BOOK RESUME: OF MICE AND MEN

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Over seventy-five years since its first publication, Steinbeck’s tale of commitment, loneliness, hope, and loss remains one of America’s most widely read and taught novels. An unlikely pair, George and Lennie, two migrant workers in California during the Great Depression, grasp for their American Dream. They hustle work when they can, living a hand-to-mouth existence. For George and Lennie have a plan: to own an acre of land and a shack they can call their own. When they land jobs on a ranch in the Salinas Valley, the fulfillment of their dream seems to be within their grasp. But even George cannot guard Lennie from the provocations, nor predict the consequences of Lennie’s unswerving obedience to the things George taught him.

Of Mice and Men represents an experiment in form, which Steinbeck described as “a kind of playable novel, written in a novel form but so scened and set that it can be played as it stands.” A rarity in American letters, it achieved remarkable success as a novel, a Broadway play, and three acclaimed films.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

"Of Mice and Men is a thriller, a gripping tale running to novelette length that you will not set down until it is finished. It is more than that; but it is that. . . . In sure, raucous, vulgar Americanism, Steinbeck has touched the quick in his little story."
—The New York Times

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- Educator’s Guide
- Lesson Plan
- Split by Race and Wealth, but Discovering Similarities as They Study Steinbeck

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

- Principal reverses Steinbeck book ban (1997)
- California pushing back on school book bans (2023)
- Dubuque School District reconsiders removing well-known books from curriculum after public outcry (2022)
- John Steinbeck’s Of Mice and Men survives censorship attempt in Idaho (2015)