Chapter 16

Summary

The Wilsons and the Joads travel together, through Oklahoma and into the Texas Panhandle. For two days, the new pace of travel exhausts the family, but on the third day, the travelers acclimate to their new way of living.

Analysis:

The two families' adaptation shows their perseverance, resilience, and commitment to their journey.

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Summary

Rosasharn tells Ma that once the group arrives in California, she and Connie plan to live in town while the rest of the Joad family toils in the fields. Rosasharn is excited by the opportunities urban life offers: motion pictures, hospitals, and so on. Connie, she says, will study at night and work towards owning a business. Ma Joad opposes this idea because she doesn't want to see the family separated, but doesn't push her objection because she sees that Rosasharn is only dreaming.

Analysis:

The Joads' solidarity—both within the family and beyond it, as with the Wilsons—is what has let them come as far as they have. Ma Joad recognizes this. However, she's an astute (wise) enough person to realize that Rosasharn's ambitions are simply pipe dreams

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Summary

The Wilson's car, which Al is driving, breaks down because of a broken bearing. Al is ashamed; he takes the car's failure as an indication of his incompetence, and he lashes out at Tomwhen Tom insinuates that Al may have been responsible for the breakdown.

Analysis

When the car breaks, Al feels a guilt similar to what many men in the novel experience when bad things happen that are mostly out of their control.

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Summary

Tom, Al, and Casy volunteer to stay with the car while the group continues on. Pasupports this plan, but Ma challenges his authority by refusing to go along. Pa, humiliated by his wife, backs down, and the Joads stay in place.

Analysis

Again, Ma Joad stresses the importance of the family staying together, and is even willing to **challenge Pa Joad's leadership** in order to ensure the family sticks together.