**Curley’s wife**

As we read on, it is possible to feel sorry for Curley’s wife. After all, as the only woman on the ranch she is lonely and sad. She is the only female character who appears in the novella. As a woman, and because she is a woman, she cannot live the life she dreams of. Indeed, she has precious little control over her own life.

**Arrange the points below in the Venn diagram in order to decide whether you think that her actions are a reaction to how she is treated, or if her character is just petty, cruel and self-obsessed. Are there any which you would place in the middle?**

1. Her marriage to Curley is rotten. He seems to care little for her, and is really more interested in talking about himself than taking an interest in her.
2. She is saddened by her lost potential; she tells us twice that she could have been a Hollywood movie star and tells us that her mother took the chance from her.
3. Her only chance to escape her mother was marriage to Curley. She is presented almost as a desperate captive of the ranch.
4. She flirts deliberately with the ranch hands and causes them to suffer Curley’s anger.
5. She does little to hide these flirtations from her husband, as if she is doing it to make him feel small/er
6. She barges in on Lennie, Crooks, and Candy, calling them the weaklings of the pack. She makes herself feel bigger by cruelly cutting down Candy for his old age and meekness, Lennie for being "a dum dum," and most harshly, she threatens Crooks with a lynching.
7. While she scorns and mocks Lennie, Crooks and Candy, they are the only ones she has to talk to.
8. She has convinced herself that her mother stole the letter from the actor inviting her to Hollywood when this could have been a pretty standard pick-up line.
9. She thrives on attention and is desperate enough to want Lennie’s praise for her soft hair.
10. She frightens Lennie by screaming when he is stroking her hair. She loses her life just because she didn’t want him to ‘mess up’ her hair.

**Curley’s wife: Final impressions**

Reasons not to feel sorry for Curley’s wife

Reasons to feel sorry for Curley’s wife