the other girls like her?

Faye didn't have long to wonder about the second question. Kate worked hard at being pleasant to the other girls. She helped them keep their rooms clean. She served them when they were sick, listened to their troubles, answered them in matters of love, and, as soon as she had some, loaned them money. She became best friend to everyone in the house. Faye realized she had a jewel.

People who don't know think it is easy to run a whorehouse—just sit in a big chair and drink beer and take half the money the girls make, they think. But it is not like that at all. You have to feed the girls—that's groceries and a cook—and send out the laundry. And you have to keep the girls well, and as happy as possible. It isn't so easy.

When Kate offered to help with the shopping and planning of meals, Faye was pleased. Well, not only did the food improve but the grocery bills came down one-third the first month Kate took over. Faye did not know how she ever managed without Kate. The girls began to realize there were two bosses, not one, and they were glad because Kate was so friendly. And they all said, "You watch—she'll own this house one day."

Gradually, a perfectly natural thing happened. Faye, the most

motherly of women, began to think of Kate as her daughter. And she did not want her daughter to be a whore. After about a year had passed, she said, "Kate, I don't like you working here."

"Why not?"

Faye shook her head, trying to find words. "I just don't like it. You're like a daughter to me, and I don't like my daughter working."

"Don't be silly, darling," said Kate. "I have to—here or somewhere else. I told you. I have to have the money."

"No, you don't," said Faye. "You could manage the house. I could give you as much as you make and more. You could take care of things for me and not go upstairs. I'm not always well, you know."

"I know you're not," said Kate. She shook her head sadly. "I'd like to do what you want, but you need your little reserve. No, I must go on working."

"I don't want you to work."

"I have to, Mother."

The word did it. Faye burst into tears, and Kate sat on the arm of her chair and wiped her streaming eyes. Soon she was calm again. "Now you're all right," Kate said. "I'll go and get dressed."

"Kate, when you finish work, you tap on my door," said Faye. "I'll have a little surprise for you."

Kate kissed her. "What a dear you are, Mother."

That night, the hall was dark but a line of light showed under Faye's door. Kate knocked softly and went in. On the table with candles around it was a big white cake and a basket with a large bottle of champagne lying on crushed ice. Faye wore her best dress and her eyes were shiny with emotion.

"Come in," Faye said. "I have a present for my dear daughter. Now Kate, you open the bottle and pour two glasses." When everything was ready, Faye raised her glass. "To my daughter—may you have long life and happiness."

And when they had drunk, Kate replied, "To my mother."

"You'll make me cry—don't make me cry," said Faye. She pushed a polished wooden box toward Kate. "Open it. It's my gift to you."

In the box lay a rolled white paper tied with a red ribbon. Faye had written, *I leave everything I own without exception to Kate Albey because I regard her as my daughter.*

Kate read it three times, looked back at the date, and studied the signature. She looked deep into Faye's eyes. "I'm trying not to cry, Mother. I didn't know anyone could be so good."

They sat in the warmth for a long time before Faye moved. "Kate," she said, "we're forgetting. It's a party. We've forgotten the champagne. Pour it, child."

Kate said nervously, "Do we need it, Mother? I never have drunk much. It's not good for me."

"Nonsense. Pour it, darling." Kate filled the glasses. "Now drink it. I won't touch mine until yours is empty." She held her glass until Kate had emptied hers, then drank it. "Now another glass—there. You see how good it is?"

Kate's body screamed against the wine. She remembered and she was afraid, but it was too late. The change came to her almost immediately after the second glass. All her barriers and defenses were gone and she did not care. Her voice became cold and her eyes grew watchful. "I'll bet you can't drink two without stopping."

"Don't bet me, Kate. You'd lose. I can drink six without stopping. I'll do it if you will."

The contest started, and a pool of wine spread over the tabletop and the level went down in the bottle. Faye laughed. "We're going to have such a good life. Why don't we sell the house and go to Europe?"

"No."

"What do you mean, no? It's my house. I can sell it."

"Did you forget I'm your daughter?"

"I don't like your tone, Kate. What's the matter with you?"

Kate laughed softly. "Mother, dear, I'm going to show you how to run a whorehouse. We'll fix those nasty little worms who come in here looking for pleasure for a dollar."

"What are you talking about?" asked Faye. "I want you to be sweet. I want you to be like you were."

"Well, it's too late. I didn't want to drink the wine. But you, you nasty fat worm, you made me. Do you think I'll give up working? Do you think my regular customers give me a mean little dollar? No, they give me ten dollars, and the price is going up all the time. They pay me to hurt them, and that's the way this whole house is going to be. And the price will be twenty dollars."

Faye whispered, "I want you out of the house. I want you out. I run a good house without nastiness. I want you out."

"I can't go, Mother. I can't leave you alone, poor dear." Her voice became cold. "Now I'm sick of you. Sick of you." She took a wineglass from the table, went to the dresser, and poured sleeping medicine until the glass was half full. "Here, Mother, drink it. It will be good for you." She held the glass to Faye's lips. Faye talked thickly for a while, and then she relaxed in her chair and slept.

Fear began to gather in the corners of Kate's mind. She remembered the other time and a sick feeling came over her. She dragged the sleeping woman over to the bed and undressed her. The day was coming fast. She opened a drawer and examined the medicine bottles that were there. She carried a bottle of ammonia to the bed, poured some onto a handkerchief, and, standing as far away as possible, held the cloth over Faye's nose and mouth.

Faye took a deep burning breath and came coughing and fighting out of the blackness. Her eyes were wide with fear, and she screamed and screamed again.

Three sleepy girls and the cook looked in the doorway. "She's had a bad dream," said Kate. "I'll stay with her." She petted and babied her, but the look of horror would not go out of Faye's eyes.

A few days later, Kate went into the kitchen before supper. She took a small bottle from her pocket and carefully squeezed a few drops into a glass using an eyedropper and went into Faye's room. "Here's your medicine, Mother dear," she said.

At supper Faye's face was red. She stopped eating and seemed to be listening.

"What's the matter, Mother?" Kate asked.

Faye was still listening. "I don't know," she said. "Suddenly I felt afraid and my heart started pounding."

Kate said, "I don't like it. I wish you'd go see Dr. Wilde about it."

The next day Faye felt all right. "I was just out of breath," she said. "I'm getting too fat."

"Well, we're going to have some special food," said Kate. "I've made some chicken soup for you and we'll have a green bean salad—the way you like it, just oil and vinegar—and a cup of tea."

In the kitchen Kate poured the oil and vinegar onto the bean salad. Then she used the eyedropper to squeeze two drops of poison onto the beans. She went to her room and swallowed the contents of another small bottle and hurried back to the kitchen.

"I made the salad especially for you," said Kate. "See if you like it."

"It's delicious," said Faye.

It struck Kate first. Her forehead was covered with sweat as she bent over, crying in pain. Faye ran to the hallway screaming for help. The girls and a few Sunday customers crowded into the room. Faye was wiping Kate's forehead with a towel when the pain struck her.

Faye and Kate were pale and weak when Dr. Wilde arrived. He noticed the salad. "What did you eat? Did you preserve these beans here?" he demanded.

"Yes," said Ethel. "The other girls and I all helped Kate and the cook put them into jars."

"Go out and break every jar. Leave homemade beans alone. Buy canned ones."

"What is it?" Kate asked.

"Food poisoning. You're lucky. We don't know much about it, but few people ever recover from it."

Faye was never really well again. She had some bad days that winter, and it took a long time for her to gain her strength. Kate was exhausted and her small body had shrunk to bones. The girls tried to take her place with Faye, but she would not leave.

One evening, Dr. Wilde listened to Faye's heart for a long time. "Her heart just can't stand the strain, I'm afraid," he said. "She's all torn up inside. Give her a little warm milk."

When he left, Kate put a glass of milk on the bedside table, then she took two little bottles from her pocket and sucked a little from each into the eyedropper. "Open up, Mother. This is a new kind of medicine. Now be brave, dear. This will taste bad." She squeezed the liquid onto Faye's tongue and held up her head so she could drink. "Now you rest and I'll be back in a little while."

When Kate first heard the news, they had to tie her down to keep her from hurting herself. From violence she became depressed. It was a long time before she regained her health. And she forgot completely about the will. It was Ethel who finally remembered.

Chapter 7 New Names, Old Names

On the Trask place Adam withdrew into himself. A gray cloud hung over him that slowed his movements and his thoughts. He was aware of the twins because he heard them cry and laugh, but

he felt only a slight dislike for them. To Adam they were symbols of his loss.

Lee tried to bring Adam back to awareness, but Lee was a busy man. He cooked and washed, he bathed the twins and fed them. Through his hard and constant work he grew fond of the two little boys.

One day Lee saw Samuel Hamilton in his son Will's new store in King City. They sat together at a little round table in the bar-room next door.

"I've wanted to go and see you and Adam," said Samuel, "but I didn't think I could do any good."

"Well, you can't do any harm. I thought he'd recover from it. But he still walks around like a ghost."

"It's over a year, isn't it?"

"Three months over."

"What did he name the twins?"

"They don't have any names."

"You are making a joke, Lee. What does he call them?"

"He calls them *they*."

"I mean when he speaks to them."

"When he speaks to them he calls them *you*, one or both."

"This is nonsense," Samuel said angrily. "No names! I'll come tomorrow and I'll bring a horse-whip."

Adam was thinner than Samuel remembered. It took a little time for him to notice that Samuel was in front of him. A look of displeasure pulled down his mouth.

"What do you want?" he asked.

A kind of joy lighted Samuel's eyes at the rudeness. "You don't deserve your children. For a year you've lived with them and you haven't even given them names."

Adam said, "What I do is my business."

Samuel struck him with a work-heavy fist, and Adam lay in the dust. Samuel asked him to rise, and when Adam accepted

struck him again, and this time Adam did not get up. He looked stonily at the threatening old man.

The fire went out of Samuel's eyes and he said quietly, "Your sons have no names."

Adam replied, "Their mother left them motherless."

"And you have left them fatherless." He reached down and put his arms around Adam's shoulders and helped him to his feet. "We'll give them names," he said.

Adam wore a faraway look, but his eyes were not dead as they had been. He said, "It's hard to imagine I'd thank a man for insults, but I'm grateful."

Lee carried out the twins, one under each arm, and put them on the ground beside the table and gave each boy a stick for his hand to shake and make shadows with.

The two men sat looking at the twins when suddenly Adam leaned forward. "These boys don't look alike!" he cried.

"Of course they don't. They're not identical twins."

"That one—that one looks like my brother. I just saw it. I wonder if the other looks like me."

"Both of them do."

Lee came out with a plate of fried chicken, a bowl of smoking boiled potatoes, and a deep dish of vegetables. "I don't know how good it will be," he said. "The hens are a little old." He returned to the house to get a bottle of wine.

While he was gone Adam said, "It's strange to me. He used to speak differently."

"He trusts you now," Samuel said. Lee joined them at the table and the men ate quietly.

"We'd best get on with the naming," Samuel said when they had finished. "Names are a mystery. I've never known whether the name is shaped by the child or the child changes to fit the name. Have you thought about your name, Adam? We could call them Cain and Abel."

Adam said, "Oh, no, we can't do that. I want them to start fresh."

"I don't understand that story at all, but I feel it," Samuel said. "Do you understand it, Lee?"

"No, but maybe I don't remember the details very well."

"I haven't heard it since I was a child," said Adam.

