

Name _____

Friendship and Dreams: A Summary of 'Of Mice and Men'

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. Loneliness is a prevalent theme in "Of Mice and Men." Characters like Candy, Crooks, and Curley's wife experience profound isolation. Candy is lonely after losing his dog, Crooks is isolated due to racism, and Curley's wife is trapped in a loveless marriage. They seek companionship but often fail to connect with others. George and Lennie's friendship stands out as a rare bond that counters the pervasive loneliness on the ranch.
2. Candy's relationship with his dog mirrors the larger themes of companionship and vulnerability. His dog, once his loyal companion, becomes old and useless, leading to its euthanization. This foreshadows the fate of other characters and highlights the transitory nature of relationships in the story.
3. George's decision to take Lennie's life is a heartbreaking moral dilemma. He chooses to protect Lennie from a brutal and vengeful mob, sparing him from suffering and ensuring a peaceful end. The weight of this choice reflects the sacrifices made for friendship and the harsh realities of their world.
4. The title "Of Mice and Men" is derived from Robert Burns' poem and suggests the unpredictability of life and the inability to control one's destiny. It reflects the theme of dreams and their fragility, as well as the challenges faced by the characters in a world where even the best-laid plans can go awry.

