

Rain of Gold Study Guide

Rain of Gold by Victor Villaseñor

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Plot Summary

The book tells the detailed history of three generations of two families initially caught up in the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Tracing their migrations to the United States and the difficulties they faced, it portrays an accurate picture of life in Mexico in the early 1900's and in the coastal area of California during the time of prohibition through the 1930's.

Lupe Gomez, a six-year-old girl when the story begins, grows up in the village of La Lluvia de Oro, or, Rain of Gold. It was a quiet Mexican village in the mountains of north-central Mexico, with beautiful forests, streams, natural beauty and many animals that roamed freely. Then, a vein of gold was discovered and the whole environment changed in less than twenty years. Within a generation, an American mining company purchased the mine and began to develop the valley into a large industrial operation.

Lupe and her family adjust and live to the best of their abilities for several years. However, the Revolution begins and as it gets closer to their village, even the Americans close the mine and leave. Lupe's father had gone to the lowlands to find work, and it is becoming more and more dangerous for the family in the lonely, almost deserted village.

When the revolutionaries finally do come and burn their houses, kill many of the men and boys, and rape the women, Lupe's mother writes to her father, Don Victor Gomez to come home immediately and take them away. When he arrives it is decided to make what money they can by processing discarded gold ore and migrate to the United States.

The family takes a train to the United States and eventually ends up in Arizona where there is work in the mines, but soon they find themselves in California working the fields with hundreds of other Mexican migrants. It is here that Lupe meets Juan Salvador Villasenor.

At the same time that Lupe's family left Mexico, Juan and his family had been forced to move from their mountain village when their crops and houses were burned and their livestock was stolen. It was a long, difficult trip, often by train and much by foot.

Arriving in Juarez, they are forced to beg for food to survive, just as many other Mexicans are doing. The hardships are unbelievable, but one by one they find passage into El Paso, and then on to California.

When Juan and Lupe meet, Juan is a successful bootlegger, and has a background of criminal activity that eventually forces him to take the name of Salvador. Lupe's family is very much opposed to drinking, gambling, and behavior they feel is unbecoming of a family man. It is not until after their marriage that Salvador finally lets Lupe know the truth about his background.



Section 1, Rain of Gold

Section 1, Rain of Gold Summary

While searching for drinkable water, a man named Espirito finds a spring with very sweet water. In it are rocks that contain a great deal of gold. When he is offered all the food and clothing his people can use in return for more of the golden rocks, he discusses it with his people. They agree, but only on the condition that the only rocks that can be taken are those on the surface. No digging is to be allowed.

When the nuggets are depleted from the stream the area is sold. The new owner begins to dig into the wall of the canyon for more gold until he becomes rich, and then he decides to sell the mine to a large American mining company.

The mine is developed and continues to grow until it becomes unsafe for the Americans due to the Mexican Revolution of 1910.

Section 1, Rain of Gold Analysis

The history of the mine and those who lived in the valley is traced. This section is used to show how the valley changed physically, and why the mining operation ceased. The poor people who lived there initially are pictured as happy though uneducated and isolated from the mainstream of Mexico in the late 1800's.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

The book tells the detailed history of three generations of two families caught up initially in the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Tracing their migrations to the United States and the difficulties they faced, it portrays an accurate picture of life in Mexico in the early 1900's and in the coastal area of California during the time of prohibition through the 1930's.

A wall of gold has been found near El Rio Urique, and the Mexican people who have been using the sweet water spring near it watch as ownership of the mine changes from Mexican to an American corporation that purchases the mine. The new corporation immediately begins to create a huge mining operation. Where once there was just a small spring, a modern operation has been constructed to withdraw gold from deep in the mountain to be shipped to the United States. The mine has been named La Lluvia de Oro.

A poor Mexican family consisting of the mother, Dona Guadalupe, her four daughters, and one son, live across the canyon from the new mine. They feed the miners each morning and evening to make money to live while the father, Don Victor, searches the lowlands for work.

One day, as the morning chores end and the family begins to have their own breakfast, an army of horsemen coming into their canyon interrupts them. It is soldiers from the Revolution, and the family goes quickly to hide under a large boulder where they have a secret place. It is a small area cleared to make a tiny cave, and as they enter they cover it with manure from their chickens and goats that has been saved for this purpose.

As they hide from the soldiers' rifle fire and trampling hooves, one of their prized goats impales itself on a picket fence in fear, and then the soldiers torch their small ramada before going on downward into the village, leaving wreckage of their meager home.

When they feel the soldiers have gone, Lupe, the youngest of the girls, goes to the river to get water. As she dips her clay gourds into the fresh stream, a soldier rides up on a beautiful orange-red stallion. However, instead of striking her, he speaks to her in a gentle voice, and asks that he be allowed to place his wife in her home so that he may go on about his duties. His name is Colonel Manuel Maytorena, and he wears a spotless gray uniform with shining buttons. He has stood up to the American miners who employ the poor Mexicans, and has made their working conditions better, so they all think highly of him.

Soon the Colonel's pregnant wife, Socorro, has been placed with them. She is a beautiful girl who tells them of her wonderful life before meeting Colonel Maytorena. As they prepare for bed, Dona Guadalupe takes her youngest daughter, Lupe, aside and



warns her not to like the handsome Colonel too much as it would not be good for their family.

Chapter 1 Analysis

The scene is set around what was once a poor but prosperous Mexican village. The time is a few years after the start of the Mexican Revolution of 1910. A happy family is introduced which consists of several young girls, their brother, and their mother, Dona Guadalupe. They are poor, but very religious and see God's creation and goodness in everything around them.

The creation of the modern mine and the Mexican Soldiers who continually harass the people of the small village shows how these people had once lived in peace, but how they now fear the soldiers who rape the women, burn their houses, and shoot their animals for no apparent reason. It is implied that the roving bandits are not really the soldiers of the Revolution, but simply men using the Revolution as an excuse to steal openly.

A plot begins as one young girl, Lupe, falls in love with a Colonel who moves into their meager home with his pregnant wife. Lupe's mother warns her of the problems that could befall their family if Lupe does not curb her obvious feelings for the handsome and popular soldier. The reader also sees the beginning of the disruption of the once happy but poor Mexican village and its people due to the discovery and mining of the gold that is located in the once fresh and beautiful spring.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

The first day of school arrives and Lupe goes to the school in the American compound near the mine. She is uneasy as she has never before been away from her mother. She carries with her a card given to her by Colonel Maytorena that she is supposed to give to her new teacher. It carries his name and is on beautiful white paper. However, she forgets to give it to the teacher. When she is asked to introduce herself, she is too shy, so another girl tells the class about her. The girl's name is Rose-Mary, and she tells the other students that Lupe is very poor and has no father and does not even live in a real home. Hearing this, Lupe bursts into tears, tells the others that Rose-Mary is lying, and leaves school. Another student, Manuelita, follows her and comforts her, telling her that Rose-Mary is jealous, because the handsome Colonel lives with Lupe's family. Rose-Mary is the daughter of the village mayor, Don Manuel.

The Colonel is in charge of building a road out of the valley that is designed to carry gold away on mules. When it is complete, the first shipment of gold is ready to be sent to Arizona, and the Colonel will be traveling with it. He asks Lupe to take care of Socorro while he is gone as she is about to have their baby. Lupe is very sorry to see him go as she has become quite attached to him.

Many days later, Lupe has a feeling that Colonel Maytorena will be returning, and goes up the steep canyon road to see. Neither he nor his men appear, however. On her return home, she finds her mother, her brother, and an old miner who has been a friend of her family for many years. She finds that they have found a vein of gold on their own, and cannot understand why she was not told of this wonderful discovery. The old miner, Don Benito, tells Lupe that they are concerned that she would tell the Colonel about the gold, and that he would then take it from them to buy guns for his war against Pancho Villa. Lupe is only six years old and they do not feel she has the knowledge or experience to keep their secret.

Chapter 2 Analysis

A conflict is created between Lupe, and the Mayor's daughter, Rose-Mary. It is also brought forward that many of the local people do not like or trust Colonel Maytorena as they feel he is using them to steal money for a possible effort by the United States to defeat the revolutionist, Pancho Villa.

Lupe's love for the Colonel continues, even though it is revealed that she is only six years old, and her love and need for education is also found. This is somewhat unusual for a girl in a remote village.



When Lupe finds that her brother and an old friend of the family have found their own gold, she first learns that everyone does not love and trust Colonel Maytorena as she does.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

The family crushes the gold ore into fine dust to make it seem like it has come from the river, then Don Bonito and Victoriano sell it. Some money is given to Lupe's mother and sisters, and some is given to her brother, Victoriano. Victoriano has trouble keeping the secret that they may have found a great deal of gold, and, while they are in the village together, Don Bonito sees the mayor's older daughter, Olivia, and immediately falls in love. He grabs her and tells her that he wants to marry her, and that he has just become rich. Lydia is at first offended, but, as she realizes that Don Bonito might be telling her the truth, she asks him to request her hand formally from her father, Don Manuel.

When Victoriano tells his mother of this, Dona Guadalupe becomes worried, and confronts the old miner. Don Bonito tells her that he plans to get much of the gold for new clothes that he needs to impress Don Manuel in order to be able to marry Lydia. Dona Guadalupe offers to make his clothes for him if he will wait a few weeks to get the gold and to keep quiet about it in the meantime. Don Bonito agrees.

Chapter 3 Analysis

While Don Bonito has found gold, become rich, and then lost his fortune on trivial things like drink and music in the past, he is confident he has learned his lesson. However, the power of gold and wealth prove too much for him to resist, and it appears he will be back into the same situation of letting it run through his hands quickly rather than spending it wisely.

Dona Guadalupe finds a way to get Don Bonito to put off immediately giving away their discovery, and hopes it is not too late to keep the villagers from becoming suspicious.

More suspicion is placed on the Mayor, Don Manuel, as it can be seen that he is very interested in where the gold of Don Bonito and Victoriano has come from.

A more detailed sense of life in the remote mountain village is described, and there is a sense of closeness of the few real native residents.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

When it is time, the town midwife, Angelina, is summoned to assist Socorro with the birth of her child. The moon is full, and the animals around the house begin to howl and the echo is answered by other animals with each of Socorro's screams. The midwife reminds the girls in attendance that men cannot stand pain as women can, and also, that men do not feel the pain and responsibility of lovemaking as women do. Lupe is congratulated on her assistance as Socorro delivers first one, then another baby.

Chapter 4 Analysis

The scene symbolizes the birth of Jesus in the manger as the animals in the vicinity begin to call out to each other with Socorro's screams during childbirth. And their living quarters are not much more than a manger.

Lupe is allowed to stay through the proceedings, and is congratulated for her concentration during her assistance. A sense of maturity and compassion are seen in Lupe.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Word arrives in the village that there is a great war going on in the valley below between the Villistas and the Carranzistas. After several days the battle is over, but during this time Don Benito has decided to get the gold out of their find by using dynamite so they can quickly leave the valley. Dona Guadalupe is not in favor of this, but she can no longer keep the old miner from his goal. A large, deformed miner who has befriended the family aggresses to get some powder, and everyone in the family is very excited about being wealthy in just a few days. Dona Guadalupe wants her share of the money to move her family north to the United States where she feels there is less poverty and more opportunity for her children to grow and survive.

Lupe continues to worry about the man she continually thinks of as her true love, Colonel Manuel Maytorena. No word of him has been received since the end of the battle.

Don Benito and Victoriano have hired a fourteen-year-old boy named Ramon to help them remove the rocks and earth from their find of gold. He is a large, strong boy, but not mentally bright enough to be able to work in the mines, so he is anxious to prove himself here with his physical prowess.