Samuel said, "Cain was the firstborn of Adam and his wife Eve, then his brother Abel was born. Abel was a keeper of sheep but Cain was a farmer. After some time Cain brought part of his harvest and offered it to the Lord and Abel brought a fat young sheep. The Lord was pleased with Abel's offering, but not with Cain's.

"And Cain was very angry. The Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? If you do well, you will be accepted. And if you do not do well, you will sin. And your sin will try to rule over you, but you will rule over it.'

"And Cain turned against his brother and killed him. And the Lord said to Cain, 'Where is your brother?' And Cain said, 'I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper?' The Lord punished him by sending him away from his home. Cain was afraid that he would be killed for his crime, but the Lord put a mark on him so everyone would recognize him. He said that anyone who killed Cain would be punished. And Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and lived in a land to the east of Eden."

Adam said, "I think Cain was treated unfairly."

"Maybe he was," said Samuel. "But Cain lived and had children, and Abel lives only in the story. We're all Cain's children."

"And we're all guilty," said Adam. "We're all descended from Cain and his guilt is in all of us."

"Yes, it's everybody's story," said Lee. "That's why it's the best-known story in the world. I think it's the symbol story for the human soul. 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. I think that if rejection could be ended, there would be fewer crazy people."

"I'll think about that when I'm alone," said Samuel. "But I drove over here today to help name the twins and they're not named. I'll have to be going home soon."

Adam said desperately, "Name me some names."

"From the Bible?" asked Samuel.

"From anyplace."

"Well, let's see. Of all the people who started out of Egypt only two came to the Promised Land, Caleb and Joshua. Would you like them for a symbol?"

"Joshua was a soldier—a general," Adam said. "I don't like soldiering. I like Caleb, though—Caleb Trask."

One of the twins woke up and began to cry. "Caleb's named," said Samuel. "He's the smart one—the dark one. See, the other one is awake too. Well, I've always liked Aaron, but he didn't reach the Promised Land." The second boy almost joyfully began to cry.

"He's Aaron, then," said Adam. "Yesterday I couldn't tell them apart, Aaron and Caleb. I'm glad you came, Samuel. There's a weight off me."

Chapter 8 Goodbyes

The Hamiltons were strange, nervous people, and some of them were too sensitive and they broke down. This happens often in the world.

Of all his daughters, Una was Samuel's greatest joy. Even as a little girl she hungered for learning. Una and her father shared a love of learning—secret books were borrowed and read, and their secrets communicated privately.

Una met and married a dark, serious man. He was one of those men who live in poverty so that they can learn. He studied photography. He believed that the exterior world could be transferred to paper—not in the ghost shadings of black and white, but in the colors the human eye sees.

He took Una away to the north, and it was black and lost where he went and they must have had a very hard life. Una wrote letters without joy but also without self-pity. And then she died and her body was shipped home.

Una was dead before I remember, but George Hamilton told me about it years later and his eyes were full of tears. "Her nails were broken and her fingers were all cracked and worn out. And her poor, dear feet—they had not worn shoes for a long time."

Una's death struck Samuel like a silent earthquake. He felt that he could have done more for her. His young skin turned old, his clear eyes dulled, and his great shoulders bent. He became an old man.

His other children were doing well. George was in the insurance business. Will was getting rich. Joe had gone east and was helping invent a new profession called advertising. The girls were married, all except Dessie, and she had a successful dressmaking business in Salinas. Only Tom had never got started. Samuel told Adam that he came close to greatness but he could not decide what to do.

Sometimes Tom took me fishing. We started before the sun came up and drove the horsecart straight toward the mountains. I can't remember the sound of his voice or the kind of words he used. I can remember both about my grandfather, but when I think of Tom it's a memory of a kind of warm silence. Maybe he didn't talk at all.

On Thanksgiving of 1911, the Hamilton family gathered at the ranch. They arrived with presents and more food than even this family could eat. Their children filled up the place with

noise. Liza ordered and organized and Samuel stayed with the talk and the singing and the memories until suddenly he tired and he went to his bed.

When the mother and father were gone, Will brought the whiskey in from the blacksmith shop and the family had a meeting. There were Tom and Dessie, George and his pretty Mamie, Mollie and William J. Martin, Olive and Ernest Steinbeck, Will and his Deila.

They all wanted to say the same thing—all ten of them. Samuel was an old man. It was a shocking discovery for them all, like suddenly seeing a ghost.

Will Martin said, "Life is too hard here. Why don't we get him to sell out and move to town? Mollie and I would like them to come and live with us." They were silent after that; the idea of not having the ranch, the dry, stony desert of the heartbreaking hillside, was shocking to them.

Will Hamilton said, "No, he will never sell the ranch, and if he did I don't think he'd live a week. But there's another way. Maybe he could come for a visit. Tom, could you run the ranch?"

"Oh, that's nothing," said Tom. "It's no trouble to run the ranch because the ranch doesn't run—never has. But I can't talk to him about it—he'd know why we're doing it."

George said, "We could write it in a letter—a kind of invitation. And when he got tired of one of us he could go to another." And that is how they left it.

Tom brought Olive's letter from King City and gave it to Samuel. Samuel went into the kitchen where Liza was cooking, then came back outside where Tom was waiting.

"Tom, do you think you could look after the ranch if your mother and I took a little trip? Ollie wants us to stay with her for a while in Salinas."

"Sure," said Tom. "How long do you plan to be gone?"

Samuel's blue eyes looked into his. "Tom, my son, if you have a

secret with your brothers and sisters, I don't mind. I think that's good, but don't tell the others I know. I know where I'm going and why I'm going, and I'm content."

Having made up his mind, Samuel made formal calls on all his neighbors, the old-timers who remembered how it used to be. And when he drove away, they knew they would not see him again, although he did not say it.

He saved his visit to the Trask place for last. He had not been there for months. Adam was not a young man now. The boys were eleven years old.

"How is Adam?" Samuel asked.

"He's all right," Lee said. "But he hasn't changed much."

"And how are the boys?"

"You'll see when they come home from school. They're like two sides of a coin. Cal is quick and dark and watchful, and his brother—well, he's a boy you like before he speaks and like more afterward."

The dinner table was set in the house. The twins came in silently and stood shyly staring at their guest.

"It's a long time since I've seen you, boys. You're Caleb, aren't you?"

"I'm Cal."

"Are you called Aaron?"

"Yes, sir."

Lee laughed. "He spells it with one *a*. The two *a*'s seem a little fancy to his friends."

"I've got thirty-five Belgian rabbits, sir," Aron said. "Would you like to see them? I've got eight newborns—just born yesterday."

"I'd like to see them, Aron." Samuel's mouth turned up a little at one corner. "Cal, don't tell me you're a gardener."

Lee's head turned quickly and he inspected Samuel. "Don't do that," he said nervously.

Cal said, "Next year my father is going to let me have part of the flat land."

Aron said, "I have a male rabbit that weighs fifteen pounds. I'm going to give it to my father for his birthday."

Adam joined them at the table and the boys ate quickly and quietly, then excused themselves.

Lee brought the coffeepot to the table and filled the cups and sat down. "Mr. Hamilton, do you remember when we talked about the story of Cain and Abel?"

"I certainly do. And that was a long time ago."

"Ten years nearly," said Lee. "Well, the story affected me deeply, and I read every word again. Then I compared the translations we have and they are fairly close. There was only one place that bothered me. It is when the Lord has asked Cain why he is angry. The Lord says, 'If you do well, you will be accepted. And if you do not do well, you will sin. And your sin will try to rule over you, but *you will rule over it*.' In the English translation, this was a promise that Cain would overcome sin."

"Then I got an American translation of the Bible. It says, '*Rule over sin*.' Now this is very different. This is not a promise, it is an order. And I began to worry about it. I wondered what the original word of the original writer had been that these very different translations could be made."

Samuel leaned forward and the old young light came into his eyes. "Lee," he said, "don't tell me you studied Hebrew!"

"I'm going to tell you. I went to San Francisco to the headquarters of our family association. It's a center where any member of the Lee family can get help or give it. I went there because in our family there are a number of ancient men who are great thinkers. I respectfully told one of these wise men about my problem, read him the story, and told him what I understood from it. The next night four of them met and called me in. We discussed the story all night long."

Lee laughed. "I guess it's funny," he said. "Can you imagine four old gentlemen, the youngest is over ninety now, beginning the study of Hebrew? They hired a teacher. Exercise books, grammar, vocabulary, simple sentences. Every two weeks I went to a meeting with them, and in my room I covered pages with writing. I bought every known Hebrew dictionary. But the old gentlemen were always ahead of me."

"After two years we felt we could approach the story of Cain and Abel. My old gentlemen thought that these words were very important too—*You will rule over sin* and *Rule over sin*. And this was the gold from our mining: *You may*."

Samuel said, "It's a wonderful story, but why are these words so important?"

"Don't you see?" Lee cried. "The American translation *orders* men to triumph over sin. Many millions of people obey this because it is an order. The English translation makes a promise in *you will*, meaning that men will surely triumph over sin. And there are many millions who believe that they *will* overcome sin even without trying. But the Hebrew word that translates as *you may* gives a choice. A man can choose whether or not to fight against sin and to win. And that choice makes a man great."

Adam said, "I don't see how you could cook and raise the boys and take care of me and still do all this."

"Neither do I," said Lee. "But I feel that I am a man because of those two words, *You may*. It's my choice."

Lee and Adam walked out to the barn with Samuel to say goodbye. Samuel said, "Do you like your life, Adam?"

"Of course not."

"If I had a medicine that might cure you and also might kill you, should I give it to you?"

Lee said, "Be careful, Mr. Hamilton. Be careful."

"Adam, do you want the medicine?" Samuel said.

"Yes. I don't know what it is, but give it to me."

"Adam, Cathy is in Salinas. She owns a whorehouse, the most vicious in this whole end of the country. The worst things humans can think of are for sale there and the worst people come there for satisfaction. But it is worse than that. Cathy, and she is now called Kate, takes the fresh and the young and the beautiful and damages them so that they can never be healthy again. Now, there's your medicine. Let's see what it does to you."

"You're a liar!" Adam said.

"No, Adam. I am many things, but I am not a liar."

"Lee, is this true?"

"Yes, it's true."

Adam stood for a moment and then he turned and ran. They could hear his heavy steps running and tripping until he went over the hill.

"Your medicine is like poison," said Lee.

"I know, but I chose to tell him. And I have forced him to choose to live or to die. Now it's time to go, Lee."

"Goodbye, Samuel," Lee said. He turned and looked after the cart and on the hill he saw old Samuel against the sky, his white hair shining with starlight.

Chapter 9 Freedom

It was a dirty, windy evening and Castroville Street was deep in sticky mud. Adam had his instructions. He counted two houses and nearly missed the third, so high were the bushes in front of it. The paint had long disappeared from the walls and no work had ever been done on the garden. He slowly opened the gate and went up the shaky steps onto the dark porch. The front door opened and a soft voice said, "Won't you come in?"

The reception room was not well-lit, but Adam could see the

shine of polished furniture and gold picture frames. He had a quick impression of richness and order.

The soft voice said, "Do we know you?"

"No, you don't."

"Who sent you?" The girl was dressed in black and her face was sharp—pretty and sharp.

"A man at the hotel."

"Sit down over here. You did come here for something, didn't you? If you tell me what you want, I'll tell the right girl."

"I want to see Kate," Adam said awkwardly.

