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## The Tortilla Curtain By T.C. Boyle: American Dream

Many people come to the United States thinking they will be their best self's but face the ugly reality of the American dream. In this case, many people are afraid of coming to the United States, because many stories are told in which people work day and night to survive in the United States even though the American dream is seen in such a good light. The opposite of what the American dream specifies; prosperity for all and the ability to achieve one's goals and aspirations. The book by T.C Boyle, *The Tortilla Curtain* underscores the idea that the American dream is unattainable for immigrants that come to the United States because of the Americans that oppress them.

The car accident at the beginning of the story alludes to how United States citizens feel about illegal immigrants. This is the only time in which Delaney, who has achieved the American dream, and Candido, who wants the American dream, will encounter each other. This marks the beginning in which the reader will be able to see their distinctive lives. Boyle exemplifies this with "for a long moment they stood there, examining each other unwitting perpetrator and unwitting victim". This could underscore the idea that United States citizens are accountable for how the poor live and how they are treated. Also, how Delaney reacts to the accident is crucial to this idea because his first concern was if his car was damaged and not how well the person, he had just run over was. Delaney describes Candido as "an insect pinned to a mounting board". This shows how people in Arroyo Blanco look at immigrants as if they were animals and could be further extended to the views of United States citizens on immigrants in the United States. The people living in Arroyo Blanco describing illegal immigrants in such a bad way dehumanizes them and contributes to the discrimination they often face when crossing the border.

The walls seen throughout the novel imply the way in which illegal immigrants are kept out. The wall built around Arroyo Blanco resembles the Mexico-U.S border in which there are many illegal immigrants who come across the wall. "Jack wants to put a wall around the whole place, all of Arroyo Blanco. Seven feet tall". This could resemble the idea of building a wall in the Mexico-U.S border to keep out illegal immigrants. The idea of a wall being built around Arroyo Blanco suggests today's idea of President Trump building a wall around the United States to keep out illegal immigrants because they are dangerous. The canyon wall in the novel is also important because it keeps Candido and his wife America away from safety and prosperity even though that's the reason they came to the United States. This implies the oppression the border gives to those who come across the border illegally This resembles how United States citizens often do things to keep immigrants from moving forward. There is also a figurative wall between Delaney, the American, and Candido, the illegal immigrant, in which each chapter goes from person to person, and when they do interact it's usually bad. This comes to show the hatred that Americans give to illegals when they encounter them. The events dealing with walls underscore the idea that Americans often oppress immigrants to a section of the community and often try to keep them out of the United States. The concepts of walls in the novel refers to the idea of Americans and illegals being separated into their own sections.

The coyotes seen throughout the novel represent illegal immigrants in the United States. When the coyote first appears in the novel, the readers see that "a coyote had somehow managed to

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get into the enclosure and seize one of the dogs... up and over the fence". This could resemble how many Americans often believe that when illegal immigrants come through the border that they are taking their jobs and opportunities. In fact, "one coyote, who makes his living on the fringes of my community has learned to simply hew his way through the plastic irrigation pipes whenever he wants a drink". This event resembles the similarities between coyotes and illegal immigrants. Like the coyote, many incoming immigrants don't have anything when they arrive in the United States so they scour the bottoms for hopes of finding new and better opportunities. Moreover, a coyote in Spanish means someone who brings people over or through the border illegally. Delaney also says that he wants to call the county animal control department to trap coyotes. This also resembles people calling la migra or immigration officers to catch or trap illegals living in the United States. This is another layer of how Boyle underscores the idea that there are many ways in which Americans try to keep illegal immigrants out and under control without them being able to do many prosperous things.

U.S citizens provide a sense of authority over immigrants not allowing them to move up economically, and hence them never reaching their American dream. They oppress them into a small section and don't allow them to grow to where it could benefit the United States economy. Most immigrants come to the U.S with the idea of the American dream in their head, but the American dream as some say is a nightmare creation. In such case where people aren't afraid of their enemies as much of those friends who hug them exemplifies the ideas that immigrants come to the united states thinking that their lives will be full of opportunities but in reality, they work from paycheck to paycheck, living one day at a time, without the opportunity to move up.