On the day they are to begin blasting, the men have forgotten their lunches, so Victoriano goes home to get them. Arriving at home, he is with his mother and Lupe when there is a great explosion from the mountain above them, and Victoriano and Lupe rush out to see where it came from. When they arrive at the site, many of the people from the town and several miners are there also. The women arrive with tortillas and beans and the men and boys begin to dig frantically to find the old miner and Ramon. When they are found at last, both are dead. It appears that Ramon had seen the rockslide coming and tried to protect Don Benito with his body, but both perished.

The bodies are laid out at the town center, and the next day they are buried. Afterwards a steer is barbecued and people from miles around came to join in the festivities. As the celebration of the dead begins a young soldier named Scott rises and announces that he will wed his sweetheart, Carmen, this evening. Everyone cheers and the celebration renews with even more vigor than before.

That evening as the villagers are gathered in their finest clothing and celebrating so much joy, gunshots are heard from the outskirts of the village and everyone begins to run for his life. Soon, mounted soldiers gallop into the square and begin shooting at anything that takes their fancy. Lupe soon sees the horse she knows to belong to her true love, the Colonel. Running to it, she is surprised that the man riding it is not the Colonel, but a man with hideous scars all over one side of his red face. The man grabs for Lupe, but her mother runs to them and lashes at the horse with a broomstick,



causing it to lurch ahead. In its fright, it jumps a rock wall, and falls, breaking its leg. Within a few seconds La Liebre calls for Dona Lupe and her family to be captured and shot for causing the death of his great horse.

The first to be caught is Victoriano. When Dona Guadalupe tries to free him, she, Lupe, Maria, and Sophia, are all caught and immediately put before a rock wall to be shot. La Liebre and the Americans get into an argument, and then La Liebre sees the young Mayor's daughter, Lydia, and soon forgets about Dona Guadalupe and her family.

Chapter 5 Analysis

Don Benito succumbs to his flaw of excitement of the lure of instant riches. The young boy, Victoriano, survives to carry on the name of his family. The scene in the village after the deaths of two of its citizens is pictured as one more of celebration than of mourning. With the excitement of spring a young officer announces that he will wed his Mexican sweetheart that evening. With this, the reader is given the full anticipation of a great feast and much celebrating.

The reader gets the first real sense of what the Mexican Revolution is doing to the Mexican people. The American miners are shown to be trying to arbitrate in the situation by offering a horse to replace the one that died when Dona Guadalupe struck its eye with a broomstick.

The young girl who was about to marry Scott is seen by La Liebre, and it becomes clear that there will be trouble between the Mexican revolutionary soldiers and the young girl's father. Also, Lupe realizes that her true love, Colonel Maytorena, must be dead as Pancho Villa has somehow gotten his horse and given it to the terribly scared man who raided their village who his men call La Liebre



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

One day Socorro becomes mad and throws out all of her husband's clothes, wanting to say goodbye to him forever. Lupe rescues his gray coat, and, with her brother to protect her from the Revolutionaries, goes up the mountain to a little pile of rocks that look like tortillas. It is there she wants to bury his coat. As she and Victoriano build an altar and cover it with flowers from the meadow, Lupe finds a young fawn close to the spot where the altar has been prepared.

Lupe takes the deer home and raises it as if it were her daughter, sleeping with it and taking it everywhere but to school. By this time Senor Jones, the mine foreman, has sent the rest of his family to the United States where it is safer. He has also become very close to the Mexican Revolutionaries, even at the expense of the poor village people.

One day after school Senora Munoz, the village teacher, tells Lupe that she is doing extremely well in her studies, and that if Senora Munoz is forced to leave, Lupe must somehow continue her studies. Lupe is terrified as she has begun to love her teacher almost as much as she loved the Colonel, and now she may be taken from her also. Senora Munoz assures Lupe that she is not leaving right away, but does ask a favor of her. She asks that Lupe bring her a little cheese every day, but to tell no one. When Lupe finds that her friend, Manuelita, is taking their teacher sweetbread, Lupe's mother finds out and assumes that the miners are no longer paying the teacher's salary.

That night, many of the mothers in the village go to Don Manuel, the mayor, and ask why the teacher is no longer being paid. He responds that there is no obligation to provide a school and that he has no reason to fund it any longer. The mothers band together and offer a few pennies a day to make up for the teacher's salary of fifty cents a day, and decide they will take turns feeding her. Then, Don Manuel locks the school and the children are forced to go to the rear of the village bakery for their lessons.

While the mayor owns the largest store in the village, a small man of thirty years named Don Tiburcio, owns the second-largest one. One evening he comes to the house of Dona Guadalupe with a large box of chocolates for them to share. No one in the room has ever tasted a chocolate candy, and they are ecstatic with the gift. Don Tiburcio also gives flowers to Sophia, and, before he leaves everyone is quite contented with their first tastes of what they call the "candy of love". The next evening Don Tiburcio arrives with more sweets, and this time he asks for the hand of Sophia in marriage.

During the next few days Sophia and her mother discuss the matter at great length. Sophia believes Don Tiburcio loves her, but her mother wonders why he has lived alone with his mother for thirty years without any interest in women previously.



Chapter 6 Analysis

Two references are made to the final parting of Colonel Maytorena. The first is when Socorro throws out his clothes in anger, and, the second is when Lupe and her brother bury his coat. The author indicates that his parting with the mule train was final.

The mayor of the village, Don Manuel, becomes more obviously evil as he closes the school when he loses face with the local mothers and his business competitor, Don Tiburcio. Then there is specific reference made to the feeling of accomplishment the women get from working together to keep the teacher and the school stays open.

The arranged marriages of the Mexican people in the village are highlighted as parents make several arrangements for their children's futures. The final one in the chapter brings with it some drama as it questions the real intentions of Don Tiburcio in his desire to marry Sophia, who is just half his age.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

The Americans decide to close the mine, and many Mexican men are left without work. As a result, families begin leaving the town to find work in other areas. Due to this, there are very few men coming to Dona Guadalupe's home to eat, and she has no way to pay her bills. When Victoriano finds that his mother is unhappy, he decides to go to an area below the mine where unprofitable ore is discarded. Here he looks for rocks with some color that he can take home and extract the gold by pounding them with a hammer.

La Liebre and his men discover him while he is doing this. Thinking that Victoriano has been given more valuable rocks by the miners, he decides to make an example of the boy, and takes him to the village square to be hanged.

When his mother hears of this, she finds her father's old pistol and goes to the square to save him. Cutting the ropes that bind Victoriano, she hands him the gun and tells him to run, which he does. He somehow escapes, so the vicious La Liebre grabs Dona Guadalupe and makes it clear that she will be hanged. As Victoriano sees this, he fires the pistol blindly but hits La Liebre in the face, killing him instantly. By this time a huge crowd has gathered, and the soldiers release Dona Guadalupe and then flee from the hundreds of villagers who are ready to riot. The villagers sit in a tightly packed group and begin to sing loudly as the soldiers retreat.

Chapter 7 Analysis

The people who came to the village to make their home while there was work in the mines begin to leave. This causes a change in the economy and the situation escalates. Losing her source of income reflects the plight that many Mexicans found during the Revolution, and was one of the main reasons so many migrated to the United States to find work.

The author traces some of the actual history of Dona Guadalupe who was rescued by a Mexican when her parents were killed and their house was burned to the ground. She was a Yaqui Indian by birth, and given her present name by the man who rescued her.

Once again the Mexican villagers are able to achieve a goal by working together as they drive the Revolutionaries from their town by showing a united effort.



Section 2, The Hand of God

Section 2, The Hand of God Summary

In 1869 a man named Don Pio Castro and his two brothers set out north of Mexico City to find a new place to start a new community. They want a place that is isolated and safe from roaming bandits, but that is fertile enough to support livestock and some crops.

They find that most of this type of land is taken, but finally discover a very high mesa that is unspoiled and has the required water and soil they are seeking. It is here they begin with fifty men, and are soon followed by the women and children.

Many years later, however, they begin to be bothered by men who used the Revolution to raid any villages they could find. Their livestock is either stolen or killed, and their houses and farms are burned for no reason. As a result, these people begin to migrate to the United States in hopes of finding new land to start over.

Section 2, The Hand of God Analysis

A parallel of the village where the gold mine was established is created in the high mountains north of Mexico City. The reason for the abandonment of the area is set as much the same as that for the box canyon where the villagers near the mine were forced to evacuate. These people, too, left with few belongings to make their way to the United States to start over.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

An eleven-year-old boy named Juan Salvador Villasenor is traveling with his family to El Paso, Texas. Their village has been destroyed, and many other families like his are on the roadways also. As they pass a cornfield, Juan distracts the foreman of a farm so that he and his family may steal corn from the fields alongside the road. His mother is Dona Margarita, his oldest sister is eighteen-year old Luisa, and his sixteen-year-old sister who was recently raped by the soldiers is Emilia. She has gone blind with embarrassment, and is pregnant. Also with them is Inocenta, a beautiful girl of five years, and a three-month-old baby named Joselito.

That night they make a cozy camp, and roast the corn over a fire made of cow dung.

The next day as they approach Leon, Guanajuato, they see the city is burning and the people are fleeing. A young man runs toward them, and is recognized as Epitacio who is Luisa's second husband. He left her unexpectedly, and she has made the excuse to the others that he only went ahead to find a safe passage for them. They fight and argue, but finally make up, and the group goes on into the wreckage of Leon.

As they travel north towards where trains are rumored to be taking families to the United States border, they pass hundreds of dead people in the streets. When they get to the train, thousands are in line for over a mile and it seems hopeless that they can get on. That night there is nothing to eat and no fuel for a fire. During the evening prayers, Dona Margarita thanks God for providing them with food to share with the others around them. As she continues Juan realizes she is planning to kill the little burro that has been his pet since he was very little. He begins to cry and comfort the burro but it is soon killed and the people around them all begin to cut the fresh meat.

Chapter 8 Analysis

The author uses the second section to introduce his ancestors of his father's side, and as in the first section of the book, they too are fleeing their homes due to the Revolution. Dona Margarita is described as a small woman who has great resolve. She has a tendency to see the good that has happened to her and her family at the end of each day and to look for opportunities to keep her family safe and fed when no opportunities are apparent.

Epitacio has some knowledge of the United States, and assures them that he will be their leader once they arrive in El Paso safely. However, there is some concern as to his loyalty and true character.

The act of cooking and eating stolen corn roasted over a fire of dried cow dung is an accurate description of how the small group and many others were forced to survive.

There is also a brief description of the plundered city of Leon and the rubble and death created by the Revolution.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

When at last it is their turn to board a train for the United States, they find they must ride in empty cattle cars, still full of fresh manure, along with five thousand others trying to leave Mexico. Juan and his friends have a bet as to who can wait longest to board the train as it leaves. Juan and a boy named Eduardo wait too long, and therefore, cannot catch the train as it picks up speed. While Eduardo heads back to town, Juan knows that his entire family is on the train, so he keeps following it down the tracks, through the entire day in the hot sun until his *huaraches* are totally gone.

Late that night Juan sees the campfires of the people on the train where it has stopped. His feet are bloody, and he can barely walk, but he knows he has won the race. It is four days before the salves his mother has applied to his face and feet begin to heal him, and he regains consciousness. The train has stopped this time, because it is needed in the war effort and the people are put off and are camped. Juan promises his mother that he will never do anything so foolish again, and his sisters are glad to see his recovery as he is the only surviving male of their once great, proud family.

When the people are told that the train can no longer carry them north as it is needed for the war effort, Dona Margarita announces that Juan has shown them that they can walk all the way to the United States, even if it is a thousand miles. And so they begin, along with thousands of others from the train, walking slowly in the blazing heat and dust with their meager belongings on their backs. They can soon walk no more as they have no food or water. Juan sees some blackbirds fighting over food in the corrals of the horses waiting for the train to take them to battle. He realizes that there undigested seeds in the manure, and get his mother and sisters to help him dig through the fresh dung for the seeds which will be boiled into a stew for their evening meal.