"Does she know you?"

"I don't know." He felt his courage going. "Would you tell her that Adam Trask wants to see her? She'll know then whether I know her or not."

"I see. Well, I'll tell her." She moved silently to a door on the right and went in.

Kate sat in a chair behind a desk in her room. She was still pretty and blonde. Her mouth was little and firm, but her cheeks and shoulders had become round. Only her hands had aged, and they were lean and spotted with brown. Her waist was narrow but her legs and feet had thickened. She was dressed severely in a black dress with long sleeves, and the only contrast was a cloud of white lace at her wrists and throat.

"There's a new one, a stranger," said the girl in black. "He says his name is Adam Trask."

Kate sat still as if she held her breath. "Bring him to me," she said. When the girl had gone, Kate opened the right-hand drawer of her desk and took out a gun. She checked that it was loaded, put it on her desk, and put a piece of paper over it. She turned off one of the lights and sat back in her chair.

A knock came on the door. "Here he is," said the girl, and closed the door behind Adam. He glanced quickly about before he saw Kate sitting so quietly behind the desk. He stared at her,

and then he moved slowly toward her. Her eyes, cold and expressionless, remained on his eyes.

Adam saw her hair, her scar, the loose skin at her throat, her arms and shoulders. He sighed deeply.

Kate's hand shook a little. She said, "What do you want?"

Adam sat down in a straight chair beside the desk. He wanted to shout with relief but he said, "Nothing now. I just wanted to see you. Sam Hamilton said you were here."

The moment he sat down, the shake went out of her hand. "Hadn't you heard before?"

"No, I hadn't heard."

"I expected you for a long time, and when you didn't come I guess I forgot you."

"I didn't forget you," he said. "But now I can."

Her lips closed and straightened and her eyes narrowed with cruelty. "You think you can?"

"I know I can."

She changed her manner. "Maybe you won't have to," she said. "If you feel all right about everything, maybe we could spend some time together."

"I don't think so. I have to go. I just came up to Sam Hamilton's funeral."

"I hated him," she said. "I would have killed him if I could."

"Why? He was a good man."

"He pretended to be good, but he was a liar. That's what I hate, the liars, and they're all liars."

Adam's eyebrows went up. "Do you mean that in the whole world there's only evil and madness?"

"That's exactly what I mean. Would you like me to prove it?" She took a pile of brown envelopes from her desk drawer. "Take a look at these," she said.

"I don't want to."

"I'll show you anyway." She took out a photograph. "Look

there. That's a state senator. Look at his fat stomach. He likes whips. Look at the expression on his face! He's got a wife and four kids. Look at this! This piece of white fat is a councilman; this big red Swede has a ranch out near Blanco. Look here! This is a professor at Berkeley!"

"I don't want to see these," said Adam.

"Well, you have seen them. And you don't believe it! I'll make you beg to get in here!" She tried to force her will on him but she saw that he was free. Her rage turned to poison. "No one has ever escaped," she said softly.

"I have to go," said Adam. "I don't understand. I know, but I can't believe. But no, it—it can't be a bad dream—no. Because I remember you are the mother of my sons. You haven't asked me about them."

Kate smiled cruelly. "Your sons? I am the mother—but how do you know you are the father?"

Adam's mouth dropped open. "Cathy, what do you mean?"

"My name is Kate," she said. "Listen, my darling, and remember. How many times did I let you come near enough to me to have children? Once."

"You were hurt," he said. "You were terribly hurt."

She smiled at him sweetly. "I wasn't too hurt for your brother."

"My brother? Charles? You are a devil. I don't believe it, but it wouldn't matter—even if it were true." And suddenly he laughed because he knew that this was so. He moved slowly toward the door.

Kate screamed, "Adam!"

He turned slowly. He smiled at her as a man might smile at a memory. Then he went out and closed the door gently behind him.

Kate sat staring at the door. Her eyes were desperate.

Samuel's funeral and the talk with Kate should have made Adam sad and bitter, but they did not. He felt young and free as

he got off the train in King City. On his drive back to the ranch he saw things he had not noticed for years. He saw the wild flowers in the heavy grass, and he saw the red cows against the hillsides, moving up the paths and eating as they went. Suddenly he found himself saying aloud, "I'm free, I'm free! She's gone out of me!"

Lee came out of the house to meet Adam. "How was the funeral?"

"Lots of people," Adam said. "He had lots of friends. Everything all right here?" He noticed that Lee was staring at him. "Put the horse away, Lee, and then come in and make some tea. I want to talk to you."

Adam stirred his tea and watched the sugar disappear. He said, "I went down to see her."

"I thought you might," said Lee. "I don't know how a human man could have waited so long."

"Maybe I wasn't a human man."

"I thought of that too. How was she?"

Adam said slowly, "I can't understand it. I can't believe there is such a creature in the world."

"Are you all right now?"

"I am all right," said Adam. "That is what I wanted to talk to you about. I seem to have come out of a sleep. In a strange way my eyes have cleared. I'm free. Do you know what I'm saying?"

"Yes, I know. And I can see it in your eyes and in the way your body stands." Adam, looking at him, realized that Lee was not a young man anymore.

Lee studied the cup in his hand and his was a memory smile. "Maybe if you're free, you can free me."

"What do you mean, Lee? Aren't you happy here?"

Lee said, "I don't think any man is happy when there are things undone that he wishes to do."

"What do you want to do?"

"Well, one thing it's too late for. I wanted to have a wife and sons of my own. I talked to Mr. Hamilton about the other. I want to open a bookstore in Chinatown in San Francisco."

Adam sat silently, stirring his tea. "I never thought of you going," Adam said. "Could you wait a little while?"

"What for?"

"I want you to help me get to know my boys. I want to organize this place, or maybe sell or rent it."

"Please try not to hold me back because you need me. That's the worst thing you can do to a lonely man."

Adam said, "A lonely man? Why didn't I know that?"

"Mr. Hamilton knew," said Lee. "I loved Mr. Hamilton. I would like to go to Salinas to visit his grave tomorrow if you will permit it."

"Do anything you want," said Adam. "God knows you've done enough for me."

Chapter 10 Truth and Lies

That year the rains had come so gently that the Salinas River did not overflow. A narrow stream twisted from one side to the other of its broad bed of gray sand, and the water was clear and pleasant. It was very warm for March, and the wind blew steadily from the south and turned up the silver undersides of the leaves.

Cal and Aron climbed up out of the river bottom to the level land. "We ought to start back," said Aron. "Maybe Father's back by now."

Aron's eyes were very wide and he had a beautiful soft mouth. The width between his blue eyes gave him an expression of innocence. His hair was fine and golden. The sun seemed to light up the top of his head.

Cal looked more like Adam. His hair was dark brown. He was

bigger than his brother, bigger of bone, heavier in the shoulder, and his jaw had the squareness of Adam's jaw. Cal's eyes were brown and watchful, and sometimes they looked black.

They walked along in silence for a time and then Cal said, "All this is our land—all the way over to the river."

"It's Father's."

"Yes, but when he dies it's going to be ours."

This was a new thought to Aron. "What do you mean, when he dies?"

"Everybody dies," said Cal.

"I know that." Aron wanted to think of something else.

Cal said, "I know a secret. Where do you think our mother is?"

"She's dead."

"No, she isn't. She ran away. I heard some men talking."

"I don't believe it," said Aron. "They were liars. Father said she was in Heaven."

Cal said quietly, "Pretty soon I'm going to run away and find her. I'll bring her back."

"Don't you think she's in Heaven?" And when Cal did not answer, "Why would she want to run away?"

"Maybe because she didn't like us."

Through his gathering tears Aron could see his brother's eyes, hard and reasonable. There were no tears in Cal's eyes. Cal felt pleasantly excited. He had found a secret tool to use for any purpose he needed.

He studied Aron, saw his trembling lips, but he noticed in time the narrowed eyes. Aron would cry, but sometimes, pushed to tears, Aron would fight too. And when Aron cried and fought at the same time, he was dangerous. Nothing could hurt him and nothing could stop him.

Cal put his new tool away. He could bring it out any time, and he knew it was the sharpest weapon he had found. He would

inspect it at his leisure and judge when and how much to use it.

He made his decision almost too late. Aron leaped at him and hit him in the face with his open hand. Cal jumped back and cried, "I was just joking. Honest, Aron, it was only a joke."

Aron stopped. Pain and puzzlement were on his face. "I don't like that joke," he said.

Cal came close to him and put his arm around him and kissed him on the cheek. "I won't do it anymore," he said.

The boys walked silently for a while. Aron said, "Did you really hear those men?"

"Maybe I only thought I did," Cal said quickly. The twins came in sight of the ranch buildings in time to see Lee leading a strange horse and carriage toward the barn. "Who's here?" said Cal.

"Just some people going by," said Lee. "They were looking for the Long ranch. Your father's back from Salinas. You'd better go in."

The two looked down shyly as they entered the living room. There was a man in city clothes and a woman in the fanciest clothes they had ever seen. Her coat and hat lay on a chair beside her, and she seemed to the boys to be entirely dressed in black silk and lace.

But that was not all. Beside the woman sat a girl, a little younger maybe than the twins, but not much. She wore a wide blue sunhat with lace around the front and a flowery dress. The boys could not see her face because of the sunhat, but her hands were folded in her lap and it was easy to see the little gold ring she wore on her third finger.

"These are my boys," their father said. "They're twins. That's Aron and this is Caleb. Boys, shake hands with our guests, Mr. and Mrs. Bacon and their daughter, Abra."

Aron shyly held out his hand to the little girl with the hidden face, but nothing happened. Her hand was held out, but it did

not move toward his. There was a long silence, then he heard his brother laugh.

Aron reached out and grabbed her hand and pumped it up and down three times. It was as soft as a handful of flowers. He felt a pleasure that burned him.

"Children, go outside and play," Mrs. Bacon said. Abra and Cal and Aron went out and stood side by side on the small covered porch.

Cal demanded, "How old are you?"

"Ten, almost eleven."

"Ho!" said Cal. "We're eleven, almost twelve."

Abra pushed her sunhat back. She was pretty, with long, dark hair. One day her nose would be sweet and turned up where now it was still like a button. But two features would be with her always. Her chin was firm and her mouth was as sweet as a flower and very wide and pink. Her green eyes were intelligent and completely fearless.

"You can come here and play if you like," said Cal boldly.

"I live in Salinas," Abra said in such a tone that they knew they were dealing with a superior being who had no time for rural pleasures.

Abra saw that she had crushed them, and while she knew the weaknesses of men she still liked them, and, besides, she was a lady. "Sometimes, when we are driving by, I'll come and play with you—a little," she said kindly, and both boys felt grateful to her.

Now Abra felt warmer toward the boys. She noticed their thin washed-out clothes and remembered the children's stories she had read. "You poor children," she said. "Does your father beat you?"

They shook their heads. They were interested but puzzled.

"Is your mother mean to you?"

"We don't have a mother," said Aron. "Our mother's dead."

His words destroyed the story she was writing but immediately supplied her with another. "Little motherless orphans," she said sweetly. "I'll be your mother. I'll hold you in my arms and tell you stories."

"We're too big," said Cal. "You'd fall over."

Abra turned away from his cruelty. Aron, she saw, was entering into her story, and he seemed to be imagining that he was in her arms. Abra looked at his sunny hair and at his eyes that seemed so near to tears, and she felt the beginning of love. She put her hand on his arm and felt him shiver.

