

The Californios Study Guide

The Californios by Louis L'Amour

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

The Californios Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapters 1-4.....	5
Chapters 5-9.....	9
Chapters 10-13.....	13
Chapters 14-18.....	16
Chapters 19-21.....	19
Characters.....	22
Objects/Places.....	25
Themes.....	27
Style.....	29
Quotes.....	32
Topics for Discussion.....	34



Plot Summary

The Californios by Louis L'Amour is the tale of the Mulkerin family's struggle to keep their ranch after an unscrupulous man buys their bank note and wants to foreclose for his personal gain.

The story takes place in 1844 when Southern California was sparsely inhabited. The towns and cities were few and largely undeveloped. The ranch was a typical type of home and horses and wild animals abound. There is a lot of talk of riding off into the wilderness and travel.

The story speaks about Malibu, the home to the Mulkerins. The area is relatively rural at this time and it is clear that the region is still somewhat rough-hewn and unsettled. The author describes Malibu in such a way that the reader can relate it to the modern day Malibu, at least as far as the scenery goes. There are many hills and breathtaking views of the Pacific Ocean.

The Mulkerin Ranch House is located in the mountains of Malibu. The house is a low-roofed adobe that has been added onto over the years. Near the open porch is a lean-to stable. From the front porch one can see hills, boulders and sandstone outcroppings.

Not far from the ranch are mountains, canyons and the open desert. The Mulkerins spend time in the mountains looking for gold. There are few that know the mountains well, even the trackers. The only one that seems to know every inch of the hills is Juan, The Old One.

The story begins with a man named Wooston who has purchased the bank note on the Mulkerin ranch. The ranch is home to Eileen Mulkerin and her sons, Michael and Sean. Michael has joined the Church and Sean is usually out to sea, but it is still the family home and all that Eileen has left of her deceased husband, Jaime.

Sean Mulkerin is trying to raise enough money to pay off the bank note. While in Acapulco, a woman swims out to Sean's boat and insists that he take her far away or there will be trouble. The woman, Mariana, is running away from her betrothed, a violent and powerful man.

Sean takes Mariana back to the ranch to meet Eileen and the others.

No matter what Eileen does, it seems that there is no way to raise enough money to pay off the bank note. Still, Eileen is determined to save the ranch and promises trouble to any that try to stop her.

Zeke Wooston is the owner of the note and will do anything to get his hands on the land, mainly because he wants use of Paradise Cove, an old smuggler's port. Wooston employs many men, all of which are of questionable character.



Eileen decides that the only way to save the ranch is to ride into the hills to find Juan, Jaime's old friend, and most likely the only man that knows where to find gold.

Juan, The Old One, is a mystical man with great wisdom. He leads Eileen to the gold but there is not enough to pay off the debt. Along the way, Juan dies. The rest of the party is followed by eight men, but they manage to make it back to the ranch.

One of the men, Russell, encounters the spirits and is punished for his misdeeds.

Eileen's plan for a fandango is a good one as long as Wooston bows to peer pressure. Wooston is not to be discouraged however. He sends two men to kill Sean, but they fail. Back at the ranch, Wooston waits for the Senora. Thinking that he has killed Sean, Wooston is sure the ranch is now in his possession. Wooston is wrong and is killed by Sean.

In the end, the Unknown ones shine on the Mulkerins, giving them a jar full of gold that will surely save and revive the ranch.

The main plot of the story is the fight to keep land and ward off unscrupulous outlaws and politicians while searching for gold. The subplots include Eileen's history and relationship with her dead husband Jaime as well as her pride and self-reliance. There is the story of Sean and Mariana and their blooming relationship. Lastly there are many references to spirits and hauntings of the land, which lends an air of mystery and intrigue to an otherwise common battle to protect one's home and family.



Chapters 1-4

Chapters 1-4 Summary

Chapter 1: Chapter one begins with a description of the Mulkerin house in Malibu, California. The Mulkerin Ranch House is located in the mountains of Malibu, California. The house is a low-roofed adobe that has been added onto over the years. Near the open porch is a lean-to stable. There are also fields of wheat that have recently burned, allegedly by a scurrilous man that wants to take the land away from the family. From the front porch one can see hills, boulders and sandstone outcroppings. Also off in the distance is the Pacific Ocean.

The Mulkerin family consists of Eileen Mulkerin and her sons Michael and Sean. Eileen was raised in Ireland and moved from Ireland to Mexico as a younger woman. From Mexico, Eileen and her new husband, Jaime, moved to Malibu. The former Presidente had given the land to Jaime as a reward for his service in the Mexican Army. Jaime had died several years before.

Bad luck and other unfortunate circumstances have put the family farm at risk. Eileen is determined to save it at any cost. The only way to come up with enough money to secure the farm and the Mulkerins' future is to find gold in the hills. Jaime found gold twice and there was more to be had if only the Mulkerins knew where to look.

Eileen Mulkerin is hoping for a miracle yet is determined that she will not lose the farm. Currently, the family's hope lies in Sean, who is piloting the Lady Luck back from Mexico, hopefully with a large sum of money from selling fur pelts and other things.

At the house with Eileen is Michael, one of the two grown sons. Michael has taken his vows to become a monk and is often the source of spiritual courage for his family.

Eileen, Michael, and Win Standish speak of the gold in the hills of California. No one knows where Jaime used to go and look for the gold or where he found it on two separate occasions. The trio talks and waits for the arrival of Zeke Wooston, the man who recently bought the bank note to the farm. Wooston intends to evict the Mulkerins the next day if they do not vacate the premises immediately. Eileen has no intention of leaving and tells the man just that.

Wooston is described as being a smuggler and a swindler, taking part on many illegal and unethical deals under the watchful eye of Captain Nick Bell and Micheltorena, a local soldier and leader.

Jorge Fernandez rides with Wooston. Fernandez is known for being a violent and abusive man. Fernandez is cruel to many including horses, women and Mexicans. Also present is Tomas Alexander, owner of a local cantina. The men state their point and are sent away by Eileen, who still insists that she will find a way to pay the note. The men mock her but drive away. Inside the house Eileen, Michael and Win discuss their



options, which seem to be almost non-existent. At this point it seems that the only hope for saving the farm rests with Sean.

Eileen looks around the house and recalls her youth and how she came to Malibu. Eileen's family had lived in Ireland before boarding a smuggler's boat to France. After a few months, the family went to Spain. Eileen's father was embroiled in a political scandal and was killed in Spain. Eileen sailed to Mexico to live with an aunt and uncle. While in Mexico, Eileen met Colonel Jaime Mulkerin, a veteran soldier in the Mexican Army. The couple fell in love, married, and moved to Malibu after the Colonel received the property from the Presidente.

Eileen talks about Jaime and his unusual gift for speaking in tongues. No matter who Jaime encountered, it seemed that he could communicate. This was especially true with the local Indians who came to respect and like Jaime. The feeling was mutual.

