***Of Mice and Men***

**Chapter 1**

1. Describe the atmosphere that is created by the imagery in the first two paragraphs of the novel.
2. Why does George get angry with Lennie after they arrive in the clearing?
3. What does the dead mouse in his jacket pocket reveal about Lennie?
4. Why does George urge Lennie to remain quiet when they meet the boss at the ranch where they’ll be working?
5. As they prepare the campfire for dinner, Lennie remarks that he likes his beans with ketchup, sending George into a rage. How is George’s tirade revelatory?
6. Is Lennie capable of manipulating George?
7. What is the purpose of the story of the rabbits that George tells Lennie?
8. Before they go to sleep, George tells Lennie to “hide in the brush” near their campsite and wait for George to come if he gets into any trouble. What prediction can readers draw from George’s instructions?
9. Why does Steinbeck describe Lennie in animalistic terms?
10. What did you learn in the first section of Of Mice and Men?

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**Chapter 2**

1. How does the boss react to Lennie’s silence?
2. Why does the boss find George and Lennie’s relationship unusual?
3. How does the boss treat George and Lennie?
4. What is George’s fear at this point in the novel?
5. When Lennie questions George about telling the boss Lennie was kicked in the head

by a horse, George says, “Be a damn good thing if you was....Save ever’body a hell

of a lot of trouble.” What does this mean?

1. Describe Candy’s connection to his dog.
2. How is Candy’s relationship with his dog reflective of George’s relationship with

Lennie?

1. When George confronts Candy about eavesdropping, Candy says, “A guy on a ranch

don’t never listen nor he don’t ast no questions.” What does this reveal about the lives

of the migrant workers.

1. Steinbeck describes Curley’s glance as “at once calculating and pugnacious,” and he strides about with “his elbows…still bent out a little.” How does this description reveal Curley’s personality?
2. How do George and Lennie react to seeing Curley’s wife for the first time?

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**Chapter 3**

1. What caused George to stop playing mean-spirited jokes on Lennie?
2. What detail is added to the Weed story when George confides in Slim?
3. Carlson offers a simple solution to the problem of Candy’s dog’s smell and feebleness: shoot it. Slim concurs, saying that the old dog only suffers. What is the significance of this scene?
4. When Carlson starts to take Candy’s dog out to be shot, Slim reminds him to “[t]ake a shovel.” What does he mean?
5. The discussion of Curley’s wife leads Whit to invite George to come with the other men “to old Susy’s place.” What is “old Susy’s place,” and what purpose does it serve in the novel?
6. What is Candy’s reaction to the gunshot and later to Carlson cleaning his gun?
7. What is the attraction of the vision of the farm and the rabbits to Candy?
8. Why does Candy say that he should’ve shot his own dog?
9. Why is Slim angry with Curley when they return to the bunk house?
10. Why does Curley attack Lennie?

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*Chapter 4*

1. Curley’s wife is lonely because she’s a woman. Candy is lonely because of his age. Why is Crooks lonely?

2. Why does Lennie wander into Crooks’ room?

3. Why is Crooks rude to Lennie?

4. What is Crooks’ initial evaluation of Lennie?

5. How does Crooks taunt Lennie?

6. Why does Crooks relent in his taunting of Lennie?

7. What does Curley’s wife suspect about Curley’s injury?

8. What is Curley’s wife’s reaction to the dream of the farm with the rabbits?

9. How does the promise of the farm embolden Candy and Crooks?

10. Why does Crooks abandon the dream of the farm?

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**Chapter 5**

1. What has Lennie done as the section opens?

2. What is Lennie’s fear?

3. What personal information does Curley’s wife reveal to Lennie in the barn?

4. To console Lennie over the death of his puppy, Curley’s wife tells him that he can

get another one, that “[t]he whole country is fulla mutts.” What is the significance

of this line?

5. Why does Curley’s wife get angry when Lennie tells her that George said he shouldn’t talk to her?

6. What was Curley’s wife’s dream? She indicates that life with Curley is not what she

wanted for herself.

7. Why does Curley’s wife offer to let Lennie stroke her hair?

8. Why does Curley’s wife become afraid of Lennie as he’s stroking her hair?

9. Why does Lennie kill Curley’s wife?

10. Why does Lennie leave Curley’s wife’s body in the barn, but take the puppy with him

when he leaves to go to the river?

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**Chapter 6**

1. The novel ends where it began, in the clearing by the river. What is the atmosphere established by the description at the beginning of the final section?

2. What is the purpose of Aunt Clara’s appearance in Lennie’s mind’s eye?

3. What does Lennie fear his punishment will be?

4. Why does the giant rabbit appear to Lennie?

5. Why does George struggle with the description of the farm when Lennie asks

him to recite it to him there, on the river bank?

6. What is Slim’s role at the end of the story?

7. What is the significance of Carlson asking George if Lennie had his gun and supplying the story that George wrestled the gun away from Lennie and shot him?

8. When George — obviously upset — and Slim go for a drink, Carlson remarks,

“Now what the hell ya suppose is eating them two guys?” Why doesn’t he understand?

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