"Tell me," she said pleasantly. "Where is your mother buried? You could put flowers on her grave."

"We don't know," said Aron.

Cal's eyes shone with a new interest. "I'll ask our father where it is so we can take flowers," he said. He was already planning his revenge on Aron because Aron liked his brother better.

At that moment, Lee came out leading the Bacons' horse and carriage. Mrs. Bacon called, "Hurry, Abra, we're going." Lee and Adam and the twins watched them until they were out of sight.

At the supper table the boys discovered the change in their father. The boys had never learnt to tell him of their interests or discoveries, or of their needs. They were surprised and a little embarrassed to find that Adam listened to them and asked questions.

"What did you think of Abra?" Adam asked. "Is she a nice little girl?"

"Oh, yes," said Aron. "She's good and nice. I wanted to marry her."

"You did? What about you, Cal?"

"I guess I'll let Aron have her."

Adam laughed, and the boys could not recall ever having heard him laugh. "She's a real nice girl," said Cal. "She said to ask

you where our mother's grave is, so we can take some flowers."

Adam's mind raced. He was not good at lying. "I wish we could do that, but I have to tell you. She's buried on the other side of the country, where she came from."

Cal was disappointed by this answer, but he was not sure why. Adam quickly changed the subject. "Mr. Bacon made a suggestion this afternoon," he began. "He said it would be better for you if we moved to Salinas where there would be lots of other children to play with." The thought shocked the twins.

Cal asked, "How about here?"

"Well, we'd keep the ranch in case we want to come back," said Adam.

Aron said, "Abra lives in Salinas." That was enough for him.

After the boys had gone to bed Adam said, "Do they know anything?"

"I don't know," said Lee. "I wish there were some way you could tell them the truth."

"That would rob them of the good thoughts about their mother, Lee."

"But there's another danger. What will we do if they find out the truth? A lot of people know. But that's not the worst danger."

"What do you mean?" asked Adam.

"It's the lie I'm thinking of," said Lee. "If they ever found out you'd lied to them about this, they wouldn't believe anything you'd ever said or done."

"I'll think about what to tell them," said Adam. "Lee, if I wanted to take a trip east, would you stay with the twins until I get back? I'd like to see my brother Charles."

"Why don't you write and ask him to come out here?"

"That's a good idea, Lee. I didn't think of it. How long does it take a letter to go east?"

"I don't know," said Lee. "Two weeks maybe."

Chapter 11 Bad News, Good News

After his first letter to his brother in over ten years was mailed, Adam became impatient for an answer. When it finally came, the left-hand corner of the envelope had printed on it *Bellows and Harvey, Attorneys at Law*, and their address was Adam's home town in Connecticut. He read the letter very slowly, then took a deep full breath and released it slowly. "My brother Charles is dead," he said.

"I'm sorry," said Lee.

Cal said, "Is he our uncle?"

"He was your Uncle Charles."

"I wish I knew him before he was dead," said Aron a little sadly. "Was he nice?"

"Very nice," said Adam. "He was my only brother, just like Cal is your only brother."

Cal asked, "Was he rich?"

Adam said firmly, "At a time of death it isn't a nice thing to talk about money. We're sad because he died."

"How can I be sad?" said Cal. "I never even saw him."

Lee covered his mouth with his hand to hide a smile.

Adam looked back at the letter.

"As attorneys for your brother it is our pleasant duty to inform you that he built up a large fortune through hard work and judgment, which in land and cash is in excess of \$100,000. His will, which was prepared and signed in this office, will be sent to you at your request. By its terms it leaves all money and property to be divided equally between you and your wife."

That evening after dinner, Adam took the letter from his pocket and put it on the table. "Lee, I want you to read this, to read it carefully, and then—I want to talk about it."

Lee read the letter slowly, then half-closed his eyes. "Under the terms of the will your wife inherits over \$50,000. That's a lot of

money, and quite a lot of good or evil could be done with it. Would your brother, if he knew where she is and what she is doing, want her to have the money?"

"My brother would not want that," said Adam. And then he remembered the girls upstairs in the hotel and Charles's regular visits.

"Well, consider this," said Lee. "She couldn't claim the money without your help. But maybe she'd do something good with it."

Adam shivered as he thought of the brown envelopes in Kate's desk. "No, she wouldn't," he said. "She said she could destroy the reputations of many men in Salinas. I don't know what to do. I'll have to give it a lot of thought."

"You don't have any choice, do you?" said Lee. "You'll do what you were taught to do when you were young. You'll give your wife the money because it's the right thing to do, and the fact that she's a whore in Salinas won't change a thing."

Adam got to his feet. His face was angry. "You are disrespectful now that you've decided to go away," he cried. "I haven't decided what to do about the money!"

Lee shook his head and went out.

Cal crept quietly down the dark hall and into the bedroom where his brother was sleeping. He wished with all his heart that he had not stood listening at the hall door.

Adam stayed in his room all the next morning and then went to find Lee, who was working in the garden. "I guess I was stupid," he said.

Lee leaned on his shovel and regarded him quietly. "When are you going?" he asked.

"I thought I would catch the two-forty train. Then I can get the eight o'clock back."

It was four-fifteen when Adam climbed the crooked steps and knocked on the weather-beaten door of Kate's place. Kate sat at the end of the dining room table with an account book open

before her. Her dress was severe and she rolled a yellow pencil restlessly in her fingers. She looked coldly at Adam as he stood in the doorway.

"What do you want now?" she asked. Adam did not reply. He walked to the table and laid the letter in front of her.

Kate read the letter quickly. "What do you want me to do about it?"

Adam pointed to the address on the letter. "Why don't you write down the address and get in touch with them yourself?"

"What have you told them about me?"

"Nothing," said Adam. "I wrote to Charles and said you were living in another town, nothing more. He was dead when the letter got there. The letter went to the lawyers."

"You can't say we've been divorced. We haven't been."

"I don't intend to."

"Give me \$45,000 in cash and you can keep the rest."

"No."

"What do you mean, no? You can't bargain."

"I'm not bargaining. You have the letter and you can do what you want."

"Adam, you're a fool. If you had kept your mouth shut nobody would ever have known I was alive."

"I know that."

"You know it. Did you think I'd be afraid to claim the money?"

Adam said patiently, "I don't care what you do."

She smiled coldly at him. "You don't, huh? There's a permanent order in the sheriff's office, left there by the old sheriff, that if ever I use your name or admit I'm your wife I'll get sent out of the county and the state. Aren't you tempted to get me sent away and take all the money?"

"I brought you the letter," Adam said.

"And I want to know why," she said. "I don't know what the trick is, but I'm going to find out."

"I'm not interested in what you think or what you think of me," said Adam. "Charles left you the money in his will and he wanted you to have it. It isn't mine."

"I'll find the trick. I'll find it."

Adam said, "I guess you can't understand it. There are so many things I don't understand. I don't understand how you could shoot me and abandon our sons. I don't understand how you or anyone else could live like this." He stood up and walked toward the door.

"You're changed, Mr. Mouse," she called after him. "Have you got a woman at last?"

Adam stopped and turned and his eyes were thoughtful. "I just said I didn't understand you," he said slowly. "Just now it came to me what you don't understand. You know about the ugliness in people. You showed me the pictures. But you don't know the rest." Adam went on, astonished at his own thoughts. "You don't believe I brought you the letter because I don't want your money. You don't believe I loved you."

Kate laughed loudly at him. "What a sweet dreamer is Mr. Mouse! Tell me how to live my life, Mr. Mouse!"

"No. I won't, because I know there's a part of you missing. Some men can't see the color green, but they may never know they can't. I wonder if you ever feel that something invisible is all around you. It would be terrible if you knew it was there and couldn't see it or feel it."

Kate pushed back her chair and stood up. She hid her tightly-closed fists in the folds of her skirt and tried to keep the anger out of her voice. "If there are things I can't see, don't you think they're dreams manufactured in your own sick mind?"

"No, I don't," said Adam. "No, I don't. And I don't think you do, either." He turned and went out and closed the door behind him.

Kate sat down and stared at the closed door. She was not aware

that her fists beat softly on the white tablecloth. But she did know that the square white door was softened by tears and that her body shook with something that felt like rage and also felt like sorrow.

Chapter 12 Two Sides of a Coin

A child may ask, "What is the world's story about?" And a grown man or woman may wonder, "What way will the world go? How does it end?"

I believe there is one story in the world, and only one, that has inspired and frightened us. Humans are caught—in their lives, in their thoughts, in their hungers and ambitions, in their greediness and cruelty, and in their kindness and generosity too—in a net of good and evil.

There is no other story. A man will have only one question left at the end of his life: was it good or was it evil? And all novels, all poetry, are built on the never-ending contest in ourselves between good and evil.

Lee helped Adam and the two boys move to Salinas, unpacked, and saw the family settled. Then, one evening, he waited until the boys had gone to bed to speak to Adam.

Adam understood his intentions and spoke first. "When do you want to go?" he asked.

"As soon as possible. I'm afraid I might lose my purpose if I don't go soon. Maybe I'd better go tomorrow."

Six days later, Lee came back on the ten-forty train and let himself in with his own key. Adam was in the kitchen cleaning a burnt black frying pan.

"Lee!" he cried. "Is anything the matter? What happened to you?"

"Nothing happened to me," said Lee. "I got lonely. That's all. Isn't that enough?"

"How about your bookstore?"

"I don't want a bookstore. I think I knew it before I got on the train."

"Then that's your last dream gone."

"I'm glad," he said. "Adam, I am extraordinarily, unbelievably glad to be home. I've never been so lonely in my life."

Cal and Aron were amazed by the size of the West End School after their background in a one-room country school, but after a few days they could not remember ever having gone to any other school.

Everyone who saw the twins remarked on their difference from each other and seemed puzzled. Cal was growing up dark-skinned, dark-haired. He was quick and sure and secretive. Even though he may have tried, he could not hide his cleverness. No one liked Cal very much, but everyone feared and respected him. Although he had no friends, he took up a position of leadership in the schoolyard.

Aron was loved by all. He seemed shy and delicate. His pink and white skin, golden hair, and wide-apart blue eyes caught attention. In the schoolyard his prettiness caused some difficulty until the other boys discovered that he was a completely fearless fighter, particularly when crying.

On the first day of school, Aron followed Abra to the white gate of her yard. "What do you want?" she said.

"I guess it will be a long time before we can get married," Aron said.

"Not so long," Abra said.

Aron followed her as she walked to the end of the street and turned into a field. On the edge of the field stood a tree with long, thin branches that hung down nearly to the ground. Abra parted the branches like a curtain and went into the house of leaves. You could see out through the leaves, but inside it was warm and safe.

"We'll have a house together some time," said Aron. "But that will be a long time."

"Don't worry about long times," said Abra. "This is a kind of a house. We can play like we live here while we're waiting. And you will be my husband and you can call me wife. It'll be like practicing."

Aron said suddenly, "While we're practicing, maybe we could do something else."

"What?"

"Maybe we could pretend like you're my mother."

"That's easy," she said. She put a soft tone in her voice and said, "Come on, my baby, put your head in Mother's lap. Come, my little son. Mother will hold you." She held his head, and without warning Aron began to cry and could not stop. Abra stroked his cheek and wiped the flowing tears away with the edge of her skirt until very slowly he stopped.

Aron sat up and said almost angrily, "I hardly ever cry unless I'm mad. I don't know why I cried."

