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English Literature 9

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Companionship in Of Mice and Men

Of Mice and Men is a novel about life during the great depression centered around the main characters, George and Lennie. One main aspect the book focuses on is on companionship and how the absence and presence of it can affect individuals and one's sense of social responsibility. The companionships between characters in Of Mice and Men are used in order to convey this. This includes of the companionship between George and Lennie, the main characters in Of Mice and Men, and through the other characters in the ranch who lack this sense of companionship.

In Of Mice and Men, it can be seen how the presence of companionship can give people hope, a purpose, a goal in life. ““Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world ... They ain't got nothing to look ahead to' ... 'With us it ain't like that. We got a future. We got somebody to talk to that gives a damn about us.' ... 'Because I got you to look after me, and you got me to look after you, and that's why'” (13-14). In this quote, Lennie and George are sitting together and have started talking about their dream, which was created by their companionship. Since it's a common goal, and they can combine their power to achieve that goal. It makes the dream seem more plausible and overcomes the impossibility of the dream. Later in the story, a lonely and useless man named Candy also joins George and Lennie as part of their dream. It gave Candy a purpose, and made their common goal even more closer, making them work harder to try to achieve it. Because of social responsibility, they don't want to let each other down. The same can be observed with Crooks, who during his entire life, was looked down upon due to social discrimination, because he was black. Just being part of George, Lennie and Candy's dream overcame this, showing how companionship really is so powerful to overcome what society thinks of one.

In Of Mice and Men it can be seen how the absence of companionship can affect people, for them to not have

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a purpose in life. People who lack companionship's dreams and goals appear to be impossible without companionship, since they appear to be so far away. The book describes migrant workers as "... the loneliest guys in the world. They got no family. They don't belong no place. They come to a ranch an' work up a stake and then they go into town and blow their stake, and the first thing you know they're poundin' their tail on some other ranch. They got nothing to look ahead to'" (13-14). Migrant workers work alone, and there is this sense of emptiness inside them. That they're in this limbo of working, then busting all of their money for their own temporary joy, how their dream is ever so impossible they never try to achieve it. Which shows how really all migrant workers have no purpose or goal to strive for, since there's no reason to strive for it without companionship. There is no social responsibility. Along with this, it is also shown that the absence of companionship will make people seek for companionship, to seek for a purpose, to make their dream plausible, to try and achieve their dream. As mentioned earlier, this can be seen with Candy and Crooks being part of George and Lennie's dream, which was created by their companionship. This just shows how much the absence of companionship can affect people and to seek for the presence of companionship, and how the presence of companionship can affect people in such ways to give people a purpose in life, to give people social responsibility.

Steinbeck uses the presence of companionship in *Of Mice and Men* to show how it can be so powerful to not only overcome the impossibility of dreams, but to also make violence and death seem peaceful. This can be ultimately seen at the end of the book, how Lennie's bad habits all lead up to the point where he accidentally killed a woman. Lennie was running away from what he had done and hid. When George found Lennie, he talked to Lennie one last time about their dream, and when immersed in that, George killed Lennie painlessly, to let Lennie rest in peace in their dreams. It was their companionship which gave George the responsibility to end Lennie's life, not to make the same

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mistake Candy did, that he started and he should end it out of his own heart. From their companionship, George wanted to stop the pain and suffering Lennie is going through and would have gone through if it were Curley who killed Lennie. To stop the violence and death Lennie had caused, to stop it from going any further for their own good. To end it once and for all, once and for all in peace, in their dreams. At that still moment of Lennie being immersed in his dreams, the companionship was so strong, even though death was right around the corner, there was a sense of peacefulness, tranquility, as if violence and death didn't exist. As if their dream was right there, right in their grasp, which really does show the beauty and the power of companionship, to even overcome such things as death, and to make it even appear peaceful.

Steinbeck uses companionship in *Of Mice and Men* to show the effects of the absence of *Of Mice and Men*, how without companionship we really have no goal to achieve for, and our dreams appear to be impossible to achieve. Whereas the presence of companionship overcomes the impossibility of our dreams, and gives us social responsibility to help each other out, to not let each other down and to stay together. The power of companionship can be seen to be so powerful to make what would have been a heartless death, into a peaceful, tranquil death. Making death not even seem like actual death, but resting in peace. All of this really does show how powerful companionship can really be.