

## ***The Tortilla Curtain***

### **part one, chapters 1 and 3**

How does Delaney (a self-described “liberal humanist”) feel about hitting a man (“his victim”) with his car? Explain your answer. Expand...

Delaney feels like he is the victim, like the man just threw himself in front of Delaney’s car. He is also embarrassed that he thought of his car and insurance before thinking of whether or not he injured/killed the man. When he can’t immediately find the Mexican, he wonders if he is being set up and will be robbed. He wants to help but isn’t sure how since the Mexican refuses help. He is relieved that he doesn’t have to do anything more than give the guy \$20.

Why does Delaney have conflicted feelings about the man being Mexican?

He feels bad about hitting the man but is angry when he realizes the man must be living in the woods because Delaney doesn’t want anyone messing up nature.

Is there anything Delaney should have done differently? Explain...

(personal opinion) i.e. gotten the man medical attention at a clinic that wouldn’t report his illegal status, taken him shopping to get new clothes and groceries that were ruined, called the police,...

Delaney offered help; Cándido refused it. So why would Delaney lie to Kenny Grissom, saying he hit a dog?

Hit and run is illegal.

Delaney is embarrassed that he just left the man with \$20 and no medical care.

Kenny many have reported the accident, getting the Mexican and Delaney in trouble.

Is Kyra’s response reasonable? Explain...

(personal opinion) YES—people are sue crazy, so you have to protect yourself.

NO—she was more concerned about being sued than about the man’s welfare.

In your own words, describe Delaney's daily routine and his role within his family.

Fixes breakfast for everyone, takes care of Jordan (stepson), cleans, writes, hikes,...  
House dad, not the main breadwinner (and okay with that),...

Why does the community want a gated entrance?

To keep out Mexicans (poor people, people of color, people who are different,...)

Why is Delaney (and the athletic man) against the gate?

They like the openness of the community. A gate looks exclusionary, prejudice,...

#### **part one, chapters 2 and 4**

Cándido is badly hurt. He doesn't have money, but hospitals don't refuse to help indigents. And if he gets deported, he could just sneak back over the border again like he had done many times before. So why does he refuse medical attention?

He doesn't want to leave America alone.

Why does América sneak into the United States with Cándido? What does he promise her? And what is she expecting?

a house with a yard, a better life for her and the baby, the American dream

Cándido is too injured to seek work, and they need food. So why is Cándido so “vehemently” opposed to América trying to find work?

His pride—he is supposed to support and take care of her.

He also fears for her safety: la Migra, unscrupulous white men, poor men at the labor exchange desiring her body,...

Cándido thinks about what América means to him “—just his life, that was all.” Explain Cándido’s background with América and why he believes that América is his savior who rescued him from a ruined life.

America is actually his sister-in-law. She reached out to him when his wife got pregnant by another man and ran out on him. She pulled him out of his despair and drunkenness and gave him a reason to live. She got pregnant with his child and agreed to go to the United States with him.

Why is América both shocked and discouraged when she finds out that Mary also is looking for work at the labor exchange?

Mary is a legal citizen who is looking for work. America didn’t think that someone who is legal would need help finding a job.

What happened the first time América and Cándido tried to enter the United States?

They were attacked, robbed, and tossed back into Mexico. Candido was beaten, and America was almost raped.

Who tears up Cándido and América’s campsite? Why does Cándido comment about the boy being a redhead... “did they all have to be redheads”?

Jack Jr.—Delaney was a redhead too. (Candido assumes that Jack Jr. is Delaney’s son and that Delaney sent him to rip up the campsite.)