Later that night Epitacio tells them that there are four empty boxcars heading north in just a few minutes. The group leaves everything and immediately begins to run quietly toward the cars so as not to let on to others that they may be able to leave. Epitacio and Juan go ahead so that Epitacio can save them a place, and Juan is to go back to the others to show them where to go. However, Juan cannot find the family quickly enough, so the train leaves without them. Epitacio appears however, so they realize that he did not leave them. They do not realize that some soldiers have taken him off the train, because they assume he is unmarried and, therefore, can be forced into the army.

A month later they finally get a train all the way to El Paso. They have seen many people starve to death in the meantime, and their little group has become much more serious than they were when they first began their long journey. As they finally see what El Paso is like, they are very disappointed. The streets are full of thousands of very poor people, there is little food or water, and nothing is the way Epitacio remembers it or



described it. Later in the day, some kind people let them take shelter beside their fence in some brush to make a temporary home out of the sun and wind.

When Epitacio and Juan finally find the slow moving, muddy, Rio Grande they can see the untouched houses of the Americans on the other side of the river, but they are told that Mexicans are not allowed to cross. The fee to cross is ten cents for adults and five cents for each child, and unheard-of fortune to them.

Eventually Epitacio and Luisa leave the others and sneak across the river, promising to come back for the others as soon as they have money.

A dust storm hits their little shelter, and for three days they huddle together trying to hide from the stinging sand. When it is over, they discover that Dona Margarita's eyes have swollen and are oozing with infection, and she barely see.

Realizing that they are starving, Dona Margarita goes to town, telling her family that she is going to get a job to feed them. That night she returns with more food than they can eat. So she continues to go to the town, but she will not let anyone else accompany her, but on the third day Juan sneaks into town and sees that she is begging.

Chapter 9 Analysis

The terrible difficulty so many thousands of people have getting to the United States is brought vividly to life. The great contrast between the people of El Paso and the people in Juarez is described, and the Mexican Revolution caused by the wealthy taking too much for themselves in the center of Mexico has resulted in this situation all the way to the United States border with Mexico. Dona Margarita, who was educated in Mexico City and whose family was wealthy and powerful, is now forced to beg in the streets of Juarez just so that her family may eat.

Some rumors surface, such as the one that tells that alligators are released into the Rio Grande to eat any Mexican who might try to cross at night. However, most of the story of the family's survival in Juarez is accurate and historically correct. These circumstances were definitely the cause of many families being separated forever, not knowing what the results of the separation were.

The extremely strong faith in God and that He will guide them keeps the family together and constantly gives them the only hope they have of surviving.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Realizing that he must help in some way or they will starve, Juan goes far to the south of Juarez looking for firewood to sell. After many hours, he finds a small bush. Digging it up with his bare hands until they are bloody, he finds that most of the good wood is underground. After finally getting enough to sell, he falls asleep in exhaustion, alone in the desert. Upon waking and wrapping the wood with the rope he used as a belt, he finds that he does not have enough strength to carry this small bundle. Back at home he could heft a bundle twice this size and carry it easily. He has a talk with God, telling him that he is tired of promises but no help, and that he needs the help for his mother, not for himself, but the help does not come. He finally sees that the pile of wood is too heavy, not like the oak back at his boyhood home, so he bundles only half of it and begins his walk back home. In the darkness he sees that much of Juarez is on fire from the fighting, but he walks on, not caring about anything but getting back to his mother.

Chapter 10 Analysis

The strong Catholic upbringing is evident in Juan's beliefs, as is his boyhood impatience. Knowing he cannot give up and do nothing, he follows his mother's lead and does what he can to help the small group that is now a very close family.

The battle in Juarez has come to a peak, and the fighting that people in the United States watched from the roofs of local buildings is brought to a reality.



Section 3, The Crying Tree

Section 3, The Crying Tree Summary

The year is now 1872. A man named Leonides Camargo is a soldier who is fighting the Yakuis Indians. One day during a raid, a little girl runs out of a house that had been ravaged and set on fire by the soldiers. She runs towards Leonides, and, for some reason, he shoots the soldier next to him who is about to kill the little girl. He rescues her, and deserts the other soldiers.

On arriving home with the little girl, he and his wife decide they must leave at once as Leonides is now a wanted man.

They name the little girl Guadalupe, and, at fifteen she marries and has two children. However, her husband leaves her, and she has nowhere to go. She gets work at a rich family's house, and soon befriends a carpenter named Don Victor they have hired. When his work is done, he tells Guadalupe of a rich mining town named La Lluvia de Oro where he can get work, and asks her to marry him and go there with him. She agrees.

While they are there, a meteorite hits a canyon wall, and many people feel it is the end of the earth. Dona Guadalupe and Don Victor make love for a long time, thinking it will be the end for them. However, the effects of the meteorite subside, and, nine months later a baby girl is born to them, and is named Guadalupe.

Section 3, The Crying Tree Analysis

Dona Guadalupe's history as an orphan is traced to the time she remarries and ends up in La Lluvia de Oro with Don Victor as her new husband. Nine months after an actual meteorite hits the valley, a daughter is born and named Guadalupe. She is to become the "Lupe" of the remainder of the story.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

Lupe is still living in the hills near the now vacant mine. The town has grown over with vines, and very few people are still in the area. One day from above the road that leads to the mine, she and her deer look down on a strange creature lumbering along the road. They run to where the center of the town had been to give warning. Soon they see Rose-Mary and her mother, arguing about who will do the laundry. Telling them what she has seen, Rose-Mary thinks that Lupe has seen the devil, but her mother is not concerned.

Lupe goes up the hillside to her ramada and tells her family what she has seen. As the figure comes into the village, they see that it is a very large man with a huge bundle covered with a red blanket on his back. As he approaches, Dona Margarita realizes that it is Don Victor, her husband, whom she has not seen or heard from in years, and she rushes into their ramada to brush her hair.

When he gets to the little group waiting for him, they hug and kiss and begin to talk of the things that have happened. The blanket is full of presents for them all. There's fine material from Guadalajara, ribbons, dried meats, sugar, and beans, and lace for Sophia's wedding dress. They all begin to laugh at the stories that Don Victor tells, and he drinks continually from a bottle of tequila he has brought with him until it is obvious that he has had too much to drink. In bed that night, the children hear Don Victor and Dona Margarita making love, and the next morning is a new day and all look forward to it.

At breakfast the next morning there is an important announcement. They must leave for the United States or wait where they are to someday be found and killed by the soldiers of the Revolution. Don Victor tells them that first they will need a great deal of gold in order to buy their way to the United States and to find jobs.

A few days later Sophia and Don Tiburcio are to be married in an important ceremony. Don Manuel, now depressed, because the Americanos left him, is to perform the wedding even though he is no longer considered the mayor. When he finally appears, everyone is amazed at his appearance. He has not been seen for several months, and he is now old and frail, barely able to walk without help. The Indian families and all the people in the village are dressed in their finest and expecting a wonderful ceremony. Half way through it, Don Manuel becomes confused, and does not seem to know what to do next. At this time, Don Victor hands him a glass that appears to be full of water, and Don Manuel drinks half of it down in one gulp. However, it is not water, but tequila, which Don Manuel has never before tasted. He shouts that it is fire, but asks for more, and he is swiftly given another glass. The ex-mayor then stands up straight and performs the remainder of the ceremony beautifully.



Don Victor explains that the only way to get enough gold for their trip is to crush rock that was left behind by the miners, and remove the gold from the resulting sand. He tells the others that it will take approximately a year to gather that much gold. At the same time he suggests that Lupe return her deer to the forest to be free as he is becoming a strong male deer and may turn on her. This causes Lupe to resent and feel she almost hates her father.

Chapter 11 Analysis

The once bustling mining town is now a ghost town with but a few of the people native to the area still holding on to a way of life now almost forgotten. Many have even returned to the ways of the native Indians and their beliefs of the devil.

When Don Victor returns to his family he brings many presents and also a bit of brawdiness that has not been seen in the household of Dona Margarita previously. She proves to be worn out, and ready for him to take the lead of their family. Being much more aware of what most of Mexico is still going through than the rest, he easily convinces them that they cannot stay and wait to prosper, but must instead take matters into their own hands. Some fear is raised when he once again decides he must go to the lowlands to find work while the others try to process discarded gold ore into pure dust.

The ex-mayor, Don Manuel, parallels the way of the village after the Americans left, and is all but dead, only to be temporarily revived with alcohol.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Don Victor leaves for the lowlands with Carlota, who will cook for her father and take care of him while he is gone. Socorro and her twin boys are going with them, as Socorro feels that she needs to create a life of her own, much to the dismay of Victoriano who has begun to love both her and her boys. Don Tiburcio goes also to bring back supplies.

Lupe finds that her father and mother also feel the deer needs to be returned to the forest. She finally lets him go with a herd of deer near where she buried the Colonel's coat, feeling that two loved ones have left her.

Maria convinces Esabel to "steal" her. Lupe finds out, and threatens to tell their mother, but is finally convinced to keep quiet. When Esabel comes to their house late at night and Maria leaves with him, Lupe finds out that her mother was the one who convinced them to elope this way. There is no money for a proper wedding, and Dona Guadalupe is concerned that her family is vulnerable to bandits who are beginning to terrorize the area.

Don Victor finally returns. When Victoriano learns that Socorro has taken her twins and gone to the coast he is deeply hurt, but his father tells him that it was for the best.

One day later during a thunderstorm, bandits appear and try to steal Lupe, who runs deftly down the canyon. In a lucky series of events, one of the bandits is stabbed in the throat and dies immediately, one is shot in the head, and one runs away. Victoriano is beaten badly, and one of the bandits shoots and kills his little dog that was trying to defend him. Lupe is just ready to throw herself into the raging waters above the waterfalls when Don Tiburcio shoots one of the bandits. Lupe then hides with a friend in the rocks until far into the night as there are gunshots everywhere and horses continually come and go with the bandits. Lupe sees the glow of flames as the houses are burned to the ground.

When at last she is certain the bandits have gone, she runs down the hill to Don Tiburcio's house, only to find Sophia holding him as he dies. In his last dying breath he tells Sophia to clean the fireplace and then leave immediately with their newborn son.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Don Victor has remained true to Dona Margarita and his family, calming some of the rumors of his past gambling and drinking. Dona Margarita reveals that she still loves him very much, and that she wants him to lead their family from this point forward.



Their luck finally runs out, and their village is rampaged by bandits, who burn many of the houses and kill several of the men defending their families. However, her quickness and knowledge of the area saves Lupe, who is now seen as a young woman.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Several days later when the house, which now belongs solely to Sophia, has been cleaned of the blood of Don Tiburcio and three bandits, they begin to clean out the fireplace. Sophia has forgotten her husband's last words and only remembers when they find a metal box filled with gold in the ashes.

Sophia leaves for the lowlands and, ultimately, for the United States, leaving only Dona Margarita, Victoriano, and Lupe left in their ramada. Lupe feels that everything is going wrong. Everyone has either gone to the world beyond or to the valley below.

It is many days later when a large rock in the middle of the plaza is turned up by roots growing due to the rainy season. It is discovered that it contains a large vein of gold, and soon many other rocks containing gold are dug up in the plaza. The rocks can be discovered and dug up very quickly, but processing the gold from the rocks is very time consuming, and the men get impatient at the slow pace. One day while watching two dogs fight over the old horns of a bull, Victoriano gets an idea. He uses the horns to funnel the gold, then, when the mercury is added to separate it from the sand, the process goes much faster. Very quickly they have many little balls of gold, the last step in the process of making it so it can be transported.

