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**IDX G9 ENGLISH H+ STUDY GUIDE ISSUE 5**

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1. What is the symbolism of shooting Candy’s dog?

There are two parts to this event that are important. Like what Candy said, his dog reflects his character. Candy sees himself in his dog because he feels old and replaceable. This would be useful for analyzing Candy’s character, because it shows his insecurities and gives more perspective on how he is marginalized. Other than that, here’s what I found on reddit (thanks reddit :P). Candy’s dog’s death is parallel to Lennie’s death. Both are killed by the same weapon (Carlson’s Luger), and the difference is that Candy let Carlson kill his dog for him while George took matters into his own hands. Lennie and Candy’s dog can be further connected with animalistic imagery– Steinbeck frequently describes Lennie’s hands as paws. When Candy’s dog is shot, Candy remarks that he should’ve killed his dog himself to lessen the dog’s suffering. When comparing this to Lennie’s death, George being the one to pull the trigger is significantly better than Lennie being shot by (let’s say) Curley. It’s a sign of George’s love for Lennie and the heaviness of the decision. Furthermore, the two’s deaths can be connected by loneliness. Candy’s dog was Candy’s only companion, and so was Lennie for George.

1. How are marginalized characters represented in this book?

What’s key to realize is that the marginalized characters in this book aren’t all on one platform regarding their place in society. The marginalized can marginalize others (that gives these characters nuance)

Curley’s Wife: Curley’s wife is marginalized because of her gender, btu still the one with most power compared to the other marginalized individuals because of her relationship with Curley. She’s very obviously marginalized in the way that she’s never given a name– a way to corroborate that her identity is ignored aside from the fact that she’s Curley’s wife. In other words, she is defined by her husband. What’s also to note is her naivety. Curley’s wife is at best sixteen, and we’re given context that her marriage with Curley was a result of impulse and rage due to the fact that her actions are limited as a woman. Aside from that, Curley’s wife is portrayed both negatively and somewhat redeeming. Because she is the one with the most authority compared to other marginalized characters, her blatant racist ideas in the scene where all of them gather in Crooks’s room are used to communicate that she isn’t entirely a victim. Curley’s wife is a character of nuance, as she complains about the oppression she receives as a woman but also is an enforcer of oppression onto others. Her cynical and self-centered personality works both ways in analyzing her place in society.

Lennie: Lennie is marginalized because of his learning disabilities. There are a few things to mainly focus on. Lennie’s disabilities give him traits resembling a child. Steinbeck characterizes him as extremely dependent and gullible (as shown in the chapter where Lennie talks with Crooks). However, Lennie becomes a victim of his own strength as he fails to understand his destructive abilities and therefore inflicts harm onto others. What’s interesting is that his moral compass is George. Even until the last chapter, Lennie is unaware of what he did to Curley’s wife. Rather, he repeatedly scolds himself by saying that George won’t let him tend to the rabbits. This dependency on George is also a reason of Lennie’s instability. Lennie turns drastically violent and hostile at the mere thought of George being harmed (Crook’s chapter again). His sudden rage is a looming threat throughout the book, as even though audiences are guided to be sympathetic for Lennie, when Lennie is agitated, audiences know that consequences will be bad. This is mainly due to the fact that Lennie’s learning disabilities don’t let him understand the magnitude of the actions and hardly give him a chance to calm down. He fails to understand most characters in this book and as a result, what seems harmful to him could be fatal to another. This is seen in chapter five, where he gets mad at the puppy for dying when it was entire his fault. Similarly, he only breaks Curley’s Wife’s neck after he gets frustrated by her reaction (which was completely justified because she was basically going to die) and shakes her. To him, it was just a way to get her to calm down and stop. These details prove that Lennie is likely never going to fully fit into his society as he is alienated from others due to his inability to comprehend them. George is his only caretaker throughout this book, which is why Lennie’s death is so significant.

Candy: Candy is very oftenly described as helpless. His insecurities are a big part of him because of his age and his disability (lost a hand). He’s very vulnerable, and even though he tries to stand up for people on the ranch, his helplessness gets the better of him and he fails. He is hopeful and supportive, but his inner qualms control him as a character. I personally just feel bad for him.

Crooks: The biggest two themes about Crooks is racism & segregation and loneliness. Crooks is defensive and miserable most of the time. He’s the most marginalized character throughout this book and there’s several details you can see it from. First of all, he calls Slim Mister Slim, a direct acknowledgement that there’s a status difference between them. (The other men at the ranch never do that) Furthermore, rarely does anyone else at the ranch call Crooks by his nickname. Before Crooks actually appears in the book, the men at the ranch mention him in the n-word. They refuse to address him properly, and since they’re using the slur, that evidence that they only see him by his skin color. Men also don’t visit Crooks’s room and don’t play games with Crooks because they automatically separate themselves from Crooks. The piles of books in his room and his gun communicate his loneliness and insecurity as a result of it. Crooks is mean to Lennie at the start of the chapter because he doesn’t believe in Lennie’s innocence and tries to take advantage of how gullible he is. However, frankly because of Lennie’s naivety, Crooks feels comfortable opening up to him. The racism that Crooks faces is extremely harmful to his personality (especially when he said he was kidding about the farm ☹). This is especially shown when he stops trying to assert anything after Curley’s wife reminds him of his social status. Crooks was described as without ego and without any self-esteem. Crook’s loss of character is a testament of society’s ostracizing and undisguised prejudice that over a long time period has robbed him of any self-respect or ability to connect with those around him.