The Indians in the area are known as Chumash, although that is not the tribal name. Rather, it was the name of the first members of the tribe to interact with the whites. It was at one of the meetings with the Chumash that Jaime met Juan.

Chapter 2: This chapter begins with Captain Sean Mulkerin, the owner and operator of the two-masted schooner known as Lady Luck. Sean is sailing back from Acapulco with a small load and small profits. The market is not paying well for his cargo. The pelts bring more money but it is not enough.

Lady Luck docks off the coast. Sean stands on deck, staring out onto the lights, wondering what might be waiting for him on the shore. The sight of a woman breaks his concentration. The woman is running across the beach. She shucks off her dress and dives into the water. The woman swims to the Lady Luck and demands to come aboard. Sean helps the woman onto the deck. The woman demands that the ship sail immediately and says that if it does not there will be a lot of trouble. Without any explanation, Sean orders the crew to set sail.

After the crew raises the anchor and sets out into the night, Sean goes to his cabin to find the woman sound asleep. The explanation will have to wait until morning.

The next morning Sean speaks with the woman and asks to hear her story. The woman is Mariana del la Cruz. Mariana is running away from Andres Machado, her betrothed. Machado is a wealthy and powerful man. Mariana is bound to marry him through an agreement between her uncle and Andres. Sean blanches at the sound of Machado's name. Machado knows Sean and will stop at nothing to track Mariana.

Mariana apologizes to Sean for getting him into trouble. Sean tells her not to worry about it. Additionally, Sean tells Mariana that they will go to Malibu and the family farm.

Chapter 3: Sean is twenty-two years old and already a veteran sailor. At age fourteen, Sean took his first voyage with Jaime. Father and son sailed to Mazatlan, Acapulco, and Tehuantepec. From that day on, Sean seemed to be on the water the majority of the time.



This time Sean would have to use all of his skills if he is going to outrun Machado. Ten warns Sean about Machado and reminds the Captain of the man's reputation, which is a violent one.

Sean thinks about Machado a great deal at this time. However, the Senora is much more important right now. Sean must figure out a way to save the farm as it, aside from Sean and Michael, is all Eileen has left of Jaime and their life together.

Chapter 4: Sean and Mariana make it off the boat and back to the Mulkerin pueblo. Along the way, Wooston's men plan to ambush and kill Sean, but when they see that Sean is not alone the plan is aborted. The identity of the woman is unknown and killing her could make much more trouble than it is worth.

Chapters 1-4 Analysis

Chapter 1: Eileen Mulkerin is a strong, proud woman with a strong Irish stubborn streak. Despite her situation, Eileen is determined to stand on her own and protect the family land until the last possible moment. If there is any way Eileen can win over Wooston, she will.

The presence of Michael offers a great deal of strength for Eileen. She does not understand entirely why he became a monk but she supports him. Another strong support system is Win Standish. Win had done all he could up to this point to help save the farm. It is clear that Win, Eileen and Michael are all very close.

According to those at the Mulkerin house, Zeke Wooston is an unethical despicable man. The company he keeps is also questionable and there is no doubt that he will not hesitate to evict Eileen. Eileen does not fully rely on Sean as she states but at this time it seems that there is no other way than to have faith.

Chapter 2: In this chapter, Sean Mulkerin meets Mariana de la Cruz. The situation is odd in that Mariana shows up out of nowhere and demands to sail immediately. Sean does it without question. It is clear that the woman is used to ordering people around and seems to have no problem issuing commands to anyone in her path.

Mariana has knowingly placed Sean in a terrible position. Although Mariana apologizes, she does not actually seem to be remorseful in any way. In an additional peculiar move, Sean plans to take Mariana home to his mother. This in itself is an odd thing to do, stranger still considering the financial crisis being faced by the family at this time.

Chapter 3: Sean recalls his sailing history with great fondness. It is obvious that Sean adored his father and in some ways emulates him. Sean uses his wits to outmaneuver Machado. Machado may be powerful and wealthy, but no one knows the ocean like Sean. It is after he and Mariana disembark that is the big problem. Machado can find the Mulkerin house and therefore, Mariana.



Chapter 4: Sean and Mariana make it off the boat. Sean is worried about being followed but ventures forward anyway. Mariana seems to be content to be watched over and also seems to be less concerned than she should be regarding Machado.

Sean's near miss from the shooter proves to be lucky and predictable. Wooston is a big fish in a small pond and his actions show it. Underneath Wooston's bullying, he knows that he is not as important as he thinks.



Chapters 5-9

Chapters 5-9 Summary

Chapter 5: Sean and Mariana reach the Mulkerin house. Eileen is still awake, waiting for Sean's arrival. Jesus Montero, a friend of Jaime's and worker on the ranch, alerts Eileen that Sean has come home but that he is not alone. Eileen gets up and greets her son. Sean introduces Mariana to Eileen. Eileen is upset but cordial. It is not long until Michael and Win enter the room. Neither is happy about Mariana's presence. Win wants to send Mariana back to her uncle. Eileen insists that Mariana is welcome in her home and that they will deal with the trouble when the time comes.

The conversation turns to finding gold in the hills. Eileen begins to think that finding the gold is the answer. Montero says he is surprised that she would believe in such nonsense. The brothers begin to discuss the issue. Everyone puts their heads together to try and figure out who used to go into the mountains with Jaime. The only realistic answer is Juan.

Juan is discussed. No one knows how old Juan is or where he lives. There is an air of mystery around the old man. It is said that he is the last of his people, but no one can explain what that means. It seems that no one knows his current whereabouts or if he is still alive. Montero says that the Mulkerins will have more luck speaking to Juan than he will.

It is decided that Sean, Montero, Eileen and Mariana will go looking for Juan and then go into the mountains. Michael will stay behind at the ranch. Sean thinks that Wooston and his men would not forcibly eject a monk from his home.

Chapter 6: Montero leads the party, followed by Eileen, Mariana, two pack horses, and Sean. The ride is quiet and although Sean does not expect trouble, he rides with a shotgun in his hands. "His life in the mountains, the desert, and at sea had sharpened his senses until alertness was a way of life" (p. 57).

The day is growing late. Sean and Montero decide where they will stop for the night. As the light of day grows dim, Sean spots sandal tracks in the dirt and knows that they belong to Juan.

The party approaches Juan, who sits waiting on a bench by his door. Juan has expected them to come at some point and tells the group that Jaime said he should only tell the secret to Eileen or Sean.

The group does not stay long at Juan's hut before it is time to ride on into the mountains. Juan says he must go with them to keep them from getting lost but that it is important they remember the route because he will die soon. Juan says there are eight men following the party and if the men catch up, everyone will die. Sean has never understood how people like the Old One know when someone is nearby when there is



no sign, as if there is a disturbance in the air. Still, Sean trusts Juan implicitly and will do whatever he is told to do.

