

# How does Steinbeck present Slim from the extract

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



Slim, on his first appearance, is described as moving with a “majesty only achieved by royalty or master craftsmen”. With this descriptive phrase, Steinbeck immediately establishes Slim as someone who is confident in himself that is admired by others. To move like majesty, it requires one to move with graceful fluency without seeming effort. This is a man who is comfortable in his own persona. Continuing with the comparison to royalty, Steinbeck describes Slim as “the prince of the ranch”. Slim has such an authority on the ranch that his word was golden.

If Slim said that something was to be done, everyone on the ranch went along with it and no one rebelled against it. This is not because the other characters on the ranch are scared of him but rather the fact that he is portrayed to the readers as being very respected. Slim is the voice for justice within the novel. This shows that he is wise and all the other ranch workers looked up to him as a role model since he is like a father figure to all the ranch men with his words of wisdom being the words they live by.

Steinbeck describes his manner as having “gravity” and “a quiet so profound that his word was taken on any subject.” Slim was not someone who had to raise his voice to be authoritative. His presence spoke for itself. Slim serves as an annoyance to the character of Curley, since he really should be the “prince of the ranch” as the boss’s son. The use of this metaphor implies that Slim has a higher social status than the other ranch workers. Additionally, it is important to understand that he has not assigned himself with the label as Curley no doubt would

He is described as having a “hatchet face” which goes along with the name of Slim. Together the name and the description of his face give the reader the sense of someone who is very lean. Along with this, he is described as being actually being between the ages of 35-50 but suggested as an ageless character. Also when talking about his appearance he is described with “His hands, large and lean, were as delicate in their action as those of a temple dancer.” In this simile the word ‘large’ suggests that they are masculine and strong but the phrase ‘temple dancers’ implies they are skilful and tender.

Similarly at the beginning of the extract his strength is mentioned – saying he is ‘capable of driving ten, sixteen and even twenty mules’, which also expresses his strength and importance on the ranch as he is able to carry out jobs, which was of great value during the Great Depression. Another key descriptive phrase for Slim is that “His ear heard more than was said to him, and his slow speech had overtones not of thought, but of understanding beyond thought.” With this descriptive phrase Steinbeck artfully portrays that Slim is able to read into people and what they say.

He is not someone who takes things people say at face value. He also understands that there is often more to the story. The word ‘beyond’ suggests that he is omniscient which again depicts the connotations of Slim being like God and king of the ranch. This also is what leads to Slim’s word being gospel on the ranch. Everyone knows that he gives everything a fair hearing. Slim renders a decision much like a judge would do. This links to Slim’s nature as judges are well-respected and distinguished as is he.

Right away when Slim began to talk to George about working on the ranch, he used a tone which was friendly, encouraged confidence without

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demanding. It is this friendly tone that allows George to develop a similar friendship with Slim and allows him later to confide in Slim about Lennie. Steinbeck portrays that despite being thought higher by everyone he doesn't let this get to his head since he has a lot of general decency. While Slim is certainly modelled as a friend and upstanding character, as one can see from this extract he is one of the characters who plays a pivotal role in the plot in *Of Mice and Men*.