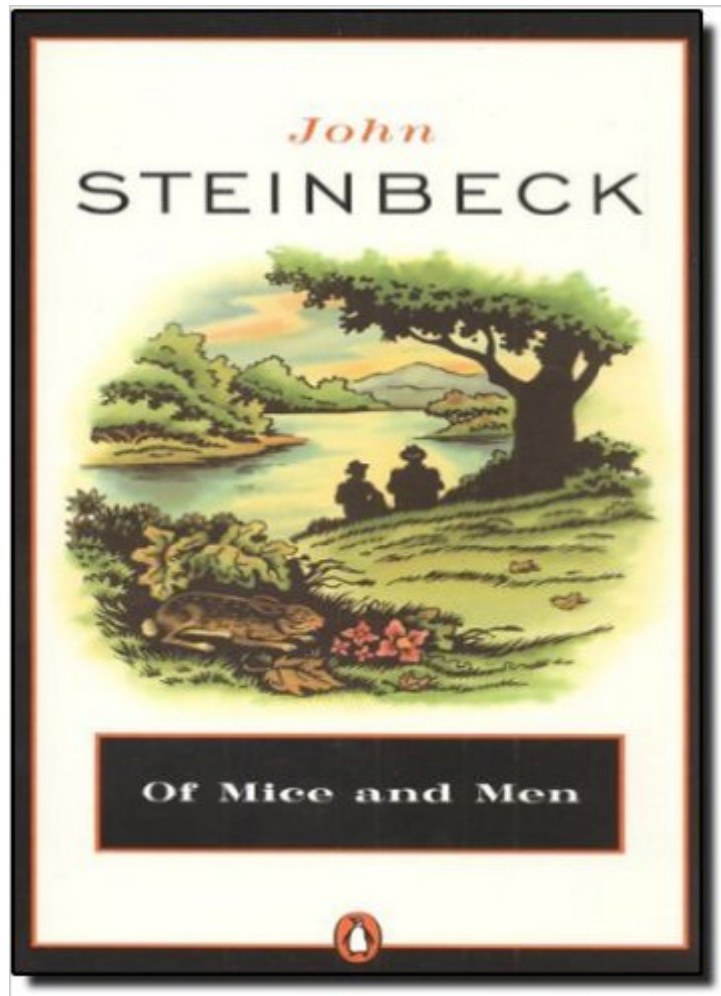




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Of Mice And Men



Synopsis

A controversial tale of friendship and tragedy during the Great Depression— They are an unlikely pair: George is "small and quick and dark of face"; Lennie, a man of tremendous size, has the mind of a young child. Yet they have formed a "family," clinging together in the face of loneliness and alienation. Laborers in California's dusty vegetable fields, 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 of a flirtatious woman, nor predict the consequences of Lennie's unswerving obedience to the things George taught him. "A thriller, a gripping tale . . . that you will not set down until it is finished. Steinbeck has touched the quick." —The New York Times

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Customer Reviews

—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
—“Brutality and tenderness mingle in these strangely moving pages. . . . The reader is fascinated by a certainty of approaching doom.—Chicago Tribune
—A short tale of much power and beauty. Mr. Steinbeck has contributed a small masterpiece to the modern tough-tender school of American fiction.—Times Literary Supplement [London] --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

John Steinbeck, born in Salinas, California, in 1902, grew up in a fertile agricultural valley, about twenty-five miles from the Pacific Coast. Both the valley and the coast would serve as settings for some of his best fiction. In 1919 he went to Stanford University, where he intermittently enrolled in literature and writing courses until he left in 1925 without taking a degree. During the next five years he supported himself as a laborer and journalist in New York City, all the time working on his first novel, *Cup of Gold* (1929). After marriage and a move to Pacific Grove, he published two California books, *The Pastures of Heaven* (1932) and *To a God Unknown* (1933), and worked on short stories later collected in *The Long Valley* (1938). Popular success and financial security came only with *Tortilla Flat* (1935), stories about Monterey's paisanos. A ceaseless experimenter throughout his career, Steinbeck changed courses regularly. Three powerful novels of the late 1930s focused on the California laboring class: *In Dubious Battle* (1936), *Of Mice and Men* (1937), and the book considered by many his finest, *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939). *The Grapes of Wrath* won both the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize in 1939. Early in the 1940s, Steinbeck became a filmmaker with *The Forgotten Village* (1941) and a serious student of marine biology with *Sea of Cortez* (1941). He devoted his services to the war, writing *Bombs Away* (1942) and the controversial play-novelle *The Moon is Down* (1942). *Cannery Row* (1945), *The Wayward Bus* (1948), another experimental drama, *Burning Bright* (1950), and *The Log from the Sea of Cortez* (1951) preceded publication of the monumental *East of Eden* (1952), an ambitious saga of the Salinas Valley and his own family's history. The last decades of his life were spent in New York City and Sag Harbor with his third wife, with whom he traveled widely. Later books include *Sweet Thursday* (1954), *The Short Reign of Pippin IV: A Fabrication* (1957), *Once There Was a War* (1958), *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961), *Travels with Charley in Search of America* (1962), *America and Americans* (1966), and the posthumously published *Journal of a Novel: The East of Eden Letters* (1969), *Viva Zapata!* (1975), *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights* (1976), and *Working Days: The Journals of The Grapes of Wrath* (1989). Steinbeck received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1962, and, in 1964, he was presented with the United States Medal of Freedom by President Lyndon B. Johnson. Steinbeck died in New York in 1968. Today, more than thirty years after his death, he remains one of America's greatest writers and cultural figures.