The party sets off into the mountains. Along the way, Sean marvels at the old one while worrying about his mother and Mariana. The group stops for the night. Montero takes the first shift. Sean tries to sleep but cannot. Sean takes the second shift and not long after, he starts Eileen awake. Eileen feels that someone is coming.

Chapter 7: Juan approaches Sean and Eileen. The Old One also felt the presence of the oncoming men. The party saddles up and follows Juan onto a hidden trail. Despite Juan's age, he moves like a young vaquero. Sean continues to fuss over Eileen but she shrugs it off. There are still three or four more days to go and Eileen tries to reassure Sean that she is more than capable of making the trip.

Eileen sees that Juan is disturbed. Juan tells Eileen that she should not have come that there will be bloodshed. Juan does not know the details but knows that it will happen. There is no permanent shelter. Juan tells Eileen a little about his people, how their settlement was ruined by fire and earthquake. Juan has no desire to share the history beyond what he has told Jaime and Eileen. He says he may tell Sean about some of it. Juan does not believe that his history will teach anyone anything of significance. "Men do not learn from history. Each generation believes itself brighter than the last, each believes it can survive the mistakes of the older ones" (pp. 74-75).

Eileen tells Sean about the bloodshed. Sean says he is expecting it. Sean is worried since only he, Eileen and Montero are armed and are no match for Machado and the other seven men, many of which are outlaws.

The group rests for a while and then Juan insists they continue to ride through the night.

Chapter 8: Machado and his party find the fire left by Sean. They decide to use it to cook food. There is conversation about the area and what might happen. The party has grown in size, joined by a dozen Californios. Silva, a man who is three-quarters Indian and one-quarter Spanish, has reverence for the area and the spirits that live in it. The majority of the others scoff at Silva. Fernandez seems to agree and both men feel that there is something bad in the place. Silva believes that Juan has a plan to trap them because he is no longer trying to outrun the group.

Sean Mulkerin is mentioned. The outlaws think that it is wise to kill them all. Machado only wants Mariana and a whip. Machado says he will take pleasure in killing Sean. Fernandez warns Machado that Sean is a strong man and a good fighter.

The others continue to scoff at the possibility of the trap and evil spirits. One of the men and his horse see a rattlesnake in the trail that causes the horse to start. When the other men look, there is nothing. Machado takes the lead.

Chapter 9: The Mulkerin party rides on into the darkness. Juan tells Montero, Sean and Mariana to stay put while he takes Eileen to the gold. Juan says they will return by daybreak. The area in which the three stay is inhabited by some unseen energy and is



unsettling to Sean. The three tell stories of their experiences and knowledge of the old ways. Sean finds ruins and wants to investigate. Montero tells him he cannot. Although Sean still wants to see what the Old Ones have left behind, he knows that Montero is right and that he must respect Montero, the land, and the Old Ones.

Juan takes Eileen into the hills. Along the way they talk about the land, the gold, and the Old Ones. Juan says there will be bloodshed but that Sean and the others will have help. Eileen comments again on how Juan is not like any other Indian. Once again Juan asks her to define "Indian." Juan also tells her that the Aztecs and the Incas are not the Old Ones— those tribes were new.

Eileen can feel the energy of the place and Juan explains in his vague way, saying, "Some say this place is haunted, and the place where I left them, but the ways of evil are always haunted, and evil breeds its own destruction" (p. 98).

Juan tells Eileen to rest, and that they must wait until daylight to see the gold.

Chapters 5-9 Analysis

Chapter 5: Eileen is a reluctantly gracious woman. It is clear that Mariana is intruding and could not pick a worse time to bring her troubles to the ranch. Still, Mariana is invited to stay because it is Sean that brought her to the house. Win and Michael are not angry that Sean helped Mariana; they simply do not want her at the ranch. Win wants to send her home to her uncle but Eileen will not allow it.

Montero is stunned that Eileen, "one of the most practical, sensible, down-to-earth women" Montero has ever known would consider giving into such fanciful ideas as searching for gold in the mountains. Eileen understands what Montero is saying but reminds him that she is Irish, saying, "I mean we Celts are not inclined to be overly skeptical about the Little People, or the mysterious" (p. 50).

The differences between the Mulkerins and Montero are even clearer when the group tries to estimate Juan's age and cannot. Regardless of their whimsy, Montero is ready and willing to help Eileen and her sons in any way he can.

Chapter 6: The ride through the mountains is eerily silent, giving Sean time to think about the predicament he faces along with his mother and others. Sean tries to remember what Juan imparted to him years ago but cannot. Sean only knows that the man has changed him in some way and that he is wise. One of the things that impresses Sean the most is how the Old One, and even his mother, have such keen senses that they can feel and sense things that others cannot. Although Sean cannot see or hear people on the trail, he believes that Eileen and Juan are right when they know the men are coming after them.

Chapter 7: Juan tells Eileen that there is no real point in sharing the history of his people because no one learns from history. Juan also makes the point that history repeats itself. Juan tells Eileen about the bloodshed leading the reader to think that Juan may



well be one of the dead. Sean is not surprised that there will be bloodshed and while he will do all he can to protect those in the party, he will surely be outgunned.

Chapter 8: While many think there is safety in numbers, it appears that it may not matter Machado's group. Silva and Fernandez believe in the Old Ways and feel that something is wrong. The others, unfamiliar with Juan or the Old Ways, think it is all nonsense. L'Amour gives the distinct impression that Machado and the non-believers are going to regret their skepticism and mockery.

Chapter 9: Juan continues to be mysterious and vague about many things. Whenever Eileen tries to get him to clarify, he only muddles things. Eileen truly wants to know about Juan's past. Juan seems to be waiting for a specific moment to tell Eileen and/or Sean at least part of his story.

Juan also confirms what the others suspect, that the Old Ones will help to protect Sean and the others and that those who commit evil will bring about their own downfall.



Chapters 10-13

Chapters 10-13 Summary

Chapter 10: Sean wakes Mariana when he hears Machado's people coming up the trail. Sean tells Mariana to hide and if they are found to ride to Los Angeles to Pio Pico. Pico, hopefully, will be able to protect her.

Sean rides to the edge of a clearing and sees a group of nine or ten men down in the canyon. Montero is nowhere to be seen, but Sean has faith that Montero knows what to do in this type of situation.

Machado's party comes close and Sean speaks to them from the darkness. Sean tells them to turn around. Wooston challenges Sean. Machado asks about Mariana. Sean says Mariana has made her decision. Machado laughs at Sean.

Montero and Mariana make noise and Machado's men believe that there may be more people than they thought. There were also the sounds of a coyote and strange laughter coming from the hills. Machado knows they are in the open and have a better chance of winning if they wait until morning.

Just before daylight Sean, Montero and Mariana prepare to leave. The men shoot at them but the group gets away.

