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English 9-6

18 December 2012

### Of Men and Friendship

George and Lennie are standing in the forests right in front of the river. George wants Lennie to imagine their little place as if it was right there, right in front of the river. He makes Lennie believe that he has never gotten mad at him. George is trying to give Lennie the best moment he can experience before the tragedy occurs. George suddenly shoots Lennie. In the novel, *Of Mice and Men*, by John Steinbeck, George Milton is what is called a tramp because he travels from ranch to ranch to find work. He travels with his friend Lennie. George has a big dream of one day settling down and having a place of his own. The story takes place in the late 1930s on a small ranch in central California. George's friend is always getting himself into trouble, leaving George to always having to resolve his conflicts. As a result of this, George ends up taking the life away from his friend, not out of anger, but out of protection. George is a good friend to Lennie as shown by what his statements are, what his actions are, and what his thoughts are. Statements that are made have an enormous effect on friendships.

The first way that George is a good friend to Lennie is shown by the statements he makes. George and Lennie were by a green pool of water. Lennie began drinking big gulps from the pool. George had not noticed, at first, but when he did he told him, "Lennie, for God's sakes don't drink so much" (3). This statement made by George shows that he cares a great deal about Lennie. George does not want anything bad to happen to Lennie. Lennie is a grown man and should be looking after himself, but due to the reason that he is not "bright", and has the mind of

a child, George feels compelled to take care of him. George is a good friend to Lennie because he is always putting up with him and the foolish things that he does. George always has to look after his friend. George loves Lennie because he cares for him and protects him. If he did not love Lennie than he would not do any of the things he does for him. George is not being forced to care for Lennie. He protects him and cares for him because he wants to do those things for Lennie. The fact that George does not want anything bad to happen to Lennie shows that he values Lennie and their friendship. George takes a mouse away from Lennie and was explaining to him what their plan would be when they would arrive to the ranch. George said he would "... give [the boss] the work tickets, but [Lennie should not] say a word" (6). George knows that Lennie is not bright. George knows that Lennie's personality could cost Lennie his job. George tells Lennie not to say a word so that he does not mess up anything with the boss. George is trying to protect Lennie by not letting him say anything. He does not want Lennie to get rejected. George knows what a great guy Lennie is, but he is aware that their new boss might not have the same about opinion about Lennie. He wants Lennie to be successful which is why he wants Lennie to get the job. George tries really hard to keep Lennie out of trouble by trying to prevent it from happening or by getting him out of any existing trouble. George is very protective of Lennie. He also shows that protection by the things he does.

Another way that George is a good friend to Lennie is by his actions. George and Lennie were talking to the boss. George complimented Lennie by telling the boss that Lennie is "... a hell of a good worker... [and as strong] as a bull" (22). George complimented Lennie not only so that the boss got a good impression of Lennie but also because George himself thinks it is true. He knows that the boss was expecting a good worker. This quote shows that George is a good friend to Lennie because he could have just let Lennie fight his own battle with the boss but

instead it was as if George stood up for him when he gave Lennie the compliment. George was trying to hide Lennie's flaws. George knows that by covering up Lennie's bad qualities with his good qualities, will help Lennie get by. George seems like an older brother to Lennie because he is always trying to protect Lennie. George is always trying to prevent bad things from happening. George is stressed out of always having to look after Lennie and protecting Lennie, but he does not always show it because he wants the best for Lennie. In the last section of the novel, *Of Mice and Men*, Lennie has killed the boss's son's wife by accidently breaking her neck, so he ran off in the woods so that the woman's husband, Curley, would not find him and punish him. Curley wants to kill Lennie for killing his wife. George is prepared to kill Lennie himself. He finds Lennie in the woods and was starting to have a conversation with him. George mistakes some of the words in his sentence when he is talking to Lennie. The reason for his mistake was due to the fact that he is crying. George is hurting on the inside because he knows that killing Lennie is the best thing for them both. He knows that if he does not kill Lennie, then Curley will catch him, torture him, and then finally kill him anyway with a slow painful death full of suffering. George would rather Lennie to die an instant death with out pain or suffering involved then a slow agonizing death torturing him every second having his body beg for the pain and suffering to stop. Either way, it still hurts George on the inside to know that his best friend will soon be gone. He is aching inside because the person who knew him the most, with who he shared all of his dreams and feelings, will never come back. Lennie is more than a best friend to George. Lennie is like a brother or a son to George. Lennie is part of George's family or, at least, it seemed that way. Lennie is the most important person to George. It did not seem this way, but in some ways George depended on Lennie. He depended on Lennie to be there when he needed someone to talk to or share his dreams and feelings. He depended on him to be there for him. George cares

