Of Mice and Men Study Guide

Questions to Ponder:

1. Why did Steinbeck never give Curly’s wife a name?

2. Was the ending of the story just? Did George have another choice?

3. Notice how Steinbeck starts every chapter. Why did he do that?

4. “I seen thrashin’ machines on the way down. That means we’ll be bucking grain bags, bustin’ a gut.” This is a quote from George when he is explaining to Lennie that they will be staying the night on the bank before heading to the ranch. Lennie, however, wants to go to the ranch immediately so they can eat supper. How is George like the farmer in the poem which gives the novella its name, and how would Lennie be like the mouse?

5. “Slowly, like a terrier who doesn’t want to bring a ball to its master, Lennie approached, drew back, approached again. George snapped his fingers sharply, and at the sound Lennie laid the dead mouse in his hand.” How does this imagery/simile show the relationship between George and Lennie.

6. “He was a jerkline skinner, the prince of the ranch, capable of driving ten, sixteen, even twenty mules with a single line to the leaders. HE was capable of killing a fly on the wheeler’s butt with a bull whip without touching the mule.” What does this description of Slim- as given by Candy- convey about the character?

7. What is the significance of the killing of Candy’s dog, and how does it mirror the killing of Lennie?

8. In chapter 1, Steinbeck foreshadows the ending of the story. How? Why did he do this so early in the novel?

9. The story doesn’t have a happy ending. Why has it been such a literary success? How is it still relevant today?

**Multiple Choice Questions to Work: Some of these might be on the test. Others won’t be. They are designed to help you prepare!**

1. What does George say he could do if he were alone?

* 1. Go to a “cat house.”
	2. Drink whiskey all night
	3. Play cards at a pool hall all night
	4. All of the above

2. Why are George and Lennie different from other guys who work on ranches?

1. They are actually wealthy
2. They like their work and want to do it forever
3. They are not drifters
4. Each has the other to look out for him

3. What does Slim have that Lennie wants?

a. The best bunk

b. Puppies

c. A gun

d. A wife

4. Why did Curley fight with Lennie?

a. Curley thought Lennie was laughing at him.

b. They both wanted the same puppy

c. Lennie punched him first

d. Lennie made a rude remark about Curley’s wife

5. Why is it important that the first and last chapters take place in the same location?

a. Because it is a neat, symmetrical way to round off the novel.

b. Because it gives the reader the sense that what George did is right.

c. Because it is such a beautiful spot.

d. The location is just a coincidence.

6. What is the significance of the killing of Candy's dog?

a. There are a number of deaths in the novel, so this one gets us used to the idea.

b. It makes us feel sorry for Candy.

c. It hints that George will kill Lennie.

d. It reveals that Carlson is a mean man.

7. Which of the following does not foreshadow later events in the novel?

a. Lennie kills the mouse that he holds

b. George tells Lennie where to hide if there is trouble.

c. George scolds Lennie for getting them fired from every job they have.

d. George talks about Aunt Clara.

8. Which of the following does not describe Lennie?

a. Slow-witted

b. Innocent

c. Talkative

d. Forgetful

9. What is the name of the town from which George and Lennie are fleeing when the novel begins?

a. Weed

b. Soledad

c. Salinas

d. The town is never named

10. Why does Curley dislike Lennie?

a. Lennie laughs at Curley.

b. Curley is jealous of those who are bigger than he.

c. The boss tells Curley to watch out for Lennie.

d. Lennie likes Curley’s wife.

11. What do the men think of Curley’s wife?

a. They think she is a tart.

b. They pity her for her marriage to Curley.

c. They think she married Curley for money.

d. They suspect that she married Curley because she is pregnant.

12. Which of these animals is not killed in the course of the story?

a. An old dog

b. A mouse

c. A puppy

d. A rabbit

13. Why does Candy let Carlson shoot his dog?

a. Candy cannot afford the dog anymore.

b. Candy knows his dog will only suffer if he lives.

c. Carlson offers Candy another dog.

d. Candy is pressured into letting Carlson shoot his dog.

14. What is the name of Curley’s wife?

a. Colleen

b. Beatrice

c. Clara

d. She is never named.

15. According to Curley’s wife, under what condition do men speak to her?

a. When Curley is around.

b. When she tells jokes.

c. When she behaves like a proper wife.

d. When they are alone.

16. What excites Lennie most about his dream life with George?

a. He will learn to farm.

b. He will get to tend rabbits.

c. They will both find “purty” girls and settle down.

d. He will strike it rich panning for gold.