The sun was gone behind the trees. "Come on. Hurry! I bet my father's looking for me." Abra turned and ran away toward home.

It was February of 1915. The Trasks were comfortable in Salinas. Lee, after he had given up his dream of opening a bookstore, built a home for himself. He bought a bed and a desk and unpacked his books, put a soft carpet on the floor and pictures on the walls. He placed a big armchair under the best reading lamp he could find.

Lee also spent Adam's money and Adam gave him no opposition. A gas stove came into the house, and electric wires, and a telephone. He bought new carpets, a gas water-heater, and a large icebox. In a short time, there was hardly a more comfortable house in Salinas.

The new icebox fascinated Adam. He bought a textbook on

refrigeration and began to study it. He visited the ice factory that made ice for the few houses in Salinas that had iceboxes and for the places that sold ice cream. The truth was that Adam needed work. He came out of his long sleep needing to do something.

Adam was walking back from the ice factory when he saw Will Hamilton. "I'd like to talk to you about an idea I had," he said. "You might give me an opinion. You're a businessman."

"Of course," said Will. "Anything I can do."

"The whole country's changing," Adam said. "People aren't going to live the way they used to. Do you know where the biggest market for oranges in the winter is?"

"No. Where?"

"New York City. Now in the cold parts of the winter, don't you think people want fresh vegetables in the winter—like peas and lettuce and tomatoes? In a big part of the country they don't have those things for months and months. And right here in the Salinas Valley we can raise them all year."

"So what's your idea?"

"I was thinking of buying the ice factory here in Salinas. Then I could pack lettuce in ice to keep it fresh and ship it to the East Coast by rail."

"That would cost a lot of money."

"I have quite a lot of money."

"Stop right there, Adam," said Will. "Forget your idea. People in the East aren't used to vegetables in the winter. They wouldn't buy them. Your train could get stuck on a sidetrack and you'd lose everything. The market is controlled. I know you don't want my advice, but leave refrigeration alone."

"The war in Europe is going to go on a long time. And when there's war there are going to be hungry people. If you plant beans on your bottom land, your boys won't have to worry about the future. Beans are up to three cents now. If we went into the war I wouldn't be surprised if they went up to ten cents."

Will went away feeling good. He knew that he had given good advice.

"How about the ice factory?" said Lee.

"I think I'll buy it."

"You might plant some beans too."

Later in the year Adam made his great try, and it was a sensation in a year of sensations, both locally and internationally. As he got ready, businessmen spoke of him as far-seeing, forward-looking, progress-minded. The six cars full of lettuce packed in ice were decorated with big signs which said, "Salinas Valley Lettuce." But no one wanted to invest in the project.

The idea looked good. The lettuce would be sold to agents in New York at a fine price. If it was a success, many businessmen would put money in. Even Will Hamilton wondered whether he had not been wrong with his advice.

If the series of events had been planned by an all-powerful and unforgiving enemy, it could not have had more effect. As the train came into Sacramento, a snow slide closed the Sierras for two days and the six cars stood on a side track while their ice melted. On the third day, the train crossed the mountains and that was the time for unusually warm weather throughout the Middle West. In Chicago there was a confusion of orders—no one's fault, just one of those things that happen—and Adam's six cars of lettuce stood in the yard for six more days. What arrived in New York was six carloads of terrible mess, and it cost a lot just to get rid of it.

Adam read the telegram from the agents and settled back in his chair with a strange smile.

Cal and Aron heard the reaction in Salinas. Adam was a fool. It took experience to be a businessman. People who inherited their money always got into trouble. The twins felt Adam's failure very deeply. They were fifteen years old and they had known so long that they were sons of a wealthy man that the feeling was hard to

lose. And the high school group cruelly began to refer to the boys as "Aron and Cal Lettuce," or simply "Lettuce-Head."

Aron still had Abra to comfort him, but Cal was alone. For a very short time he tried to join them, but they did not want him. He was jealous and tried to attract the girl to himself and failed.

Cal felt restless and began to walk the streets late at night. On his walks he often recalled the conversation between Lee and Adam he had heard on the ranch. He knew that his mother was not dead, and he wanted to dig out the truth.

One night Cal ran into Rabbit Holman, who lived near the ranch. He had sold a piece of his land at a fine price and he was celebrating in Salinas by getting drunk. He drank whiskey from a bottle as they walked along together, and soon he had forgotten not only who Cal was but also how old he was.

And he said, "Harry, I'll tell you what we'll do—we'll go to Kate's place. You remember who Kate is, don't you? She's Adam Trask's wife, the mother of those twins. I'll never forget the time she shot him in the shoulder and ran off." They went through the dusty yard and up on the unpainted porch. The guard at the door did not look closely at Cal as they joined the nervous waiting men.

◆

One night, Lee heard a quiet knock at his door and he let Cal in. Cal spoke softly and rapidly. "I know where my mother is and what she's doing. I saw her."

"What do you want to know," Lee asked softly.

"Does my father know?"

"Yes."

"Why did he say she was dead?"

"To save you from pain."

"Did she shoot him?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because he didn't want her to go away. He loved her with his whole mind and body. He gave her everything."

"Lee, why did she do it?"

"I don't know. It seems to me that she is not like other people. She was full of hatred, and her hatred wasn't healthy. It wasn't angry. It was heartless. Tell me, Cal, do you hate your mother?"

"Yes," said Cal. "I hate her because I know why she went away. I know—because I've got her in me." His head was down and his voice was heartbroken.

Lee jumped up. "You stop that!" he said sharply. "Of course you may have that in you. Everybody has. You've got your father in you, too, so don't use the excuse that you inherited it from your mother. Whatever you do, it will be you who does it, not your mother."

Cal was growing toward manhood, and his discovery sharpened all his emotions. He saw Adam's sadness and loneliness, and there grew in him a great love for his father and a wish to protect him.

Aron was changing too, but his feelings took a religious direction. He joined the church and spent many hours with the minister, Mr. Rolf, a young man with no experience of the world. Aron's religion inevitably took a sexual turn. He spoke to Abra about his decision to become a minister and never to marry. Abra in her wisdom agreed with him, feeling and hoping that this phase would pass. She wanted to marry Aron, but for the moment she did not speak of it.

Aron naturally tried to work on Cal. First he prayed for him silently, then tried to persuade him to change his ways. Cal thought he was unbearably full of his own goodness and told him so. It was a relief to both of them when Aron stopped trying to save his brother's soul.

Chapter 13 Sons and Brothers

Cal gave himself the task of learning all he could about Kate so that he could protect his father. He reasoned that what she could do before, she could do again. A known enemy is less dangerous, less able to surprise. Sometimes in the afternoon he lay hidden in the tall grass across the street, watching Kate's place. He found that she came out every Monday at one-thirty.

One Monday, she turned in at her gate as usual. Cal waited a moment then walked past the house. Kate was waiting in the yard. She said to him coldly, "This isn't the first time you've followed me. What do you want?"

Cal froze in his steps and stared at her. And he realized that Aron had the same wide-apart blue eyes and the same color of hair. He lowered his head. "Nothing, ma'am."

"You won't tell me, will you?"

Cal heard his own speech with amazement. "You're my mother and I wanted to see what you're like."

"What? What is this? Who are you?"

"I'm Cal Trask."

She looked at him closely, and a faintly remembered picture of Charles leaped into her mind. Suddenly she said, "Come with me!"

Cal followed her into the house, down a hall, and into her room. Then, she opened a new door cut in the wall at the end of her room and went into a box of a room with no windows and no decorations. Its walls were painted a dark gray and there was a solid gray carpet on the floor. The only furniture was a huge armchair and a covered floor lamp that gave out a weak circle of light. "Come in and bring that chair with you," she said. "Close the door."

Kate sat down in the armchair and carefully removed her gloves. The fingers of both hands were bandaged. "Don't stare,"

she said angrily. "It's arthritis. Oh—so you want to see, do you?" She unwrapped the bandage from her right hand and held her crooked fingers under the low light. "There, look!" She cried out in pain as she wrapped the bandage loosely. "You'll probably get it. My grandmother had it and my mother was just beginning to get it." She stopped. The room was very silent.

"I saw you looking at this room," she went on. "The light hurts my eyes. I come here to rest." She settled back in her chair. "How's your father?"

"I don't want to talk about him."

"Oh, no! You like him then?"

"I love him," said Cal. "Why'd you shoot my father and run away from us?"

Kate looked at him and her eyes were cold and shallow. "Because he tried to stop me from going. When I was hurt, all broken up, he took me in and he looked after me, cooked for me. He tried to tie me down by making me grateful. But nobody can hold me. I waited until I was strong and then I broke out." A kind of realization came over her. "Maybe you're like me. Why wouldn't you be?"

Cal shook his head. "I'm going," he said happily. "What Lee said is true. I was afraid I had you in me."

"You have," said Kate.

"No, I haven't. I'm my own person. If I'm mean, it's my own meanness. And I don't think the light hurts your eyes. I think you're afraid."

"Get out," she cried. "Go on, get out!"

"I'm going." He walked to the door. "I don't hate you," he said. "But I'm glad you're afraid." He went out and banged the door behind him.

Kate sat back in her chair and thought suddenly of the only person who had ever made her feel this fear and hatred. It was Samuel Hamilton, with his white beard and his laughing eyes

that looked underneath her skin. Cal's words kept repeating themselves over and over in her head, "I think you're afraid."

With her bandaged hand she pulled out a fine chain which hung around her neck inside her dress. On the chain were two safe-deposit box keys, a gold watch with *to C with all my heart from A* on the back, and a little steel tube with a ring on the top. Very carefully she unscrewed the top from the tube and shook out a capsule. She held the capsule under the light and saw the white powder inside—six grains of morphine, more than enough. Very gently she slid the capsule into its tube, screwed on the cap, and dropped the chain inside her dress.

The nation moved little by little toward war. Business improved and prices began to rise. Little groups of British purchasing agents traveled around the country in their uniforms, buying food and cloth and metals and chemicals. One of the things they bought was beans because beans are easy to transport and they do not spoil and a man can live on them. Beans were twelve and a half cents a pound and hard to find. And farmers wished they had not agreed to sell their beans for five cents a pound six months ago.

Cal walked to school with Aron. "How would you like to leave school and go back to the ranch?" said Cal.

"What for?"

"We could make some money for Father."

"I'm going to college. I wish I could go now. Everybody is laughing at us because of the lettuce. I want to get out of town, but I don't know if there's enough money for college."

Cal said, "If you worked hard you could take entrance examinations next summer and go in the fall."

Aron swung around. "I couldn't do it."

"I think you could," said Cal. "Mr. Rolf could help you." Cal thought for a moment. "I'll tell you what. I'm going to try to make some money. If you pass your examinations a year early, I'll help you through college."

"You will? I'll go and see the principal right away."

After supper that night Cal said, "Father, would you mind if I went down to the ranch Friday afternoon?"

Adam turned in his chair. "What for?"

"Just want to see. Just want to look around."

"Thinking seriously of going into farming?" asked Lee.

"I might. If you'd let me take it over, I'd farm it, Father."

"Well, we'll see," said Adam. "You might want to go to college."

When Cal started for the front door, Lee followed and walked out with him. "Cal," he called. "I've got \$5,000 if you ever need it."

"Why would I need it?"

"I don't know," said Lee.

