

## **Chapter 16 Summary Analysis-we aren't reading this chapter**

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

**Themes:** Powerlessness, Perseverance, and Resistance

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. 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 enough person to realize that Rosasharn's ambitions are simply pipedreams.

**Themes:** Family, Friendship, and Community

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 Tom when Tom insinuates that Al may have been responsible for the breakdown. 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.

**Themes:** Dignity, Honor, and Wrath, Faith and Guilt

Tom, Al, and Casy volunteer to stay with the car while the group continues on. Pa supports 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. 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.

**Themes:** Family, Friendship, and Community

Tom and Al work on fixing the car. Al tries to bring up personal topics, but Tom tells his brother that he'd prefer to focus on moving forward. Tom, like Ma, has gained perspective that keeps him from overthinking his hardship.

**Themes:** Powerlessness, Perseverance, and Resistance Family, Friendship, and Community

To find the replacement part they need, Tom and Al go to a junkyard in town. They find the part, and hang around to talk to a one-eyed man who works at the lot. The one-eyed man cries to the brothers about his pitiful life. Tom harshly tells the man to stop complaining and get his life together, but denies the attendant a ride to California after he asks for one. When the brothers leave, the one-eyed man cries alone.

This scene showcases Tom's moral ambiguity. Tom's criticisms of the one-eyed man seem well-intentioned but unnecessarily harsh. Furthermore, he refuses to help the

man, even when asked to do so. The one-eyed man's suffering illustrates the damage that loneliness can do.

**Themes:** Humanity, Inhumanity, and Dehumanization, Dignity, Honor, and Wrath, Powerlessness, Perseverance, and Resistance

With the Wilsons' car fixed, the brothers meet the rest of the group at a campsite. The camp proprietor/manager, a local, attempts to charge Tom for sleeping on his property. Tom refuses defiantly, and goes to sleep down the road. The proprietor's exploitative behavior provokes Tom's righteous ire, and Tom is willing to inconvenience himself to prove his point.

**Themes:** Humanity, Inhumanity, and Dehumanization, Dignity, Honor, and Wrath

At the camp, a haggard man tells Pa that he's on his way back from California, and that the Joads' search for work will likely be fruitless. **The handbills** that promise work are designed to yield far too many workers so that the employers can exploit the workers who show up. The naysayer then becomes self-conscious, and gives Pa advice on how to negotiate better working conditions. \*\*You'll see this scene in the movie  
This scene presents one of the first direct signs that the Joads' experience in California will involve still more hardship. However, even the bitter man feels some remorse, and tries to redeem himself by offering helpful advice.

**Themes:** Humanity, Inhumanity, and Dehumanization, Powerlessness, Perseverance, and Resistance