

Steinbeck uses various techniques to create tension in the 'Shooting of Candy's Dog' scene. These techniques create suspense between the characters and between the reader and the scene. Steinbeck's main intent is to create tension in this scene and have the readers on the edge of their seat. This scene comes in the middle of the book just after Lennie gets his pup from Slim.

This scene is foreshadowed at the start of this chapter when Carlson wants to shoot the dog because he is "all stiff with rheumatism". Carlson fails at this point but we realise that the dog will die soon. The death of the dog is also foreshadowed when Lennie gets his new pup. This makes us realise that the older dog will be 'traded' for the younger pup. There is also contrast in the dog's owners. Candy is old and about to lose his dog whereas Lennie is young and has just received a new pup. The audience are manipulated to think that the worse will happen and from that point tension is built as we wait for the inevitable.

Steinbeck uses Silence to great effect in this scene along with the feeling of foreboding.

The first technique used by Steinbeck is that of the use of Adverbs. Once Carlson has taken out Candy's dog to shoot him, there is a very subdued and tense atmosphere. Candy is feeling very upset about the fact that his dog has been taken away to be shot which is the reason that he lay 'rigidly'; George is being careful of Candy's feelings and shuts the door 'gently'. When Slim talks 'loudly', it is to fill the silence that is created as the men wait for the inevitable shot but because the silence is so strong, a tense atmosphere is created that keeps the characters silent until the shot and therefore increasing the silence even more.

Steinbeck uses repetition to emphasise the mood, making the silence into an almost physical presence, an extra person in the room, because its presence is so tangible. He does this firstly through the many repetitions of the words 'silent' and 'silence' but also by using personification when he talks about how 'The silence came into the room' and how, more aggressively, it 'invaded' the room. When the men try to break the silence their voices sound false and overly loud. The men are so tense and on edge that the slightest thing is annoying: when George shuffles the cards the 'little snapping noise' seems intrusive and makes all the men look at him, so he stops.

The contrast with Candy's behaviour is another way in which Steinbeck creates a feeling of tension. Whilst the men are being falsely cheerful and keep trying to make light conversation, Candy remains implacably quiet. Even Slim cannot get him to respond with his offer of any of the pups he wants. Throughout, Candy remains silent and stares at the ceiling. Steinbeck reinforces the feelings Candy has for the men and their actions through his refusal to speak but also when he 'rolled slowly over and faced the wall and lay silent' once the shot is heard.