Now the problem is how to get food. The rainy season is at its peak and the rivers are swollen so that they cannot leave to get anything, and they are forced to dig roots to survive. One day Lupe smells meat, and goes to the ruins of Don Manuel's store where people are beginning a feast. A deer is hanging from the tree, and she realizes that it is her pet deer. Lupe hides and vomits.

The same day Don Victor returns from the lowlands. His clothes are torn, and he is exhausted. His news is that Sophia's ship went down at sea, and he explains that he is the one who convinced her to take a ship rather than the train as it would be safer. He immediately becomes sick with a terrible fever. All the old Indian methods of healing are used including hanging three dead chickens at the foot of his bed, draping his neck with a rope of garlic, and massaging the soles of his feet with hot, evil-smelling herbs. Ojos Puros, the last living relative of the man who originally found gold in their spring, tells them that they must leave the valley immediately, and to go without their gold. He notes how his father and others died when the gold was first discovered, how the Colonel died trying to remove the gold from the mine, and how Sophia died, because she tried to get to the United States with her gold from Don Tiburcio.

The next morning Lupe finds her mother at her crying tree. She tells Lupe that she thinks Sophia is alive, and that they will all be reunited some day and their gold is not the reason for their troubles. A few days later Don Victor begins to recover from the fever. Their good friends, led by Dona Manza, decide to leave the canyon immediately.



They will go first so as not to create a large group on the trails, and thus, avoid drawing attention to themselves, and Don Victor will lead his family a few days later.

The trail out is very dangerous with sliding rocks and rushing streams. Lupe cannot keep up as they almost get to the flatlands. Soon, she falls, realizes that she is bleeding, and assumes that she is dying. When Maria finds what has happened, she assures her that she is not dying, but that she has just become a woman.

Chapter 13 Analysis

Most of the people of the village have turned to the ancient ways of the Indians for survival. This includes their beliefs in the healing powers of spirits and the fear of the devil. Dona Margarita realizes they must move forward, and resolves to carry on with their goals as she makes preparations for her family's departure from the valley.

The author describes in detail the native peoples' methods for healing the ill, and their firm belief that the devil will punish anyone who tries to leave with the gold of the mountains.

She also refuses to believe that her daughter, Sophia, has died in a shipwreck, and vows that they will all be reunited once more as a family. Though she has said she wants Don Victor to become the leader of their group, it is clear she is still the strength and support they all need to continue with their dreams.



Section 4, Even God Needs Help

Section 4, Even God Needs Help Summary

Juan and his brother-in-law, Epitacio, are now in the United States in Douglas, Arizona. They have work at the Copper Queen Mine, and have just gotten their paychecks. They decide to gamble to double their earnings, and Epitacio loses everything they have earned. Epitacio disappears the next day, so Juan is forced to work two shifts to pay for food for the family. He meets another worker who tells him how easy it is to steal copper ore and sell it. The first time they try this scheme it works, but the second time they are caught and sent to jail. Juan breaks out but is soon caught and sent back. It is August eighteenth, 1916, and Juan is thirteen years old. He is sent to the Arizona State Penitentiary in Florence, Arizona.

There a rich friend of his mother finds him, and offers him five hundred dollars that will go to his poor mother if he will confess to killing a man that the rich man's son has been convicted of. Juan agrees and gets a life sentence.

He eventually escapes there also, and, after a number of jobs, he finds himself in Montana. Here he befriends some prostitutes, and learns the profession of gambling, and soon is wealthy and wearing custom-made suits.

Then, he gets a telegram from his sister saying that his mother is very ill, so he goes to California to be with her.

Section 4, Even God Needs Help Analysis

This section traces the life of Juan Villasenor, the author of the books father.

There is a very accurate picture of the difficulties he had in trying to get ahead in the United States, and many of his misadventures are show to be fate, and not the fault of Juan. He is a very young boy by our standards today, and goes through a great deal of pain and bad luck before becoming a professional gambler. He is evidently quite well liked by the madam of the whorehouse where works as she teaches him to be a refined gentleman.

The news of his mother's illness is responsible for his trip to California.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

Several years have passed, and Juan has been convicted of stealing, but with a payment of five hundred dollars to his aging mother, Juan admits to a killing he did not commit and goes to prison in Arizona. Finally escaping, he finds himself in Montana as a professional gambler at a whorehouse. This is where he is when he receives word that his mother is very ill in California.

Juan immediately leaves Montana and takes a train to Los Angeles, now somewhat of a wealthy, sophisticated gentleman. Taking a cab to his sister, Luisa's, house in the barrio, he sees how the houses are small, the streets are dirty, animals roam loose in the streets, and everything is different from the white section of town.

When he finds the house it is extremely run down. His mother lives in what was the goat shed, and has withered to almost nothing. Still, she says she promised him not to die until he was grown and married, and begs him to promise that he will never leave her again, which he does. However, he thinks about the business he left behind and the finest women in Montana.

As they talk of the relatives that have split up, Juan finds that much of the money he got for admitting to murder and some of that he has been sending from Montana has gone to cousins whom he feels are worthless. And yet, his mother and sister remain poor with little to eat, and a horrible house in a dirty neighborhood.

While waiting for a game of cards to begin in town, Juan goes to a small restaurant to eat. Only as he is finishing the meal does the owner come and ask him to leave, telling him that he does not serve Mexicans. Juan begins to realize that here, in California, Mexicans are looked on as nothing, not equal to any other race. As he expected, the card games do not discriminate, and he is soon into a game. After bluffing for a while, he quickly wins two large pots, but two men at the table who are working together decide to take the money from him. One tries to cut his throat while the other takes the money and runs out the back door. Juan's quickness saves his life, but not without a deep wound in his face.

Chapter 14 Analysis

Juan is proven to be a survivor, but not without his faults. It is clear he has killed at least two men, and has a prison record. Only his will and his background save him from life-long incarceration, or murder. He proves to be a man mostly concerned about himself, but he is still true to his mother's wishes. Without really saying it, the author implies that Juan has completely taken to a life of crime.

Those of the families that have survived have made homes in the United States, but their futures here seem to be governed by their race and the discrimination towards their Mexican heritage. They are very little better off than they were in Mexico.

Juan's mother remains focused on the idea that he must marry, but cautions him of the problems of picking the wrong woman. Juan's temper comes to the surface as does his intelligence with languages and his gambling strategy.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

Lupe goes with her mother and father and the rest to California to find work where the winters are warm, and they also hope to find Don Manuel who is there and may have information about Sophia. They finally find Don Manuel, and he gets them all jobs, but, as a labor contractor, he takes a large percentage of their earnings so there is little left.

After a year in Santa Ana, Lupe has returned to school to further her education, which, her mother feels is extremely important. One day a man comes to their door while Lupe is fixing dinner for the others who are still at work. He is very tired, but asks if they are the Gomez family from La Lluvia de Oro. Lupe admits that they are, but says she does not know the old man. He then explains that he is the husband of her sister, Sophia and that she did not die at sea. He tells her that his name is Francisco Salazar "a sus ordenes."

Sophia explains that there was no food or water on the ship, so she had to get provisions and take another ship a few days later. But then, she was robbed of everything the first night and left with nothing when she got to the United States. She finally got work in the cotton fields, but did more work than the men so she was barred from working with them any longer. Eventually Francisco came to the house where Sophia lived with her two sons and they left together, finally getting good paying jobs and finally marrying.

A few months later, Lupe is going with her family to the fields to pick apricots. One of the trucks in the caravan breaks down, so they must stop. Thinking they will find a place to buy milk and food, they come to a small house with a goat tied in back. Victoriano goes to the back door and knocks. Inside, Juan Salvador Villasenor is healing from the wound he received in the gambling hall, and he does not want to answer the door. Instead, Maria answers Victoriano and agrees to let them milk the goat and look for eggs in return for a box of vegetables. Lupe milks the goat, and sees Juan outside watching the men repair the truck, and is immediately interested in him even though one side of his face is bandaged. However, when she sees the butt of his pistol sticking out of the back of his pants she is repulsed and moves to the other side of the truck.

Several days later Juan is out of money and begins to look for a job. At a rock quarry he is hired as the only Mexican powder man at the quarry. While he does the job very well, he is not allowed to eat or drink with the Anglos.

The next day Juan is told that if he wants to work, he must be a laborer along with the rest of the Mexicanos. He needs the work so he does as he is told. When the whistle does not blow at noon, everyone is told by a foreman that it is time for lunch. However, later in the afternoon there is a huge explosion and a rock wall comes down on the laborers with no warning. There was no whistle to warn them, but the Anglos do not



seem to care even though three Mexicans are killed and many are injured. Juan is told that there are many accidents like this, and that only Mexicans are ever hurt or killed.

The next day the united Mexicans stand together and ask for improvements before going back to work. The foreman grants them a new whistle, but that is all. When the men begin to go back to work, Juan screams at them that they are all cowards, and begins to go almost insane in front of the foremen and the Mexican laborers alike. However, the Mexicans must continue to work under the deplorable conditions as they have no other way to feed their families.

Chapter 15 Analysis

The near craziness of Dona Margarita in believing that Sophia is alive is disproved when Sophia's husband finds them and they are reunited with Sophia. Sophia describes how the Mexicans bound for the United States were mistreated, and how she was lucky to survive with the help of a friendly Mexican family. The generosity and compassion of the Mexican people is once again highlighted. Even having very little for themselves, they share whatever they do have with others.

The near meeting of Juan Villasenor and Lupe Gomez is described. At this same time Dona Margarita realizes that Juan is not ready to take a woman, settle down and be a responsible husband and father.

More of the discrimination towards Mexicans is pictured when Juan takes a job at the mine, only to be demoted the second day, because he is not white.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Juan makes friends with the owner of the gambling hall in Carlsbad named Archie Freeman, and Archie agrees to let Juan manage the card games during the festival of the Stringbeans. Archie is also the deputy sheriff of the area.

At the same time, in the tomato fields nearby, Carlota and Lupe are invited by some boys to accompany them to the dance that evening at the festival in Carlsbad. While they are waiting to enter the dancehall, Lupe looks across the street into the gambling house. In an instant she sees a well-dressed man in a clean white shirt, and she feels that she has seen him somewhere before. Not long after, a fight breaks out between her Mexican friends and three rowdy white boys. Archie goes to break up the fight, and at the same time Juan spots Lupe, and is immediately struck with her simple beauty and they exchange furtive glances.

Juan is still looking for the two men who robbed him and cut his face at the pool hall months ago. One day he hears that they are in Fresno, and immediately leaves to find them and kill them both.

One day when Lupe gets back home in Santa Ana she goes to the library to check out some books to help her learn the art of bookkeeping. There she meets an Anglo boy named Mark who asks to walk her home and help to carry her books.

While trying to find the men who robbed him, Juan is put into jail for sixty days for gambling. While he is there he makes friends with an Italian named Al Cappola. Al has been brought from Italy to oversee the making of fine liquor that is bootlegged in northern California. For a few dollars a day he agrees to teach Juan how to make fine whiskey. When he gets out of jail he immediately begins to make an excellent whiskey and sells it at a large profit. With the money he buys new clothes and a brand new Dodge that he lets his nephews drive around the orange orchard. While talking to his sister, Maria, he hears that the boys have quit school, thinking the way to make a good living is not through education, but through the use of a gun, like their Uncle Juan.

Later that night the brother of the man who taught him how to make whiskey comes to Juan's house. He wants to buy fifty or sixty barrels of whiskey from him at seventy dollars a barrel. Juan is extremely cautious as he does not trust anyone, let alone the brother of an Italian bootlegger. He agrees but only tentatively.

