

Student Essay on Of Mice and Men and To a Mouse: A Comparison

Of Mice and Men and To a Mouse: A Comparison by John Steinbeck

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Essay

"Of Mice and Men" by John Steinbeck was named after Robert Burns' poem "To a Mouse." The line the name comes from, "the best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley", summarises one of the principal themes of the book, that everyone needs a dream, but no matter how well planned or thought out that dream is, it can go wrong. The tragedy of this story is that all of them do.

Robert Burns got his inspiration for this poem when he ploughed over a mouse's nest for the winter. In the poem Robert Burns sympathises with the mouse. He looks at the mouse's plans as similar to a human's. The mouse has been collecting for it's nest for months, and suddenly it is ruined, with no hope of it building a new one in time for winter, just as a human can have a dream and plan towards it, but it can still go wrong. This poem relates to the book in that one of the main themes in the story is that everyone needs something to look forward too, and in this novel, none of those dreams are realised. Even George and Lennie's dream, even though they were so close to living it, becomes impossible.

Lennie and George's plans are similar to that of the mouse in Robert Burns's poem. Along with Candy they are saving money for their own home, and nearly have enough to move in, but when George shoots Lennie their dream is over, and their plans have all come to nothing, just as the mouse's did. As the mouse cannot build a new home in time for winter, George and Candy cannot live their dream without Lennie. The mouse compares to Curley's wife, Crooks, Curley and Candy in that it's inevitable it will die without it's nest to protect it from the weather, as Curley's wife has already died, Crooks knows he will never realise his dream of being accepted, Curley can't live his dream of being a "real man" without a pretty wife on his arm and Candy is also facing the inevitable of having no home to go to when he loses his job.