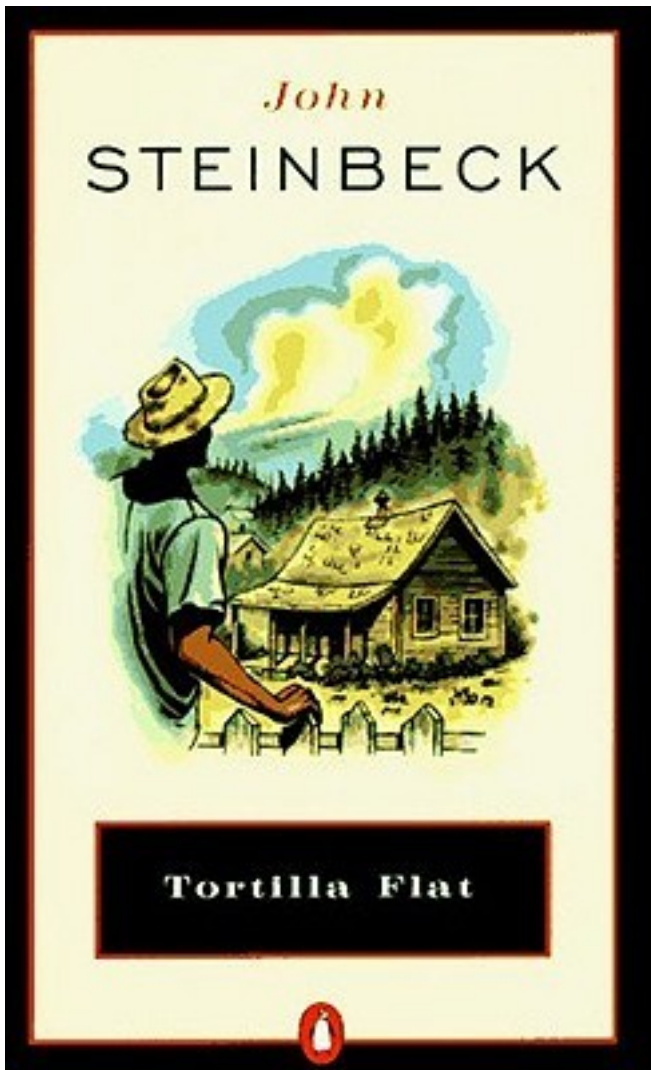

John Steinbeck

Tortilla Flat



Title: Tortilla Flat

Author: John Steinbeck

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Description

When Danny returns to Tortilla Flat in Monterey, California, after the First World War he moves into a small house left to him by his grandfather. One by one, various ne'er-do-wells are drawn to Danny's house - lured in part by the appeal of a rook over their heads, in part by Danny's generosity and the camaraderie that springs up around him. Deftly all social conventions and expectations, Steinbeck's gallery of knights thrive on the love- and the fights - that inevitably accompany a glorious night of drinking wine. They suffer the temptations of greed and lust, stand firm in their loyalty to one another, and, finally, come to understand the power of goodness and courage.

Insightful reviews

Kim:

Although it was initially rejected for publication on a number of occasions, this work – a short story cycle - was Steinbeck's first real critical and commercial success. He wrote it during 1933 and early 1934, when he was heavily involved in caring for his elderly parents, who were both very ill. Steinbeck was inspired to write the book by a high school teacher friend, who was partly of Mexican descent. She had been studying the *paisanos*, poor people of mixed Mexican, Native American and Caucasian ancestry, who lived in a shantytown in the hills above Monterey. Steinbeck's friend told him a number of stories from that community, which was referred to as Tortilla Flat.

One of Steinbeck's abiding literary passions was Thomas Malory's [Le Morte d'Arthur: King Arthur and the Legends of the Round Table](#). He aimed to recreate the spirit of the adventures of the Knights of the Round Table in linked stories about Danny and his friends Pilon, Pablo, Jesus Maria, the Pirate and Big Joe Portagee. Living together in a house inherited by Danny, the friends develop a strong moral code which governs their relationship with each other. This code does not involve sobriety or other indicia of bourgeois respectability, such as respect for private property. While stealing from a friend is punished severely, stealing from those outside the group is not only accepted, it's encouraged.

There is a lot to like about this work. The satirical, mock-heroic tone is clever, the characters of Danny and his friends are well-realised and sympathetically drawn, there's plenty of humour and Steinbeck's prose is wonderful. On the other hand, to a modern reader the depiction of the *paisanos* as heavy drinking, thieving no-hopers – albeit with a strong code of friendship and mutual support – is disconcerting. And the sexual politics of the characters is questionable to say the least.

This is not my favourite Steinbeck. Although I appreciate Steinbeck's achievement in recreating a version of the myth of the Knights of the Round Table and I love the characters and the writing, the work feels dated, which cannot be said of Steinbeck's major novels. I listened to an audiobook which was very well narrated by John McDonough. It gets 3-1/2 stars, because anything Steinbeck wrote is worth reading.

Patty: When a book is well written and the reader can empathize with the characters the experience is a joyful time well spent. Tortilla Flat surpassed my expectancy of a good read!

