

Lennie and George, migratory workers in the California fields, cherish the dream of having a little farm of their own where as Lennie's refrain has it, they can "Live of the fatta o' the land." George yearns for his own place where he could bring in his own crops instead of working for another. A place where he could get what comes up from the ground for himself. He wants the full reward of his own labor. He seeks independence, and to leave his dependent life completely. These two men seek a status in society, they feel as though they need to belong, and their dream of having a farm gives them that feeling that someday their satisfaction will come. Unfortunately our dreams don't always coincide with reality.

George and Lennie are two incongruent characters, where one is small, alert, and clever; the other huge, and powerful, however, bears the mind of a child. They compliment each other in many ways, but deep within they have an inseparable relationship. "Sometimes you just get used to a guy." The two have grown together, and they live a part of each other. George, being the leader of the two, has the responsibility of caring for Lennie, who is much like a child in his ways, however, far more dangerous than his inner character reflects. George has to keep a watchful eye over Lennie, for without constant supervision, Lennie would inadvertently kill anything he touches.

George has towards Lennie the tenderness and protective instinct which most have towards the helpless, the disadvantaged, and the dependent. George has encountered and embraced a responsibility, a social responsibility, and a humanitarian responsibility. It is to take care of, protect, save from hurt, the dim-witted, loyal, and devoted Lennie.

George constantly repeats how Lennie is a burden to him, but as George speaks, and his character becomes plain, you know that life would be totally meaningless and empty, for him without Lennie to take care of. Also he has his emotional compensation in Lennie's pathetic and dog-like devotion to him.

Lennie is George's doom, which he accepts in part because he knows that Lennie cannot live without him and in part because of love- even Lennie's poor defective love is precious to him. Year after year they go on cherishing the dream of someday settling down on a little farm together, where Lennie will tend the rabbits, and life for them will have reached their peak.

Lennie kills without hate. Lennie's actions are responsive only. He only reacts when something triggers him to. He never instigates his actions. The pup bit him, therefor he hit the dog. Curley beat on him, therefor Lennie crushed the bones of his hand. People die simply because of his strength. Lennie had a condition that the others could never understand. This is why Lennie had to die himself, simply because within the society of man, he is abnormal and weak, and would never stand a chance.

At the climax of the novel, Lennie's accidental killing of the women shatters the dream shared by George Candy, and for a short while, Crooks and died with Lennie. Rather than see Lennie tragically abused, and rather than let someone else kill him, (as Candy let another kill his dog and afterward regretted having done so himself.) George must perform the deed himself. He alone has the right, for he and Lennie have become one, made so by love and a shared dream. They are responsible for each other. The implication here is that man without hope and love, without a dream, is perhaps

better off dead. The concluding pages to the novel find themselves in the same setting as the beginning, where they recite for the final time, their impossible dream which finished when the trigger was pulled. What was done had to be done, and the story concludes when both God and man symbolically forgive the murder when the Godly words of Slim declare "You hadda George, I swear you hadda."