Of Mice and Men

John Steinbeck

Context

J OHN STEINBECK WAS BORN IN 1902 In Salinas, California, a region that became the setting for much of his fiction, including Of Mice and Men. As a teenager, he spent his summers working as a hired hand on neighboring ranches, where his experiences of rural California and its people impressed him deeply. In 1919, he enrolled at Stanford University, where he studied intermittently for the next six years before finally leaving without having earned a degree. For the next five years, he worked as a reporter and then as caretaker for a Lake Tahoe estate while he completed his first novel, an adventure story called Cup of Gold, which was published in 1929. Critical and commercial success did not come for another six years, when Tortilla Flat was published in 1935, at which point Steinbeck was finally able to support himself entirely with his writing.

In his acceptance speech for the 1962 Nobel Prize in literature, Steinbeck said:

... the writer is delegated to declare and to celebrate man's proven capacity for greatness of heart and spirit—for gallantry in defeat, for courage, compassion and love. In the endless war against weakness and despair, these are the bright raily flags of hope and of emulation. I hold that a writer who does not passionately believe in the perfectibility of man has no dedication nor any membership in literature.

Steinbeck's best-known works deal intimately with the plight of desperately poor California wanderers, who, despite the cruelity of their circumstances, often triumph spiritually. Always politically involved, Steinbeck followed Tortilla Flat with three novels about the plight of the California laboring class, beginning with In Dubious Battle in 1936. Of Mice and Men followed in 1937, and The Grapes of Wristh won the 1940 Pulitzer Prize and became Steinbeck's most famous novel. Steinbeck sets Of Mice and Men against the backdrop of Depression-era America. The economic conditions of the time victimized workers like George and Lennie, whose quest for land was thwarted by cruel and powerful forces beyond their control, but whose tragedy was marked, ultimately, by steadfast compassion and love.

Critical opinions of Steinbeck's work have always been mixed. Both stylistically and in his emphasis on manhood and male relationships, which figure heavily in Of Mice and Men, Steinbeck was strongly influenced by his contemporary, Ernest Hemingway. Even though Steinbeck was hailed as a great author in the 1930s and 1940s, and won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1962, many critics have faulted his works for being superficial, sentimental, and overly moralistic. Though Of Mice and Men is regarded by some as his greatest achievement, many critics argue that it suffers from one-dimensional characters and an excessively deterministic plot, which renders the lesson of the novel more important than the people in it.

Steinbeck continued writing throughout the 1940s and 1950s. He went to Europe during World War II, then worked in Hollywood both as a filmmaker and a scriptwriter for such movies as Viva Zapata! (1950). His important later works include East of Eden (1952), a sprawling family saga set in California, and Travels with Charley (1962), a journalistic account of his tour of America. He died in New York City in 1968.

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Lena Shamblin

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Of Mice And Men Sparknotes Chapter 3: Bestsellers in 2023 The year 2023 has witnessed a remarkable surge in literary brilliance, with numerous compelling novels enthralling the hearts of readers worldwide. Lets delve into the realm of popular books, exploring the captivating narratives that have captivated audiences this year. Of Mice And Men Sparknotes Chapter 3 : Colleen Hoovers "It Ends with Us" This poignant tale of love, loss, and resilience has gripped readers with its raw and emotional exploration of domestic abuse. Hoover skillfully weaves a story of hope and healing, reminding us that even in the darkest of times, the human spirit can prevail. Uncover the Best: Taylor Jenkins Reids "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" This spellbinding historical fiction novel unravels the life of Evelyn Hugo, a Hollywood icon who defies expectations and societal norms to pursue her dreams. Reids absorbing storytelling and compelling characters transport readers to a bygone era, immersing them in a world of glamour, ambition, and self-discovery. Discover the Magic: Delia Owens "Where the Crawdads Sing" This mesmerizing coming-of-age story follows Kya Clark, a young woman who grows up alone in the marshes of North Carolina. Owens spins a tale of resilience, survival, and the transformative power of nature, entrancing readers with its evocative prose and mesmerizing setting. These popular novels represent just a fraction of the literary treasures that have emerged in 2023. Whether you seek tales of romance, adventure, or personal growth, the world of literature offers an abundance of captivating stories waiting to be discovered. The novel begins with Richard Papen, a bright but troubled young man, arriving at Hampden College. Richard is immediately drawn to the group of students who call themselves the Classics Club. The club is led by Henry Winter, a brilliant and charismatic young man. Henry is obsessed with Greek mythology and philosophy, and he quickly draws Richard into his world. The other members of the Classics Club are equally as fascinating. Bunny Corcoran is a wealthy and spoiled young man who is always looking for a good time. Charles Tavis is a quiet and reserved young man who is deeply in love with Henry. Camilla Macaulay is a beautiful and intelligent young woman who is drawn to the power and danger of the Classics Club. The students are all deeply in love with Morrow, and they are willing to do anything to please him. Morrow is a complex and mysterious figure, and he seems to be manipulating the students for his own purposes. As the students become more involved with Morrow, they begin to commit increasingly dangerous acts. The Secret History is a exceptional and suspenseful novel that will keep you guessing until the very end. The novel is a warning tale about the dangers of obsession and the power of evil.

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