CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA—In what she described as "the most emotional moment" of her academic life, University of Virginia sophomore communications major Grace Weaver sobbed openly upon concluding Steinbeck's seminal work of American fiction Of Mice And Men's Cliffs Notes early last week.

"This book has changed me in a way that only great literature summaries can," said Weaver, who was so shaken by the experience that she requested an extension on her English 229 essay. "The humanity displayed in the Character Flowchart really stirred something in me. And Lennie's childlike innocence was beautifully captured through the simple, ranch-hand slang words like 'mentally handicapped' and 'retarded.'"

Added Weaver: "I never wanted the synopsis to end."

Weaver, who formed an "instant connection" with Lennie's character-description paragraph, said she began to suspect the novel might end tragically after reading the fourth sentence which suggested the gentle giant's strength and fascination with soft things would "lead to his untimely demise."

"I was amazed at how attached to him I had become just from the critical commentary," said Weaver, still clutching the yellow-and-black-striped study guide. "When I got to the last sentence—'George shoots Lennie in the head,'—it seemed so abrupt. But I found out later that the 'ephemeral nature of life' is a major theme of the novel."

Weaver was assigned Of Mice And Men—a novel scholars have called "a masterpiece of austere prose" and "the most skillful example of American naturalism under 110 pages"—as part of her early twentieth-century fiction course, and purchased the Cliffs Notes from a cardboard rack at her local Barnes & Noble. John Whittier-Ferguson, her professor for the class, told reporters this was not the first time one of his students has expressed interest in the novel's plot summary.

"It's one of those universal American stories," said Ferguson after being informed of Weaver's choice to read the Cliffs Notes instead of the pocket-sized novel. "I look forward to skimming her essay on the importance of following your dreams and randomly assigning it a grade."

Though she completed the two-page brief synopsis in one sitting, Weaver said she felt strangely drawn into the plot overview and continued on, exploring the more fleshed-out chapter summaries.

"There's something to be said for putting in that extra time with a good story," Weaver said. "You just get more out of it. I'm also going to try to find that book about rabbits that George was always reading to Lennie, so that I can really understand that important allusion."

Within an hour of completing the cliffs notes, Weaver was already telling friends and classmates that Steinbeck was her favorite author, as well as reciting select quotations from the "Important Quotations" section for their benefit.

"When I read those quotes, found out which characters they were attributed to, and inferred their context from the chapter outlines to piece together their significance, I was just blown away," said a teary-eyed Weaver. "And the way Steinbeck wove the theme of hands all the way through the section entitled 'Hands'—he definitely deserved to win that Nobel Prize."

Weaver's roommate, Giulia Crenshaw, has already borrowed the dog-eared, highlighted summary of the classic Depression-era saga, and is expecting to enjoy reading what Weaver described as "a really sad story about two brothers who love to farm."

"I loved this book so much, I'm going to read all of Steinbeck's Cliffs Notes," said Weaver. "But first I'm going to go to the library to check out the original version Of Mice And Men starring John Malkovich and Gary Sinise."
Questions

1. What is the surface thesis? What is the true thesis?
2. Identify three examples of the author’s use of the careful selection of details to develop his argument and show how each of these examples furthers his purpose.
3. Identify three examples of the author’s use of diction to develop his argument and show how each of these examples furthers his purpose.

Girl Moved To Tears By Of Mice And Men Cliffs Notes
Rhetorical Analysis AP Essay Assignment

Prompt

Read the following essay carefully. Then, in a well-developed paragraph, discuss the author’s use of rhetorical techniques to achieve his purpose.

Instructions

The paragraph must be word processed using standard format. Underline the thesis sentence. Highlight in yellow the support or examples from the text. Highlight in Green the commentary relating how these examples contribute to the author’s purpose.

Rubric

High (100%)
A high scoring essay does the following:
- Clearly and accurately identifies the author’s purpose
- Provides at least three significant examples of the use of rhetorical elements
- Provides insightful commentary on how each example contributes to the development of the author’s purpose
- Is generally free of mechanical errors.

Middle (85%)
A middle scoring essay does the following:
- Is partially successful in identifying the author’s purpose
- Provides examples of rhetorical elements but may not do so accurately or they may be insufficient in quantity
- Provides commentary on how each of these contributes to the development of the author's purpose although the commentary may be limited or inaccurate.
- Contains a few lapses in diction, syntax, or mechanics, but the prose conveys the writer’s ideas.

Low (75%)
A low scoring essay does the following:
- Does not identify the author’s purpose or does not do so clearly and accurately
- Does not clearly provide examples of rhetorical elements
- Does not provide commentary on how each of these contributes to the development of the author’s purpose
- Reveals weaknesses in writing, a lack of organization, grammatical problems or a lack of control that are distracting to the reader and interfere with understanding

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