

Who is responsible for the death of Curley's wife?

The obvious answer to this question would be Lennie as he did physically kill her in Chapter 5 by breaking her neck; however I feel that a lot of characters in this novella had a part to play.

You could say that Curley is most to blame for her death as he failed her as a husband. He didn't pay her enough attention, didn't really love or respect her and was too intimidating for her. It was obvious that she didn't feel comfortable expressing how she felt to Curley, 'Well I aint told this to nobody before. Maybe I ought'n to. I don't like Curley. He aint a nice fella.' And perhaps if Curley had treated her better then and showed her the attention she deserves from her husband, then she wouldn't feel like she had to go and seek it from the other ranch workers. Unfortunately she doesn't receive the attention she wants as the other men on the ranch are aware of how aggressive Curley can be, which makes the reader sympathise with her as it is clear that she is being forced into a lonely, loveless and untrusting marriage and because of this she seeks attention and comfort from Lennie, who causes her death.

However you could say that she brought it upon herself with the way she presented herself through her personality and her provocative way of dressing. 'She had full, rouged lips and wide-spaced eyes, heavily made up' this is the first time the reader meets Curley's wife, which gives them the impression that she is an attention seeker and she is already stereotyping herself without even speaking. She is presented as a very flirtatious and unfaithful character as she's a married woman. She was also aware of Lennie's strength and the possible consequences of provoking him as Lennie did break Curley's hand, however she still insisted in conversing with Lennie, so therefore it is possible to say that she is to blame for her death. Also Lennie did clearly state that they shouldn't be talking to one another and that bad things could happen because of it, 'I aint to have nothing to do with you', 'George's scared I'll get in trouble'. Also she's said to be in an unhappy marriage and Curley's presented to be this controlling and paranoid husband. Who's not to say that the reason he's like this is because of her flirtatious behaviour with his fellow workers.

Nevertheless, when it comes down to it, Lennie was indeed the one that killed her so neither one of the other characters were fully to blame. Even though, Lennie clearly didn't want to be in that position and didn't put himself there, Curley's wife would still be alive if it wasn't for Lennie's actions and ways of handling situations. However Lennie is mentally unstable and always has good intentions and you could say that he wasn't mentally in control of his behaviour. However George has made Lennie understand certain situations of bad behaviour. Lennie is aware that his behaviour in weed and killing the puppy was wrong and George did warn him of Curley's wife, so Lennie should have been better prepared when faced with a situation with Curley's Wife. Also the reader knows that Lennie has a better understanding of situations than he is presented to have as earlier on in the novella he makes George feel guilty and appreciative of him as Lennie suggested to leave George. Lennie is also aware of his strength when he reacts to things violently.

On the other hand George does take responsibility for Lennie as Lennie's caretaker, Aunt Clara, died. Due to Lennie's childlike mindset, George, who is very much aware of this, is essentially his parent and therefore George is responsible for what Lennie does. It could be said that George should've known to not to leave Lennie alone in the barn when he knows that there is a possibility that