

Loneliness and despair in the novella of mice and men

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* is an Oscar-winning novella that was published in 1937. John Steinbeck was born in 1902 in Salinas, California. He attended Stanford University but never graduated. John Steinbeck went to New York in 1925 and established himself as a freelance writer. Later he failed and returned to California. The novella takes place during the Great Depression. The Novella, *Of Mice and Men* has a recurring theme of loneliness throughout the characters Crooks, Curley's wife and Candy.

Crooks is the only African American man in the ranch. He had a humped back and he is isolated from others in the ranch. Crooks is prohibited from sleeping and staying inside of the bunkhouse with the other workers because of his race. He has to stay in a small room attached to the barn on his own. Crooks personality is described in the novella by being bad-tempered or argumentative, like in the story, he treats Lennie badly as Lennie enters the room. One may discover by closely reading the novella that his personality is only a result of the grief and loneliness that is portrayed onto him. After Lennie is upset Crooks reveals his inner feelings by saying, 'S'pose you didn't have nobody. S'pose you couldn't go into the bunkhouse and play rummy 'cause you was black. How'd you like that? S'pose you had to sit out here an' read books. Sure you could play horseshoes till it got dark, but then you got to read books. Books ain't no good. A guy needs somebody to be near him. (Steinbeck, 80). The statement that Crooks reveals is not only demonstrating the isolation and loneliness that crooks went through on a daily basis but also the theme of friendship and camaraderie. Crooks thinks and believes that someone must have the opportunity to form friendships and interact with others in order to thrive, as he says in the novella, A guy goes nuts if he

ain't got nobody. Don't make no difference who the guy is, long's he's with you. I tell ya... I tell ya a guy gets too lonely an' he gets sick. (Steinbeck, 80).

Curleyr's wife is also a significant portrait of loneliness because she is the only women on the ranch. There is no other woman for her to communicate and relate to. She is demonstrated to be isolated and lonely in the novella by giving her no name, to show how insignificant she is to her husband and to the other men in the ranch. She also seeks attention and communication from the other men in the workplace, although she usually seeks in a wrongful manner. She will show that she is the only woman on the ranch and showing that he is attractive. Curleyr's wife is described, she had full, rouged lips and wide-spaced eyes, heavily made up. (Steinbeck, 31). She also positions herself in a seductive manner, She put her hands behind her back and leaned against the door frame so that her body was thrown forward. (Steinbeck, 31). Even though she physically intrigues the other men on the ranch they are too afraid of what Curley would do so they try to not talk or look in her direction. They try not to respond to her sexual looks, they leave her alone, which makes her feel lonely.

One will believe that Candy was considered lonely after the men on the ranch kill his dog. Before the tragedy Candy seemed relatively happy and nice, in fact, he is very nice to George and Lennie when they first arrive on the ranch. It's not until the third chapter that Candy becomes lonely. Carlson, a ranch worker thinks that Candyr's dog is too old. He says that too put the dog out of misery Candy need to shoot him in the back of his head. Candy can not kill his dog and because Slim tell Carlson to do it, he takes the dog

and kills him. The dog was obviously Candy's best friend and losing him was very hard for Candy. The author, John Steinbeck, describes Candy by saying, For a moment he continued to stare at the ceiling. Then he rolled slowly over and faced the wall and lay silent. (Steinbeck, 49). Another symbol of loneliness is that the dog never got a name. Steinbeck didn't choose the name Candy's dog for more of a sad effect on the reader. Close to the end of the story, when Candy is put back into loneliness he finds out that Lennie is the one that has killed Curley's wife.

In conclusion, one may think that in the novella *Of Mice and Men*, Crooks, Candy and Curley's wife signify the theme of loneliness and despair. John Steinbeck developed the characters in a way that we would feel sorrow, misery or sadness for them. One may recommend this novella to someone that likes to read mystery and sad novels.