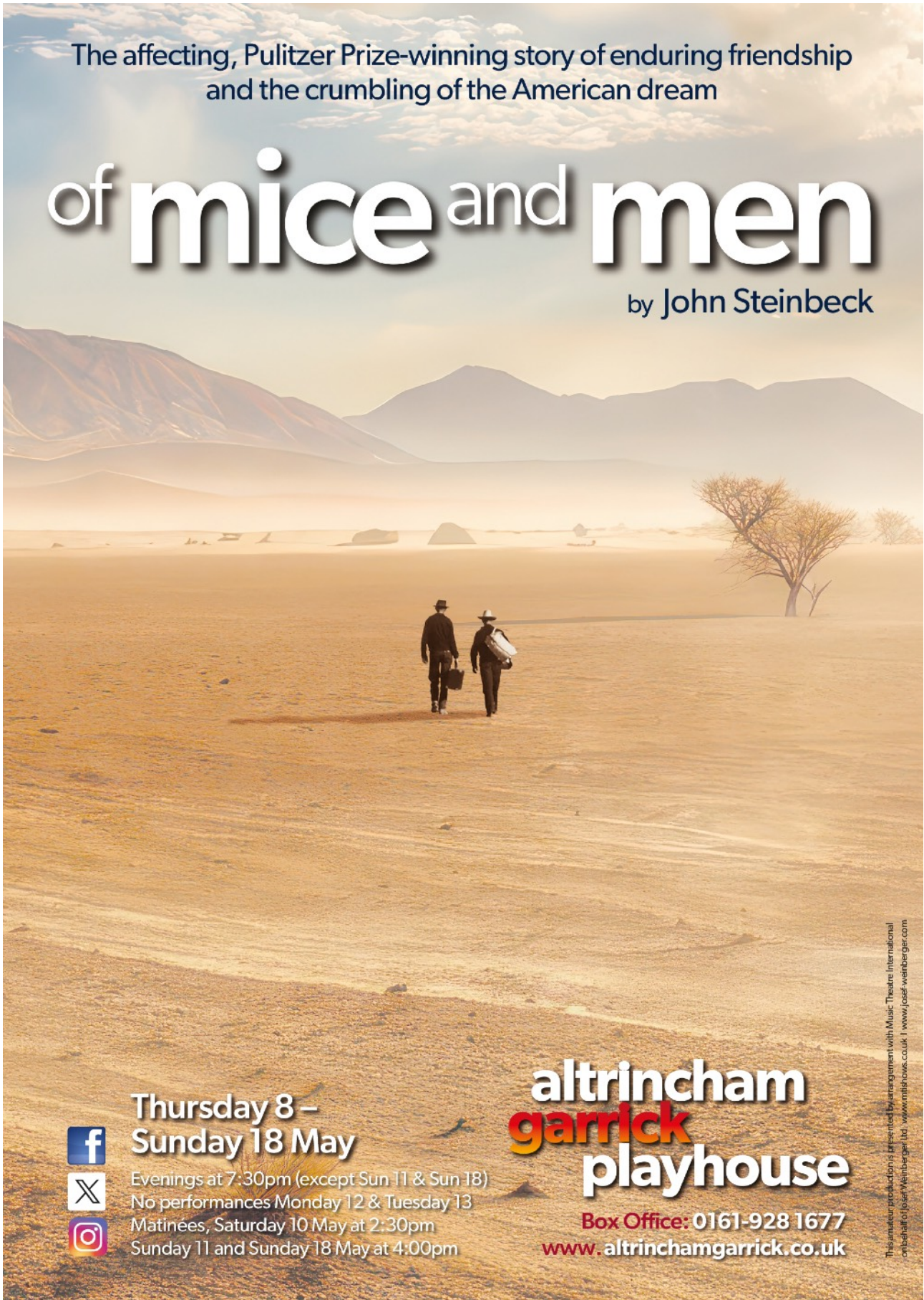


ALTRINCHAM GARRICK PLAYHOUSE - AUDITION INFORMATION:

The affecting, Pulitzer Prize-winning story of enduring friendship
and the crumbling of the American dream

of mice and men

by John Steinbeck



Thursday 8 –
Sunday 18 May



Evenings at 7:30pm (except Sun 11 & Sun 18)
No performances Monday 12 & Tuesday 13
Matinées, Saturday 10 May at 2:30pm
Sunday 11 and Sunday 18 May at 4:00pm

**altrincham
garrick
playhouse**

Box Office: 0161-928 1677
www.altrinchamgarrick.co.uk

This amateur production is presented by arrangement with Music Theatre International
© 2014 Music Theatre International. www.musictheatreinternational.com

Thank you for expressing your interest in auditioning for “**OF MICE AND MEN**”. This production will be part of our Spring/ Summer 2025 Season at Altrincham Garrick Playhouse.