I need to trust those who have declared a book a classic or those that chose an author to be a Nobel prize winner. I like to make up my own mind on a particular read but I think these sorts of recommendations can not be often wrong. I feel badly that I was too lazy to actually read what my high school teachers assigned. I think they wanted to share and expose us to good writing. We had plenty of bad writing to compare it to but I didn't have time or desire for even that. Perhaps I just wasn't ready for the subtleties and moral implications that great authors make you think about.

I understand now why some people can read a single book several times. It is a gift each time you enter the authors world. Luckily John Steinbeck created many worlds and I can always go to him to give me a thought-provoking good read.

brian : one wonders if one could do away with ambition and computers and bookface and tivo and truly be happy living day to day, sleeping in a hollow log, stealing one's dinner from pumpkin patches and bean fields, trading a day's work for a jug of cheapo wine or a roll in the hay with a whore-with-a-heart-of-gold... of course, had steinbeck truly lived the life of the *paisanos* in his novel, he never could've written it! well, possibly written. never published. therein lies the argument for capitalism as the best of the worst, eh?

this is one of those books, incidentally, in which characters tear through gallons of wine per drinking session. did people have higher tolerances back then? or did authors simply romanticize being drunk more?

oh. and it's also one of those books in which 'jew' is used as a verb.

Ian: A gem of sustained and glowing brilliance. So stable i will not think it's not extra largely acclaimed. it's a novel, and but each one bankruptcy is a self-contained episode which can be excerpted as a quick tale in its personal right. Coastal California is Steinbeck's setting, Tortilla Flat a backwater inhabited through indigenous paisanos, of which Danny and his neighbors are ordinary examples. those are workshy roughnecks, at risk of drinking, womanising, scuffling with and stealing. Their experience of kinship is indisputable though, and whilst Danny inherits the load of estate ownership, his associates flow in to aid him decrease the burden. From the crafty Pilon to the puppy loving Pirate and the dumb ox giant Joe Portagee, those disreputable characters are given an innate dignity through Steinbeck in his non-judgemental prose and a backwoods code of honour: they could scouse borrow wine from Torelli whilst the necessity overtakes them, yet they be aware of they must make it as much as him someday later. With the episodic style, curious feel of chivalry, and epic deeds (even whether it is purely epic consuming or commitment to swindling someone), there's greater than a nod to Arthurian Knights of the around Table. those American paisano knights have present in Steinbeck a

scribe priceless of championing their deeds. And its humorous too.

Stefania T.: Questa è los angeles storia di Danny, degli amici di Danny e della casa di Danny. È los angeles storia di come queste tre cose diventarono una sola. A Pian della Tortilla, parlare della casa di Danny non significa parlare d'una costruzione di legno incrostata di calce e stretta dai lacci d'un vecchio cespo rampicante di rosa castigliana. No, quando uno parla della casa di Danny, parla di uomini che, costituiti in unità, largirono filantropia, e conobbero dolcezza, gioia e, infine, mistico dolore. Poiché los angeles casa di Danny fu simile alla Tavola Rotonda, e gli amici di Danny non furono dissimili dai Cavalieri di quella. Una parabola, racconto epico piccino, novella, fiaba. Storia di amicizia - della vita che risale al cuore delle cose - fra cavalieri poveri in canna, che nulla possiedono se non l'esser vivi, scarpe rotte e qualche gallone di vino. Steinbeck gioca e scherza con loro e con te, lettore, in step with solleticarti risate schiette, piene di sole, e allo stesso pace costruisce tanta luminosa leggerezza su fondamenta di cianuro - povertà, indigenza, desolazione. Pian della Tortilla ha il gusto delle cose antiche, delle ballate narrate di voce in voce, ma natural è racconto moderno, vivido: stravolge i canoni di luogo e di personaggi che dalle favole ci si aspetterebbe tanto da farsi penna satirica, amara, meschina. Non puoi fare a meno di saziarti di divertente tenerezza, ma altrettanto non puoi evitare di sentirti canzonato - perché, Steinbeck, ti prendi così gioco di me? - persino misero. Le reazioni, i pensieri, los angeles realtà di tutti i personaggi sono così irrazionali da essere maestosamente autentici: quasi che los angeles vita, spogliata di tutto il "superfluo" (lavoro, legami, futuro, beni, cibo e stabilità - restano solo vino e sole), sia precipitata nuda dritta al centro dell'essenziale.

Jason Koivu: stories of the tall sort a few foolish gang of associates whose boy's membership antics remind one now and then of "The 3 Stooges" or "Last of the summer time Wine" as they solid approximately looking for event and drink, spinning their very own incredible yarns whereas getting drunk, and philosophizing with wild abandon - be damned the passing of the day! Hell, there is even Yogi Bear-ish picnic basket pinching scene! Nonsense, it is all nonsense! Or is it? I appear to keep in mind whatever fairly profound was once stated someplace in there among the inane, convoluted common sense and self-serving prattle...maybe it used to be the wine talking. Steinbeck dips again into the good of central-coast California, planting gypsy-esque Spaniard immigrants in a fictional city close to Monterey referred to as Tortilla Flat, a city and folks so colourful that the paint virtually runs out. yet no, it by no means does. Steinbeck layers it on, now and then too thick for seriousness. Thank goodness Tortilla Flat seldom will get too serious. definitely there are solemn moments: a death, a beating, friendships tested. sometimes those moments threaten to break down the entire buoyant structure. might be a scene or is just too morbid for this in a different way laugh-riot. Oh, cross the jug of wine and do not enable it difficulty you.

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