

# [How does steinbeck present curley in the fight scene essay](https://assignbuster.com/how-does-steinbeck-present-curley-in-the-fight-scene-essay/)

Steinbeck explores some of the multiple meanings buried in the idea of “ meanness. ” A “ mean” person is, like Curley who is nasty and a bully. Both George and Lennie express their hatred for that kind of people. George says that he “ don’t like mean little guys”. Curley’s thirst for violence and his constant urge to pick fights contrasts with Lennie’s “ innocent” violence. After Lennie accidentally kills Curley’s wife, George says that Lennie “ never done it in meanness” Lennie killed several animals by merely cuddling them, or by panicking. He loves things to the extent where he ends up harming them without knowing.

I’ll begin by talking about Curley’s character and discuss his major case of ‘ small guy complex’. He’s both pugnacious and lecherous. In the description immediately following Curley’s first entrance, he is described as “ handy”. The term makes reference to his eagerness and ability to fight. He is handy with his fists; so to speak Curley uses position as the boss’s son to intimidate the men. Few are actually intimidated by Curley himself even though he’s the boss’s son; some of the men only try to avoid him because they desperately need their jobs despite Curley’s threats over meaningless matters.

For instance he asks the ranch workers where his wife is or if they have seen his wife, but backs down if someone actually stands up to him and challenges him. And now back to the question of how Steinbeck conveys Curley in the fight scene, Lennie is large and is unable to protect himself which makes him the potential candidate of Curley’s bullying, we know Curley has a bone to pick with big guys but the writer doesn’t give us much background information on Curley.

One thing that we do know about Curley is that he was a welterweight boxer as Carlton says “ You’re yella as a frog belly. I don’t care if you’re the best welter in the country”. We don’t know why he stopped boxing; perhaps it could be linked to why he dislikes big guys. Steinbeck presents Curley as a punk, he tries to give the ranch workers the usual nonsense but this time I wasn’t working.

The moment Slim stood up for himself and embarrasses Curley and everyone decides to joins in on the fun, in order to hold on to the dignity he has left he chooses to fight Lenny without a valid reason, as he says “ What the hell you laughin’ at? ”. While Lenny and George have the American dream, Curley in this case represents reality and it’s harshness. “ No big son-of-a-bitch is gonna laugh at me. I’ll show ya who’s yella. ”

This quote shows us that Curley is mad at Carlson but instead he chooses to fight Lenny nstead who he thinks is less of an opponent but ends up humiliated. Steinbeck conveys Curley’s powerlessness in this scene as well as foreshadowing Curley’s wife’s death in the hands of Lenny. We know this because “ Curley was flopping like a fish on a line” and later on Curley’s wife also “ flops like a fish” in the hands of Lenny. One concept that Steinbeck clearly borrows from Charles Darwin is the concept of survival of the fittest. The characters can be described as fit or unfit for their social roles on the basis of their physical and intellectual abilities.