The Audition Date for this production is
The Rehearsal Start Date for this production is
The Production Dates for this production are

Tuesday 18th February
Sunday 30th March
Thursday 8th - Sunday
18th May

Performance Schedule

Thursday 8th May - 7.30pm
Friday 9th May - 7.30pm
Saturday 10th May - 2.30pm
Saturday 10th May - 7.30pm
Sunday 11th May - 4pm

Wednesday 14th May - 7.30pm
Thursday 15th May - 7.30pm
Friday 16th May - 7.30pm
Saturday 17th May - 7.30pm
Sunday 18th May - 4pm

Rehearsals

Rehearsals will be every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 7.30pm - 10pm, and every Sunday from 2pm - 5.30pm.

We do ask that all those auditioning are able to make every rehearsal. We do, of course, understand that sometimes you may have other commitments and special occasions during the rehearsal process, and we therefore ask that you inform us of any dates you are not available in advance (at the audition) and we will try and make this work. If you have a date that you're unable to rehearse within ten days of the opening night (8th May) we may have to ask you to withdraw from the production.

You may not be called to every rehearsal, and the Director will produce a rehearsal schedule as far in advance as possible, but we do still ask that those successful in being cast in the production remain flexible, as rehearsal schedules can often change during the process.

OF MICE AND MEN

Written by John Steinbeck
Based on his own Novel - OF MICE AN MEN
Directed by Joseph Meighan

8th - 18th May 2025
Altrincham Garrick Playhouse

“Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world. They got no family. They don't belong no place...with us it ain't like that. We got a future. We got somebody to talk to that gives a damn about us.”

George and Lennie are migrants with a dream; a dream of a better life, a place where they can belong, where Lennie feels safe and George can be somebody. But this is the Great Depression, not many dreams come true in a time where a few have plenty but most have nothing. When the friends take a job on Curly's farm, tragedy unfolds leading to a heart-breaking decision.

John Steinbeck's classic novel is more than 80 years old, but with themes of economic migration, racism, prejudice and exclusion it remains a parable for our times.

A story of enduring friendship and hope.

Recommended: 12+

Warning: This production stays true to the original novel, exposing the depths of the characters and inviting conversations around difficult topics set against the brutality of the time. It will contain sensitive content including topics that cover racism, ableism, sexism, violence, assault, murder, death, plus some strong and offensive language.

Characters

The play **OF MICE AND MEN** is written for 9 Male actors and 1 Female actor. Due to the subject matter and the setting of the play (1930's California - The Great Depression), it is important that actors auditioning for male roles identify as male, or are male presenting. Similarly, we ask that any actors auditioning for the 1 Female role are female or female presenting. There will be no Ensemble in this play.

George Milton

A small, quick-witted man who is Lennie's de facto guardian, traveling companion, fellow ranch hand, and best friend. Although he frequently complains about his caretaking responsibilities, he is obviously devoted to and protective of Lennie. This friendship is what helps sustain George's dreams of a better future - a fantasy of a little piece of farmland to call their own. George has a tendency to posture around others. He and Lennie are perennially out of work and down on their luck, but they take on these trials together.

Playing Age: 30s - 40s

Lennie Small

A physically imposing, lumbering, and occasionally clumsy childlike man, also a migrant worker along with his friend and companion George. His mental disability means that he is almost entirely reliant upon George for guidance and protection, however Lennie looks up to his pal with a combination of awe, respect, and love. The two men share a vision of a farm they will own together, a vision that Lennie believes to the bottom of his heart. He is gentle and kind, but he has no conception of his own strength, which gets him into trouble.

Playing Age: 30s

Candy

An aging ranch handyman, Candy lost his hand in an accident some time ago. He worries about his future on the ranch and fears the arrival of the day when his age will make him useless to others. When he hears of George's description of their dream farm, he offers a considerable amount of money to join their venture, if only they would include him in the plans. Candy has an ancient dog he loves dearly.

Playing Age: 60s

The Boss

The Boss is a stocky and well-dressed man in charge of the ranch George and Lennie land at. He is also Curley's father. He is stern but fair-minded employer - an anecdote from Candy says the Boss gifted a gallon of whiskey to the ranch hands one Christmas. He makes only one appearance on stage.