Several days later Juan accidentally spots Lupe with Mark. At first he is furious that she is with an Anglo. He soon calms down as he sees how beautiful she is and what a well-rounded figure she has, and he knows that she is still available. With that he drives to Los Angeles with a vow to sell the hotel its liquor and use it towards creating a life for himself and Lupe.



Chapter 16 Analysis

Juan's career outside the law is more highly sophisticated, and it appears that he now has a reputation even among his family of making his living with a gun. He is approached with a deal that he is uncomfortable with, but the feeling that the way to win over Lupe is with lots of money and power not to have to bow to gringos any longer overcomes his good sense, and he decides to go ahead selling whiskey for a new hotel.

At his point the author creates a new image of Dona Margarita who now smokes cigarettes and drinks whiskey from the bottle. She almost becomes a partner of Juan and helps him with ideas to overcome his concerns about the whiskey making.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

Juan begins to put all his attention into how to deliver the required amount of whiskey. A house is rented after some difficulty as he is Mexican, but he finally secures one in a decent neighborhood and moves his assistant, Julio, and his family in so they look respectable, even though they are going to use the whole house to make whiskey.

That night he learns that his nephews took the pants off their teacher and pushed him out the schoolhouse window. The next morning Juan gets Pedro and Jose up early and decides to teach them a lesson. He works them hard all day shoveling chicken shit and moving large oak barrels in his truck. Then he hands Pedro his pistol and tells him to shoot the windshield. Pedro does this immediately and the flying glass and sudden explosion causes Juan to lose control and the truck goes into a ditch, narrowly missing going over a steep embankment. With that, Juan whips Pedro with a stick and makes him repeat that he will not do petty things without thinking again. When the first car comes along, Juan flags it down for a tow into town. The man who tows them is Fred Noon, an attorney. He and Juan become immediate friends.

One day, as Lupe comes home, there is an older man in a suite sitting with her parents. He is representing the Cinco de Mayo celebration, and asks Lupe if she will be the queen and ride in a float. Lupe is stunned as she did not even enter the contest, but when the man tells her that she can pick her own princesses and will be given material for her gown, she decides to consider.

On the 5th of May, Juan and Julio have distilled thirty barrels of whiskey. Juan is to sell three of them to get money for more supplies, so he loads two of the barrels into the trunk of his convertible. Going to Archie's house he finds out about the Cinco de Mayo parade. Archie is to lead it on behalf of the sheriff's department. Juan goes to see the parade, and soon sees Lupe, dressed in white lace with a sea of snow-white lilies surrounding her. He is in shock, but thanks God and decides that this will be the perfect day to begin their courtship. She finally sees him also, and their eyes lock, long enough for her to be embarrassed.

After the parade is a dance. Juan knows Lupe is there but is unsure about how to begin his courtship of her. He notices her brother, Victoriano, outside and drives his convertible up to him and asks if Victoriano knows anything about cars. Victoriano says, "yes," and Juan asks him to drive the car and see if he can understand where a strange noise is coming from. Victoriano is thrilled and gets into the driver's seat and drives off.

When they get back to the dance, they have become friends, and Victoriano offers to introduce Juan to his two sisters. Just at that moment, however, Juan spots the Filipino and the Italian that stole his money and cut his face. He immediately decides that this is not the right moment to start his courtship, and so he excuses himself and tries to find



where the two men have gone. Going out to his car, he finds a rooster that has been beheaded in his seat. Blood of the rooster is everywhere. Then he sees the two men across the street, and one raises his glass in a silent toast. They leave and Juan cannot find them again, and so goes back to the rented house and throws himself into making the whiskey.

When the final day arrives, Juan and Julio have just completed enough whiskey to fill fifty ten-gallon barrels. Juan goes outside to think clearly, and then his nephew, Jose,

comes up the street in the dark. He tells Juan that his grandmother, Dona Margarita, has had a bad dream, and in it Juan drives into a concrete prison with no windows. The description matches the basement of the hotel where he is to deliver the liquor. When it is time to make the first delivery, Juan tells Julio that the first load is to be taken at nine o'clock sharp. However, when Julio asks when the second load is to be delivered, Juan realizes that there was never a time mentioned for a second load, and that it must be a trap, and his mother's vision was right.

He and Julio each take a truck loaded with barrels of whiskey and Jose goes with them also. Pedro stays with Julio's wife, who is giving both Julio and Juan a very hard time. When they get some distance from the hotel, they stop and hide the trucks behind some trees. Juan takes Jose to a little hill where they can watch the deliveries the first bootleggers make. After some time, they realize that eight trucks have entered the concrete area, but that none has ever come out. With that, Juan realizes it is a certain trap, and they go back to Julio and race off to hide the whiskey in the mountains.

After all the liquor is removed from the house and hidden, Juan takes his nephews to breakfast where they see in the paper that the biggest bootlegging bust in California history has taken place the night before. Fifteen trucks of illegal liquor and twenty-two people were taken into custody. When Julio and his wife, Geneva, find this out, Geneva goes hysterical. It is at that point that Juan realizes he will no longer be able to do business with Julio, so he gives him the use of his convertible and tells him to take his family and disappear for a couple months. Then, Juan and his nephews part, Juan sending them home with instructions to get Archie to help them sell the whiskey. Juan returns to Mexico to hide out for a while. Soon after, the lawmen arrive at his mother's house and tear it apart looking for a distillery.

Chapter 17 Analysis

Juan's nephews begin to imitate what they see in Juan, and he tries his best to teach them a lesson, proving that he has enough common sense to realize that they are on the wrong path in life. He also tries to get his partner, Julio, to see the bigger picture, but his greedy wife is not up to the task.

Juan still harbors the hate for the two men who robbed him and cut his face, but he does barely manages to keep his temper and not do anything stupid in front of a crowd of people. His irritation at Julio is also held in check.



Dona Margarita once again proves she has a clairvoyant sense when she dreams of the concrete prison planned to entrap the bootleggers, making Juan cautious enough not to get caught with the others.

Finally, Juan puts his courtship of Lupe on hold, realizing he has too much on his mind to concentrate on her too. As he drives off toward Mexico, his love of freedom of being on the run returns, and he is almost joyful in being free of the problems and responsibilities he feels towards his family.



Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

Lupe and her family once again leave to follow the crops, stopping to trade for eggs and milk at the house of Juan's mother. At the same time, Juan has sold two barrels of whiskey, and then sells the truck and the last barrel to a man at a service station and has him drive him to Mexicali. As they are ready to leave, Juan looks across the road and sees a group of Mexicans camped by the gas station. As he looks more closely, he thinks he sees Lupe among them, and she briefly glances at him also. The gas station owner finally gets them to Mexicali where they say goodbye, Juan making sure to tell the man the he is going to Jalisco, never to return. The next morning when Lupe's group goes to the little gas station to gas up, the owner sells them several quart-jars of Canadian whiskey. Don Victor says it is the best he has ever had.

A few days later Juan can contain himself no longer. He wants to find out what Archie knows about the set-up, so he sneaks back into the United States, and, wearing old dirty clothes, goes to Archie's saloon. By some chance, Lupe and her brother are getting out of a truck across the street. Juan nearly goes wild, but gets his senses together and decides he cannot approach her under these conditions, and walks off briskly.

The next day Juan dresses like a women, goes to the church where his mother goes, and meets her to let her know everything is all right. She tells him of the police coming to their house, and that Julio and his wife are driving his car all over and spending money like fools. Juan realizes that they are stealing his liquor, but that the police will soon catch them and that he should just leave them alone and let everything take its own course.

As Juan is hiding the remainder of his whiskey in a new place, Lupe is coming in from a nearby field with her father who has become ill and needs water. As the two approach the truck with the water, the foreman tells them to get back to work and knocks the water for Don Victor out of Lupe's hand. All of a sudden a large man appears and knocks the foreman away and hands the water to Lupe's father. The man is Juan.

That afternoon Juan goes into town and buys a new car, and that night approaches Lupe's camp. Letting Vitoriano drive it off, Juan goes inside the tent and meets Dona Guadalupe Lopez. There she questions him about everything imaginable, but mostly telling him that there family does not believe in gambling or alcohol. Surprisingly, she then tells Juan that none of her daughters will ever be allowed to marry a man who uses alcohol or gambles.

At this time Lupe's sister, Carlota, has gone to ask Archie if he knows anything about Juan. Archie says that he does, and that Archie is his deputy. Carlota is amazed, and immediately goes back to tell her family.



As Juan drives home, he is met immediately by Archie, who disarms him and forces him to sit on a chair in the middle of a vacant garage. He questions Juan to find out if he is the one who killed the two people who were blown up in his car. Juan takes a few minutes to explain that he doesn't know anything about what Archie is saying. Then the two come to an agreement that Archie will help Juan to establish a new life and a new name so that he can be respectable and get married if he wants to. In return for the protection, he will provide Archie with five barrels of whiskey every month. Juan then takes the new name of Salvador.

Lupe and Salvador finally begin their courtship, each immediately feeling as strongly as the other. Lupe's mother questions Salvador over and over about his beliefs, and, even though Salvador is forced to lie a great deal, he does it with his own mother's blessings, and feels that it is right to lie a little if it will get him ahead with Lupe's mother. He also finds out that his brother, Domingo, who has been missing for many years, may have been found in Chicago. Then he is told that Eпитacio is back with his sister, Maria, and that he did not desert Salvador in Douglas after all, but that he was tricked into going to Chicago. Salvador does not believe it, and cannot wait to see Eпитacio to get even with him for all his suffering.

Chapter 18 Analysis

There are several instances where Juan (now Salvador) and Lupe just miss seeing each other. The coincidences seem to make their eventual courtship a certainty. When they do meet, Lupe's mother is much like his own, but also very different from his mother who drinks whiskey and smokes.

There is some question of the character of Archie, but he proves, at least for the time being, to be faithful to Salvador, if a little greedy himself. Salvador feels Archie is the key to his freedom from his past life. Yet, he also appears to be the catalyst for Salvador's continued servitude to unlawful acts.

Salvador, on the other hand, may be his own worst enemy at this period of his life. He continually says he must first make a great deal of money before continuing his courtship of Lupe, and he evidently failed to realize that the continuation of this lifestyle is taking him in the wrong direction if his goal is to be happily married and raise a family.

He makes amends with Eпитacio and it may be true that Eпитacio is not really the reason for all of Salvador's past miseries.



Section 5, A Time of Miracles

Section 5, A Time of Miracles Summary

Lupe and her sisters are working the fields of southern California, when they are refused some of their pay, because they are women. Lupe's sister, Sophia, organizes a strike of the women that successfully assures them the same pay as the men get. However, the experience costs them their jobs as no one will hire them after the strike.

Section 5, A Time of Miracles Analysis

The difficulties the Mexican people had in needing work badly when there was little they could do forces them to work under conditions that they had no control over. The times were difficult for Americans too, and this worsened the position of the Mexican farm workers who were at the mercy of the farm owners.



Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

The next payday, the women in Lupe's group were once again told that they would not be paid at the same level as the men. Sophia organizes a strike, and after three days, the foremen gives in and agrees to pay everyone the same scale. There is a great feeling of accomplishment in the labor camps, and, they realize they by sticking together they can attain their goal of equality to some degree.

One day Lupe meets Mark again, and he immediately asks if she has decided to become his wife. She explains to him that she and her brother and sister have agreed to support their parents, and with learning bookkeeping on weekends she will not have time to marry. He tells her that he has talked to his uncle about a job assisting him in his office, and he has agreed. Once she and Mark are ready, they could get married later. To Lupe this means that she must agree to marry Mark in order to get the job, and she becomes somewhat distressed and very confused. She is not ready to completely give herself to Mark, but then, she finds that his uncle will hire her even though they are not engaged.

