

'OF MICE AND MEN' REVISION NOTES

THEMES WITHIN THE NOVEL:

HOPES / DREAMS:

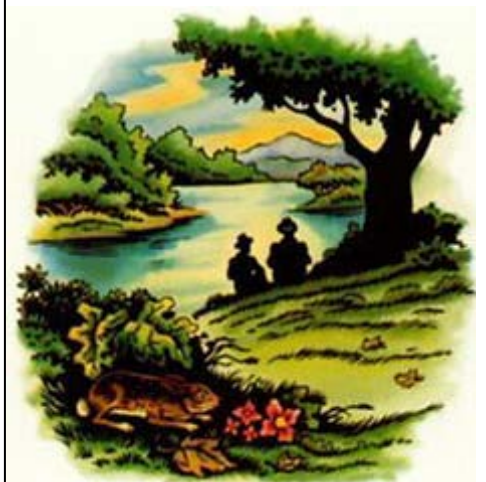
- Repetition of farm dream makes it seem more real as novel progresses (until final events)
- CHAPTER 1 – Used as sign of hope.
- CHAPTER 6 – Used differently – used to comfort Lennie before George kills him. The last mention of the dream is very poignant as both the reader and George know that the dream will never be achieved.
- CIRCULAR PLOT – used to emphasise that life will never change for these characters.
- The dream is used by Steinbeck to show a different side to Candy and Crooks.
- Dream is shattered in by Curley's wife in two ways:
 - Mocking Crooks 'bindlebums'
 - Getting killed by Lennie.
- Curley's wife had her own dreams of being in films.
- We discover characters' dreams through their conversations with Lennie – he is almost used like a journal by the other characters because they know that he doesn't always understand what they are saying.

ISOLATION:

- SETTINGS play big part in portraying isolation – ranch 'Soledad' = Spanish for 'solitude'
- Characters are discriminated against for different reasons. Although most of them suffer discrimination, the characters don't have much in common and remain quite isolated throughout the book (dream brings them together):
 - Crooks – Because he is black
 - Curley's wife – Because she is a woman and seen as 'trouble' and Curley's possession.
 - Candy – Because of his disability.
 - Candy's dog – old and smells.
- Crooks is an important character when exploring isolation – he uses his own room as a retreat and rarely allows other people to enter his room – very protective over his small space. This shows that even though he doesn't own much, he is a very proud character; This is also why he retreats back into his shell when challenged and mocked by Curley's wife.
- George ends up alone at the end – links to circular plot.

SETTINGS:

- Contrasts between Chapter 1 and 6 – circular plot - isolation
- Weed – foreshadowing
- Barn – location for a lot of negative events
 - Puppy dies
 - Curley's wife dies
 - Curley's hand crushed
- Ranch = isolated – Soledad = solitude
- Crooks' room – books – shows intelligence / proud
- Detailed descriptions of settings to reflect events and mood.



RELATIONSHIPS:

- **GEORGE AND LENNIE:**
 - Strength (physical – Lennie alongside Mental – George)
 - Friends (George takes responsibility for Lennie)
 - Father and Son (George – protective / Lennie – childlike)
 - Pet and Master (Animal imagery)
- **MASTER AND PET:**
 - Lennie and Mice
 - Lennie and Puppy
 - Candy and Dog
 - George and Lennie

} All end tragically with the ‘pet’ dying and master left alone.
- **CROOKS AND LENNIE / CURLEY’S WIFE AND LENNIE:**
 - Both characters open up to Lennie – reveals more to the reader (Lennie is almost used as a journal / diary).
- **CURLEY AND HIS WIFE:**
 - Not a loving relationship
 - Wife treated as a possession – doesn’t even have a name in the book.
 - Even at the end, Curley wants revenge for Lennie crushing his hand. This will shock the reader as he should want justice for his dead wife.
 - Wife’s unhappiness shown throughout the novel – flirting with other men, lost dreams etc...