Playing Age: 40s - 50s

Curley

The Boss' son: a young, impetuous, and combative character. Curley indicates he "has done quite a bit in the ring" at one time, but now is just "a little guy, alla time pickin' scraps with big guys." He obviously has several chips on his shoulder, many of them regarding his newly acquired wife of two weeks and the way the other ranch hands look at her. His jealousy and frequent losses of temper serve to accentuate his essential pettiness - and his inadequacies.

Playing Age: 20s

Curley's Wife

Only known throughout the whole play by her relationship to her new husband Curley and a string of unpleasant epithets from the ranch hands, she is a victim of time and place. Young, pretty, and isolated as the only woman in the play, she is, like many of the ranch hands, desperately lonely and has broken dreams of a different life. She is a victim in many ways, and her preoccupation with her looks gets her - and Lennie - into trouble.

Playing Age: 20s

Slim

The consummate ranch hand and the main driver of the mule team, Slim is called the "prince of the ranch." And for good reason - he is tall, good looking, strong, and greatly respected by the other characters for his physical abilities around the ranch as well as his treatment of the other workers. He keeps his mouth shut unless it is to speak for the weak. He is an insightful, kind, and a natural leader - and the only other character who seems to intuit the nature of the bond between George and Lennie.

Playing Age: 40s

Carlson

Another one of the ranch hands, he is a thick-bodied man who constantly complains about the smell of Curley's old dog. Carlson is a simple man who enjoys simple pleasures, but he has little sympathy for Curley when convinced to let him take the dog out back and shoot it.

Playing Age: 30s - 40s

Whit

Another one of the ranch hands, noted as a youngish labourer. He is amiable and good-natured, but a bit of a pushover. He and Carlson are in company together for much of the play, though when it comes down to it he is the only one who takes Candy's side over the killing of the dog - but only for a moment before resigning himself to the group's will.

Playing Age: 20s - 30s

Crooks

The proud, bitter, and somewhat cynical black stable-hand, Crooks gets his name, it is indicated in the script, from his crooked back. He lives by himself and is largely shunned by the other ranch hands - and he actively shuns them back, regarding any offers of kindness with suspicion. This bitterness stems from a combination of loneliness and the extremely pervasive, casual prejudices held by the country at the time this story takes place.

Playing Age: 40s

What to Prepare

Audition pieces will be available from 6.30pm on the Audition Evening, but we have also included them at the back of this pack for preparation. The page numbers from the script are listed below:

GEORGE AND LENNIE - Pages 2 - 5

GEORGE - Pages 52 - 53

LENNIE - Pages 59 - 61

BOSS - Pages 17 and 18

CARLSON - Page 40 - 41

CANDY - Pages 14 - 15 and 52 - 53

CURLEY - Page 22 and 56

CURLEY'S WIFE - Pages 68 - 69 and 74 - 75

SLIM - Pages 34 - 35

CROOKS - Pages 59 - 61

WHIT - Pages 46 - 47

The Audition Evening

Auditionees will need to sign in and complete a contact sheet in the Theatre Bar at Altrincham Garrick Playhouse from 6.30pm on Tuesday 18th February. We will then see each auditionee in the Annexe in front of the audition panel from about 7pm.

There will be Garrick personnel to show you around and help you through the process. Please be aware that these audition evenings often include quite a bit of waiting around and can be long, but we will try to move as quickly as we can.

The audition panel will consist of the Director and members of the Altrincham Garrick's Artistic and Casting Team (ACT).

We are a diverse theatre and we welcome auditionees of all ages (above the age of 18) and all genders, ethnicities, sexualities, disabilities and races, to enrich the work of the production.

What Next?

If you've read all the information in this pack, and wish to audition, then please email casting@altrinchamgarrick.co.uk stating "**OF MICE AND MEN**" in the subject heading and detailing your name and contact number. By emailing, you will have registered for an audition on Tuesday 18th February.

We'd like to wish you the very best of luck, and we look forward to welcoming you, or seeing you again! Thank you for taking the time and interest to prepare for this audition and Break-A-Leg!