Juan and Eileen make their way to the gold. Juan is careful to cover their tracks. Once again Juan tells Eileen that there is not much gold. Eileen is distraught when she finds that the amount of gold is less than half of what she needs to pay off the note to the ranch.

Chapter 11: It is quiet inside the cave. Juan sits down to rest, and for the first time Eileen is truly concerned about The Old One. Eileen apologizes for being thoughtless and focusing on her own needs when it is obvious that the trek has taken a great toll on the man. Juan says he will rest but warns Eileen not to wander off as the area is the most dangerous yet.

While Juan sleeps, Eileen looks around. She thinks about Sean and Mariana. Suddenly something on the rim moves and catches Eileen's attention. Seeing nothing, Eileen returns to thinking about her predicament and how she will have to take the gold but come up with another plan. The gold had to come from somewhere in the hills and there are many marks made by shovels and pickaxes that confirm her theory. Eileen thinks the gold could be the answer but there is no time to mine for it. There has to be another way.

After a time, Eileen tries to wake Juan and realizes that he is dead. Eileen mourns and covers Juan with her coat, promising to return to bury him as soon as she can. There are no animals in the area and the man's body should be safe.



Eileen meets up with the rest of the party and tells her story. All are shocked about Juan's death.

Eileen develops a plan to buy time to raise more money. They will tell the people that gold has been discovered and there will be a huge fandango.

Chapter 12: Montero lags behind and covers the party's tracks. Sean finds a place to stop and rest. Eileen shares her idea about the fandango. Although it sounds crazy, it will obviously work.

Silva tells Wooston and the others that the Mulkerin party has disappeared. Wooston is angry, saying it is not possible to disappear. Machado says he does not care about the gold; he only wants to kill them all. Russell is concerned about the gold and formulates a plan to get it with the help of a tracker named Francisco.

Francisco tells the others that Silva is withholding information because he is afraid of Juan, as many people are. Machado says that there is no point in staying in the mountains if the Mulkerins and Mariana have returned to the pueblo. Wooston reluctantly agrees. Russell puts his plan into action.

Chapter 13: Eileen and the others return to the ranch. Waiting for them is a group of armed renegades. Michael sits on the porch in his robe with a rifle across his lap. Eileen tells the renegades to get off her land. The men scoff at her, saying that they do not take orders from a woman. Sean repeats Eileen's demand. One of the men challenges Sean, which turns out to be a mistake. After the man is beaten, the group leaves.

Michael learns about Eileen's plan to hold the fandango. Eileen and Mariana begin to make plans.

Sean is worried. Eileen has never gone up against anyone like Wooston and he is afraid her plan may fail. Sean speaks with Montero about protecting the land. Montero says reinforcements are on the way.

Sean meets two of the men sent for by Montero. One is Del Campo, a man who worked with Jaime for four years. The second is Polanco, a man who exudes loyalty and respect. Sean tells them about the situation and makes it clear that Eileen is in charge. The men swear their loyalty.

Wooston and the others get lost twice in the Pine Mountains. As time goes on Wooston becomes more and more frustrated. Wooston is also angry that Russell is missing. Wooston calls out to Beltran and pays him to go to the ranch and kill Senora and Sean. Beltran, a known murderer, accepts the job. His partner, Velasco, is not as keen about it but agrees to go.



Chapters 10-13 Analysis

Chapter 10: The small group proves that cunning is sometimes better than a large group of people, even when they are armed. Positioning themselves strategically and confronting Machado is a risky but brave move for Sean and the others. They are also helped by mysterious forces in the desert, which spook some of Machado's posse.

Eileen is grateful to Juan but disappointed that the gold will not save the ranch. Even though Juan had warned her, Eileen still has hope up until the moment she sees the jars.

Chapter 11: Juan is dead. Eileen is saddened by the death but knows what she must do. There is no time for a burial, but the man will get the respect he deserves. There is great reverence for the Old One, even from those that did not know him.

Senora's plan for a fandango is clever. She is counting on public peer pressure to keep Wooston from cashing in the note. Eileen does not intend to lie to people; she simply chooses to allow them to believe what they will. At this point it seems to be the best and most logical answer.

Chapter 12: Eileen explains her plans to the rest of the group. Although they sound a little crazy, the rest respect her enough to agree with the concept.

Wooston is torn between following the Mulkerins and listening to Machado. No matter what they do, Russell will take off to mine and keep the gold for himself.

Chapter 13: Michael's personality comes out in this section. The family was correct in assuming that the people would not forcibly eject a holy man from his home. However, if they were wrong, Michael could protect himself against a small group. As it is, the men did not try to eject Michael but chose to wait for Eileen. The men further insult Eileen by being sexist. Sean is not one to back down from a challenge and soundly beats one of the more antagonistic men.

Montero is one step ahead as usual. He has already sent for reinforcements. Sean is surprised that Montero thinks two men are enough. However, it is clear that the men will fight to the end if necessary.



Chapters 14-18

Chapters 14-18 Summary

Los Angeles is a pueblo with a few adobes, a church a few stores and cantinas. The trail to Los Angeles from Malibu is along the water. Eileen and Sean ride toward Los Angeles. Eileen rides like an Irish princess, turning heads. They stop at a local store and begin to spread the news of the gold and the fandango. The merchant is startled at the turn of the Mulkerins' fortune, but promises to attend and to tell all their friends about the upcoming party. Eileen orders many supplies and orders more, hinting that there is plenty of gold to be had. Eileen also runs into Pio Pico, a powerful man and old friend. Pico knows Eileen is lying but allows himself to be deluded. Pio also promises to tell everyone they know about the fandango.

Sean is still concerned about Wooston. Wooston is not a laid-back Californio and may not bow to pressure as Eileen expects.

Wooston learns about the Senora's purchases and the upcoming fandango. Wooston is angry.

It is clear that Russell is missing. Wooston is angry that a man he hired would choose to stay in the mountains to look for gold instead of doing his job.

Chapter 14: Russell and Francisco are in the mountains, looking for the gold. Francisco lags behind, obviously trying to distance himself from Russell. Russell is angry at first but then decides he will get the gold by himself. Francisco tries to talk Russell into going back but Russell refuses. Francisco talks about the Unknown Ones and The Old One as well as the spirits and men that have disappeared in the mountains. Russell scoffs at Francisco saying that he does not believe in ghosts.

The men camp for the night. In the night Russell wakes up to find that Francisco is gone. In the morning, Russell finds the cave, and in it, Juan's body. Russell also finds flecks of gold and realizes that the rest, if there is any, will have to be mined. Russell turns around to find Juan's body is gone.

