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

**By TaeYun Kang**

*Of Mice and Men*

1. Author:
   1. John Steinbeck
2. Summary:
   1. Ch 1:
      1. George and Lennie, two migrant workers, are traveling to a new ranch in California. They stop by a river to rest for the night, revealing their close but complicated friendship. George looks after Lennie, who has a mental disability and loves to pet soft things. Lennie accidentally kills a mouse by petting it too hard, and George scolds him. Lennie dreams of tending rabbits on a farm they hope to own, while George reminds him to return to this spot if he ever gets into trouble.
   2. Ch 2:
      1. George and Lennie arrive at the ranch, where they meet the boss, who is suspicious of Lennie’s silence. They also encounter Curley, the boss’s aggressive son, who immediately dislikes Lennie. Curley’s flirtatious wife appears, making George wary. The old swamper Candy introduces them to other workers, including Slim, a respected mule driver, and Carlson, who complains about Candy’s old dog.
   3. Ch 3:
      1. Slim gives Lennie a puppy, and George opens up to him about their past, including how Lennie got them in trouble in Weed by grabbing a woman’s dress. Meanwhile, Carlson complains about Candy’s old, sick dog, arguing that it would be more merciful to put it down. Candy reluctantly agrees, and Carlson takes the dog outside and shoots it, leaving the bunkhouse in uneasy silence. Candy overhears George and Lennie discussing their dream farm and offers his life savings to help make it a reality. Meanwhile, Carlson convinces Candy to let him shoot his old dog, symbolizing the harsh reality of the world. Curley picks a fight with Lennie, who, after George tells him to defend himself, crushes Curley’s hand.
   4. Ch 4:
      1. While most men are in town, Lennie visits Crooks, the Black stable hand, who lives alone due to segregation. Crooks initially mocks Lennie’s dream but later expresses his own loneliness. Candy joins them, and for a moment, the dream farm seems possible. However, Curley’s wife arrives and belittles them, reminding Crooks of his low status. After she leaves, Crooks withdraws from their dream, realizing it is unlikely to happen.
   5. Ch 5:
      1. Lennie accidentally kills his puppy in the barn and is distraught. Curley’s wife enters and talks about her unfulfilled dreams of being an actress. She allows Lennie to touch her soft hair, but when he grabs too hard, she panics. In his fear, Lennie accidentally breaks her neck and kills her. Realizing he has done something terrible, he remembers George’s instructions and flees to the river. Candy discovers the body and tells George, who understands their dream is now lost. Curley leads a mob to hunt Lennie down.
   6. Ch 6:
      1. Lennie hides by the river, imagining George scolding him and hallucinating his Aunt Clara and a giant rabbit. George arrives and, seeing no way out, tells Lennie once more about their dream farm to comfort him. As the mob closes in, George mercifully shoots Lennie in the back of the head. Slim understands George’s pain and comforts him, while the other men fail to grasp the significance of what has happened.
3. Setting:
   1. During the Great Depression
   2. Title comes from poem “To a Mouse”
      1. Reflects themes of dreams and the harshness of life
      2. Best-laid plans often fail
4. Characters:
   1. George: caring, alert, protective, responsible, tempered
   2. Lennie: innocent, strong, big, dependent, mentally disabled
   3. Candy: old, lonely, disabled, kind, loyal
   4. Curley: aggressive, jealous, insecure, Napolean complex
   5. Curley’s wife: Lonely, flirtatious, desperate
   6. Slim: calm, wise, compassionate, respected
   7. Crooks: isolated, intelligent, lonely
   8. Carlson: blunt, insensitive
   9. Boss: caring, authoritative, fair
5. Themes (Use critical thinking to find out why these are themes, it will help when you try to think of evidence during the ICTA or exams):
   1. Marginalization/ Loneliness and Isolation
   2. American Dream
   3. Life doesn’t go as planned
   4. Friendship and Companionship
   5. Powerful and the Weak
6. PEEL prompts:
   1. How does Steinbeck portray [theme in *Of Mice and Men*] in *Of Mice and Men*?
   2. What does Steinbeck show about society back then through *Of Mice and Men*?
   3. How does the ranch represent/ symbolize American society?
   4. What is Steinbeck trying to show us about society by including two completely different authoritative figures in *Of Mice and Men*?
7. Essay topics:
   1. How does Steinbeck portray the marginalized groups in *Of Mice and Men*?
   2. How does the ranch represent/ symbolize American society?
   3. How does Steinbeck explore issues such as racism, sexism, and challenges of economic survival in *Of Mice and Men*?