The next time Salvador and Lupe talk they are finally alone. Each tells the other about the dreams they hope will come true, and, it turns out that both have the same dream in seeing their children educated, so they do not have to bow to anyone on earth. In doing so, they realize that they are truly in love and that their search for a lifelong mate is over. When the others arrive back at the house, Salvador is treated like one of the family. Don Victor takes him aside and asks him to become his partner in reopening the mine he left so long ago. Then Victoriano tells Salvador that his family now has a truck, but that there is not enough work as the strike they created has made it difficult for them to get jobs as laborers in the fields. He asks if Salvador can give them all jobs in his manure business. Salvador has almost forgotten that he told them his occupation is selling manure and fertilizer to large ranches. He is caught in his lie, but nevertheless, tells them to be ready at dawn the next day, and he'll put them to work. He thinks to himself, however, he has no idea what work.

Salvador gets a friend of his who actually does make fertilizer to take Lupe's family on as laborers. At the same time Lupe is grateful, but tells her mother that she is not sure which man she really loves. Mark always treats her nice and has intelligent discussions with. Salvador excites her, but she sometimes feels she hates him. Her mother explains to her that Salvador, then, is her true love.

Chapter 19 Analysis

Lupe must make a choice between Mark and Salvador. This conflict confuses her, but her mother sees Salvador as her real love as he is more exciting than Mark.



Salvador is caught in the lie he told Lupe and her family about his occupation. When they ask to help in his business hauling fertilizer, he bribes a friend to take them on as laborers. This shows, once again, that Salvador's lies are seemingly petty until he is confronted with them.

Salvador's mother shows that she may be on the edge of mental instability. However, in the past, she has proven herself to be correct many times when it comes to the whereabouts of her children.



Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

Dona Margarita goes to the church to have a woman-to-woman talk with the Virgin Mary's statue. She becomes somewhat boisterous, and a new young priest sees her and gets Father Ryan. Father Ryan is familiar with her and knows she is often this way and that it is just how she is. As they talk pleasantly, the Father asks Dona Maria to thank her son for the recent "gift." Knowing it was liquor, she agrees, and asks him if he would like more, to which the old priest answers that he would.

One day, as Lupe is coming in from the apricot fields, Salvador is there to meet her. He puts her into his car and tells her that she is to continue her driving lessons. She is unsure about it, especially in front of all the field workers, but agrees. Once in the car, she makes a fool of herself in front of everyone as women are not generally allowed to drive, but she also finds great joy in this new freedom. When she finally is able to stop the car, Salvador comes to her and congratulates her. Just then, Lupe's little niece comes up and asks if they are going to get married. Lupe is quite embarrassed, but Salvador says that they are, and that the niece will carry the bride gown's train. Everyone cheers, and that becomes the request for Lupe's hand in marriage.

Salvador's mother, Dona Margarita, is in the outhouse smoking a cigarette, drinking whiskey, and reading the bible when he finds her to tell her about his proposal to Lupe. She is very happy and tells him that he must go forward with his plans quickly so as not to be left behind by her other suitor. She also feels certain that Salvador's brother, Domingo, will be back from Chicago to attend.

Just over a week later, Dona Margarita has decided she will go to Chicago by herself to find Domingo. A neighbor butchers a pig and everyone celebrates. They all know that it would be difficult for a little old lady who speaks no English to go to Chicago, but she is so insistent that they decided to let her go with their blessings. Not long later a man appears in the yard that Salvador thinks is his long dead father. When his mother sees the man she faints immediately, but Salvador goes up to the man and realizes that it is Domingo, back from Chicago. They spend the night talking and catching up on family news. Domingo tells them that he made Canadian whiskey with Al Capone for a while. Soon the boys begin to blame each other for their father's death, and start to fight. Dona Margarita steps between them and makes them kneel together before her and apologize to one another, and everything is forgiven.

Chapter 20 Analysis

Humor is introduced when Salvador's mother talks to the Virgin Mary and tells her to keep her son out of their conversations. It is raised again when she is in the outhouse just before dawn drinking whiskey, smoking, and reading the bible. She is now shown to

be an extremely dedicated woman who will not take "no" for any answer when it comes to serving her family's best interests.

The proposal of Salvador to Lupe is not as romantic as it may have been, but the happiness of each of them at the thought of their marriage is extremely strong, and it appears that both families will support the union.

When Domingo returns, and he and Salvador have disagreements about the past, their mother is quick to stop them. Domingo's return from Chicago is proof that their mother can produce miracles. Domingo, however, brings new unrest into the family.



Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

Salvador gets his tailor, who has become his good friend, to help him buy a diamond for Lupe. The retail price is supposedly two thousand dollars, but Salvador buys it for four hundred. Later he finds out the man who sold him the ring is his tailor's brother.

When he shows it to his mother and they talk further, he is surprised to learn that she does not want Domingo to ask for Lupe's hand for him. His mother tells him that Domingo's girlfriend, Nellie, is married to someone else, and that she has left three small children to be with Domingo, and Dona Margarita does not want this action to be a part of Salvador's marriage. To make matters even worse, Salvador finds out that Domingo has ruined two barrels of whiskey, and has been drinking in plain view of the neighbors at the rented house where they distill the whiskey. Salvador decides to ask the priest to formally ask for Lupe's hand in marriage.

When Salvador introduces Domingo and Nellie to Archie, Domingo and Archie end up having a wrestling match. Surprisingly, Domingo is extremely good and beats Archie fairly. The two become immediate friends as Archie is impressed with Domingo's skill.

Later at the dance at Archie's dancehall, Lupe comes in and Salvador immediately asks her to dance. She admits that she does not know how, and Salvador teaches her. The two become very close, and finally, when they go outside to cool off, Salvador asks if he might come by her house with his spokesman to ask for her hand in marriage formally. She is happy to accept his proposal, and the two are more happy than either has been every before.

Chapter 21 Analysis

Salvador's brother turns out to be little more than a common criminal. Even their mother is disappointed in his relationship with a married woman who left her children to be with him. Domingo is seen as a threat to Salvador and Lupe's happiness.

Salvador and Lupe finally come together and make plans for the cycle of their courtship to end in marriage, and Salvador thinks that everything is going his way to perfection.



Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

When Salvador tells his mother the good news, she explains to him that some of the things Lupe has told him are true. When a couple marries, their first family should be their own, and they should remain somewhat removed from the rest of their respective families for the first few years.

Salvador goes to get the priest to take him to Lupe's but finds him drunk, so he has to sober him up in the process. In doing so the priest convinces Salvador to have a few drinks himself, and, by the time they get to Lupe's they are both drunk. Lupe and her parents are expecting them, and, even though they are late, her whole family is dressed in their best clothes and ready to greet them warmly. At first the priest does extremely well, telling the how good a man Salvador is and how his mother goes to church every day. However, when he begins to ask for Lupe's hand for Salvador, he looks at Carlota instead, and then he calls Carlota, "Maria". In trying to right the error, Salvador falls down over a chair and breaks it, and only Dona Guadalupe saves the situation by directing the priest to Lupe. After the request, Don Victor, knowing the two are drunk, thanks them graciously and tells them that there will be an answer within a week.

And so, even though it was a difficult time for Salvador and Father Ryan, they go back to the church drinking and singing Irish songs with their joy.

At the same time, Don Victor learns that a famous bootlegger in Corona drove a Moon convertible, exactly like Salvador's. He decides to do some spying to see if that could be the man that wants to marry Lupe. When Salvador and the priest go to get the answer from Lupe's parents, Don Victor takes Salvador aside. He tells Salvador that he has found out about his occupation as a bootlegger, but that he will not tell Lupe or Dona Guadalupe. Then, the priest and Dona Guadalupe approach Salvador and tell him that his offer of marriage to Lupe has been accepted on her behalf. Lupe's mother has but one condition, and that is that Salvador take a pot of white lilies that came from her home in La Lluvia de Oro, and that he care for them the rest of his life.

Chapter 22 Analysis

Everything goes perfectly for Salvador and Lupe. Her father knows the real Salvador but will keep his secret. Lupe's mother has performed her own little ceremony centered on a pot of lilies she dug up herself while still in Mexico and everyone feels the two are meant for each other and will live very happily with this symbol of lasting love.

Salvador has learned to manage his business without being involved, however, the free time and good food has caused him to gain some weight and that worries him somewhat.



Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

Soon Salvador's happiness comes to an end. As he drives to the house in Watts where they are doing the distilling, he sees several men jump from behind the bushes with guns drawn. When they take him inside, they have Domingo handcuffed to a chair and his face is covered with blood. The big man that Salvador had previously met at the hotel comes toward him with a gloved hand wrapped in barbed wire. The next thing Salvador knows, he is in jail. Domingo is in the cell along with him and several others, but Domingo is in very bad shape. When Salvador is finally able to talk to him, he finds that Domingo got tired of staying in the house where the distilling was going on, and went out to play pool. There he befriended a man and bragged about the bootlegging. The man was an undercover cop.

Salvador bribes a cop to call the attorney he has gotten to know named Fred Noon. Noon comes and bails him out, but his brother, Domingo goes to jail for three years. When Salvador finally gets home, his mother is worried that he will die in her arms. He finally mends, however, and decides he needs money in a hurry to get back into business so that he can put on the wedding feast in the barrio and impress all his and Lupe's friends. He goes to everyone he can think of, but even Archie will not loan him the money he needs. He finally decides to sell his car, and goes to see his gringo friend, Kenny. When Kenny hears of Salvador's predicament, he loans him four hundred dollars he has hidden in the floor of his garage. On the way home, Salvador stops to talk to an old Mexican lady that has been selling his whiskey for years. She loans him another hundred without being asked, and he goes home to tell his mother the good news.

By the time Salvador takes Lupe and her sister, Carlota, to the tailor to get fitted for the wedding dress, Salvador has spent all his money for supplies to start a new distilling process. When he tells the tailor of the situation, Salvador is told that his credit is good and not to worry. This again makes Salvador feel indebted to one who is not of Mexican heritage.

With Domingo still in jail, Nellie has their child. She then decides to go home to Chicago to her husband in hopes that he will take her back. Salvador gives her money for train fare, and Dona Margarita and Luisa agree to bring up the newborn as if it were their own.

On the day when Lupe and Carlota are to meet Salvador's mother and family, her old enemy, Rose-Mary, Don Manuel's daughter, tells Lupe that she is sorry to hear that Salvador is a bootlegger. This infuriates Lupe, but she must try to keep her composure. When they begin to go down the dirt street where Lupe remembered getting eggs and milking a goat, she notices it all looks the same. However, when they get inside everything looks different. The house is dirty, there is a vile-smelling concoction boiling



on the stove, and Luisa is very dirty and unkempt-looking. Carlota begins to get sick, and barely gets out the door before she begins to vomit. That is when Luisa asks Lupe if she would like a good, stiff drink. As Salvador hauls his sister into the kitchen, Lupe and Dona Margarita are left alone. This is when Salvador's mother realizes that Lupe is the one she wanted Salvador to meet since the first day she saw her milking their goat. She goes on talking about God, and about how the woman of the marriage makes the home, and that God provides the help.

Chapter 23 Analysis

Domingo gets what is coming to him for misleading his family and almost betraying his brother's confidence. At the same time, Salvador begins to see that his Mexican friends are not as trustworthy in his time of need as are his gringo friends, and even an old Mexican lady he has befriended helps him without question.

Lupe begins to see the wisdom in the words of her old enemy, Rose-Mary and her jealous sister, Carlota. Her first impression of Salvador's home and his family is of filth, squalor, and a complete lack of manners and class. When she meets the old, wrinkled, Dona Margarita, however, she begins to see past those things and to see the truth and honor in their family.



