

# Foreshadowing in steinbeck's of mice and men

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



The word foreshadow is a literary term used to describe how the author discreetly gives clues to the reader of the events later to occur. The touching realistic fiction novelette *Of Mice and Men* is written by John Steinbeck. George and Lennie, two men who have become close friends over time, travel together to a ranch to pursue their dream as a team. George is considered to be Lennie's caretaker, for Lennie is mentally challenged. Throughout the novelette *Of Mice and Men*, foreshadowing takes a considerable role in the most important chapters of George and Lennie's journey together.

The events that develop foreshadow other events that will echo the primary event in a distinctive way. John Steinbeck uses foreshadowing and other literary elements as the structure of his many literary works of art. The three events that foreshadow the future are George telling Lennie to return to the river if trouble occurs, Candy having to kill his dog, and a heron killing a snake.

In the beginning, when George and Lennie are at the river, George tells Lennie to return to that exact location to silently hide in the brush and wait for him if he gets in any trouble. Lennie has done bad things in the past, and George wants to make sure that Lennie has somewhere to go that's out of harm's way. " ' Lennie – if you jus' happen to get in trouble like you always done before, I want you to come right here an' hide in the brush' " (15). In the past, Lennie has gotten into trouble while working on a ranch, and both George and Lennie didn't have anywhere to go. George knows that Lennie is bound to have history repeat itself, and make the same mistakes, so he tells Lennie to remember where the river is located. George's action foreshadows

that later on, Lennie will have to return to the river. George makes sure that he can get Lennie away from any danger that can harm him, but would also know where he'd be.

As the story progresses, Candy tells George that he should have shot his dog himself instead of a stranger, because he knew the dog the best and his moment of lacking authority allowed him to regret his decision. Candy has had his dog since it was just a puppy, so he has a strong connection with his dog. Carlson thinks the dog is smelly, ancient, and becoming more and more useless everyday, so he convinces Candy to allow him to shoot his dog. “ ‘ I ought to of shot that dog myself, George. I shouldn't have ought to of let no stranger shoot my dog’ ” (61). When Candy confides in George, he admits that he is in the wrong when he decides to allow a complete stranger kill his dog instead of doing it himself. Candy, wanting to have shot his dog himself, foreshadows how George will feel about how Lennie will be disciplined. Although Candy didn't have the strength to kill his own dog, George realizes that he's strong enough to discipline Lennie in a fair and painless way.

Lastly, when Lennie is hiding in the brush at the river, a water snake is killed by a motionless heron off in the distance. The water snake was gliding on the river and is unaware of the heron that was standing still awaiting its arrival. “ A water snake glided smoothly up the pool . . . and came to the legs of a motionless heron that stood in the shallows. A silent head and beak glanced down and plucked it out by the head . . . ” (99). The snake was gracefully moving across the water, and swims to its death, negligent of its future. When Lennie is killed, he is looking at the scenery of the mountains and at the river imagining his and George's dream, completely unaware of George,

standing behind him with a gun. In the end, both Lennie and the snake met their fate of death.

Overall, Steinbeck's usage of foreshadow is applied to show how life's events are clues to the future. George wants to protect Lennie, but he also wants to make sure that Lennie has a safe place to run to. Candy fails to accomplish a difficult task and helps George to identify if he'll have the strength to do what is right or not. Death meets Lennie and the snake face to face unexpectedly. In life, has the reader ever looked at a painting and thought, "What did every brush stroke accomplish?" The creator of a work of art wants the viewer to see their artwork as a whole, but to view the specifics that created the image as desired. Each brush stroke accomplishes forcing mankind to experience various emotions, memories, inspirations, and an understanding of the meaning the piece was supposed to contain. A single brushstroke can foretell what the future may hold, although it's not always distinct.