***East of Eden*** study guide- chapters 1-22/ parts I and II

Read the introduction to the novel- take notes as appropriate

Read Genesis 4:1-16- the story of Cain and Abel (attached) *East of Eden* is an allegory to that story, so watch for the similarities

**PART I**

**Chapter 1:**

1. What is the effect of writing about the background to the land and the description of the settlers?
2. What do we know about the narrator so far?

**Chapter 2:**

1. Characterize Samuel Hamilton and his wife, Liza.
2. What does the narrator say about how people survived on this barren land?

**Chapter 3**

1. Describe Cyrus Trask
2. Describe Mrs. Trask
3. What are the major differences between Alice Trask and her predecessor?
4. What does Steinbeck mean when he writes: “When a child first catches adults out- when it first walks into his grave little head that adults do not have divine intelligence, that their judgments are not always wise, their thinking true, their sentences just- his world falls into panic desolation. The Gods are fallen and all safety gone. “ (19)
5. In what way does Adam, “find his father out”?
6. Characterize Adam and Charles. What do they think of each other and themselves?
7. Pay close attention to pages 24-28 which characterizes the relationship between Adam and Cyrus. What are the important components of this relationship?
8. Why does Charles beat up Adam when they go for a walk? How does Adam react?

**Chapter 4:**

1. How does Adam feel about being a soldier? How does he do in the army?
2. How do Adam and Charles become close while Adam is in the Army? What letter does Adam keep? Why?

**Chapter 5:**

1. Characterize the Hamilton children
2. Characterize their mother, Liza.

**Chapter 6:**

1. What happens to the house while Charles lives in it alone? What might this symbolize? How is it ironic?
2. Consider the scar Charles gets from his accident? How does this parallel the story of Cain and Abel?
3. Why does Adam re-enlist?
4. What does Adam think of Cyrus in his new position in Washington?
5. What expectations did Charles have in waiting for Adam? How does he live after he realizes Adam is not coming? How are the letters different than when Adam first enlisted?

**Chapter 7:**

1. Where does Adam go after his 2nd enlistment is over? Why? What does he learn?
2. What is in the large envelope delivered to Charles and Adam at the farm?
3. What is significant about the question Adam has to answer to get the $ from Charles to come home?
4. What is the difference in their relationship when Adam gets home? What does Charles openly acknowledge?
5. What does Steinbeck say about love on pages. 70-71 in Adam’s explanation to Charles about why he thinks his dad did not steal the $?

**Chapter 8:**

1. Characterize Cathy in the context of the “monster” Steinbeck writes about. Do women like Cathy exist in the real world?
2. How does Cathy get rid of her parents and make it look like a robbery? Why does she do this?

**Chapter 9**:

1. Characterize Mr. Edwards
2. How does Cathy get Mr. Edwards to give her a “job”? Or did she actually ask for one?
3. What happens to Mr. Edwards when he falls in love with Cathy? How does she manipulate him?

**Chapter 10:**

1. What cycle do Adam and Charles fall into in their lives?

**Chapter 11:**

1. Why is Adam so insistent on taking care of Cathy?
2. What makes Cathy uneasy about Charles?
3. How does Cathy manipulate the brothers?
4. Pay attention to the reasons Charles wants Adam to get rid of Cathy after they are married.

**PART II**

**Chapter 12:** (Intercalary chapter)

1. What different ideas does Steinbeck consider in this chapter? What is the purpose? Does it bring up any ideas already explored in the story so far?

**Chapter 13:**

1. The beginning of this chapter is also intercalary. What ideas does the beginning of this chapter address?
2. What is ironic in the fact that Cathy brings out the “glory” in Adam?
3. Where does Adam decide to settle?
4. What does Cathy do when she finds out she is pregnant?
5. Describe the first meeting between Adam Trask and Samuel Hamilton

**Chapter 14:**

1. Characterize the narrator based on this chapter about his mother, Olive. Why do you think Steinbeck included this chapter? (You may have to look back at the intro. or do some research here)

**Chapter 15:**

1. What are Adam’s hopes for himself and his future family with this new land? What is he doing to prepare for this future?
2. Does Cathy share Adam’s enthusiasm for their future? What does Steinbeck mean when he says about her, “She had the inhuman attribute of abandoning what she could not get and of waiting for what she could get.”? What one quality required of a great and successful criminal does Cathy possess and how might Steinbeck’s mention of this quality foreshadow what may happen later in the novel?
3. Who is Lee and how does Cathy feel about him?
4. Discuss the additional characterization of Samuel and Lee while they travel back to Adam’s farm.
5. How does the divining rod help characterize Samuel?
6. What is the tragic irony regarding how Adam feels about Cathy, as he tells it to Samuel?
7. How is the dinner with Samuel? What interesting exchange happens between Samuel and Lee while he is getting his horse ready? What does Cathy tell Adam after dinner? How does he respond?