One Saturday morning, Cal came in to Will Hamilton's office in his car showroom. Seeing Will's puzzled look, he said, "I'm Cal Trask."

"Oh, sure. You're getting to be a big boy. I suppose you'll be going into business soon."

"Yes, sir. I thought I might run the ranch when I get out of high school."

"There's no money in that," said Will. "Farmers don't make money. It's the man who buys from him and sells."

"Would you give me some advice?" Cal asked.

Will felt pleased. He looked at the dark-faced boy and he liked him. "If I can, I'll be glad to. What do you want to know?"

Cal said, "I want to make a lot of money. I want you to tell me how."

"Everybody wants that," Will said. "What do you mean by a lot of money?"

"Twenty or thirty thousand dollars."

Will smiled kindly. "Can you tell me why you want to make so much?"

"My father lost a lot of money. I want to make enough money to give him back what he lost."

Will looked at him in surprise. "Why?"

"Because I love him."

Will felt a sudden warmth toward this boy. Will understood him, felt him, sensed him, recognized him. This was the son he should have had, or the brother.

"Listen—you have a brother. Does your father like him better than you?"

"Everybody loves Aron," said Cal calmly.

"One more question," he said, "and I won't mind if you don't answer it. Is it possible that you're trying to buy your father's love?"

"Yes, sir, it is."

"That's all I want to ask," said Will. He looked straight ahead. "Cal—do you want to be partners with me?"

"Yes, sir."

"I don't like to take a partner without money."

"I can get five thousand dollars," said Cal.

"Where will you get it?"

"I won't tell you, sir."

Will shook his head and laughed. "I believe you. Now I want you to listen. We're going to be in this war any time. Do you know the present price of beans?"

"I'm not sure. I think around three and a half cents a pound."

"Right, but you don't want to farm. You're too smart. The man who rented your father's farm is called Rantani. He's a good farmer. If we offer him five cents a pound and give him a seed loan, he'll plant beans. So will every other farmer around here."

Cal said, "What are we going to do with five-cent beans in a three-cent market?"

Will said, "Are we partners?"

"Yes, sir." They shook hands seriously.

"I have a contact with the British Purchasing Agency," Will

said. "I bet we can sell all the dried beans we can find at ten cents a pound or more. Now would you like to go up to the old place and talk to Rantani?"

"Yes, sir," said Cal.

One late summer day, when Lee came back from the market, he found Adam leaning back in his chair and smiling at the ceiling. "Today I met Mr. Kilkenny, from the high school. Do you know what Aron is doing?"

"No," said Lee.

"He's covered all next year's work. He's going to take examinations for college and save a year. What do you think of that?"

"Remarkable," said Lee. "But why does he want to save a year?"

"Because he's ambitious," said Adam. "I didn't know anything about it. I'm proud of him, Lee. I wish Cal had some ambition."

"Maybe he has," said Lee. "Maybe he has some kind of a secret too."

"Just think," said Adam. "When Aron tells us, we ought to have a present for him."

"A gold watch," said Lee.

"That's right. I'm going to get one and have it ready."

Adam waited impatiently for Aron to bring news of his examinations. The gold watch lay in his drawer and Lee had his instructions. On the evening of the day of the announcement, he would cook a turkey and bake a cake.

One evening Cal came in and asked Adam, "Where's Aron?"

"His teacher asked him to have dinner with him," said Adam.

"I guess they want to celebrate," said Cal.

"Celebrate?"

"The exams. Didn't he tell you? He passed them."

When Aron came home, Lee was waiting for him on the porch. "Sit down! I want to talk to you. Why didn't you tell your father you passed the tests?"

"He wouldn't understand."

"Aron, can't you tell me what's the matter with you? You always used to."

Suddenly Aron broke down. "I want to go away. I don't belong here. I wish we hadn't ever come here."

Lee put his arm around his shoulder to comfort him. "You're growing up," he said. "Maybe that's it. Wait a little while and it will be over. Go to bed now, and in the morning get up early and tell your father about the tests. Make it exciting. He's lonelier than you are because he has no lovely future to dream about. And, Aron—your father left a present on your pillow."

Kate was feeling better. The new medicine seemed to be doing her some good. Her hands were less painful and she had had a good night's sleep, the first in a long time. The difference in her rested face was amazing. She looked ten years younger. As she looked in the mirror, her thoughts jumped to that other face so like hers—what was his name? Alec?

She laughed—mother of two sons and she looked like one. And if anyone had seen her with the blond one—could they have any doubt? But what would—Aron, that was his name—what would he do if he knew? His brother knew.

Suddenly she knew that she did not want Aron to know about her. Maybe he could come to her when she started a new life in New York. She would take him to the theater, to the opera, and people would see them together and wonder at their loveliness, and recognize that they were either brother and sister or mother and son.

Chapter 14 Jealousy and Revenge

We did not have many soldiers in France the first winter of the war, but we had millions in training, ready to go. In the Trask

house, Lee and Adam put up a map of Europe with lines of colored pins marking where our soldiers were, and this gave them a feeling of taking part in the war. Then Adam was appointed to the draft board, choosing the young men who would be sent away to fight. He was a logical man for the job. The ice factory did not take up much of his time and he had a good service record.

Adam worked hard and honestly and sadly. He knew that the young men he passed to the army were under sentence of death. And because he also knew he was weak, he was less likely to accept an excuse or a minor disability.

Adam looked forward to Thanksgiving, when Aron would come home from college. Aron was terribly homesick—he realized that he had made a mistake. He had decided that at Thanksgiving he would go home, and then he would be sure.

Aron tapped softly at his brother's bedroom door and went in. Cal sat at his desk, working with tissue paper and red ribbon. He quickly covered it up as Aron came in.

Aron smiled. "Presents?"

"Yes," said Cal, but did not explain.

Aron sat on the bed. He was silent so long that Cal asked, "What's the matter—you got trouble?"

"No, not trouble. I just wanted to talk to you. I don't want to go on at college."

Cal looked up quickly. "You don't? Father will be disappointed. What do you want to do?"

"I thought about taking over the ranch. Abra told me a long time ago that's what she'd like. I want to talk to Father about it tomorrow."

Cal suddenly felt angry. Aron was trying to take the day away from him. It was not Aron's day. It was Cal's day. He had planned this day for himself and he wouldn't give it up. Then he looked at his brother, at the light hair and the wide-apart eyes, and

suddenly he knew why his father loved Aron, knew it beyond doubt. He looked like her.

Then, he was bitterly ashamed. He thought, "It's just jealousy. I'm jealous." He asked himself, "Why am I giving this money to my father? Will Hamilton said it—I'm trying to buy his love. There's not one decent thing about me." Then a new voice came into his mind. "Just give it and forget it. Don't expect anything."

When Aron had gone back to his room, Cal uncovered his present. He counted the fifteen new bills once more, then wrapped them up and hid them in a drawer under his shirts. But he could not sleep. He was excited and at the same time shy. He wished the day were over and the gift given.

After the turkey dinner and dessert, they sat at the table and drank to each other's health. Adam said, "I guess we never have had such a good Thanksgiving."

Cal reached in his jacket pocket, took out the red-ribboned package, and pushed it over in front of his father.

"What's this?" Adam asked.

"A present." Cal's eyes were full of joy.

Adam unfolded the tissue paper and stared down at the money. He picked up the notes very slowly. "What is it?"

Cal swallowed. "It's—I made it—to give to you—to make up for losing the lettuce."

Adam raised his head slowly. "You made it? How?"

"Mr. Hamilton—we made it—on beans. We agreed to pay the farmers five cents and then the price jumped. It's for you—\$15,000."

Cal caught a feeling of disaster in the air and he felt sick. He heard his father say, "You'll have to give it back."

"Give it back? The British Purchasing Agency can't take it back. They are paying twelve and a half cents for beans all over the country."

"Then give it back to the farmers you robbed."

"Robbed?" Cal cried. "We paid them two cents a pound more than the market price. We didn't rob them."

His father took a long time to answer. "I send boys out," he said. "I sign my name and they go out. And some will die and some will lie helpless without arms or legs. Son, do you think I can make a profit on that?"

"I did it for you," Cal said. "I wanted you to have the money to make up for your loss."

"I don't want the money, Cal. I thank you for the thought, but I would have been happy if you could have given me—well, what your brother has. If you want to give me a present—give me a good life."

Cal stood up suddenly and his chair fell over. He ran from the room, holding his breath.

Adam called after him, "Don't be angry, son."

Adam and Lee left him alone. He thought he would cry but he did not. He felt hate spread through his body, poisoning every nerve.

Cal went out to find Aron as he returned from walking Abra home. "I want you to come with me," Cal said. "I want to show you something."

"What is it?"

"It's a surprise. But you'll be interested."

The next day, Kate sat still and stared straight ahead—hour after hour. She saw the face of the blond and beautiful boy, his eyes mad with shock. She heard his ugly words aimed not so much at her as at himself. And she saw his dark brother leaning against the door and laughing cruelly. Why had he brought his brother? What did he want?

The pain was creeping in her hands again and now her right leg ached angrily when she moved. She thought about when she was a small girl with a face as fresh as her son's. Most of the time she knew she was smarter and prettier than anyone else. But now

and then a lonely fear would fall upon her so that she seemed surrounded by a tree-tall forest of enemies. Then every thought and word was aimed to hurt her, and she had no place to run and no place to hide.

Then, one day, she was reading a book—*Alice in Wonderland*. In the story Alice had a little bottle that said, "Drink me." When she drank from it, she became very small. Cathy too had a little bottle of sugar water that she drank from and became smaller and smaller. Let her enemies look for her then! Cathy would be under a leaf or looking out of a spider-hole, laughing. And always there was Alice to play with.

All this was so good, but there was one more thing always held in reserve. She had only to drink the whole bottle and she would shrink and disappear and cease to exist. Now Kate was cold and alone but she was ready, and she knew she had been ready for a long time.

She sat up and forced her hand, in spite of the pain, to write plainly. "I leave everything I have to my son Aron Trask." She dated the sheet and signed it, "Catherine Trask."

At the table she poured cold tea into her cup and went into the gray room and closed the door. She arranged the pillows on the gray chair and sat down. Gently she pulled the chain out from her dress, unscrewed the little tube, and shook the little capsule into her hand.

"Eat me," she said, and put the capsule in her mouth. She picked up the teacup. "Drink me," she said, and swallowed the bitter cold tea. Her eyes closed and her heart beat and her breathing slowed as she grew smaller and smaller and then disappeared—and she had never been.

The next morning, Sheriff Horace Quinn sat in the dead woman's office and looked through her papers. He read the two-line handwritten will, then he opened a packet of brown envelopes and removed some photographs. On the back of each

one, in Kate's neat, sharp handwriting was a name and address and a title—councilman, judge. He sighed deeply as he called a number. Half an hour later, a nameless man stood beside him in the front office of the old county jail.

Quinn wrote a list of names on a sheet of paper. Then he walked over to the wood-burning stove against the north wall of his office. He put a folded newspaper into the stove and lighted it and dropped the brown envelopes onto the flames. "She's dead now, so you're safe," he said. "These are the only copies, and the negatives were in there."

"Thank you, Horace," said the visitor.

Horace picked up the list from his desk. "Here's a list. Tell everyone on the list that I've burned the pictures."

Later that afternoon, Sheriff Quinn climbed up the steps of the Trask house. Lee brought two cups of coffee into the living room and went out.

Adam asked, "Is there anything wrong, Horace?"