Chapter 24

Chapter 24 Summary

A few days before the wedding, one of the men, who had refused to loan money to Salvador when he most needed it, shows up at his house, wanting to give him a goat for his wedding dinner. Salvador becomes almost insane and shoots the goat and calls him names for only wanting to be his friend when he has money. Salvador's mother sees this and begins to worry about her son and his ability to hold his temper. When she confronts him, she tells Salvador that if he can hate Mexicans, and his friends when they don't treat him right, then the devil can get him to hate Lupe and their children when they come too. Salvador is horrified at this thought and yells, "No! No!" And then she reminds him that he was the last to come from her loins, and that she named him "Salvador," because she hoped that he would be the salvation of their family, and return them from the evil of the hatefulness which existed between father and son and brother and brother. She goes on to explain to him that God does not mind someone being mad. What He does not want is hatred.

On the day of the wedding Lupe wakes up somewhat unsure of herself and her decision to marry a stranger. Soon, however, her sisters and her mother pull her out of bed with tickles and laughter and it is all forgotten. Salvador, on the other hand, has more troubles with his family. When they are ready to leave, Luisa refuses to go, because she thinks that Lupe and her family look down on Dona Margarita and herself. They finally leave without her, but Epitacio stays to try to get Luisa to change her mind.

As they drive up to the church, there is a big truck full of cattle blocking the way, and then, two deputy sheriffs take Salvador to arrest him. When asked what they are arresting him for, they tell Salvador that he is being arrested for not inviting his friend to his wedding. Salvador begins yelling, knowing that Archie is behind all this. Archie appears from behind the truck full of cattle, which, he says, is his wedding gift to Salvador and Lupe.

As the wedding begins, Salvador and his mother are in the first pew as the music begins and the people begin to come up the aisle. Suddenly, Dona Margarita tells Salvador that she has an upset stomach and needs to fart. Salvador begs her not to, but she tells him that she has no choice and that he better start coughing, loudly! She begins to fart, and the other members of Salvador's family see what is happening and begin coughing too, but Dona margarita just continues to fart louder and longer, until everyone in the church is looking at them, wondering what is happening. Just then, Luisa and Epitacio slide into the front pew. With that, the commotion quiets down and the ceremony is conducted without further interruption.



Chapter 24 Analysis

While the chapter begins with a tense moment, when Salvador embarrasses his friend, Febronio, in front of his sons for his refusal to lend money to him when he needed it, Salvador's mother uses this example to help her son to see that hate is the root of evil.

There is a humorous incident at the wedding, again involving Dona Margarita, when she begins to fart helplessly at the beginning of the wedding. Eпитacio again proves he is loyal to Salvador when he stays behind the wedding party to convince Luisa to forgive Lupe for her unkind looks at her and attend the wedding.

The wedding ends with all concerned happy. However, Lupe is still not aware of what her new husband's methods of supporting his family are.



Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Summary

The reception is held in the back yard of Lupe's house. Archie has brought a large barrel of whiskey that is hidden for use by those who want it, and his men are barbecuing two sides of beef along with chickens, beans, and tortillas. Salvador takes Lupe back behind some large trees and they kiss and look into each other's eyes and speak of love and their future together.

Chapter 25 Analysis

Everyone is happy, and all cares have been forgotten as the people gather and talk of the wonderful future and the love of Salvador and Lupe.



Characters

Lupe Gomez

Dona Guadalupe Gomez

Don Victor Gomez

Victoriano Gomez

Carlota Gomez

Sophia Gomez

Maria Gomez

Juan Salvador Villasenor Castro

Dona Margarita Silveria

Domingo Silveria

Luisa

Emilia

Epitacio

Don Benito

Colonel Manuel Maytorena

Socorro

Don Manuel



Rose-Mary

La Liebre

Don Tiburcio

Senor Jones

Duel

Deputy Sheriff Archie Freeman

Mario

Mark

Jose and Pedro



Objects/Places

La Lluvia de Oro

The River of Gold, or, La Lluvia de Oro, is initially a small, unnamed village in north/central Mexico. A small vein of gold is found here, and the find is sold several times by Mexicans until it becomes famous enough that a large American mining company buys it. Intent on going deep into the mountainside to wherever the vein leads, the company gets larger and larger. Soon, the little village and the way of life of most of its occupants is a thing of the past. Poor Mexicans are hired to work in the mine and paid more than they have ever known in their lives. It is dangerous, however, and there is little in the way of safety regulation.

Most of the original dwellings are ramadas, or houses built of long poles. There is, of course, no electricity or plumbing prior to the mine being established there. Families often have a lean-to outside for additional sleeping or for shelter for their animals. Many families have goats penned for milk, and some had pigs or cattle in addition to mules and an occasional horse.

The community is situated at the end of a dead end canyon where a large river flows most of the year. In the lowlands miles below are refined settlements and much more agriculture. Above the community are virgin forests full of game and birds, the meadows are rich with grass and flowers.

The original people who settled here were very close, and created one huge family as they helped each other to survive in the rural area. Outsiders seldom visited them here, but. The entire atmosphere changed when the miners came into the valley.

The Home of Lupe's Family

The home of Lupe's family is built around a huge boulder. Its center is a lean-to made of logs and fir branches. The walls do not keep out the breeze or the light from outside. Furniture consists of a few boxes and a small table and hand-made chairs. The beds are frames filled with straw and covered with blankets and whatever material could be found.

There is a small wood stove in the ramada where the family gathers to eat and pass their free time. Coals are often brought out onto the dirt floor to warm their feet. Water is sprinkled on the hard-packed dirt floor is cleaned by sprinkling water on it and sweeping it with a stiff plant called Mexican broom.



The Burial Place of the Colonel's Coat

Lupe finds a pile of rocks that look like stacked tortillas in the high country above her village. On top is a little twisted pine tree. It is here that Lupe buries the uniform coat that belonged to Colonel Maytorena, and the area becomes a symbol of peace for her.

Box of Chocolates

The present from Don Tiburcio is wrapped with a red ribbon around bright blue paper. Inside are chocolates, each individually wrapped in colored foil of gold, silver, red, green, and blue. The chocolates are dark, but filled with different colors of luscious creams. These are called the "candy of love" and are a very extravagant luxury in the remote area.

Don Victor's Presents

Don Victor brings presents for Lupe's family from the lowlands. There are bright pieces of material, delicate lace, colorful ribbons, shoes, beans, rice, and blankets, along with dried meats, sugar, and flour.

Torreon Exodus

The town of Torreon, Mexico, is in the central portion, and is a major point of distribution for the railroad. When Juan's family passes through on their way to catch a train for the United States, the results of recent battles of the Revolution are very obvious. There are bloated carcasses of dead horses everywhere, many still in their harnesses. Hundreds of people lay dead or dying, many calling for water and food.

In the alleyways hundreds of human bodies have been piled, arms and legs are every which way. The stench is horrible. Dona Margarita is told that these are the dead from a battle more than a week before.

The Train to the North from Torreon

Thousands of people from all over the Republic of Mexico are boarding the long line of cars at the same time. The train has brought cattle south for the war effort, and the poor people are allowed to go back toward the United States in the tall, empty cattle cars. However, the cars have just been emptied, and there is still manure thick on the floors, and the people have to shovel it out with their bare hands before they can enter. There is no water to wash the cars, so the people remain in the slick mess left behind by the frightened cattle.



Cuidad Juarez

Where people supposed there would be lush green valleys and beautiful buildings, there is nothing but rocks, granite, and white sand. Everywhere are poor, ragged, starving people. It is estimated that there are twenty or thirty thousand of them, wandering everywhere looking for food. Anywhere there is any shade whatsoever, it is covered with people trying to get out of the blazing sunshine.

El Paso

Looking across the slow-moving Rio Grande to El Paso the Mexicans can see the many well-kept buildings that have been untouched by the Mexican Revolution. There are tall, well-fed, American soldiers in clean uniforms patrolling the border. It is not what most Mexicans expected to see, however.

Epitacio had told them there would be beautiful, fertile valleys. He also said the dogs that belong to Americans are fed three times each day and wear silver chains around their necks. He said that there is a pond in the middle of town where large fierce animals are kept that have huge teeth, and that these are called alligators. He was told that the Americans let them loose in the Rio Grande every night to eat any Mexican who may try to cross into the United States illegally.

Lilies from La Lluvia

Dona Guadalupe digs some lilies from her yard just as they are leaving La Lluvia to remember her home with. These are planted in Santa Ana, California, when they are finally settled. When Salvador and Lupe get married, Dona Guadalupe gives some to Salvador with instructions to take care of them forever.

"Canadian" Whiskey

The whiskey Salvador makes is called Canadian. It is made with fifty pounds of sugar cane, and one pound of yeast for each fifty-gallons of water. This makes six gallons of whiskey that is then put into charcoal barrels to age. The liquor is very good compared to most of the homemade whiskey.



Themes

Racial Equality

The two families followed in the story are motivated by the need and continually struggle for equality with the more wealthy and educated. While in Mexico, the poor people are given very little opportunity to better themselves, and are treated as undesirables by the upper classes. The Revolution begins when people are locked out of their capital city so that the president can entertain influential foreigners, and the masses rise up against this authority.

In the United States, many of the Mexican people are surprised to find that they are treated the same here. The middle and upper class white population looks at the poor Mexicans as dirty, uneducated, and inferior. When Juan is asked to leave a Greek restaurant just because he is a Mexican, he is surprised to be treated as, "dog shit, down here, along the border." (Chapter 14, p 232)

Juan is continually motivated to become wealthy so that he and his family can be treated equally to the white people, and so that he can raise his children to be educated and respected also.

Lupe and her parents also see a need to increase their status. They often sacrifice so that Lupe can attend school. In Mexico she loves to learn and does very well. Upon arriving in the United States, it is some time before her family can allow her to return to school, but they eventually make do with less so that she can leave the fields and continue her education. Lupe's initial goal is to be able to get an office job so that she will no longer have to follow the crops, and then can help to support her family on a year-'round basis.

In the barrios of both families, those people who have very little in the way of material things respect those of their friends who have managed to rise out of their poverty, even a little bit. While many of the Mexican people feel they have equal job skills to their white counterparts, they find it very difficult to compete for the same jobs. The history of both families highlights the struggle for equality through education and persistence.

Romance and Marriage

In the stories of the two families, romantic relationships take on different aspects than what are generally considered to be "normal" in the modern-day United States. Arrangement by the parents of available couples is common, and accepted by most of the Mexican youths. There is often competition between parents of eligible youths to create a match that will benefit one family more, than perhaps, the other. Therefore, the more wealthy, educated, successful, and, good-looking, are more desirable and sought-after.



Also, there are several examples of youths who select their own partner after relatively little emotional or physical contact. This may often be due to the limited accessibility of prospective partners outside their immediate social circles as a result of little physical travel between villages.

The reader may be surprised to see that Don Tiburcio courts Sophia only two evenings before asking for her hand in marriage. It was customary for the prospective husband to either ask his girl's parents for her hand in marriage, or, in the more educated circles, for the prospective husband to have a respected member of the community ask for the girl's hand for him.

Another characteristic noticeable in many instances of matrimony is the difference in the ages of the couples. Don Tiburcio is thirty years old when he asks for Sophia's hand, while she is just fifteen. There are many other instances of this as Archie Freeman marries Lupe's sister, Carlota, and, of course, when Lupe, just eighteen, marries Domingo (previously know as Juan) who is thirty. There is no reference to anyone questioning or objecting to the great difference of ages between the couples.

