



Of Mice and Men: The Climax (Section 5)

Essential Junior Cycle English Notes & Analysis

Visual
Study Guide

THE WORLD OUTSIDE



Bright sunlight, community,
and Sunday rest.

THE BARN INSIDE

Isolation, secrecy,
and darkness.



EXAM FOCUS: SETTING AS SYMBOL

While the other men play horseshoes in the Sunday sun, Lennie is alone in the shadows of the barn, setting the stage for a private tragedy.

THE OMEN & THE INSTRUCTION

“THIS HERE GOD DAMN LITTLE
SON-OF-A-BITCH WASN'T
NOTHING TO GEORGE.”



THE MISTAKE

Lennie is in a panic because he accidentally killed his puppy.

THE FEAR

He is terrified he won't be allowed to tend the rabbits.

THE CALLBACK

Lennie remembers the safety plan from Section 1: run to the brush.

ENTER CURLEY'S WIFE: THE REALITY OF ISOLATION

"I get lonely... You can talk to people, but I can't talk to nobody but Curley."

PERCEPTION

- Dangerous
- Jailbait
- Trouble

REALITY

- Trapped
- Isolated
- Desperate for connection

EXAM FOCUS: THEME OF LONELINESS

She bonds with Lennie solely because they are both outcasts on the ranch. She knows he hurt Curley's hand, but doesn't care.

THE HOLLYWOOD DREAM



KEY INSIGHT

Just like George and Lennie, Curley's wife is driven by a failed dream of a better life.

1 THE PROMISE

A man promises to put her in the movies and write to her from Hollywood.

2 THE BETRAYAL

The letter never arrives. She blames her mother for stealing it.

3 THE ESCAPE

Driven by spite and a desperate need to leave home, she marries Curley.

THE CHAIN REACTION OF PANIC

1. The Connection

They bond over liking soft things. She calls him "jus like a big baby."

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2. The Invitation

She invites Lennie to feel how soft her hair is.

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3. The Warning

Lennie pets too hard and won't let go. She panics: "you stop it now, you'll mess it all up."

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4. The Escalation

She screams. Lennie panics, terrified George will hear. He covers her mouth.

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THE TRAGEDY

“...flopped like a fish. And then she was still for Lennie had broken her neck.”

FEAR, NOT MALICE

Lennie's violence is driven by absolute panic.

THE MOTIVE

He shakes her roaring 'don't you go yellin' solely to stop her from getting him in trouble.

INEVITABLE CONSEQUENCE

The accidental murder is the ultimate result of his unchecked physical strength.

THE AFTERMATH & THE FLIGHT

**“I done a bad thing.
I done another bad thing.”**

1. Realization

Lennie understands the immediate severity of his violent actions.

2. Futile Cover-up

He hides the puppy under his coat, childishly thinking it will help the situation.

3. The Prophecy Fulfilled

He flees the barn to hide in the brush by the Salinas River, exactly as George instructed.



The Death of the Dream



Candy discovers the body and immediately fetches George.

Candy asks if they can still get the little farm.

George doesn't answer. Candy "dropped his head and looked down at the hay. He knew."

Exam Focus: Symbolism

At the exact moment Curley's wife dies, the dream of the rabbit farm dies alongside her. George admits he always knew it was an impossible fantasy.

Curley's Reaction: Anger Over Grief

*"I'm gonna get him.....
I'll kill the big son-of-
a-bitch myself."
- Curley*

What is Expected

- Sorrow
- Tears
- Mourning for a lost spouse



Curley's Reality

- Instant fury
- Treats her death as a stolen possession, not a lost life

Exam Focus: Character Analysis

Curley shows zero emotional devastation. He uses his wife's murder as an excuse to exact revenge on Lennie for crushing his hand.