This review is a work in progress. I have the 1953 book with an introduction by Joseph Henry Jackson. I found the introduction by Mr. Jackson to be very instructive and enjoyable. However it may be for more a student than the casual reader. My book is from The Viking Press. It contains six

short novels. They are mostly chronological in the order that John Steinbeck published them. The one exception is that the first short novel in the book is "Tortilla Flat". The second is "The Red Pony". These were composed, I think, in the opposite order. Mr. Jackson explains this. These are followed by "Of Mice and Men", "The Moon Is Down", "Cannery Row", and "The Pearl". I read "The Red Pony First". There is a lot in "The Red Pony" which reminds me "Of Mice and Men". It is episodic. The first episode is "The Gift", which is about a child Jody, and his pony. It is beautiful, poignant, and ultimately painful. The second episode is "The Great Mountains". It actually is about a visitor to the same ranch that is the setting for first story. Jody and his family are in this story, along with an elderly visitor. The next episode is "The Promise" which is, more or less, a sequel to the first story. It is somewhat painful. The last episode is "The Leader of The People" which is a bittersweet story about a senior citizen member of the same family at the ranch. It is my personal favorite episode. I completely enjoyed this novella "Of Mice And Men". It is a relatively short work. It was written in 1937, before *The Grapes of Wrath*. I had previously read *The Grapes of Wrath*. I enjoyed this book more. I have very little formal education in regard to literature. So my opinion may be very faulty. Anyway, I felt this work was a more artistic work than *The Grapes of Wrath*. This work reminded me more of Ernest Hemingway. I was very impressed. As is common with many shorter works, the author leaves a lot of questions unanswered. The reader is left to speculate why certain issues develop and are resolved in certain manners. I felt all the aspects of the relationship between George and Lenny were slightly unclear. The book ended with me wishing I knew more about George. My guess is that is intentional on the part of Mr. Steinbeck. I would like to note that I purchased this "Of Mice and Men" on Kindle and at the same time purchased the audiobook narrated by Gary Sinise. I felt Mr. Sinise was really excellent and I highly recommend the audiobook version as read by Mr. Sinise. Mr. Sinise really added to the pleasure of the reading experience with his very professional performance.

After watching an earlier episode of "The Walking Dead," many of the comments mentioned that the story line of the episode mimicked events from "Of Mice and Men." Having never read the book myself, I decided to download the short novella for fun. The story is about two men named George and Lennie as they try to find a way to make a living in California as farmhands. The pair are forced to be nomads due to the instability of Lennie, whom George takes it upon himself to care for. The only thing that keeps them both going is their dream of having a farm of their own one day, one where Lennie dreams of taking care of the rabbits, but the pair find out that this tiny beacon of hope may not be enough to get them through their current job. The introduction informs the reader that

this novella was not meant to be historically accurate, but rather an expression of the feelings and lives of the men who wandered to California from the dust bowl in search of work. As an emotional expression, it works very well and leaves the reader feeling the hopelessness engulfing the lives of the men just trying to find a way to get by. It's short, sad, sobering and well worth the short time it takes to read.

Steinbeck's writing is beautiful, and the story is compelling. I wish I could say the same about the book itself. It is one of the most horribly formatted published books I've ever seen. Dialogue is broken in mid-sentence and continued on another line as if it were a new paragraph. This sort of thing is scattered throughout the book. Whoever did the pre-press on this Brawtley edition should be strung up by the thumbs. I would be shamed to admit it if I had done it.

It's not just the water snake that struggles to keep his head above water.

Steinbeck's classic 1937 novella *OF MICE AND MEN*, a book that has gone from realistic to mandatory to transcendent, has often been a gateway to the world of John Steinbeck; the world of the Salinas Valley, the world of hard-scrabble individuals with unknown motives and silent wishes. The story of George and Lennie is as familiar to even the most casual of readers, right up there with the travails of Scout and Boo, or Rhett and Scarlett. The story of two bindlestiffs during the Great Depression who find work on a ranch was my personal entry to the world of Steinbeck, a journey that wandered through *GRAPES OF WRATH*, *CANNERY ROW* and *EAST OF EDEN*.

Steinbeck's mastery of California in the early 20th century, much like Updike's New England or Welty's Mississippi, is a resource and a gift to American Literature. With a limited number of characters, Steinbeck paints a beguiling tapestry of life on the ranch, with memorable characters such as Slim, the muleskinner, Candy, the defeated caretaker and Crooks, the African-American stable-hand, whose drop of his guarded demeanor is one of the many heartbreaking scenes in a character study of intimate proportions. As George and Lennie reach their inevitable denouement the heart leaps deeper in the throat, signifying a chilling wind across the valley.

I love this heart warming tear jerking book. I read it for a class assignment. We discussed each well defined characters and applied it to psychology. This is a short story that took me from curiosity to oh my goodness in 2 sentences. It has some twist and carries a solid plot to the end. The author had a way of grabbing my attention. Also to make me look at my own emotions, the way I think, and

how I react toward others. I highly recommend this book for a short story and to find a sense of hope.

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