17. What is Old Susy’s place?

a. A restaurant

b. A saloon

c. George’s mother’s home

d. A house of prostitution

18. Who discovers Curley’s dead wife?

a. George

b. Curley

c. Candy

d. Carlson

19. What does Curley wear to set himself apart from the other men?

a. A denim jacket

b. High-heeled boots

c. A bull whip

d. Gloves

20. Who cared for Lennie before George?

a. Lennie’s aunt Clara

b. Lennie’s mother

c. George’s aunt Clara

d. George’s mother

21. What does Curley’s wife offer to let Lennie touch?

a. Her dress

b. Her face

c. Her hand

d. Her hair

22. How does Steinbeck foreshadow the death of Curley’s wife?

a. He dresses the woman in fancy red shoes.

b. He opens the chapter in which she dies with Lennie petting his dead puppy.

c. He gives her a moving speech in which she admits her dream of being a movie star.

d. He points out several times that Lennie doesn’t like her.

23. What does George say to Lennie before shooting him?

a. He tells Lennie that he is a bad man and that he deserves to die.

b. He tells Lennie that he has no other choice but to shoot him since it’s the law.

c. He tells Lennie the story of their farm.

d. He tells Lennie he’s sorry that he let him down.

24. After killing Curley’s wife, which of the following pairs does Lennie imagine appears to chastise his behavior?

a. Aunt Clara and his mother

b. Aunt Clara and a giant rabbit

c. George and Curley

d. George and Curley’s wife

25. Disappointed with her life, Curley’s wife wonders where she would be if she had followed her dreams and become which of the following things?

a. A movie star

b. A schoolteacher

c. A showgirl

d. A nurse

**The American Dream: For each of the characters, be able to describe his/her American Dream and the character’s fate in the story**. **What statement is Steinbeck making about dreams?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Character | Dream | Character’s Fate |
| Lennie |  |  |
| George |  |  |
| Curley’s Wife |  |  |
| Crooks |  |  |

 **Matching. Write the letter of the correct character that matches each description. You may use a letter more than once.**

A. George B. Lennie C. Curley D. Candy

E. Carlson F. Crooks G. Curley’s Wife H. Slim

I. The Boss J. Aunt Clara K. Bill Tenner L. Susy

M. Whit

1. The old swamper

2. Stable man

3. Likes soft things

4. Kills Candy’s dog

5. Is killed by Lennie

6. Skinner

7. Kills Lennie

8. Ill-tempered son of the boss

9. Has “the eye”

10. Starts a fight with Lennie

11. Used to live on a farm with white chickens

12. Gave Lennie mice to pet

13. Lives in the barn at the ranch

14. His dog has a litter of puppies

15. Wants to take care of rabbits

**Quote Identification. Match the characters using the same letters for the characters listed above. As you work through these, consider how it characterizes him/her.**

16. “This ol’ dog jus’ suffers hisself all the time. If you was to take him out and shoot him right in the back of the head--” he leaned and pointed, “—right here, why, he’d never know what hit him.”

17. “I ought to of shot that dog myself, George. I shouldn’t of let no stranger shoot my dog.”

18. For a moment he seemed bewildered. And then he whispered in fright, “I done a bad thing. I done another bad thing.”

19. “You hadda, George. I swear you hadda.”

20. "I think I knowed from the very first. I think I knowed we'd never do her. He usta like to hear about it so much I got to thinking maybe we would."

21. "It's just the talking. It's just being with another guy. That's all."

22. "An' what am I doin'? Standin' here talking to a bunch of bindle stiffs - a nigger an' a dum-dum and a lousy ol' sheep - an' likin' it because they ain't nobody else."

23. "We gotta house and chickens an' fruit trees an' a place a hundred times prettier that this. An' we got fren's, that's what we got."

24. “Now what the hell ya suppose is eatin’ them two guys?”

25. “Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world. They got no family. They don't belong no place…”

26. “I seen hundreds of men come by on the road an' on the ranches, with their bindles on their back an' that same damn thing in their heads . . . every damn one of 'em's got a little piece of land in his head.”

27. “I tell you I ain’t used to livin’ like this. I coulda made somethin’ of myself.”

28. “Get up on your feet…I’ll show ya who’s yella.”

29. “…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.”

30. “An’ I got you. We got each other, that’s what, that gives a hoot in hell about us.”

If you completed this, you are more than ready! Way to go!