Chapter 15: Russell starts to feel the otherworldly presence of some entity and decides to leave the cave. The heat is overwhelming, and like many others before him, Russell feels dizzy and sick. Once outside the cave, Russell cannot see the trail or his horse. Russell tries to figure out which way to go. Once he spies a gap and a clearing, he begins to head in that direction until he sees Juan's tracks. Russell follows the tracks to a table that may have served as an altar. There are three sets of tracks, including Juan's. Russell approaches the area, and before he knows it, his head is spinning and he is falling. As Russell falls, he hears voices. One declares that Russell is an evil man, another says he must not be able to tell others about the sacred space, and a third says he is an enemy of the Senora. Russell gets the sensation of being carried away.



Sean goes out hunting for beef for the fandango. With him are Hilo, Tennison and the others. Hilo tells Sean that Russell is missing. The men discuss what might have happened to Russell. None deny that there are many superstitions and unexplained occurrences in the mountains and that although they are unexplained it does not make them untrue. Ten and Sean also talk about people with six fingers.

Chapter 17: The first guests arrive for the fandango. Many friendships are rekindled. Several people tell Sean that they will help him to fight off Wooston. Sean thinks about how they will pay Wooston, although the appearance of having money will help them secure a loan or at least give them time to formulate another plan.

The party continues and grows by the minute. Machado and some of his men arrive. Sean approaches them and tells Machado he is welcome to the fiesta but that there will only be singing and dancing, no fighting. Machado agrees.

Machado dances with Mariana, which makes Sean jealous. Eileen consoles him and tells him it is only a dance.

Montero approaches Sean to tell him that there is someone to speak with him.

Chapter 18: Nick Bell and others ride up before Sean can see who has summoned him to the corral. Bell attempts to arrest Sean for the murder of Russell. Bell says it does not matter if Russell's body has been found; it is obvious he is dead. There is a confrontation. Interrupting the confrontation is the arrival of an Indian leading a burro. Atop the burro is a very old man. The old man is Russell.

Everyone gapes at Russell's presence. He looks eighty years old, gaunt, and on the verge of death. Russell tells the group, including Wooston, his story. The men think Russell has lost his mind. Russell tells about seeing Juan's body, the altar, and being lost in the mountains. He also talks about falling into a shimmering light, not knowing where he was going. After a time, Russell was sent back to that place by the cave. He says the "injuns" took him but he knows not where. Russell cannot explain exactly what happened but the locals believe him. Wooston wants to take Russell away because he has found the gold.

As the evening wears on, some of the men get ready to sleep. Exhaustion has set in and it is clear that there will be trouble at daybreak.

Chapters 14-18 Analysis

Chapter 14: Eileen goes ahead with her plan, which works beautifully. The people are being alerted about the fandango at the speed of light. Wooston is angry about the turn of events and is not about to be dissuaded from his plan to foreclose on the ranch.

Russell continues to scoff at Francisco but cannot deny that something strange is happening around him. Francisco is distancing himself from Russell and the sacred place. Francisco leaves in the night.



Chapter 15: The next day Russell finds the cave and Juan's body. The amount of gold frustrates Russell, who is determined to find more. The disappearance of Juan's body makes Russell wonder if he has hallucinated or if there are other forces at work.

Chapter 16: Russell witnesses the presence of the spirits firsthand as he is scooped up and taken to another place, probably through a sipapu. The spirits are unhappy with Russell.

Sean and the others go out into the desert to kill cattle for the fandango. Along the way there is talk about Wooston. The men also explore the existence of the Unknown Ones, the spirits and things that cannot be seen but may still be real.

Chapter 17: Sean is pleased to see old friends and is happy to know that many will stand by his side. Machado arrives at the fandango and is told by Sean that only singing and dancing are going to take place. Oddly enough, manners prevail and Machado agrees. Mariana also dances with Machado, which angers Sean. Sean's jealousy is a clear indicator of his feelings for Mariana.

Chapter 18: The arrival of Nick Bell is not a surprise. The reason for his visit is poorly contrived and has no legal standing. There is about to be an ugly scene when Russell arrives on the back of a burro. Russell has aged at least fifty years. No one can seem to get Russell to explain the story because Russell does not understand what happened. To the Mulkerins and others it only confirms what they already knew about the mountains and the spirits. Wooston is already trying to turn the situation to his advantage.



Chapters 19-21

Chapters 19-21 Summary

Beltran and Velasco follow Sean into the mountains. Beltran is a known hunter, scalper and murderer. The man is ruthless and without emotion. Velasco is no better. Velasco is a bandit, vaquero and former soldier. The men see no problem in killing Sean Mulkerin and believe that the job should be easy. Even when the trail is lost, the men know Sean's destination, so it would not be a problem to locate him again. Beltran tells Velasco that he may also kill Wooston. Neither of the men likes Wooston and there would be more money to be had if Wooston was dead.

Sean knows that the men are on his trail and he takes necessary precautions.

Del Campo and Polanco go to Topanga Canyon where they stop at a cantina owned by Tia Angelena. Tia is not a reputable woman but a loyal one. Eileen Mulkerin had saved Tia's life once and Tia was not one to forget. Tia tells Del Campo and Polanco about Beltran and Velasco. Del Campo and Velasco return to the ranch to warn Sean, but when they arrive, Senora tells them that Sean has gone into the mountains to bury The Old One. Sean insisted on going alone. They are worried but know that no man is going to sneak up on Sean Mulkerin.

Sean takes an alternate trail to the cave to ensure that he will not be ambushed along the way. The first day is uneventful and Sean is left to ponder about his life and future. The next morning Sean rides out.

Beltran and Velasco lose Sean in the mountains. Knowing where they are going is helpful, but the men were distracted enough by this knowledge to allow the trail to disappear. Beltran is annoyed because they lost Sean. The men find the place where Senora had tethered her horse, but no one had been there since and that was days ago. Velasco thinks he hears something. Beltran scoffs at him and says it is nothing but foolishness. Velasco also tells Beltran about Russell but Beltran wants no part of the story.

Sean's horse senses the other horses and stirs. Sean wakes up and discovers the two men only a few hundred yards away. Sean decides to move out and go to the cave. When Sean arrives at the cave, a voice tells him that The Old One is gone. Sean says he wants to see for himself. It is true - Juan's body is gone. The voices ask about the other two men. Sean says he does not know who the men are but that they are mostly likely his enemies.

Sean notices that one of the five jars left on the mantel is missing.

Chapter 20: Sean looks around the cave and notes the old tool markings, recognizing that the work was performed in ancient days. Sean says goodbye to the voice and leaves the cave. Sean finds the altar that Russell spoke about and goes to examine it.



There is nothing but the polished table and paths converging toward it. Sean turns to go back to his horse.

There is an eerie silence and Sean feels that something is amiss. Sean spots Velasco and a shootout ensues. At the end of it, Beltran and Velasco are dead. Sean checks Beltran's pockets and finds Wooston's name on a piece of paper.

