
A Character Analysis Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck - Curley's Wife

Of Mice and Men's Curly's Wife: An Analysis

In the 1930's, rights for minorities were incredibly limited. White women were barely allowed to vote at this time, and the expectations set for women were oppressive and demanding. If a married man were on a ranch full of women, many may say he cannot help but look and flirt, for there is absolutely no one else to speak to if he is not to speak with the opposite sex. This is the situation Curly's wife was landed in, labeling her "tart." Curly's wife's taboo promiscuity was an act of rebellion from the expectations of her time. The 1930's oft had high supply of the double standards you see in this novel. Women had to gain a full education for the same pay as a man with an elementary level education. While many women worked, they were still expected to attend to domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning, and nurturing the needs of offspring, while men were allowed to relax after a long day of work. Socially, workingwomen were frowned upon, seeing them as stealing money from men and abandoning their children. Curly's wife lived in the midst of this era, a confusing one for women. Her sexual rebellion was her personal way of breaking from these shafts. Her promiscuity was a response to her own desires as well as a way to gain power.

The Analysis behind Curly's Wife's Promiscuity

Being a victim of high yet empty expectations of fame and fortune that was common in the rising age of modern media, Curly's wife was encouraged to settle instead for marriage to a financially stable man, socially, a good lifestyle choice for the time. It is highly likely that due to the feelings of shame from her so called failure, she did not dare risk a similar situation of unsuccessful sorts, so she settled in with a cushy job and a thick skull named Curly. Her lack of commitment to Curly is due to the fact that she only married him because it was socially acceptable. Without any platonic relationship or spark, their marriage resulted in a sort of fatal un-attraction to Curly, and an attraction to the other men.

Curly's wife, though, was not attracted to these raggedy ranchmen. A mental child, an old man missing appendages, a dark skinned stable prince were not likely to be the match for a bombshell such as the wife. As we saw, she really did not want to go any further than hair touching with Lennie, proving her thirsty title of "tart" wrong. What she really sought was the power that lust and attraction brings over men. In no other way was she able to have power as that over her male counterparts, so her promiscuity translated to power. Her involvement with Lennie is not to blame for Lennie's death, or her death. Although she put herself in the compromising situation with Lennie, she did not expect or intend for any ending as such. Lennie isn't to blame either, as he simply thought he was protecting her from punishment of being with him alone. The only one to blame for Lennie's death would be the very angry and jealous Curly.

Concluding Statements

Curly's wife only sought survival in her nuclear marriage on the ranch. Using her sexuality and

body for power acted as a way for her to keep her head above water in the man's world she lived in. By using the only thing she can barely claim as her own property, her body, she seeks a bit of freedom from her dull marriage and cocky spouse. She is not to blame for any deaths within this novel, nor was she entirely at fault for being the tart she was. Simply, she attempted to keep her head above water in her man-packed life, resulting in two awful tragedies.

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