FORESHADOWING:

(Hints at what might happen later in the plot):

- Title of novel ‘The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry...’
- Woman in weed
- George’s constant warnings to Lennie to keep away from Curley’s wife
- Candy’s dog
- Repetition of ‘run to the brush’
- Dead animals
- Structure – uplifting events are quickly followed by something bad (this occurs throughout the novel)
- Lennie’s strength – dead animals – won’t let go of Curley’s hand

Read the points and see if you can:

- extend them further
- Turn them into P.E.E
- Find a quote from the book to back up each idea

Bear in mind that this is just an overview – look at the next few pages in this booklet for more ideas / explained in further detail...

COMPARING CHAPTER 1 AND CHAPTER 6:

ANIMAL IMAGERY:

- Lennie – “like a bear drags his paws” “Lennie dabbled his big paw in the water...”

CHAPTER 1

Energetic wild animal
creeping bear moves”

Strong

Clumsy

CHAPTER 6

Lennie is like a hunted animal – “came as silently as a

Characteristics are more cautious

Reader’s sympathy grows towards him further

- Death of animals – Candy’s dog / Mice / Puppies: Hints (foreshadowing) that George’s ‘pet’ (Lennie) must die too?
- DIGNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY – Candy wishes he had shot his dog himself – Links to George taking responsibility for Lennie.

REPETITION OF FARM STORY:

- Chapter 1 represents **hope** and **dreams** when Lennie and George are discussing the farm.

Whereas:

- In Chapter 6, George uses the farm to **comfort** Lennie.
 - Very poignant and emotive – George and the reader know that the dream will never come true. The reader empathises with George’s situation and decision.
 - The sadness surrounding the death of Lennie **and** the dream is furthered because the reader is aware that the dream was about to come a reality with the help from Candy.

CIRCULAR PLOT:

- Novel starts and ends in the same setting – brush
- This emphasises that no matter what dreams they have, the ranch workers are destined to just move round from ranch to ranch until they eventually die – Reader feels increasing sympathy for these helpless and isolated characters.

SETTING: HERON AND WILDLIFE

- Same setting in chapter 1 and 6 – chapter 6 is written with a more negative perspective:

CHAPTER 1: peaceful “twinkling over yellow sands...”
chapter 1 turns to isolation:

“the golden foothill slopes...”

CHAPTER 6: Sense of peace from

“Sun had left the }
“Still late in the afternoon } Metaphor for Lennie’s life -
close o end?

- Lennie is in the middle of the setting in a vulnerable childlike position:
 - “...he embraced his knees and laid his chin down on his knees...” – builds sympathy for character

HERON –

Chapter 1 – Heron spares snake’s life
Reflected - George saves Lennie’s life by helping him escape Weed.

Chapter 6 - Heron stands motionless in the water then kills the snake
Shows smarter animal killing helpless animal – FORESHADOWING – George and

Lennie

Circle of life / nature

Curley's Wife - Love or Hate?

DISLIKE

- She is the cause of the farm dream shattering
- Flirts with other men : “leant against the door frame so that her body was thrown forward..”
- Visual description of when introducing her “nasal” voice...red - danger/lust
- George warns Lennie that she is trouble. We as the reader, trust George because of the way he looks after Lennie.
- It is ultimately her fault that Lennie is dead
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SYMPATHY

- The reader never likes her but as the novel progress they may feel some **sympathy** towards her.
- Could have had a better life (HOPE/DREAM) - “but my old woman wouldn’t let me...”
- Treated as a possession - no name
- Gets treated as ‘trouble’ (unfair?) She is assumed to be trouble from the outset.
- Opens up to Lennie - reader gets to find out more background information about the character: “Well, I ain’t told this nobody before...”
- Knowing her dreams makes the character seem more real/human.
- Visual description of her when dead is much more delicate: “she was pretty and simple and her face was sweet and young.”