"No, I don't think so. Adam, was that woman still married to you?"

Adam went white. "Yes," he said. "What's the matter?"

"She killed herself last night."

Adam's face twisted, and he put his face down in his hands and cried. "Oh, my poor darling!" he said.

Horace sat quietly and waited. After a time, he took the folded will from his pocket and held it out. "There's over \$100,000 in her safe-deposit boxes."

Adam read the two lines and went right on staring at the paper and beyond it. "He doesn't know—she's his mother."

"You never told him?"

"No. What should I do?"

"I can only tell you what I'd do," Sheriff Quinn said. "I'd tell him everything. I'd even tell him why you didn't tell him before."

"Lee," Adam called, "tell Aron I want him. He has come home, hasn't he?"

"Not yet," said Lee. "Maybe he went back to school. I'll ask Cal."

Cal's face was tired and closed and mean when he came in. Adam asked, "Where's your brother? He hasn't been home for two nights."

"How do I know?" said Cal. "Am I supposed to look after him?"

Adam's body shook as a tiny sharp blue light flashed at the back of his eyes. He said thickly, "Maybe he went back to college."

Sheriff Quinn stood up. "You get a rest, Adam. You've had a shock."

In his room Cal sat at his desk, holding his aching head. Cal had never drunk before, and had never needed to. But going to Kate's had been no relief from pain, and his revenge had been no victory. Coming out of Kate's he had touched his tearful brother, and Aron had cut him down with a fist like a whip. Aron had stood over him in the dark, and then suddenly turned and ran, screaming like a broken-hearted child. Cal drank all night, then he was back in his room. His guilt struck him and he had no weapon to fight it off.

A feeling of worry for Aron rose in him because Aron could not take care of himself. Cal knew he had to find him and bring him back, even if he sacrificed himself. Then the idea of sacrifice took hold of him the way it does with a guilty-feeling man.

Cal took out a flat package from under his handkerchiefs in the drawer. He looked around the room and brought a small dish to his desk. He folded one of the bills in the middle and lighted it with a match. When six were burned Lee came in without knocking and stood silently, waiting. Cal lighted one bill after another until all were burned.

At last Cal said, "Go ahead—you want to talk to me. Go ahead!"

"Where's Aron?" asked Lee.

"I don't know. He ran away." Then Cal cried, "Why did I do it?"

"Don't make it complicated," Lee said. "You were mad at him because your father hurt your feelings. You were just mean."

"I guess that's what I wonder—why I'm mean. Lee, I don't want to be mean."

"Just a second," said Lee. "I thought I heard your father come in. Cal, he doesn't look well—he looks like he's in shock. Oh, I forgot. You don't know. Your mother killed herself last night."

Cal said, "Did she? I hope it hurt!" and then, "No, I don't want to say that. I don't want to think like that."

Lee found Adam leaning against the wall, his hat low over his eyes. Lee helped him into the living room and he fell heavily into his chair. His eyes were strange and his speech had the sound of a dream talker, slow and coming from a distance. He put his hand into his pocket and slowly brought out a yellow government postcard. "Lee, I guess I'll have to get glasses. Can't read it. Letters jump around. You read it."

And Lee read, "Dear Father, I'm in the army. I told them I was eighteen. I'll be all right. Don't worry about me. Aron."

Chapter 15 The Only Son

The winter of 1917–18 was a dark and frightened time. The Germans smashed everything in front of them and the war seemed hopeless.

Adam was more puzzled than sad. He was released from the draft board as a result of his poor health. Almost daily he spoke of Aron. "I can understand why a young man might want to enlist," he said. "If Aron had talked to me, I might have tried to persuade him against it but I wouldn't have forbidden it. You know that, Lee."

"I know it."

"That's what I can't understand. Why did he run away? Why doesn't he write? Has he written to Abra?"

"I'll ask her."

That evening Lee said, "Cal, have you seen Abra?"

"Sure, I see her. She walks away."

"I don't understand why she hasn't been here. Something's wrong there. Will you ask her to come and see me?"

"I'll try, but I told you she walks away."

Cal tried all the next day to find Abra alone, and it was only after school that he saw her ahead of him, walking home. "Lee wants to see you," he said. "He asked me to tell you."

She was pleased. "Does he? Tell him I'll come."

They walked along in silence until Cal couldn't stand it anymore. "You know about Aron?"

"Yes." She held out a book. "Look next to the first page."

A penny postcard was inside. "Dear Abra," it said, "I don't feel clean. I'm not good enough for you. Don't be sorry. I'm in the army. Don't go near my father. Goodbye, Aron."

Cal closed the book angrily. "Do you know why he went away?"

"I guess I could figure it out. Do you want to tell me?"

"Abra, I've hurt you more than you know, but I'll tell you," said Cal bitterly. "Our mother was a whore. She ran a house here in town. Thanksgiving night I took Aron down and showed her to him."

Abra broke in excitedly, "What did he do?"

"He went mad—just crazy. He shouted at her. Outside he knocked me down and ran away. Our dear mother killed herself; my father—he's—there's something wrong with him. Now you know about me. Now you have some reason to walk away from me."

"Cal," she said, "I've known about your mother for a long,

long time. And there's something else I want to tell you. I don't love Aron anymore."

"Why not?"

"I've tried to figure it out. When we were children we lived in a story that we made up, then when I grew up the story wasn't enough. But Aron didn't grow up. He wanted to believe that his mother was dead and that I was perfect, but I'm not. Tell Lee I'll come. I feel free now. I think I love you, Cal."

"I'm not good."

"Because you're not good."

Adam often slept until late in the morning. Lee helped him get up. "I had a dream—very real," Adam said. "I dreamed about my father."

"A great old gentleman, from all I hear," said Lee. "I read all the newspaper articles your brother's lawyer sent."

Adam looked calmly at Lee. "Did you know he was a thief?"

"You must have dreamed that too," said Lee.

"He was a thief," said Adam. "I didn't think so once, but I do now. He stole from the Army."

Lee changed the subject. "Do you know who Cal saw yesterday? Abra."

Adam said, "Abra?" and then, "Oh, sure, Abra. She's a nice girl."

Lee wondered what Adam meant, saying his father was a thief. Maybe it was true—Adam, the most honest man it was possible to find, living all his life on stolen money. Lee laughed to himself—now this second will, and Aron, who tried to be so pure, living all his life on the profits of a whorehouse. Was this some kind of joke, or did one thing balance another?

On May 28, 1918, American soldiers carried out their first important assignment of the First World War. The First Division, General Bullard commanding, was ordered to capture the village of Cantigny, on high ground looking over the Avre River valley.

The attack was a complete success and the French government congratulated them.

Spring was late that year in the Salinas Valley. Cal and Abra went on a picnic in the Gabilan Mountains to gather wild flowers at the end of May.

When Cal returned, all of the lights were on in the Trask house. Adam's door was open and the sound of voices came from his room.

"What's going on?" asked Cal.

Lee looked at him and swung his head toward the table where the open telegram lay. "Your brother is dead," he said. "Your father has had a stroke."

Dr. Murphy came out carrying his bag.

"How is he?" Cal demanded.

"I'll tell you all we know. You're the head of the family now, Cal. Do you know what a stroke is? This one is a leakage of blood in the brain. Certain areas of the brain are affected. He can't move his left side, and the right side only a little. In other words, your father is nearly helpless."

"Can he talk?"

"A little—with difficulty. Don't tire him."

Cal struggled for words. "Is he going to die?"

"We don't know. He might live for a week, a month, a year, even two years. He might die tonight."

Cal walked into his father's room and sat down beside the bed. Adam's eyes were calm, aware but not interested. Cal said, "I'm sorry, Father. Can you understand me?" Adam's eyes did not change or move. "I did it," Cal cried. "I'm responsible for Aron's death and your sickness. I took him to Kate's. I showed him his mother. I don't want to do bad things—but I do them."

He put his head down on the side of the bed to escape the terrible eyes, and he could still see them. He knew they would be with him, a part of him, all of his life.

Lee came into the bedroom. "Cal!"

"What do you want?"

"Go to Abra."

Cal and Abra walked slowly down the street together. Cal said, "Abra, I've killed my brother and my father has had a stroke because of me."

She took his arm and held it tightly with both hands.

Cal said, "Didn't you hear me?"

"I heard you."

"Abra, my mother was a whore. I've got her blood. Don't you understand? What shall I do?"

"We're going back to your father's house," said Abra.

Lee and Cal and Abra went into the bedroom together.

"Adam, can you hear me?" asked Lee.

The blue eyes closed slowly, then opened. Lee said, "Thank you, Adam. I know how hard it is. I'm going to ask you to do a much harder thing. Here is your son Caleb—your only son. Look at him, Adam!" The pale eyes looked until they found Cal.

Lee's voice continued. "I don't know how long you will live, Adam. But your son will live. He will marry and his children will be all that remains of you. He acted in anger, Adam, because he thought you had rejected him. The result of that anger is that his brother and your son is dead. Your son is marked with guilt—almost more than he can stand. Adam, please forgive him. Don't leave him alone with his guilt. Adam, can you hear me? Forgive him!"

A terrible brightness shone in Adam's eyes and he closed them.

Lee said, "Help him! Give him his chance!"

Adam's breath came quick with the effort and then slowly his right hand lifted—lifted an inch and then fell back.

Lee whispered, "Thank you, my friend."

Adam's eyes opened and he tried to speak. His whispered words seemed to hang in the air, "*He has the choice.*"

His eyes closed and he slept.

ACTIVITIES

Chapters 1–3

Before you read

- 1 The Introduction to this book refers to the story of Cain and Abel. Do you know this story? If not, find out about it. Who were these two men? Where is their story told? What happened to them? Discuss why you think their story remains relevant.
- 2 Using the Introduction, books, and the Internet, find out about John Steinbeck and the background to this novel. Discuss your findings.
 - a Who was Steinbeck and what did he write about? Why do you think his books are still best-sellers?
 - b Why did the American Civil War take place? How was the country divided? What was the result of the war?
 - c Who moved into the western states of the United States and why in the second half of the nineteenth century? What happened to the native Americans who were living there?
 - d Where was the First World War fought? When and why did the United States join in? How did the war end?
- 3 Look at the Word List at the back of the book and check the meaning of unfamiliar words. Then find:
 - a words that relate to medicine or medical conditions
 - b words connected with military life
 - c words for documents or messages.

While you read

- 4 Who:
 - a came to the Salinas Valley with her husband?
 - b is a blacksmith?
 - c moves west from Connecticut?
 - d lost part of his leg in the American Civil War?
 - e was Cyrus Trask's second wife?
 - f is Adam Trask's half-brother?
 - g is sent to the army?

- h** makes money easily and eventually owns several stores?
i was the son of Olive Hamilton?
j is scarred in an accident?
k becomes a vagrant?
l leaves a large sum of money in his will?

After you read

- 5** Discuss which of these adjectives best describe each of the characters below.

aggressive brave charming competitive disapproving
good-looking humorless inventive obedient peace-loving
quiet respectful sensitive strict strong suspicious

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| a Samuel Hamilton | d Cyrus Trask |
| b Liza Hamilton | e Adam Trask |
| c Alice Trask | f Charles Trask |

- 6** Compare the characters of Adam and Charles. Which of the two men would you prefer to know? Why?

- 7** Work with another student. Have this conversation and come to a decision.

Student A: You are Charles. You don't want to keep the money that you have inherited. Explain why.

