

Mice and Men: Hopes and Dreams destroyed

In the novella 'Of Mice and Men' John Steinbeck successfully destroys the hopes and dreams of the reader and of humanity as a whole when George is forced to shoot Lennie. In the book George invents a fantasy in which they both have their own farm and Lennie, in particular, is in charge of the rabbits. This keeps Lennie and George happy and they frequently talk about this dream and hope they can live it with each other. Then Candy gets involved in the dream by promising to provide the funding it if he can come along too and be involved.

The reader's hopes and dreams are partially destroyed when Lennie kills Curley's wife, after she explains how she only ended up on the ranch because she had to get away from her mother who would not let her pursue her dream of becoming an actress. Her situation went from bad to worse when she married Curley and lived on the ranch, as everyone refused to show her any sort of affection or emotion as Curley was so protective over her and they were worried it would get them in trouble. "I wasn't gonna stay no place where I couldn't get nowhere or make something of myself, an' where they stole your letters". This shows Curley's wife's hopes and dreams were destroyed by both her mother, Curley and the cruelty of the world, and partially Lennie when he kills her. This not only shows the destruction of Curley's wife's dreams, but that innocence cannot prevail in a world as cruel as the one they live in.

When George and Candy are standing in the barn contemplating what to do about the death of Curley's wife Candy asks George whether this means they can no longer get their own place. George's answer causes the reader as well as the characters of the novella to come to the realisation that the dream is dead and the hope of the characters is lost. "You an' me can get that little place, can't we, George?" to which George replies "I think I knowed from the very first. I think I knowed we'd never do her". This confirms to both Candy and the reader that the dream is over, and it also marks the point where George not only knows it won't happen, he also gives up.

The reader's as well as the character's dreams are also destroyed when George shoots Lennie. George shooting Lennie shows just how much he cares about him, he knows he must be the one to do it. In the novella the only character who truly gets to live their dream is Lennie before he dies when George tells Lennie to look over the river and and imagine the farm, the animals and the alfalfa patch. "Look acrost river, Lennie an' I'll tell you so you can almost see it". This shows George

knows this is as close to the dream as Lennie will ever get. He gives up hope on it becoming a reality because he knows even if they run and manage to get away they will end up in some other job and Lennie will get in more trouble and they will never achieve their dream due to the fact that the world is a harsh place for someone like Lennie to get by.

John Steinbeck shatters the hopes and dreams of the reader as well as humanity as a whole in the very last line. "Now what the hell ya suppose is eatin' them two guys?". Carlson says this about George and Slim, George having just shot his own friend. This shows how the other characters on the ranch are unable to sympathise towards someone who has just shot his own friend. This also shows just how much of a lack of empathy Carlson has and can't understand George's sorrow. He has no idea what it's like to have a close friend and can never understand the relationship between George and Lennie.

Through each of these events explored, John Steinbeck successfully destroys the hopes and dreams of the characters of the novella, those of the reader and of humanity as a whole. He does this through the death of Curley's wife, George shooting Lennie and the final line of the book. Our hope that George and Lennie will achieve their dream and get their own land that was introduced to us at the start of the novella is now destroyed. All the innocence of the world has been destroyed leaving us with little hope for the people on the ranch.