Planning the Hunt

The Misdirection

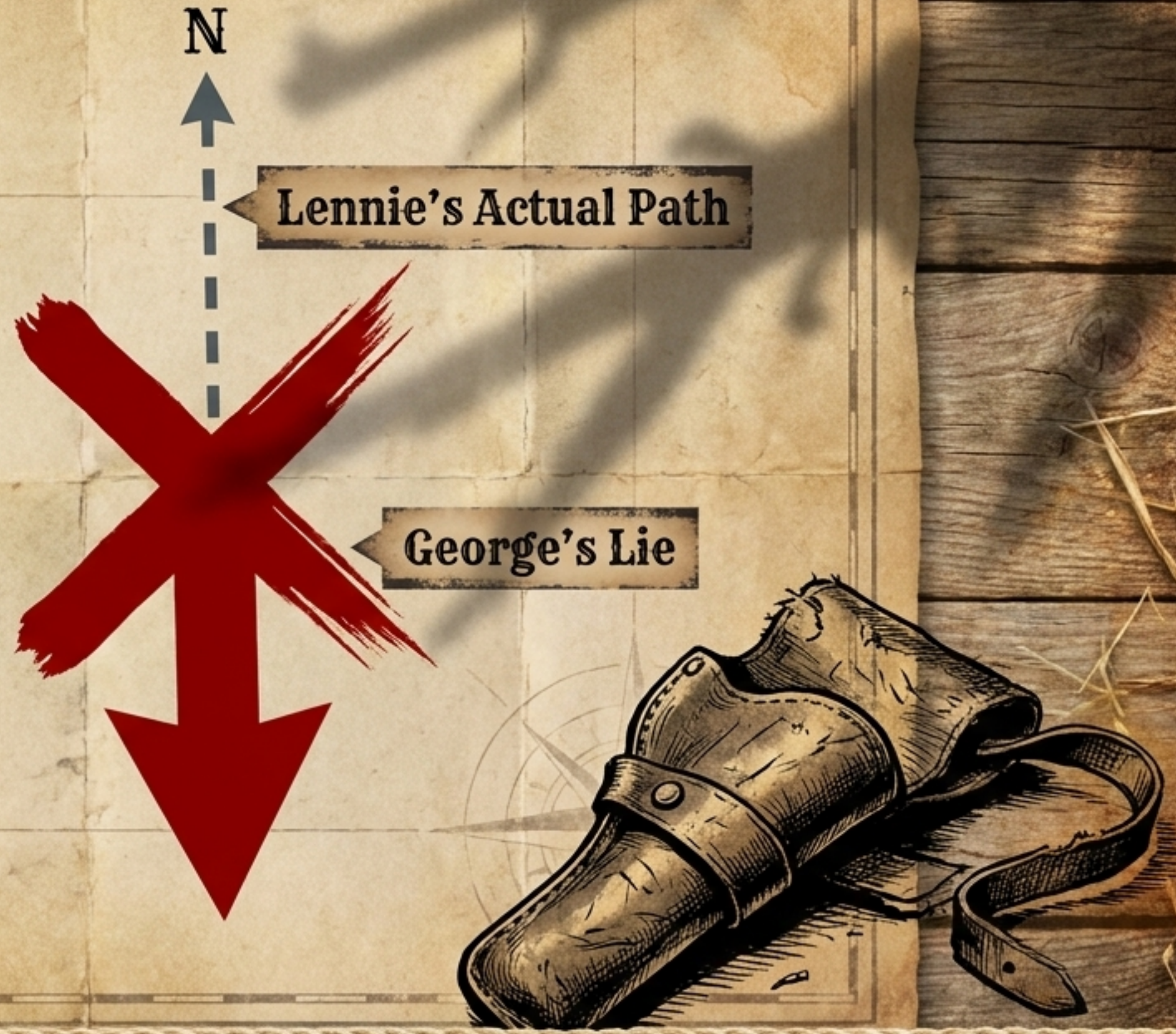
George tells Slim they came from the north, so Lennie would have gone south, deliberately sending the mob the wrong way.

The Missing Weapon

Carlson announces his gun is stolen, and the men assume Lennie took it.

The Vow

Curley is adamant about violent revenge: "I'm gonna shoot the guts outta that big bastard myself even if I only got one hand."



Junior Cycle Masterclass: Section 5 Themes



1. The Inevitability of Fate

Lennie's flight to the brush fulfills the dark foreshadowing planted by Steinbeck in Section 1. The dead puppy directly mirrors the dead mice.

2. Destructive Isolation

Curley's wife's fatal mistake was seeking companionship from a dangerous man simply because she had "nobody but Curley" to talk to.

3. Toxic Masculinity

Curley's reaction to his wife's death completely replaces human grief with a bruised ego and a desire for violent retribution.