so much about Lennie that he would rather have Lennie's soul be at peace even if his own cannot. George is a good friend to Lennie because he has always cared more about Lennie than he has ever cared about himself. Not only do George's actions have a big impact on his friendship with Lennie, but so do his thoughts. The way that a person thinks about someone else really defines who that person is and what their point of view is.

George is a good friend to Lennie by what his thoughts are. Slim was talking to George about George traveling with Lennie. George told Slim that he thought "It's a lot nicer to go around with a guy you know" (35). This simple thought shows that George likes traveling with Lennie. He likes to be around Lennie because he feels better around him. The fact that George tells that to a guy he just met shows that he is not embarrassed of Lennie. He does not care what other people think of him. George feels comfortable around Lennie and comfortable enough to talk about their friendship. He enjoys Lennie's company. George is a good friend to Lennie because it does not matter what problems they are having or what problems Lennie causes for George because he still thinks that it is nice to be around him. Even though they get along pretty well, sometimes they did have their arguments. George got into an argument with Lennie. Lennie realized that it was his fault for the cause of the argument. He decided to tell George that he was leaving so that George would not have to deal with him anymore because he was such a bother. George then felt guilty for being a bit mean to him so he told Lennie "... [he] was jus' foolin' ... 'cause [he wants Lennie] to stay with [him] (13). If Lennie were to leave, it would give George an opportunity to actually live his life with out worries or cares. George realizes that, but because he cares so deeply and so much about Lennie, he tells Lennie to stay with him. By saying that it shows that it does not matter how much of a bother Lennie is, George is willing to put up with him because he loves him. George knows that Lennie will not be able to survive in the real world

because he thinks like a child and would not even know how to find food or take care of himself. Lennie depends on George for all those things. He knows that Lennie is weak. George does not want anything bad to happen to Lennie. Lennie is the most valuable thing that George has in life and he would be devastated if anything were to happen to Lennie. That is the reason why George looks after Lennie so much. George is a good friend to Lennie as shown by what his thoughts were.

As given by what he said, what his thoughts were, what his actions were, and what his statements were, George is a good friend to Lennie. It is believed by some readers that George is not a good friend to Lennie because he loses his temper and is harsh to Lennie. The only reason George loses his temper and becomes harsh to Lennie is because he cares about him. The same type of situation comes up when caring parents get mad at their child when the child does something wrong. The parents get mad because they care about the child and are worried. They worry because they love and care about the child. George feels the same emotions as those of a parent when he is with Lennie. The fact that George feels this makes him a good friend to Lennie. George is like a parent to Lennie which is why at times he develops the characteristics of a caring parent. George killed Lennie in the forest. He cannot believe his eyes. George's mind, as if telling him a secret, whispers to him telling him that he killed Lennie and that it was the best thing for him. On the other hand, his heart is screaming telling him the opposite. George stood there still in the forest helping Lennie to imagine their biggest dream. He stood there with a dry yet moist feeling in his throat not knowing what to say next because of the aching pain that endured his chest. He knew what he had to do. His small yet strong hands raised the gun. His hands began to sweat more and more leaving tiny droplets gliding down the gun. It seemed that even the gun was crying out of despair knowing that the deadly deed was to be done soon.

George pulled the trigger and the gun let out a loud cry of agony as it penetrated Lennie's body leaving him lifeless.

Works Cited

Steinbeck, John. *Of Mice and Men*. NY: Penguin Group, 1993.