

**Year 9 English w/c 6<sup>th</sup> July**  
**'Of Mice & Men' Week 6: Chapter Five**

**Task 1: plot summary (Chapter Five)**

Read Chapter Five and complete the summary by filling in the blanks.

Lennie is in the barn, stroking the dead body of his puppy, which he has \_\_\_\_\_ killed. Curley's wife comes in. She \_\_\_\_\_ in him about her unhappy marriage and her \_\_\_\_\_ of being an actress. She \_\_\_\_\_ him to stroke her hair, but when he becomes too heavy-handed she tells him to stop.

Lennie is \_\_\_\_\_. He holds on to Curley's wife. She screams and \_\_\_\_\_, and Lennie \_\_\_\_\_. He puts his hand over her mouth and nose and shakes her, \_\_\_\_\_ her neck. Then he realizes what he has done. Remembering George's instructions earlier in the \_\_\_\_\_, he runs off to hide in the brush by the river.

\_\_\_\_\_ comes into the barn and discovers the body. He calls \_\_\_\_\_, then the other men. They prepare to go after Lennie and \_\_\_\_\_ him. Carlson discovers that his \_\_\_\_\_ is missing, and assumes that \_\_\_\_\_ has taken it. Whit is sent into Soledad to fetch the \_\_\_\_\_.

The younger men, including George, set out to find Lennie. Left alone to \_\_\_\_\_ over the body of Curley's wife, Candy lies down in the hay and covers his eyes with his arm.

struggles      flirts      invites      accidentally      breaking      pistol      Curley  
George      frightened      watch      week      George      arrest  
day      punches      deputy      sheriff      panics      rifle  
Candy      kill      dream      Lennie      confides

## Task 2: vocabulary & glossary

The words and definitions below have been jumbled up. Find these words in the chapter and read them in context then try to match the words with their correct meanings. Use a dictionary to check your answers (online dictionaries are available). Add to your own glossary of words and definitions that you began for Chapters One to Four. Include these words and any other words you have found tricky in this chapter.

console

Confused

cautious

Extremely violent or cruel

confide

To wriggle

earnest

To trust someone with a secret

writhe

Careful; attentive to danger

bewildered

Serious and sincere

vicious

To comfort

### **Task 3: characterisation – Curley’s wife**

The male characters are uniformly hostile towards Curley’s wife. However, this doesn’t mean that her portrayal in the novel is necessarily unsympathetic.

Reread Curley’s wife’s conversation with Lennie, then find a quotation that suggests that she...

...is interested in other people: \_\_\_\_\_

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... engages with Lennie: \_\_\_\_\_

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... tries to comfort Lennie: \_\_\_\_\_

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... accepts Lennie as he is: \_\_\_\_\_

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... is the only character to be concerned about an animal’s death: \_\_\_\_\_

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Can you think of any other good points to her character? If so, note them here:

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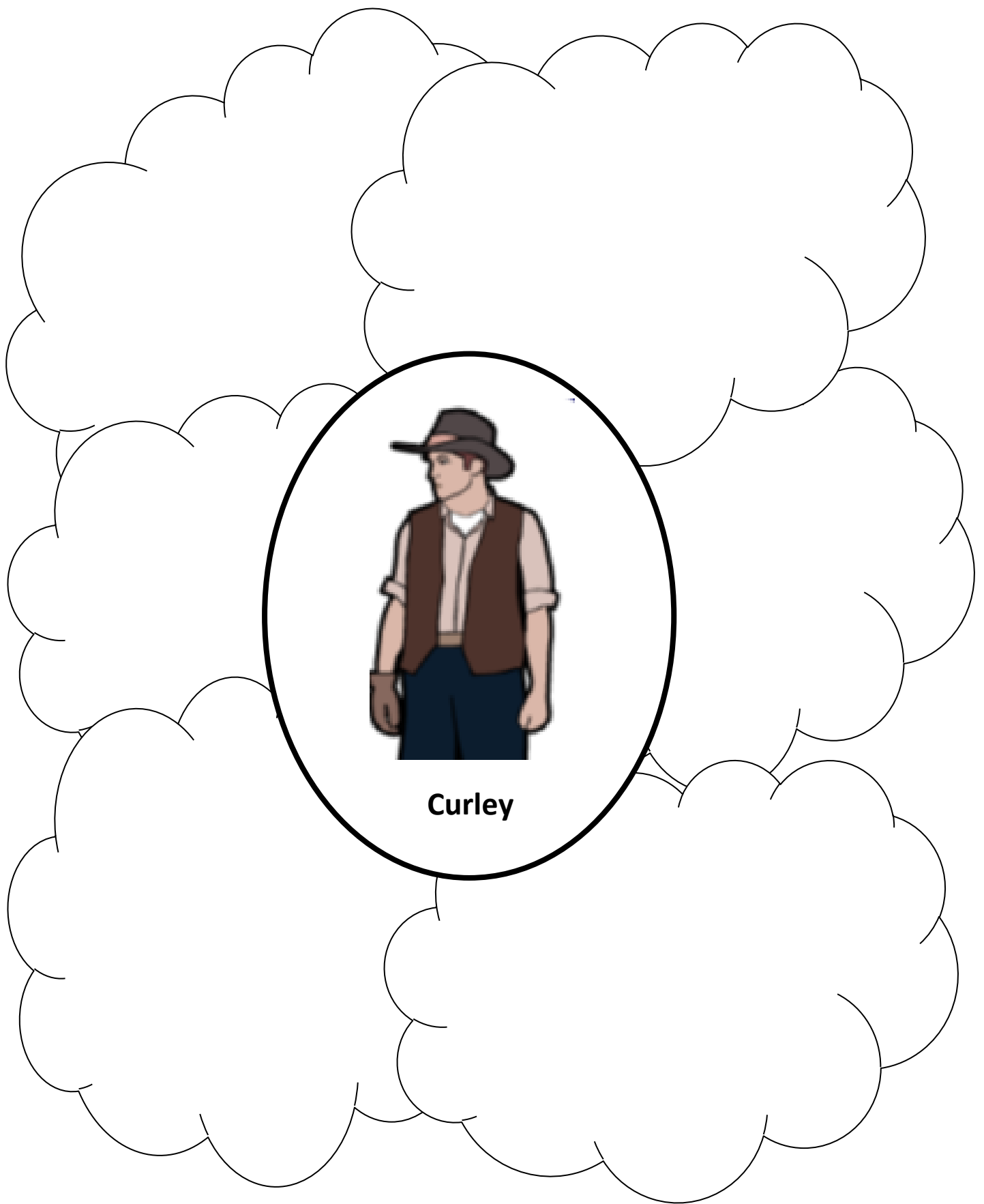
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Mind-map everything you know about Curley's wife. Try to select short quotations to support each point.



