

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

1. George and Lennie have no family link – what do you imagine is the basis of their friendship?
2. Who bears the guilt for Curley's wife's death?
3. What could George have done differently to save either Lennie or himself?
4. The title refers to a well-known couplet in a poem by Robert Burns:

“The best-laid plans of mice and men / go oft astray”.

Is the tragic fate of George and Lennie inevitable?



REEL READERS
Future PRESENTATIONS

Enchanted April (PG)
Tuesday, April 27
at 6:00 p.m.

Rabbit-Proof Fence (PG)
Thursday, May 20
at 6:00 p.m.

FREE Resume Workshop
with Barbara Safari
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14
2 - 3:00 p.m.
Library Multipurpose Room

Don't forget to sign-up for

Splash Read Ages 1-12
 TEENS & TWEENS Make Waves Read Ages 12-19
 Water Your Mind Read Ages 20 & Up

2010 SUMMER READING

REEL READERS
Read the Book! See the Movie!
FREE ADMIT ONE

OF MICE AND MEN
Wednesday
March 24 at 6pm
Library Multipurpose Room

How to become a Reel Reader

1. **Read the book**, if you have time. Each month, prior to the movie event, copies of the selected title are available in the Farmington Library's rotunda.
2. **Join us for the movie even if you haven't read the book**. Bring your own carry-out dinner to enjoy while you watch the movie in the Farmington Library's Multipurpose Room.
3. **Talk about the book and film**. Following the movie, you are invited to participate in a guided discussion.
4. **You might win fabulous prizes** when you attend Reel Reader events!

If the movie is not suitable for younger children, activities will be available for them at the library.

“We have a dream.
Someday we'll have a little house and a couple of acres.
A place to call home.”



John Steinbeck Biography

John Steinbeck was born February 27, 1902, in Salinas, California, and died nearly sixty-seven years later on the opposite coast, in New York, his life and work having spanned the American continent. He is considered to be among the best chroniclers of the Great Depression of the 1930s, represented by the trilogy of novels from that decade: *In Dubious Battle*, *Of Mice and Men*, and, most notably, *The Grapes of Wrath*.

His earliest literary love was quite different: Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, the medieval collection of stories about the legendary King Arthur and his Round Table. Steinbeck's mother, Olive, a school teacher, read to him from the Bible and from books such as *Treasure Island* and *Robin Hood*. In adolescence he decided to be a writer himself, and after graduating from high school he attended Stanford University, off and on, until he left in 1925 before completing his undergraduate degree.

As a young man he was variously employed as a hod-carrier, fruit-picker, apprentice painter, laboratory assistant, caretaker, surveyor, and reporter.

He finally moved to the Monterey Peninsula, near where he had grown up, to pursue a writing



career that would eventually produce eighteen novels, two collections of short fiction, eleven works of nonfiction, and six screenplays.

Throughout his long and controversial career, John Steinbeck extolled the virtues of the American dream while he warned against what he believed to be the evils of an increasingly materialistic American society. His novel *In Dubious Battle* (1936), about a strike of agricultural workers organized by two communists, was attacked as being too sympathetic to unions and labor organizers.

Of Mice and Men (1937) drew on Steinbeck's experience during high school working as a field hand on local ranches near Salinas. Steinbeck collaborated with playwright George Kaufman to produce a theatrical version of the book, which won the New York Drama Critic Circle's Award.

The Grapes of Wrath (1939) is considered the definitive novel of the Great Depression. The review in *Time* characterized it as Steinbeck's "strongest and most durable novel, a concentration of [his] artistic and moral vision." It was the only one of Steinbeck's novels to win the Pulitzer Prize, in 1940.

In 1962 his vast and influential literary production was honored when he was awarded a Nobel Prize in Literature.



Late in his life, he returned to the literature he had loved as a boy, writing *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights* (published posthumously), and *The Short Reign of Pippin IV*, a fantasy about medieval France.

One of his last books was a nonfiction account of his trip from Maine to California, accompanied by his poodle, Charley – *Travels With Charley in Search of America*.

Steinbeck was a uniquely American writer, the critics contended, whose distrust and anger at society was offset by his faith and love for the land and its people.

John Steinbeck is perhaps best characterized by the description in his Nobel Prize award: "...he holds his position as an independent expounder of the truth with an unbiased instinct for what is genuinely American, be it good or bad."

SUMMARY:

Of Mice and Men is set on a large ranch in the Salinas Valley of 1930s California. The story centers on two itinerant ranch hands — Lennie Small, a strong, but child-like mentally disabled man, and George Milton, who looks after Lennie and dreams of owning a farm. Their unusual relationship is one of mutual need: Lennie needs George to restrain and direct him; and George, though frustrated by Lennie's simplistic urges and their complications, feels a loyalty and obligation to him. Lennie's part of the dream, which he never tires of hearing George describe, is merely to tend to (and touch) soft rabbits on the farm.

Driven from job to job by the failure of Lennie to adapt to social norms, they find work on a ranch, where they feel they have a chance to earn some money toward their goal of having their own farm. The two men meet a coworker who offers his savings to help finance the purchase of a farm, and their prospects brighten. Before their dream can be realized, however, Lennie and George's plans fall victim to forces beyond their control.