Best wishes,

Joseph Meighan (Artistic Director/ Artistic and Casting Team)

Carole Carr (Artistic and Casting Team)

Mike Shaw (Artistic and Casting Team)

Fiona Primrose (Artistic and Casting Team)

Gemma Sales (Artistic and Casting Team)

GEORGE
(beginning timidly and growing angry as he speaks)
God damn it, we could just as well of rode clear to the ranch. That bus driver didn't know what he was talkin' about. "Just a little stretch down the highway," he says, "Just a little stretch"-damn near four miles! I bet he didn't want to stop at the ranch gate... I bet he's too damn lazy to pull up. Wonder he ain't too lazy to stop at Soledad at all!
(Mumbling.) Just a little stretch down the road.

LENNIE
(timidly) George?

GEORGE
Yeh... what you want?

LENNIE
Where we goin', George?

GEORGE
(jerks down his hat furiously) So you forgot that already, did you? So I got to tell you again! Jeez, you're crazy!

LENNIE
(softly) I forgot. I tried not to forget, honest to God, I did!

GEORGE
Okay, okay, I'll tell you again... *(With sarcasm.)* I ain't got nothin' to do. Might just as well spen' all my time tellin' you things. You forgit 'em and I tell you again.

LENNIE
(continuing on from his last speech) I tried and tried, but it didn't do no good. I remember about the rabbits, George!

GEORGE
The hell with the rabbits. You can't remember nothing but them rabbits. You remember settin' in that gutter on Howard Street and watchin' that blackboard?

LENNIE
(delightedly) Oh, sure! I remember that... but... wha'd we do then? I remember some girls come by, and you says -

GEORGE
The hell with what I says! You remember about us goin' in Murray and Ready's and they give us work cards and bus tickets?

LENNIE
(confidently) Oh, sure, George... I remember that now. *(Puts hand into side coat-pocket, his confidence vanishes. Very gently.)* George?

GEORGE
Huh?

LENNIE
(staring at ground in despair) I ain't got mine. I musta lost it.

GEORGE
You never had none. I got both of 'em here. Think I'd let you carry your own work card?

LENNIE
(with tremendous relief) I thought I put it in my side pocket. *(Puts hand in pocket again.)*

GEORGE
(looking sharply at him, and as he looks, Lennie brings hand out of pocket) Wha'd you take out of that pocket?

LENNIE
(cleverly) Ain't a thing in my pocket.

GEORGE
I know there ain't. You got it in your hand now. What you got in your hand?

LENNIE
I ain't got nothing, George! Honest!

GEORGE
Come on, give it here!

LENNIE
(holds his closed hand away from George) It's on'y a mouse!

GEORGE
A mouse? A live mouse?

LENNIE
No, just a dead mouse. *(Worriedly.)* I didn't kill it. Honest. I found it. I found it dead.

GEORGE
Give it here!

LENNIE
Leave me have it, George.

GEORGE
(sternly) Give it here! *(Lennie reluctantly gives him mouse.)* What do you want of a dead mouse, anyway?

LENNIE
(in a propositional tone) I was petting it with my thumb while we walked along.

GEORGE
Well, you ain't pettin' no mice while you walk with me. Now let's see if you can remember where we're going. *(George throws it across the water into brush.)*

4

ACT ONE

LENNIE

(looks startled, then in embarrassment hides his face against his knees) I forgot again.

GEORGE

Jesus Christ! *(Resignedly.)* Well, look, we are gonna work on a ranch like the one we come from up north.

LENNIE

Up north?

GEORGE

In Weed!

LENNIE

Oh, sure I remember-in Weed.

GEORGE

(still with exaggerated patience) That ranch we're goin' to is right down there about a quarter mile. We're gonna go in and see the boss.

LENNIE

(repeats, as a lesson) And see the boss!

GEORGE

Now, look! I'll give him the work tickets, but you ain't gonna say a word. You're just gonna stand there and not say nothing.

LENNIE

Not say nothing!

GEORGE

If he finds out what a crazy bastard you are, we won't get no job. But if he sees you work before he hears you talk, we're set. You got that?

LENNIE

Sure, George . . . sure. I got that.

GEORGE

Okay. Now when we go in to see the boss, what you gonna do?

LENNIE

(concentrating) I . . . I . . . I ain't gonna say nothing . . . jus' gonna stand there.

GEORGE

(greatly relieved) Good boy, that's swell! Now say that over two or three times so you sure won't forget it.

LENNIE

(drones softly under his breath) I ain't gonna say nothing . . . I ain't gonna say nothing. *(Tries off into a whisper.)*

GEORGE

And you ain't gonna do no bad things like you done in Weed neither.

OF MICE AND MEN

5

LENNIE

(puzzled) Like I done in Weed?

GEORGE

So you forgot that too, did you?