Humor

While there is a great deal of violence throughout the story, there are episodes of humor as well. One of the first is somewhat stomach turning, but contains not only humor, but reality of life as well. When Lupe's older sisters are forced under a pile of fresh manure to hide from bandits, the more proper and spoiled sister, Carlota, is reluctant to allow herself to be covered in this manner. Finally, being physically pushed by her mother, she was, "trying to get out of the crevice until she got a wet piece of chicken shit in her mouth." (Chapter 1, p. 18)

Perhaps even more visual, is the picture of Dona Margarita that Salvador finds just before dawn one morning. Looking for his old mother, he finds her in the outhouse. "There she sat covered with her serape so the morning breeze wouldn't chill her. She had the Bible open on her lap, a cigarette hanging from her lips and a glass of whiskey in her left hand." (Chapter 20, p. 434)

Without a great deal of detailed description, the author takes everyday situations and quickly turns them into humorous episodes, then leaving them just as quickly.

An instance of this humor happens when Salvador picks up the priest at the church. The priest is to ask Lupe's parents for her hand in marriage on Salvador's behalf, but Salvador finds him drunk. They go to Lupe's house anyway, and the priest asks the wrong sister for her hand for Salvador. Salvador is so stunned he jumps up from his chair quickly and smashes his head on a lamp.

Style

Points of View

The story is told entirely by an omniscient third party point of view. Since the circumstances and the events of the book are true, the author is obviously the narrator. This person knows the true history of the Mexican people's struggle to rise out of poverty and ignorance, and the suffering they go through in both Mexico and the United States to overcome this situation. These are seen through the poorer Mexican individual's eyes and the experiences related are also of these same people.

The accounts told of these struggles by the immediate families are attained through many years of discussions and interviews with the people who appear in the book. While the dialogue is largely made up through recollections and first-person accounts, it represents the author's impression of the places, events, and characters that appear during the events of the three generations outlined.

Setting

The initial events of the book take place in two areas of Mexico. One, the La Lluvia de Oro, or, Rain of Gold, is a beautiful, pristine, box canyon high in north central Mexico. The people of the canyon are initially poor, but pictured as happy and contented with their plight in life. The development of the gold mine begins to change their environment, and, thus, their way of life. The beauty begins to leave in place of concrete building, barbed wire fences, and tremendous noise caused by the mining processes.

The people begin to flee the area when the bandits begin to set fire to the village. Most head for the relative safety and security they assume they will find in the United States.

The other opening setting is in the high mountains north of Mexico City. Three brothers discover an area where they wish to begin a community that is safe and isolated from the poverty and insecurity of the larger cities. As with the other village in the opening pages of the story, it is beautiful and relatively untouched by civilization when the community is founded. It is also vacated when the area is over run by bandits who burn the buildings, kill many of the inhabitants, and steal or kill their livestock.

The squalor of Ciudad Juarez is seen and contrasted to what it was like just three years prior to the Revolution. The relative serenity and beauty of the area has gone as thousands and thousands of poor people trying to get to the United States have ended up there with no jobs, money, food, and no shelter to speak of. The ease of crossing the Rio Grande into the country they see as their salvation has disappeared, and most wait in horrible conditions.



The farming communities of Southern California, however, offer a better chance at salvation, even though the environment appears to many as another hopeless struggle for betterment. People live in houses, have transportation, and their jobs provide them with fruit and vegetables and some other comforts. While many are not able to take advantage of some of the methods to better themselves, there is more education available than there had been in the rural communities of Mexico, and they are free from the raids of the bandits they were used to in Mexico.

Language and Meaning

The research for this book began in 1975. It was written from these notes, interviews, and research until 1989, mostly in Spanish. The final publication is in modern English, with many Spanish words and phrases used to emphasize meaning and to describe some phrases not readily transferable into English. The interviews were generally with the people who appear in the pages that resulted from their own personal recollections.

The people who make up the majority of the characters spoke little or no English until they entered the United States. This situation is reflected only in the words of the author, not in the general dialect or the dialogue.

Structure

The story contains five hundred sixty pages, twenty-five chapters, and five separate sections. The numbered chapters begin with a quote that contains an overview of the situation that follows. Numbered chapters begin in chronological order. The sections begin with a flashback that outlines what has taken place prior to the action that follows in the numbered chapters. There are also flashbacks during many of the narrations used for the same purpose.

The book's beginning sections have the family trees of both of the main families in diagram form and a map of the area of Mexico where the families begin their stories.

There are also eight glossy, black and white photos included. These are of several of the main characters from both families.



Quotes

"All right, *querida*," said her Colonel, I must go now, and I want you to know how proud I am of you for doing so well in school. For, without education, a person can't go very far in life. This is what the whole war is about: the uplifting of our people." Chapter 2, p. 36

"Your love for the man is the least of our problems," said their mother. "For a woman can always learn to love the man she marries if he's good to her and he is a good provider. But," she added, "the problem we have here is that Don Tiburcio has never been a man to show much interest in women or drink or cards, and he's been living with his mother all these years without ever marrying, so I'm just suspicious that he might be looking for a servant instead of a wife, now that his mother is getting up in years." Chapter 6, p. 81

"But I like talking bad about the rich, Mama! It's fun and maybe God will punish me and make me rich someday, too!" Chapter 9, p. 128

"Oh, *Dios mio*," said Epitacio, making the sign of the cross over himself, "it wasn't like this two years ago. I swear it, Juan!" Chapter 9, p. 134

"No one of earth has ever gone to church to see You more than my dear mother!" he bellowed. "All through this war, she always made plenty of time for You! It's not right what You've allowed to happen to us! She was begging in the street, God! Begging! Don't You understand? There, in front of Your very own church, begging! AND I'M MAD AT YOU, GOD!" Chapter 10, p. 151

"I swear it," Maria was saying, "if you don't come and steal me tonight, I'm coming to your house to get you!" Chapter 12, p. 185

"This is also why we must get out of this canyon," continued her mother. These aren't soldiers anymore. These are savages, abortions *del Diablo*! They use the Revolution as an excuse to steal and plunder!" Chapter 12, p. 188

"We're a strange people," he added. "So much respect, so many traditions, and yet we kill each other like dogs and we don't think nothing of that." Chapter 12, p. 192

"Gold is evil!" continued Ojos Puros. "You must abandon it. Or the same monster of the deep that crushed Sophia's ship will come out of the depth of your souls and destroy you, too!" Chapter 13, p. 204

"I knew it," said Duel, "the first moment I laid eyes on you. I said to myself, 'That boy, he's been to hell and back.' For no real man like us can believe in the puppet-God of the churches. The devil, yes, of course, but not God!" Section 4, p. 218

"Because Mexicans are always poor, right!" said Pedro. Chapter 14, p. 228



"Man, oh, man, " said Juan to himself, "if one day I could just buy a nice little piece of land and build a house on a knoll like Don Pio. Then get a car - a good one - and prove to the boys that a Mexican can be somebody. That would be beautiful." Chapter 14, p. 230

"That's pretty good," laughed the Greek, "but still, your accent's a little bit off, *amigo*." He came close to Juan. Look," he said softly, "I live just around back with my family and, to my home, you're welcome any time. But here, you know how it is; I have to stay in business, so I'm still going to have to ask you to leave." Chapter 14, p. 232

"Hey, you, Vil-as-enor-eeee!" he said, twisting Juan's name worse than ever, "we ain't got no work for you today . . . unless you all want to work with the other Mexeee-cans," he added. Chapter 15, p. 258

"!*Cabrones pendejos!*" he screamed at his fellow countrymen, who were filing into the quarry. "You don't deserve the shit a dog leaves in the streets! These *gringos* tricked you worse than children! They have no more respect for you than pieces of dried-out horse shit!" Chapter 15, p. 262

"I got it!" she said excitedly. "Oh, why didn't I see it before? It's so obvious," she added, laughing. "Why, *mi hijito*, all you do is rent a big house in the *gringo* part of town! A big house! And, oh, I'm sure that no *gringo* will ever try to befriend you. Why, they'll be mad that you're even there. They'll be sure to keep away from you!" Chapter 16, p. 295

"That's true," he said, "in the *barrio*. But not with the Anglos. Hell, to rent the new house, I had to say I was a Greek. Jose, I was a boy - no bigger than you - when I went to prison and grown men tried to abuse me, but I fought 'em. Look!" he said, ripping his shirt open. "they cut my stomach open, left me for dead, but I never gave in! Because I'm a man, goddammit! I don't care what an old-fart teacher tells you; you pay attention and learn! Reading, education, that's what's going to get us ahead in the long run. Not this bootlegging. Think! Look around you! Use your head!" Chapter 17, p 315

"Yeah, I guess you're right about that," said Juan, still feeling a little cautious. "By the way, Kenny, I'm not going by 'Juan' anymore. From now on my name is Salvador. Juan, he's gone to Mexico and he died. I never knew him." Chapter 18, p. 346

"Good, I'm glad you agree with us," said Dona Guadalupe, "because speaking quite frankly, I want you to know that we will never permit one of our daughters to marry a man who drinks alcohol. In fact, we've both instructed our daughters since they were small of the terrible vices of liquor and cards." Chapter 18, p 362

"Don't pay attention to her," said her mother. "She's just excited. It's not every day that people see the possibility of a girl getting out of the fields." Chapter 18, p. 370

"This country is our home now," began Sophia, "so we can't allow people to treat us like dirt. We can't just keep saying to ourselves that it's okay because we're going back to Mexico someday." Section 5, p 397



"Mine are easy. I'm going to be rich. I don't know how, but I am. And I don't care if I have to work for twenty hours every day, seven days a week, but I'm not going to work for nobody but myself ever again. And I'm going to buy a ranch. A big one! And, in the middle of it, on a hill, I'm going to build my home like my grandfather built, and my children will go to school and they'll never suffer like I suffered, I swear to God!"

Chapter 19, p. 408

"I've come to talk to You, woman-to-woman, one last time before I go to Chee-a-caca to get my son," she said in a firm, strong voice. "So, I don't want Your Most Holy Son coming in this time and interrupting us. Besides," she added with a twinkle of mischief in her eyes, "I just heard a good one, and I think You might like this one." Chapter 20, p. 425

"Of course," she said, "to start off each morning praying for God, smoking and drinking for myself and crapping for the devil is one of my greatest pleasures. Now go on, please, and get me a little more *whiskito* and then start the fire and put on the coffee and heat me a sweet roll. Then, when I'm all done here and feeling good and clean inside, I'll come into the house and listen. But, now, go on, the Virgin and I are in the middle of some very juicy gossip!" Chapter 20, p. 434

"Yes, you do," said Salvador, "because I want you to know that I'm beginning to see that yes, of course, there are bad son-of-a-bitch *gringos* like the bastard that worked Domingo and me over, but there are good ones, too. Kenny - that *gringo* in Carlsbad - he just loaned me money and saved my life when no *mejicano* would. And Fred Noon, another *gringo*, he's a lawyer, and he's helping Domingo right now without pay. Do you understand? Both of these *gringos* came through for me when all our miserable, son-of-a-bitch *mejicanos* ran from me in fear!" he shouted. "*Gringos* saved me! So I don't want you pretending to shoot *gringos* anymore just because they're *gringos*. That's bad, just as bad as the ranger who beat us for no other reason except that we're *mejicanos*." Chapter 23, p. 506



Topics for Discussion

Discuss some of the reasons that many of the Mexican people left Mexico for the United States.

Analyze the conclusion of many Mexican people that education was the answer to the pathway of a better life for their children.

Explore possible reasons why the borders of the United States were closed to many Mexicans during the Revolution of 1910.

There are many coincidental meetings of the same people from Mexico once they arrived in the United States. How accurate do you think the author is in presenting these situations?

Discuss some possible reasons that Juan was not allowed to continue as a "powder man" at the rock quarry, even though he was qualified.

What was the difference between a Revolutionary Soldier and a bandit in Mexico during the Revolution?

How were Dona Guadalupe and Dona Margarita different? How were they the same?

Explore the function of religion to the families who traveled from Mexico to the United States.