

The Tortilla Curtain

part one, chapters 5-8

Describe Kyra... What type of employee is she? ...wife? ...mother?

blonde, fit, well dressed

EMPLOYEE—very professional, top seller, workaholic, real estate is her top priority

WIFE/MOTHER—dominant in the relationship; concerned but mainly absent, does not rush home at the end of the day to be with family

Kyra reexamines her priorities. What does she admit regarding the relative importance of her dog's death? What are her priorities?

upset about her dog's death but realizes that other people have bigger problems; knows that her job is consuming her life and tries to convince herself that her job is important

What is ironic about Delaney's column which praises the coyote chorus?

a coyote just ate Kyra's dog, yet Delaney is praising the coyote chorus and claiming that he is content listening to it

How does Delaney's viewpoint differ from Jack Jardine's regarding immigrants and "controlling the borders"?

Delaney recognizes that immigrants are the lifeblood of our country and feels they deserve some rights/respect

Jack Jardine feels that immigrants are being replaced by machines and are just causing trouble

What is Delaney's reaction to seeing Cándido in the grocery store parking lot?

feels sorry for him and feels guilty—but is also angry because he believes that he is causing trouble for someone else now

How does Delaney feel after seeing José and his companion in the canyon during his hike? What is the significance of the six Hispanic men who were part of a road crew?

realizes he may be prejudice but is angry that José may be camping in the canyon, junking it up, and intruding on his paradise

Delaney's car is missing—certainly the Mexicans are to blame

How does Kyra feel about the Da Ros property?

possessive—she loves the house and doesn't want to sell it to unworthy people—hangs out there like it is hers

Bill Greutert wants a house that is “out of the way,” safe. Out of the way and safe from what?

Immigrants, poor people, people of color

Nine days after Cándido's accident, América gets work at the labor exchange. Where is she taken to work? What kind of work does she get?

Jim Shirley's house in Arroyo Blanco scrubbing Buddha statuettes

Compare/contrast América and Mary.

América—illegal, doesn't speak English, hard worker, grateful for the work

Mary—legal, speaks English, lazy, incessant complainer

How is América treated by her employer?

worked more hours than agreed for the same pay, given less money than Mary, felt up, not given gloves to protect her hands

América and Cándido (and Delaney) meet José Navidad. Describe this intruder in their lives. What does José do the second time he runs into América?

América—intimidates her after she accepts a cup of coffee (expects a favor); rapes her

Cándido—unwelcomed trespasser near their campsite

Delandy—intrudes on his nature paradise and trashes it up

lighter skinned, liver colored eyes, backwards baseball cap, bad dentures, chews gum, speaks English, fake friendly, damaged and dangerous