Sean rides hard back to the ranch. He arrives at midnight. Just as he begins to dismount, he is shot repeatedly. Seven men shoot at Sean. Miraculously, Sean is not dead, but he is seriously wounded. Sean figures out that the Senora and the others were tricked into leaving the ranch and that Wooston and his men were inside. Sean realizes that he cannot feel his left leg and that he is extremely weak.

Sean manages to get over to the wash and falls asleep. When he awakes, the Senora and Mariana are sitting on horseback. Wooston is telling the Senora that Sean is dead. Sean rises up from his hiding place and shoots Wooston. There is a brief shootout and some of Wooston's men are killed.

Chapter 21: It is three weeks later. Sean is still healing and has a long way to go, especially since he lost so much blood. Machado comes to visit Sean and teases him about having to wait to kill him. The men have come to an understanding and soon Machado will return to Mexico.

Sean falls asleep but then hears a noise. When he wakes there is a jar on the mantel. It is the missing jar from the cave. Eileen sees it and takes it from the shelf to discover it is filled with gold.

Chapters 19-21 Analysis

Chapter 19: This chapter is the beginning of the denouement of the story. Sean is traveling to the cave alone. This shows Sean's respect for The Old One and also marks a final step toward maturity. Beltran and Velasco are ruthless men that have no regard for anything but money. Velasco is affected by the atmosphere but Beltran shuns him, mainly because he does not want to think about such things.

Sean's episode in the cave is interesting in that he has learned not to question certain things. There are things in this world we cannot understand, and The Old One has taught Sean to respect that fact.

Chapter 20: The shootout between Velasco, Beltran and Sean seems to have some otherworldly aspects to it. In most cases it would be surprising for Sean to shoot and kill both men. The reader gets the impression that Sean may have had a little help from beyond. Finding Wooston's name in Beltran's pocket only confirms Sean's suspicions.

Chapter 21: Wooston thinks he has the last laugh when it comes to the Mulkerin ranch. Sean is most likely dead and the Senora is bound to get a big surprise when she returns home. Wooston will win this war after all. Only Wooston is a bit premature. It is a miracle

that Sean lives. The Senora is certainly shocked to think that her son could be dead. Wooston is taken off guard when Sean calls him out and the battle is won.

Confirmation of Sean's efforts and beliefs comes when the jar of gold ends up on the mantelpiece. As is customary, Sean thanks whoever and whatever has helped him.



Characters

Eileen Mulkerin

Eileen Mulkerin is the protagonist in the story. Eileen was born in Ireland and moved to France as a young woman. From France the family moved to Spain. In Spain Eileen's father was killed because he was a part of a plot to overthrow the British government. Eileen was sent to Mexico to live with an aunt and uncle.

Once in Mexico Eileen met and married Colonel Jaime Mulkerin. Mulkerin was a Colonel in the Mexican Army and who gained favor with the Presidente. The Presidente granted Jaime and Eileen a plot of land in Malibu. The land became the family farm.

Eileen became the matriarch after Jaime died. She is highly respected by all around her. Known as a capable, strong, practical woman, it is clear that Eileen can take care of her own. Eileen fights against the stereotypes of woman with people like Wooston who think she will simply roll over and give up the ranch.

Although Eileen is a practical woman, she also reminds people that she is a Celt and as such has an air of her ancestors and their mysterious ways.

Sean Mulkerin

Sean Mulkerin is a twenty-two-year-old sailor and son of Eileen and Jaime Mulkerin. Sean set out on his first voyage at age fourteen when Jaime took him aboard a ship that sailed to Mazatlan, Acapulco and Tehuantepec. From that day on Sean seemed to be on the water the majority of the time.

It is unusual for a young man to captain his own schooner at his age, but Sean does it well. He has gained the respect of his crew and those around him. Even those that don't like Sean admire his skill. Sean is known as a fair man, an honorable man, a good sailor and a fine fighter. Machado is warned of this when he goes after Sean with the intention of killing him.

Above everything else, the most important thing in Sean's life is his mother, the Senora. Sean will do anything it takes to protect Eileen and to do whatever she says.

While on the quest to save the ranch, Sean is also on a quest of another kind. Sean is learning about himself and the ancient ways, tapping into what he knows in his heart and soul. Sean is also experiencing love for the first time.



Michael Mulkerin

Michael Mulkerin is the son of Eileen and Jaime Mulkerin. Michael was once a bit wild, good with a gun and has many other skills. Michael surprises his family when he decides to become a monk. Although it is clear that Michael supplies much of the moral and spiritual support to the family, particularly since Jaime died, Michael is still a Mulkerin who can and will defend his home and his family.

Micheltorena

Micheltorena is the current governor of California.

Win Standish

Win Standish is Eileen's nephew and helps all he can to save the family farm.

Zeke Wooston

Zeke Wooston is a crooked man who wants to take the Mulkerin family farm away from them in order to use it as a smuggler's paradise.

Juan

Juan is an old friend of Jaime's and most likely the only person who knows where to find the gold so desperately needed by the Mulkerins. Juan is referred to as "The Old One," a man who is the last of a dying people. The man is a healer, mystic, and wise beyond his many years. Some believe Juan has special powers.

Mariana de la Cruz

Mariana de la Cruz is the fiancée of Andres Machado. Mariana is the woman who dives into the ocean and insists on being rescued by Sean Mulkerin.

Andres Machado

Andres Machado is the fiancé of Mariana de la Cruz. Machado is an extremely wealthy and powerful Mexican known for his skills as a duelist and for his violent temper. Machado has won many duels and is not one to be taken advantage of or ridiculed. Mariana's departure has embarrassed Machado, and as a result she will have to pay. Sean is convinced that Machado will come after him to rescuing Mariana.



Jorge Fernandez

Jorge Fernandez warns Machado about Sean's prowess as a fighter. Fernandez believes something unusual is happening in the desert but no one heeds his warnings except for Silva.

Silva

Silva is one of the men who join Machado's party. Silva, three-quarters Indian, believes in the legends of the Old Ones.

King-Pin Russell

King-Pin Russell is a swindler and outlaw who associates with Fernandez and Wooston. Russell is a skeptic and scoffs at the potential for otherworldly occurrences in the desert.

Jesus Montero

Jesus Montero is an old friend of the Mulkerin family. Montero is an old man who watches over Eileen and the boys as well as the ranch. Montero knows about the old ways and is on hand to help find the gold.



Objects/Places

The Mulkerin Ranch House

The Mulkerin Ranch House is located in the mountains of Malibu, California. The house is a low-roofed adobe that has been added onto over the years. Near the open porch is a lean-to stable. There are also fields of wheat that have recently burned, allegedly by a scurrilous man that wants to take the land away from the family.

From the front porch one can see hills, boulders and sandstone outcroppings. Also off in the distance is the Pacific Ocean.