**Chapter 16:**

1. What is the cause of Samuel’s “Weltschmerz” or “Welshrats” which he feels on his way home from Adam’s house?
2. What plans does Adam have for Samuel in terms of helping with his land? Why is this a great thing for Samuel and his family?

**Chapter 17:**

1. The narrator points out several odd aspects of Cathy’s pregnancy. What are they?
2. What does Samuel mean when he says this to Lee, after Cathy gives birth, “A frightened sorrow has closed down over my heart. I wish I were a child so I could cry. I’m too old to be afraid like this. And I’ve not felt such despair since a bird died in my hand by a flowing water long ago.” (195) Why does he say it?
3. What does Cathy do after she has the babies?

**Chapter 18:**

1. What does Adam tell Horace Quinn about his accident? Does Horace believe him?
2. What does Horace find out about Cathy’s whereabouts?
3. What has happened to Adam since the shooting? What does Samuel Hamilton tell him to do?

**Chapter 19:**

1. Discuss the similarities the narrator makes between a whorehouse and a church.
2. What are the mysteries surrounding the “Madam” of a whorehouse? Discuss the differences between the 3 whorehouses and madams on the “Row”
3. How does Kate (Cathy) work out for Faye?
4. What hints does Steinbeck give that Kate is up to something and is not as fond of Faye as Faye is of her?

**Chapter 20:**

1. Why does Faye plan a party for Kate?
2. What happens at the party?

**Chapter 21:**

1. Review the opening three paragraphs of this chapter and explain how this applies to Kate.

**Chapter 22:**

1. Why does Samuel decide to go see Adam again? How does Samuel think Liza will react to his request to go see Adam again? Does she react in the way he expects?
2. How does Samuel get Adam out of his stupor?
3. How does Adam feel about Cathy?
4. Why does Adam now want to know about her- about her past, when previously, he did not care?
5. What does Adam realize about his sons?
6. What do the men discuss regarding the Cain and Abel story after Adam reads it?
7. What do the men end up naming the twins? Who are they named after?
8. What does Adam say when Samuel reminds him of the garden he planned to plant?

Genesis 4:1-16New International Version (NIV)

Cain and Abel

**4**Adam[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A1%2D16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-81a)] made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A1%2D16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-81b)] She said, “With the help of the Lord I have brought forth[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A1%2D16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-81c)]a man.” **2**Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. **3**In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. **4**And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, **5**but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

**6**Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? **7**If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”

**8**Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.”[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A1%2D16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-88d)] While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

**9**Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

**10**The Lord said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground. **11**Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. **12**When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”

**13**Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is more than I can bear. **14**Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

**15**But the Lord said to him, “Not so[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A1%2D16&version=NIV#fen-NIV-95e)]; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. **16**So Cain went out from the Lord’s presence and lived in the land of Nod,[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A1%2D16&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-96f" \o "See footnote f)] east of Eden.

**Footnotes:**

1. [Genesis 4:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A1%2D16&version=NIV#en-NIV-81) Or *The man*
2. [Genesis 4:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A1%2D16&version=NIV#en-NIV-81) *Cain* sounds like the Hebrew for *brought forth* or *acquired.*
3. [Genesis 4:1](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A1%2D16&version=NIV#en-NIV-81) Or *have acquired*
4. [Genesis 4:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A1%2D16&version=NIV#en-NIV-88) Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Masoretic Text does not have *“Let’s go out to the field.”*
5. [Genesis 4:15](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A1%2D16&version=NIV#en-NIV-95) Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Hebrew *Very well*
6. [Genesis 4:16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A1%2D16&version=NIV#en-NIV-96) *Nod* means *wandering* (see verses 12 and 14).

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