Student B: You are Adam. Explain why you want to keep the money that your father has left you.

Chapters 4–6

Before you read

- 8** Discuss these questions.

- a** What do you think will happen to Adam and Charles in the next part of the story? Do you think they will become friends? Why (not)?
b In Chapter 4, you will meet a pretty young woman called Cathy Ames who has "evil in her soul." How might a person like that behave? How might she affect the relationship between Adam and Charles?

While you read

- 9** Find the correct ending to each of these sentences.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a Cathy is interested in her father's business ... | 1) when he asks her about the scar. |
| b Cathy doesn't like to drink alcohol ... | 2) because he tries to stop her leaving. |
| c Mr. Edwards takes Cathy to Connecticut ... | 3) so that the other girls will trust her. |
| d Cathy marries Adam ... | 4) because she wants his money. |
| e Adam doesn't realize ... | 5) to make her work. |
| f Adam meets Samuel ... | 6) that his brother is sleeping with Cathy. |
| g Cathy bites Samuel ... | 7) because he can protect her. |
| h Cathy shoots Adam ... | 8) so she can poison her. |
| i Kate works hard at the whorehouse ... | 9) because she loses control. |
| j Kate cooks for Faye ... | 10) when he decides to buy the Bordoni ranch. |

After you read

- 10** How does Cathy feel about each of these people?

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| a her father | d Charles |
| b Mr. Edwards | e Samuel |
| c Adam | f Faye |

- 11** Answer these questions.

- | |
|--|
| a What happens to Mr. and Mrs. Ames? |
| b What is Mr. Edwards' business? |
| c Why is he unhappy after he meets Cathy? |
| d Why is Cathy frightened of the sheriff? |
| e Why does Adam move to California? |
| f Why does Cathy almost die when she is pregnant? |
| g Why doesn't Adam tell the truth to the sheriff about his gunshot wound? |
| h Where does Cathy go when she leaves Adam's farm? |
| i What gift does Faye give to Kate? |
| j What happens to Kate when Faye dies? |

- 12** This book is set in the nineteenth century. Lee talks a strange form of English and wears Chinese clothes because people expect it of a Chinese servant. Discuss whether people in your country today expect certain groups to behave in a particular way.

Chapters 7–9

Before you read

While you read

- 15 Circle the correct words in these sentences.

 - a Adam / Lee cares for the twin boys after Cathy leaves.
 - b The twins look alike / different.
 - c In the Bible story, the Lord favored Cain / Abel more than his brother.
 - d Lee learns that human beings may / will defeat sin.
 - e Samuel / Lee tells Adam where Cathy can be found.
 - f Kate is predictably cruel / unexpectedly kind to Adam.
 - g After his visit, Adam feels sad and bitter / young and free.
 - h Lee would like to have his own life eventually / immediately.

After you read

- 16** Who says these words to whom?

 - a** "You don't deserve your children."
 - b** "How long do you plan to be gone?"
 - c** "Don't tell me you studied Hebrew?"
 - d** "Your medicine is like poison."
 - e** "I would have killed him if I could."
 - f** "You were terribly hurt."
 - g** "Maybe if you're free, you can free me."
 - h** "God knows, you've done enough for me."

- 17** Work with another student and have this conversation.

Student A: You are Samuel. Tell the story of Cain and Abel in your own words and explain what you think it means.

Student B: You are Lee and you have read the story of Cain and Abel in the original Hebrew. Explain to Samuel why the words “you may” are so important.

18 Samuel Hamilton says: “Names are a mystery. I’ve never known whether the name is shaped by the child or the child changes to fit the name.” What do you think? How are names chosen in your family?

Chapters 10–12

Before you read

- 19** Discuss these questions.

 - a** In Chapter 12, Adam decides to go into business. Do you think he will be suited to it. Why (not)?
 - b** What do you already know about the twin brothers Cal and Aron? How do you think they will develop as they grow older? Will they be affected by the way their mother and father have treated them? Do you think it is significant to the story that their names begin with the same initials as their uncle and their father?

While you read

- 20** Are these sentences true (✓) or false (✗)?

 - a Cal is darker, heavier and more watchful than his brother.
 - b Aron knows the truth about his mother.
 - c Cal is jealous of Abra's warmth with Aron.
 - d Adam plans to visit Kate.
 - e Charles leaves all his money to Adam.
 - f Adam and Kate are divorced.
 - g Adam, Cal, and Aron move to Salinas.
 - h Lee leaves the family and never returns to them.
 - i Adam's attempt to become a businessman is unsuccessful.
 - j Cal sees his mother.

After you read

21 In which order do these events happen? Number them 1–10.

- a Charles leaves Adam and Kate a lot of money.
- b Aron becomes religious.
- c Adam's brother Charles dies.
- d Lee leaves the family but quickly returns.
- e Adam offers Kate her share of the money.
- f Adam and his sons move to Salinas.
- g Cal tells Aron that their mother is not dead.
- h The brothers meet Abra.
- i Cal finds his mother at the whorehouse.
- j Adam's business plan fails.

22 Discuss these questions with another student.

- a Adam decided not to tell his sons about their mother. Do you think he was right? What would you have done in his situation?
- b Cal is upset because he thinks he has inherited his faults from his mother. Lee believes that the way children are brought up is more important. What do you think? Give examples of people you know, or know about.
- c The storyteller writes, "I believe there is one story in the world, and only one, that has inspired and frightened us." What is this one story? Look back at the beginning of Chapter 12 and explain it in your own words. Do you agree with Steinbeck? Explain why (not).

Chapters 13–15

Before you read

23 In the last part of the book, who will:

- a return to work on the ranch?
- b leave home and go to college?
- c reject a generous gift from one of his sons?
- d kill herself?
- e join the army?
- f Abra decide to marry?

While you read

24 One word in each sentence is wrong. Underline it and write the correct word.

- a Aron looks like his father.
- b Cal is upset after his meeting with Kate.
- c Cal goes into partnership with Aron.
- d Lee has more respect for Cal than for Aron.
- e Cal makes money by selling lettuce.
- f Cal hurts Aron out of hatred.
- g Kate leaves all her money to Cal.
- h Abra is attracted by Cal's strengths.
- i Adam forgives Cal before his stroke.

After you read

25 What part do these play in the story?

- a a gold watch
- b beans
- c \$15,000
- d morphine

26 Explain what each of these characters means.

- a Cal to Kate: "If I'm mean, it's my own meanness."
- b Cal to Lee: "Why did I do it?"
- c Aron to Abra: "I don't feel clean."
- d Lee to Adam: "Help him! Give him his chance!"
- e Adam to Lee: "He has the choice."

27 Work with another student. Have this conversation.

Student A: You are Will Hamilton. Discuss with Adam how you and Cal have made a lot of money. Show how proud you are of Cal and of yourself.

Student B: You are Adam Trask. Explain why you do not approve of what Will and Cal have done, and why you have no respect for your son's success.

Writing

- 28 After studying the story of Cain and Abel, Lee says, "A man can choose whether or not to fight against sin and to win. And that choice makes a man great." Explain whether the events in the story support his belief or show it to be wrong, and give your own opinion.
- 29 Imagine that you are Lee, at the end of the story. Describe your life with the Trask family and summarise what has happened to Adam, Cathy, Cal, and Aron. Explain the decisions that you made about your own life, and what you are doing now.
- 30 Which of his sons does Cyrus Trask prefer: Adam or Charles? Who does Adam prefer: Cal or Aron? How do the two fathers show their preferences? Are they wrong to have or to show these feelings? Give your views on their parenting skills.
- 31 Write a letter from Samuel Hamilton to a relative in Ireland at the beginning of the new century, with an account of the family and of life in the Salinas Valley.
- 32 Write a newspaper reporter's interview with the local police chief concerning the fire at the Ames's house, the robbery, and Cathy's disappearance. Write the reporter's questions and the police chief's answers.
- 33 Write a letter from Kate to Aron, to be opened after her death, describing her life and explaining her actions.
- 34 Which characters do you admire most in this novel? Which do you have least respect for? Give reasons for your answers.
- 35 Imagine that you are Cal. It is three years after the end of the story. Write about what has happened to you since then, and how you feel about the past.
- 36 Describe how the story of Cain and Abel is used in this novel.
- 37 Write a review of this book. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the story? Would you recommend it to other readers? Give reasons.

Answers for the Activities in this book are available from the Penguin Readers website.

A free Activity Worksheet is also available from the website. Activity Worksheets are part of the Penguin Teacher Support Programme, which also includes Progress Tests and Graded Reader Guidelines. For more information, please visit:
www.penguinreaders.com.

WORD LIST

ammonia (n) a gas or liquid with a strong, unpleasant smell, used in cleaning

arthritis (n) a disease that causes pain and swelling in the joints of your body

blacksmith (n) someone who makes and repairs things made of iron

capsule (n) a small, rounded container with powdered medicine inside it

champagne (n) a French wine with bubbles that is often drunk on special occasions

clever (adj) able to learn things quickly; showing ability or skill, especially in making things

conscience (n) the feelings that tell you whether your actions are morally right or wrong

crooked (adj) twisted; not straight

draft board (n) a group of people who decide, in war time, who must fight for their country

enlist (v) to join the army, navy, or air force

eyedropper (n) a short glass tube with a rubber part at one end, used for measuring liquid in drops and letting it fall into your eyes

foothill (n) one of the low hills at the bottom of a group of mountains

identical (adj) exactly the same

inspire (v) to encourage someone to do or produce something good

labor (n) physical work; the process of a baby being born

lace (n) a type of fine cloth with patterns of very small holes in it

morphine (n) a powerful drug used for stopping pain

private (n) someone with the lowest rank in the army

rage (n) a strong feeling of uncontrollable anger

sacrifice (n/v) something that you give up, often for something more important

safe (n) a strong metal box or cupboard with a lock on it, where you keep money and valuable things

safe-deposit box (n) a small box used for keeping valuable objects

sentence (n/v) a punishment that a judge gives to someone who is guilty of a crime

spring (n) a place where water comes up naturally from the ground

stroke (n) a sudden illness in which a tube in your brain bursts or becomes blocked

telegram (n) a message sent using electrical signals

triumph (v) to succeed in something important, especially after a difficult struggle

vagrancy (n) the condition of having no home or work and living by begging or stealing

whore (n) an offensive word for someone who has sex to earn money

will (n) a legal document that shows who you want to leave your money and property to after you die

PENGUIN READERS recommends



The Testament

John Grisham

Nate O'Riley is a powerful Washington lawyer. Returning to work after a long stay in hospital is difficult for Nate. Then he is sent on a journey that takes him from the tense courtrooms of Washington to the dangerous swamps of Brazil. It is a journey that will change his life forever... *Another great thriller from John Grisham, one of the world's most popular writers.*

Snow Falling on Cedars

David Guterson

It is 1954 and Kabuo Miyamoto is on trial for murder. He is a Japanese American living on the island of San Pedro, off the north-west coast of America. The Second World War has left an atmosphere of anger and suspicion in this small community. Will Kabuo receive a fair trial? And will the true cause of the victim's death be discovered?

Misery

Stephen King

Paul Sheldon is Annie Wilkes's favourite writer. She loves all his books about Misery Chastain. When Annie finds Paul after a car accident, she takes him home to look after him. Then Annie discovers that Paul wants to kill Misery and to write different kinds of books. She is determined to stop him, and Paul becomes her prisoner.

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