

## Candy

He introduces many of the other characters on the ranch to us.

He is the first person to speak to George and Lennie.

He likes to gossip, "Candy warmed to his gossip", as he cannot participate in the ranch conversation because he is so old.

Candy is named ironically. His name connotes sweetness but his life is exactly the opposite because it is bitter and miserable.

His job is to brush the floor as 'swamper'. This gives him the lowest status in the ranch because he has the lowest job and is incapable of doing anything else with his age. No one therefore supports him when he doesn't want the dog to be shot.

"Old" – Steinbeck continuously describes Candy using the prefix adjective 'old'. It is as though all he is on the ranch is old and this is how he is perceived by the other itinerant workers; there is nothing more to him. His age, however, is not seen as something which deserves respect. This is also the word constantly used to describe Candy's dog.

He is crippled. "He pointed with his right arm, and out of the sleeve came a round stick-like wrist but no hand". Candy is physically lacking and is Lennie's opposite because he is often unwell and frail. In this way he can be seen to mirror Crooks because both of them have been working as itinerant workers for a long time and are crippled from working at the ranch. In contrast, Candy's time on the ranch is limited and he mentions no family and has no one to look after him ("I won't have no place to go"), whereas Crooks does talk about his childhood and he has a place at the ranch for a longer time because his job is more permanent as 'stable buck'.

He is desperate to be involved in the dream. He will have a place to call his own and will have friends. Candy's compensation means that the dream can become a reality for George and Lennie. Candy also needs something to keep up his hopes now that his dog is dead. At George talking about the dream, Candy's description changes from "hopelessly" to "excitedly" speaking.

Candy really doesn't get on well with Curley's wife and she can see that she is danger, the same way which George sees and the same way that the dog senses that Curley is dangerous. "He was the master of the situation" suggests that Candy was very angry however was able to contain his anger and "master" implies he had full control and gives him a power over something which he has never had before. Candy defends and helps Lennie when George isn't there and Lennie recognizes this as well: "Lennie looked to Candy for help". In addition, when she leaves after destroying Crooks' dream, Candy says "That bitch didn't ought to of said that to you." Candy defends Crooks because he sees himself in him and he calls her a "bitch" using the explicit and plosive 'b' to add a sense of disgust and harshness in his judgment of her.

Candy and Lennie have a mirroring quality as well as Candy's dog and Lennie. It is because George, after Candy enters into their dream, becomes the carer of Candy and Lennie. "Jesus, seems like I can't go away for a minute" shows that George treats Candy and Lennie in the same way because both of them went and spoke to Crooks, who George sees as inferior and trouble. Additionally, "Candy was crestfallen" shows how he doesn't want to disappoint George in the same way that Lennie is always sad and upset if George gets mad at him, and when Lennie kills the puppy he feels upset that George will be mad at him more than upset at the actual death of the puppy.

Candy discovers Curley's wife dead body. He is left behind then with the corpse and is also left alone in the bunkhouse when all the other itinerant workers (except Lennie) go to the cathouse.

"He rubbed his smooth wrist on his white stubble whiskers"

- there is a juxtaposition of the "smooth wrist" and the "stubble whiskers". However, with the alliterative detail of the 'w' and the soft sound of 'whiskers' it negates the plosives in 'stubble' and creates a softer sound. This is a nervous habit of Candy's, whereby he rubs his wrist in some way when he is upset or nervous and it is a way of him containing his emotions.

"Candy dropped his head and looked down at the hay"

- The dropping of his head could be used by Steinbeck to show Candy paying respect to both Lennie, the death of the dream and the death of Curley's wife. However it could also be in sorrow. 'Looked down at the hay' shows that Candy recognizes the dream is dead. As the hay is a metaphor for dreams, it implies that Candy is looking at them sorrowfully.

"Ever'body knowed you'd mess things up. You wasn't no good. You ain't no good now, you lousy tart"

- Candy is very angry at Curley's wife for destroying the dream. He blames her for the death of the dream, as he was angry with her for destroying Crooks' dream. 'You ain't no good now' is said almost satirically by Candy and it is a strangely vindictive side of him because she cannot be good or bad now as she is dead.