Mind-map everything you know about Curley. Try to select short quotations to support each point.



## Task 4: themes – dreams & loneliness

### **The American Dream:**

For hundreds of years the USA has been associated with the promise of a new and better life. Early settlers went there to escape religious persecution. Others went in search of land and independence. Until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, land was virtually the only way to gain wealth or power. Because America was a new land with no aristocracy, it gained the reputation as a country where anyone, no matter what their background, could succeed. All you needed was talent and hard work. This ideal became known as 'The American Dream'. George and Lennie's dream of having their own farm relates to the American Dream because they would answer only to themselves, they would own their land and home, they believe they can do it despite being poor and they would reap the benefits of their labour.

Curley's wife articulates the clearest statement yet of the culture of ambition which fuelled the American Dream when she says, "I wasn't gonna stay no place where I couldn't get nowhere or make something of myself..." Her dream of becoming a film star is another, more modern version of the American Dream. Curley's wife dreams of being an actress. Lennie dreams of tending the rabbits on the farm where he will live with George but Lennie kills his puppy, just as he kills all small animals entrusted to him; and he kills Curley's wife. When Lennie kills the pup he fears that George will no longer allow him to care for the rabbits. When he kills Curley's wife he seals his own fate and destroys the dream he shared with George and Candy. The deaths of the pup and of Curley's wife both symbolize the death of dreams.