The Mulkerin family consists of Eileen Mulkerin and her sons Michael and Sean. Eileen was raised in Ireland and moved from Ireland to Mexico as a younger woman. From Mexico, Eileen and her new husband, Jaime, moved to Malibu. The former Presidente had given the land to Jaime as a reward for his service in the Mexican Army. Jaime died several years before.

Bad luck and other unfortunate circumstances have put the family farm at risk. Eileen is determined to save it at any cost. The only way to come up with enough money to secure the farm and the Mulkerins' future is to find gold in the hills. Jaime found gold twice and there was more to be had if only the Mulkerins knew where to look.

California

The Californios by Louis L'Amour takes place in 1844 in California. In that time period, the majority of California was wilderness. Places like Los Angeles and Malibu were beginning to grow, but the outer areas were uninhabited and filled with mystery. No one but the Indians and some outlaws and locals know the areas, and even those are few and far between.

Montero is a good source of information on the area because he has been there for many years. Likewise, Sean has spent many years riding with his father in the desert and throughout the canyons. However, it is rare that anyone knows the land well except for Juan and people of his ilk.

The inhabitants of the area are mixed. Many people refer to the locals as "Indians" although the term is never really defined. As Juan says, "What is an Indian?" There are many tribes and branches of people, some of which are nearly extinct. There are also residents of the area known as Californios and people who are gringos - meaning that they are neither Indian nor Mexican. There are also many Mexicans which may or may not have been born in Mexico.



The terrain is described as being beautiful but rugged and barren. There are many canyons, cliffs, outcroppings and patches of wilderness. The desert is a brutal place where one may see mirages or suffer and die from a lack of water.

Lady Luck

Lady Luck is the name of Sean Mulkerin's boat. Lady Luck is a two-masted schooner used to transport various types of cargo from California to Mexico.

Paradise Cove

Paradise Cove is a cove located on the Mulkerin property. It was formerly used by smugglers who often brought in shipments by night. The Mulkerins believe that Wooston wants the property to use Paradise Cove as a drop-off point.

The Valdez Note

The Valdez Note is the loan that was taken out by the Mulkerins. Wooston bought the loan, also known as the note, from Valdez in order to strongarm the Mulkerins into giving up their land through foreclosure.

Sipapu

A sipapu is a hole in the ground from which the Hopis and other tribes believed they originated.

Acapulco

Acapulco is where Sean meets Mariana de la Cruz. Mariana lives in Acapulco and was supposed to marry Andres Machado there.

Sespe

Sespe is a creek used for a landmark when traveling to the cave where the gold is hidden.



Themes

Pride

Pride is one of the main themes in the book. Even though the Mulkerins have suffered through some hard times and are on the verge of losing their home, pride will not let them be shamed into running away from all that they have built. This pride is fueled mostly by Eileen, whose Irish blood causes her to be strong, independent and not easily ruled. Additionally, the pride comes from temper. Eileen's temper is fueled when Wooston wants to take the land. Eileen knows that she owes the money, but Wooston's methods are uncouth and his motives are unethical. Those things cause Eileen to become angry because Wooston's plans are not only morally and legally wrong, but they will also corrupt the memory of Jaime and the things that he, Eileen, Montero and the boys have worked so hard to build and maintain.

Mariana also exhibits pride when it comes to her relationship with Andres Machado. Mariana is angry and disgusted that she should be given away like an old piece of furniture, particularly when it is to a man she despises. It is pride along with anger and underlying fear that causes Mariana to run away.

Wooston exhibits pride through his actions. His pride is fueled by insecurity and the need to control.

The Unknown Ones

The Unknown Ones are a people who have inhabited the area for many centuries but have left behind no historical data. According to the story as well as the Historical Note, the Unknown Ones predated the Aztecs and Incas, who were transplants to the area. It is thought that the Unknown Ones were also the same as the Oak Grove People and perhaps the Hunting People, a tribe that followed them.

The Unknown Ones knew the land like no others before or after them. There are remnants of their existence, but many artifacts have been eradicated or destroyed to the point of being hopelessly lost. The people are also known as having great healing and mystical powers, such as being able to go into the sipapu and reach the other side of the curtain, bringing back infinite wisdom. It is also said that the Unknown Ones inhabit certain areas in the region, protecting those who need help while admonishing, repelling and/or punishing those that do evil or mean harm.

Juan, The Old One, although very old, does not claim to be one of the Unknown Ones although his people have vanished from the face of the earth with little or no trace of their history or culture. It is assumed that Juan is descended from the Unknown Ones, hence his powers and knowledge.



Determination

Determination is a main theme in the book and can be seen in many different ways.

Eileen is determined to keep the ranch despite all odds. Even when things are at their worst, Eileen's determination rarely wavers. Eileen's Celt heritage makes her hearty, determined, and capable. This blood and those characteristics have been passed down to her sons, even Michael, whose vocation often masks that part of his personality.

Wooston is a determined man. Wooston wants Paradise Cove and also wants to see the Mulkerins removed from their ranch. It seems as if Wooston has some issue with the Mulkerins, although the reader may get the impression that underneath it all, Wooston is a coward.

Mariana shows determination when she refuses to marry or return to Mexico. Mariana wants to live her own life and does not want to be held prisoner by a violent man that she does not love. Mariana seems to be willing and able to do whatever it takes to secure and keep her freedom.

Perhaps one of the most determined people in the story is Andres Machado. Machado has been spurned and embarrassed by the escape of Mariana. Machado has a great deal of arrogance and will not be disrespected. As a result of Mariana's actions, Machado intends to find her, beat her and take her back to Mexico, where he will force Mariana to marry him. In the end, Machado's determination does not pay off as Mariana's determination is stronger.



Style

Point of View

The point of view used in *The Californios* by Louis L'Amour is third person omniscient. This is particularly accurate when setting and time period are of great importance to the story. Third person allows L'Amour to give the reader great insight into the sights and sounds encountered on the journey and to develop a sense of personality and vision regarding each character. This type of writing is what made L'Amour famous.

Since many of the facts in the book are historically accurate, it is even more important to impart them as such even if they are woven into the story. This creates a true to life feel about the Californios and their journey as well as the overall feel of what it was like to experience the development of the land and the relationship with the natives as well as the Mexicans.

Additionally, it allows the reader to get insight into things that may not have been seen and heard by Sean or the others, to learn about the story through various sets of eyes and to experience the journeys of the characters like Eileen, Montero, Michael, and the others.

It also lends an added air of mystery to the legends that fill the land as well as the presence of the unknown ones and the spirituality felt by only a few. The point of view also allows the reader to experience and understand the vast difference in beliefs systems and moral practices.

Setting

There are several settings used throughout the story although the majority of them are based in Southern California.

The story speaks about Malibu, the home to the Mulkerins. The area is relatively rural at this time and it is clear that the region is still somewhat rough-hewn and unsettled. The author describes Malibu in such a way that the reader can relate it to the modern day Malibu, at least as far as the scenery goes. There are many hills and breathtaking views of the Pacific Ocean.

