The chapter begins with the men outside playing horseshoes and Lennie sitting alone inside the barn. He is stroking his dead puppy. He is angry at the puppy, yelling at it for biting him. Lennie is worried that George will not let him tend the rabbits. He buries it in the hay, but later he picks it up and strokes it again. Then he throws it out of frustration.

Curley’s Wife comes in and asks Lennie about the animal. Lennie tells her that George does not want him talking to her. But she goes on talking to him. She tells him about her life before Curley and about how she could have been an actress.

Lennie tells Curley’s wife that he likes to pet soft things. She tells him to feel her hair. When he strokes her hair, she gets angry that he is messing it up. Lennie becomes scared and holds on more tightly as he had done to the girl’s dress in Weed. Curley’s wife starts to yell, and Lennie covers her mouth and tells her not to get him in trouble. She gets scared and resists even more, which causes Lennie to accidentally kill her.

He realizes that she is dead, so he picks up the dead pup and leaves to hide in the brush. Candy comes into the barn to talk to Lennie and finds Curley’s wife. He goes out and gets George, who asks him to give him a couple of minutes so the other men don’t think he was involved. George goes to the bunkhouse.
Once Curley sees his dead wife, he says he will shoot Lennie in the guts. Carlson goes to get his Luger, but on his return, he says that Lennie must have stolen it. George tells Slim and the others that Lennie probably went south. George realizes that his dream is over. And he realizes that he must reach Lennie first.

Before George finds Lennie, we see Lennie talking to an imaginary Aunt Clara. She yells at Lennie for always getting George into trouble. She disappears and then a giant rabbit yells at Lennie. George finds Lennie and tells him about owning the ranch. As Lennie is looking across the water and listening to the story, George pulls out Carlson’s Luger and shoots Lennie in the back of the head.