"Poor bastard"

- this is Candy's last line in the novella. Steinbeck could use the ambiguity to show that all of these people had their dreams end and killed and no one's dreams really to come true (link to the poem on which OMM is based). It is ambiguous as it could refer to:
  1. Lennie – Candy could be feeling sorry for Lennie because he is going to die and Candy feels he hasn't done anything truly wrong.
  2. George – Candy feels sorry for George that he will have to kill his best friend and Candy relates because he would have felt the same way about killing his dog.
  3. Himself – Candy could feel sorry for himself that he is unable to achieve his dream and all the things he said would happen when he gets too old, will now happen and Candy will be alone the rest of his life.
  4. Curley's wife – she is dead and although Candy does not like her, he could feel sorry for her that she died in the way she did.

"Old Candy lay down in the hay and covered his eyes with his arm."

- this is the same response that Candy has to his dog dying as he just lays on his bed and stares at the ceiling
- This is the way in which Candy responds to grief and death. Because he covers his face he could not want to recognize the death of people and the death of Lennie because it is too much for him to handle and he is too upset by it. Alternatively he could lie in the hay, wishing that he too was dead with the puppy and Curley's wife because as he says "when they can me here I wish somebody'd shoot me".

### **Candy and Candy's dog**

Candy and Candy's dog have the same relationship as George and Lennie. George is Lennie's keeper in a way and he protects him; Lennie goes where George goes. Candy's only friend and companion is his dog which he has had since the dog was puppy ("I had him from a pup"). This is mirrored in George and Lennie because when Aunt Clara died, George had to take care of Lennie. In addition, Lennie's animalistic descriptions show his naturalness in his

being; the dog is similarly content and aware of his surroundings, however still needs to be protected. Both couples are tied by the bonds of friendship and have been together a long time.

There is also mirroring between Candy and his dog, as they are both old and have been on the ranch for a long time. Like the dog, Candy is too old to really contribute to the ranch and his time is running out of being allowed to remain in the ranch.

“The dog raised his head, but when Curley jerked out, the grizzled head sank to the floor again.”

- this could be used to show Curley’s authority and even Candy’s dog recognizes that Curley is in charge of them all
- could be the dog hoping that Curley, as a representation of society, will put the dog out of its misery and kill him, so that the suffering ends.
- could be to show the fear of Curley and the innate awareness dog’s have of danger and a need to protect people. His head ‘sank to the floor’ when he realizes that Curley is not much of a threat, despite his initial impact.

“Got no teeth, damn near blind, can’t eat. Candy feeds him milk. He can’t chew nothing else.” – this is a description of Candy’s dog which Carlson gives. It shows the dog’s dependency on Candy and how he needs him. It also shows the dog’s age, in relation to Candy’s age as he is always complaining about aches. Preceding this quotation, Candy says “Gotta bad gut ache” showing that even eating can cause pain for him because he is so old.

Candy is proud of the dog. “He was the best damn sheep dog I ever seen”. This shows the positives of the dog before he is killed, therefore the reader is turned against society (Carlson) and empathizes with Candy.

### **The Death of Candy’s Dog**

Candy tries to make excuses and suggestions for why the dog shouldn’t be shot. He takes on an emotional side however then tries to make practical suggestions such as “You ain’t got no gun”

“For a moment he continued to stare at the ceiling. Then he rolled slowly over and face the wall and lay silent.”

- Candy doesn’t want to face the other ranch workers because it would be too difficult to mask his sadness. He is already the lowest (apart from Crooks) status on the ranch and thus does not need another reason for them to put him down.
- “slowly” is used to show sadness and grief because it sounds soft and Candy’s grief will take a long time to heal, thus “slowly” is used to begin the grieving process.
- “lay silent” shows his isolation from the itinerant workers and that he doesn’t want to be in a room with them all. It implies reflection and wanting to separate himself from the group of people who all allowed his dog to be shot.

“I ought to of shot that dog myself, George. I shouldn’t ought to of let no stranger shoot my dog.”

- this quote is the REASON George has to shoot Lennie at the end of the novel
- The mirroring is shown here of Candy+his dog and George+Lennie.
- “stranger” is used to show that no matter how much time they spend on the ranch together (and it is implied that both Carlson and Candy have been there a long time) the itinerant workers will always be strangers and foreign to each other, and this is

the reason for them being lonely because they do not allow themselves to have relationships.

- Candy couldn't have shot the dog himself because he did not believe it was the right thing to do and was too attached to the dog. However, George does kill Lennie because he realizes it is the only way for Lennie to remain safe and happy.
- This is why, when Candy finds Curley's wife in the barn, there is an implied understanding between Candy and George as to what George is going to do, because in a way Candy has told him the morally right thing to do here.