The Mulkerin Ranch House is located in the mountains of Malibu. The house is a low-roofed adobe that has been added onto over the years. Near the open porch is a lean-to stable. From the front porch one can see hills, boulders and sandstone outcroppings.

Not far from the ranch are mountains, canyons and the open desert. The Mulkerins spend time in the mountains looking for gold. There are few that know the mountains well, even the trackers. The only one that seems to know every inch of the hills is Juan, The Old One.



There are some references to the nearby town, Fernandez's cantina, Acapulco, and Los Angeles, as well as the open water where Sean spends the majority of his time under normal circumstances.

Language and Meaning

The language and meaning used throughout *Californios* by Louis L'Amour reflects on the times in a minimal way. It is clear that the people in the story live in the 1800s as they speak of particular events that were occurring at the time.

The story takes place in 1844 when Southern California was sparsely inhabited. The towns and cities were few and largely undeveloped. The ranch was a typical type of home and horses and wild animals abound. There is a lot of talk of riding off into the wilderness and travel.

In general, the language used in the story is somewhat formal. There is some use of slang in the dialogue, but very little. Most of the references to the time period are seen in the topics of conversation including the state of the economy, methods of travel, events surrounding the discovery of gold in the hills, available work and wages and the fortunes that can be made by discovering gold.

Overall, the story has a great deal of regional flavor in its language. This is due to the fact that although the people in the story are from all over the United States and Mexico, there is a certain feel to the language used in Southern California, a mix of traditional King's English, Spanish, and Mexican. Most notable are terms like *vaquero* and *gringo*.

Structure

The Californios is a work of fiction written by famed western writer Louis L'Amour. The work is 229 pages long, broken down into twenty-one chapters.

The shortest chapter is three pages in length; the longest chapter is pages in length. The average number of pages per chapter is eleven.

The story is written in chronological order. There are some episodes in which L'Amour uses flashbacks. The backstory is filled in mostly through a character's musings and conversation.

In addition to the story there is a Historical Note written by L'Amour. A great deal of the events and setting are historically accurate. For example, Micheltorena was the governor and was succeeded by Pio Pico. The settlements in the area are also historically accurate, as is the story of the unknown people, the Chumash, the cave paintings and the legend of The Old One.

The main plot of the story is the fight to keep land and ward off unscrupulous outlaws and politicians while searching for gold. The subplots include Eileen's history and

relationship with her dead husband Jaime as well as her pride and self-reliance. There is the story of Sean and Mariana and their blooming relationship. Lastly, there are many references to spirits and hauntings of the land which lends an air of mystery and intrigue to an otherwise common battle to protect one's home and family.



Quotes

"Whichever way he turned there might be some haunting mystery, some enchantment. This way might lie love and fortune, and that way shame and death."

Chap. 3, p. 16

"Sean wondered if there could be a way out. For him, of course, there was the schooner. For his brother there was the Church. But what about the Senora?"

Chap. 3, p. 30

"I mean we Celts are not inclined to be overly skeptical about the Little People, or the mysterious."

Chap. 5, p. 50

"His life in the mountains, the desert, and at sea had sharpened his senses until alertness was a way of life."

Chap. 6, p. 57

"Men do not learn from history. Each generation believes itself brighter than the last, each believes it can survive the mistakes of the older ones."

Chap. 7, pp. 74-75

"Some say this place is haunted, and the place where I left them, but the ways of evil are always haunted, and evil breeds its own destruction."

Chap. 9, p. 98

"The mind is fed by the imagination and the imagination feeds upon the intangible. Men have seen things and heard things and such things remain in their minds."

Chap. 9, p. 98

"I see no sense in running around over these awful hills looking for gold that may not even be here."

Chap. 12, p. 132

"She rode with style, a style the Irish have carried with them to many far lands."

Chap. 14, p. 144

"He looked ahead with misgiving, but followed on. If there was gold he meant to have



it."

Chap. 16, p. 155

"The more you wander around back there the more you're willing to believe anything the Indians believe."

Chap. 16, p. 170

"To a wandering man in the wilderness a back trail must be as important as that ahead, for it might be the direction taken tomorrow, and when one faced around the trail looked far, far different."

Chap. 19, p. 204



Topics for Discussion

Describe Eileen Mulkerin. Who is Eileen Mulkerin? Why is she referred to as Senora, even by her children and close friends? What is unusual about the woman? Who is her family? What is her background? Write a complete character description about Eileen Mulkerin. Be sure to include her relationships with Jaime, Michael and Sean as well as her Irish beliefs and whimsy.

Describe the terrain. Compare and contrast the terrain as it is in the story with modern day California. What are the biggest changes? Is the Old One's cave still there? How did the search for gold change the area? How has Malibu changed? How has Los Angeles changed? Where is the political center of California? Is it the same as it was in 1844? How have natural events changed the landscape? How much of the region is still uninhabited? Explain.

Examine the history of Southern California. According to the text, the first documented settler in the region arrived in 1775. The first land grant was issued in 1802. Discuss how the state evolved from that point. What was Micheltorena's role in the development of California? How and why does Micheltorena leave office? Discuss the arrival of Pio Pico. How have the land rights changed since 1844?

Discuss Sean Mulkerin. Who is Sean Mulkerin? What is unusual about Sean? How is he different from his brother Michael? Who do you think Sean takes after - Eileen or Jaime? Discuss Sean's adventurous streak. Compare and contrast Sean and Michael including their personalities, relationship with Eileen, and part in the story.

Discuss Wooston's motives. Zeke Wooston is known as being an unethical unscrupulous man. Discuss Wooston's part in the story. Why do you think Wooston bought the Valdez Note? What were Wooston's plans for Paradise Cove? What is Wooston's relationship with the Mulkerins? Has the relationship changed since Jaime died? Who are Wooston's biggest supporters? Do they support Wooston out of loyalty, fear or greed? What do you think will happen to Wooston next? Explain.

Describe the legend of the Unknown Ones. Who are the Unknown Ones? Where did they originate? Where did they live? Is there any record of their existence or is it all legend and speculation? Has anyone in the book ever met one of the Unknown Ones? How long has it been since the people disappeared? What did the Unknown Ones know that the modern tribes do not? Do you think Juan is one of the last descendants of the Unknown Ones? What special gifts did the people have? Explain.

Discuss Juan. Who is Juan? Why is he referred to as "The Old One?" How old is Juan? Why are the Indians and many locals afraid to talk about The Old One? What special gifts does Juan have? Where does he live? What is his relationship to the Mulkerins? Do you think The Old One is as mysterious as people think? How did The Old One



become so well educated? What is The Old One's relationship with the locals? Do you think Juan knew he was going to die in the cave? How and why did Juan help Eileen? Explain.