

Close Read - Candy's Dog

Excerpt from *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck pages 35-36

"These guys jus' come," said Slim by way of introduction.

"Glad ta meet ya," the big man said. "My name's Carlson."

"I'm George Milton. This here's Lennie Small."

"Glad ta meet ya," Carlson said again. "He ain't very small." He chuckled softly at his joke. "Ain't small at all," he repeated. "Meant to ask you, Slim—how's your bitch? I seen she wasn't under your wagon this morning."

"She slang her pups last night," said Slim. "Nine of 'em. I drowned four of 'em right off. She couldn't feed that many."

"Got five left, huh?"

"Yeah, five. I kept the biggest."

"What kinda dogs you think they're gonna be?"

"I dunno," said Slim. "Some kinda shepherds, I guess. That's the most kind I seen around here when she was in heat."

Carlson went on, "Got five pups, huh. Gonna keep all of 'em?"

"I dunno. Have to keep 'em a while so they can drink Lulu's milk."

Carlson said thoughtfully, "Well, looka here, Slim. I been thinkin'. That dog of Candy's is so God damn old he can't hardly walk. Stinks like hell, too. Ever' time he comes into the bunk house I can smell him for two, three days. Why'n't you get Candy to shoot his old dog and give him one of the pups to raise up? I can smell that dog a mile away. Got no teeth, damn near blind, can't eat. Candy feeds him milk. He can't chew nothing else."

George had been staring intently at Slim. Suddenly a triangle began to ring outside, slowly at first, and then faster and faster until the beat of it disappeared into one ringing sound. It stopped as suddenly as it had started.

1) Slim's dog Lulu gave birth to nine puppies last night. Slim drowned four. With no other information, how do you feel about the intentional killing of four puppies?

2) Slim's dog gave Lulu birth to nine puppies last night. Slim drowned four. He said he did it because "She couldn't feed that many". Is the killing of the puppies acceptable if it is impossible for the mother to provide enough milk for all nine?

3) Slim's dog gave Lulu birth to nine puppies last night. Slim drowned four. He picked the five biggest to keep and killed the four smaller puppies. What is your reaction to the choice to keep the five bigger puppies?

4) Candy's dog is very old, can't walk well, is nearly blind, and stinks badly. Carlson argues that the dog should be shot. Is it acceptable to kill a dog in this condition?

5) During this conversation, George had been listening. Why do you think George "stared intently" at this interaction.

6) Suddenly a triangle began to ring signaling that it was time to eat. We might have gotten more reaction information from George, but instead we hear a triangle ring slowly, then faster and faster, and then stop just as "suddenly as it had started." George stared and the triangle rang. Are these two separate things, or did the author combine these intentionally? What does it mean if the two events are linked?

Video: [Triangle Ringing Sample](#)

Now we will revisit the first few questions but change the dog into a human. We will discuss if this changes the situation and if so, how.

7) Slim's wife Lulu gave birth to nine babies last night. Slim drowned four. With no other information, how do you feel about the intentional killing of four babies?

8) Slim's wife gave Lulu birth to nine babies last night. Slim drowned four. He said he did it because "She couldn't feed that many". Is the killing of the babies acceptable if it is impossible for the mother to provide enough milk for all nine?

9) Slim's wife gave Lulu birth to nine babies last night. Slim drowned four. He picked the five biggest to keep and killed the four smaller babies. What is your reaction to the choice to keep the five bigger babies?

10) Candy's best friend is very old, can't walk well, is nearly blind, and stinks badly. Carlson argues that the friend should be shot. Is it acceptable to kill a person in this condition?