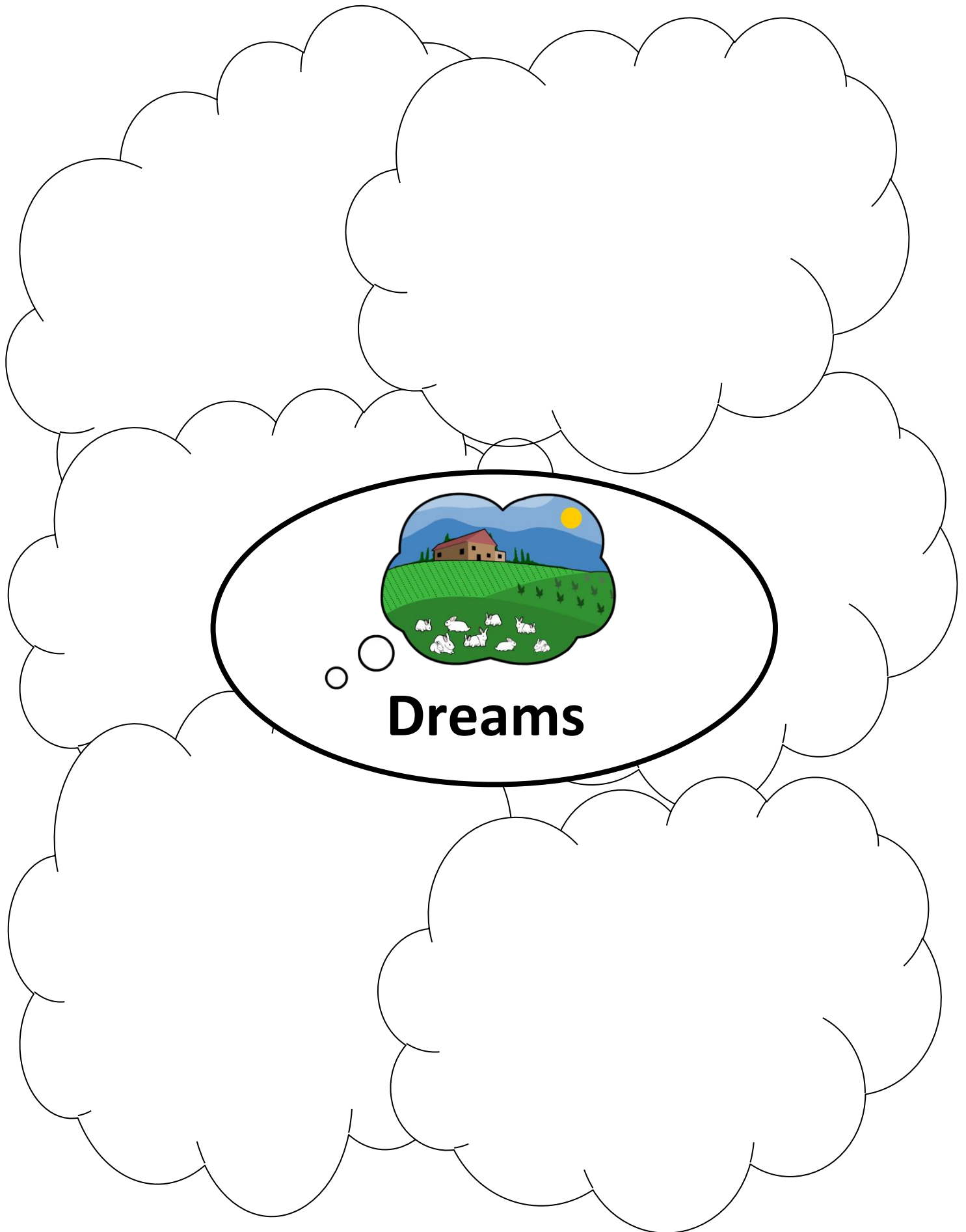
Curley's wife's dream – of being in films and on the radio – is all about communication. In this scene she finally finds someone to talk to and ease her loneliness. But notice that she and Lennie do not so much share a conversation as talk at cross-purposes about their own concerns. In fact, Curley's wife has found an *audience*.

Now remember Crooks' words from section four: "I seen it over an' over – a guy talkin' to another guy, and it don't make no difference if he don't hear or understand. The thing is, they're talkin'." The characters in the novel are all lonely. But they each believe they can best assuage their loneliness by making their own voice heard rather than by listening to someone else. Slim is the exception to this.

Curley's wife dreams of being a movie star. Ironically, however, almost all the characters in the novel behave, in a sense, like movie stars. Just as a film star displays him or herself on a giant screen for an audience to admire, so each individual in the novel is more concerned with finding an audience to listen to their problems than they are with empathizing with others. Thus we could say that Curley's wife's dream is emblematic of a highly individualistic and egotistical society.

Reread the passage from 'Curley's wife lay with a half-covering of yellow hay...' to '...her lips were parted.' Here we see two sides to Curley's wife: 'the meanness and the plannings and the discontent and the ache for attention' – and her youth and simplicity. We can arguably extend this judgement to the American Dream – and, by implication, to the whole of 1930s American society. On the one hand it is driven, at least in part, by negatives – 'discontent', 'meanness', egotism. On the other hand, there is something pitiful in the naïve belief that the dream, however unlikely, can come true.

Mind-map everything you know about dreams in *Of Mice and Men*. Try to select short quotations to support each point.



Mind-map everything you know about loneliness in *Of Mice and Men*. Try to select short quotations to support each point.



**Loneliness**



## **Task 5: stylistic techniques**

Find an example from Chapter Five of the novella of each of the following and explain the effect of each quotation/technique:

Alliteration:

Simile:

Structure:

A cinematic effect:

## Extension Task: additional questions

1. Do you believe Curley's wife really does have any redeeming qualities – or is she just flirting with Lennie? Give reasons for your views.
2. Curley's wife was very unpleasant in the fourth section of the novel. Why do you think we are given a glimpse of her (possible) better qualities just before her death?
3. Do you think Curley's wife ever had a chance of achieving her dreams? Give reasons for your answer.
4. Do you blame Curley's wife for what happens to her? Why/why not?
5. Why does Candy fetch George first when he discovers the body? Try to think of more than one reason.

6. Why do you think George refuses to buy the farm now that Lennie has killed Curley's wife?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Lennie turns on the dead pup; Candy turns on Curley's dead wife. Why do you think they do this?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Why is Crooks 'keeping back out of attention range'?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. What has happened to Carlson's gun?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. What in your opinion is the *principal* reason why Curley is so determined to kill Lennie?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. Why does Slim suggest that Curley should stay with his wife?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
12. What is the symbolic significance of Candy lying down in the hay at the end of this chapter?