
Loneliness and Friendship in the Book 'Of Mice and Men' by John Steinbeck

Loneliness is a universal, human emotion that is complex and unique to each individual. Friends are needed for emotional stability; otherwise, they would live life in solitude. Loneliness can lead to continuously seeking for a companion or relationship. In the book *Of Mice and Men*, characters Crooks, the black stable buck, and Curley's wife, the woman who walks the ranch as a temptress, both show forms of loneliness. They lack support from people in their lives, which generates them to act out in different ways because of the loneliness. Since Crooks and Curley's wife are victims of loneliness, they desperately crave a companion. This creates a reason for them to act certain ways to find a friendship.

Crooks is lonely, and this is proven throughout the book when he shows a bitter side towards the men on the ranch. Although Crooks has lived on the ranch for a long time, he resorts to books as his only companion. He shows his emotions to the reader when he says, "You got George. You know he's goin' to come back. S'pose you didn't have nobody. S'pose you couldn't go into the bunk house and play rummy 'cause you was black" (72). He confesses his loneliness on the ranch. He is telling the others that he needs human interaction or company too. Everyone needs someone to talk to and be with; this is a source of comfort in a person's life. However, Crooks does not have this comfort. He is alienated due to his race, causing him seek a relationship desperately. Because Crooks is black, he's not allowed to eat, sleep, or even hang out with the other men on the ranch. We know this when he says, "Guys don't come into a colored man's room very much." (75). It shows he gets little to no visitors to give him company. It causes him to be bitter to anybody who approaches him. This is clear to the reader when Crooks says, "You got no right to come in my room. This here's my room. Nobody got any right in here but me" (68) to Lennie. His isolation turned him bitter and twisted. He adopted a strong animosity towards the men on the ranch. When people are alone, they try their best to be accepted by others. However, it can be exceptionally hard if they are discriminated, whether it be because of race, gender, sexuality. But if they get continuously rejected, they can get a defensive hostility towards the world.

Clearly, the reader learns that Crooks lashes out and is cold to the men on the ranch because of the discrimination and loneliness he has dealt with. In addition to Crooks, Curley's wife also seeks a friendship to help her fill the void of loneliness that is in her life. However, she expresses her loneliness in a different way than Crooks. It is clear when Curley's wife says, "Seems like they ain't none of them cares how I gotta live" (88), we learn that she feel upset that no one is affectionate towards her. When Candy says, "I seen her give Slim the eye"

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(28), the reader learns how Curley's wife acts towards the men on the ranch. Because of the loneliness, Curley's wife is seductive to the other men on the ranch, most likely believing the fact that no one would simply care for her like a friend. Nonetheless, most of the men still perceive her negatively, and we learn this when George says, "Jesus what a tramp" (32). Even though Curley's wife flaunts her beauty and uses that to get attention, she still feels unwanted by the men on the ranch. Feeling unappreciated can affect one deeply. They become desperate to find someone that is willing to care and interact with them. Therefore, the reader learns that Curley's wife resorts to a way of trying to seduce the men on the ranch because she feels isolated.

In the book *Of Mice and Men*, Crooks and Curley's wife are the most alienated characters. This makes them yearn for a friendship to help them be emotionally stable by acting in certain ways. Some people may believe that the loneliness did not affect Crooks and Curley's wife; however, it is clear that Crooks and Curley's wife are the loneliest characters and they desperately want a strong bond with someone in their life, and they tried to find that person by acting out. Crooks is lonely, he feels the need to have a companion, knowing it is necessary to every human. However, that is not the case for him because of his race, and he lashes out in spite of it. Curley's wife is also lonely; she is not someone the men on the ranch want to be around, causing her to use seductive ways to achieve a bond. Unfortunately, the men on the ranch still continuously ignore her, making her still feel isolated.

Friends are crucial to people, they need it to survive. However, when they do not have that relationship, it can bring emotional distress, as well as desperation to find someone that will be their friend. In order to avoid this, people need to surround themselves with people that will support and care for them.

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