LENNIE

(triumphantly) They run us out of Weed!

GEORGE

(disgusted) Run us out, hell! We run! They was lookin' for us, but they didn't catch us.

LENNIE

(happily) I didn't forget that, you bet.

(George lies back on sand, crosses hands under his head. Again Lennie imitates him.)

GEORGE

God, you're a lot of trouble! I could get along so easy and nice, if I didn't have you on my tail. I could live so easy!

LENNIE

(hopefully) We gonna work on a ranch, George.

GEORGE

All right, you got that. But we're gonna sleep here tonight, because . . . I want to. I want to sleep out.

(The light is going fast, dropping into evening. A little wind whirts into the clearing and blows leaves. Dog howls in the distance.)

LENNIE

Why ain't we goin' on to the ranch to get some supper? They got supper at the ranch.

GEORGE

No reason at all. I just like it here. Tomorrow we'll be goin' to work. I seen thrashing machines on the way down; that means we'll be buckin' grain bags. Bustin' a gut liftin' up them bags. Tonight I'm gonna lay right here an' look up! Tonight there ain't a grain bag or a boss in the world. Tonight, the drinks is on the . . . house. Nice house we got here, Lennie.

LENNIE

(gets up on his knees, looks down at George, plaintively) Ain't we gonna have no supper?

GEORGE

Sure we are. You gather up some dead willow sticks. I got three cans of beans in my bundle. I'll open 'em up while you get a fire ready. We'll eat 'em cold.

OF MICE AND MEN

17

- GEORGE Boss the owner?
- CANDY Naw! Superintendent. Big land company . . . yes, sir, that night . . . he come right in here with a whole gallon . . . he set right over there and says, "Drink hearty, boys," . . . he says . . .
- (Door opens. Enter the BOSS, a stock man, dressed in blue-jean trousers, flannel shirt, black unbuttoned vest and black coat. Wears soiled brown Stetson hat, a pair of high-heeled boots and spurs. Ordinarily he puts his thumbs in his belt.)*
- CANDY *(shuffling towards door, rubbing his whiskers with his knuckles as he goes)* Them guys just come. *(CANDY exits, shuts door behind him.)*
- BOSS I wrote Murray and Ready I wanted two men this morning. You got your work slips?
- (GEORGE digs in his pockets, produces two slips, hands them to BOSS.)*
- GEORGE Here they are.
- BOSS *(reading slips)* Well, I see it wasn't Murray and Ready's fault. It says right here on the slip, you was to be here for work this morning.
- GEORGE Bus driver give us a bum steer. We had to walk ten miles. That bus driver says we was here when we wasn't. We couldn't thumb no rides. *(GEORGE scowls meaningly at LENNIE, who nods to show that he understands.)*
- BOSS Well, I had to send out the grain teams short two buckers. It won't do any good to go out now until after dinner. You'd get lost. *(Pulls out time book, opens it to where pencil is stuck between leaves. Licks pencil carefully.)* What's your name?
- GEORGE George Milton.
- BOSS George Milton. *(Writing.)* And what's yours?

18

ACT ONE

- GEORGE His name's Lennie Small.
- BOSS Lennie Small. (*Writing.*) Le's see this is the twentieth. Noon the twentieth . . . (*Makes positive mark. Closes book, puts it in pocket.*) Where you boys been workin'?
- GEORGE Up around Weed.
- BOSS (*to LENNIE*) You too?
- GEORGE Yeah. Him too.
- BOSS (*to LENNIE*) Say, you're a big fellow, ain't you?
- GEORGE Yeah, he can work like hell, too.
- BOSS He ain't much of a talker, though, is he?
- GEORGE No, he ain't. But he's a hell of a good worker. Strong as a bull.
- LENNIE (*smiling*) I'm strong as a bull. (*GEORGE scowls at him. LENNIE drops head in shame at having forgotten.*)
- BOSS (*sharply*) You are, huh? What can you do?
- GEORGE He can do anything.
- BOSS (*addressing LENNIE*) What can you do? (*LENNIE, looking at GEORGE, gives a high nervous chuckle.*)
- GEORGE (*quickly*) Anything you tell him. He's a good skinner. He can wrestle grain bags, drive a cultivator. He can do anything. Just give him a try.
- BOSS (*turning to GEORGE*) Then why don't you let him answer? (*LENNIE laughs.*) What's he laughing about?
- GEORGE He laughs when he gets excited.
- BOSS Yeah?
- GEORGE (*loudly*) But he's a goddamn good worker. I ain't saying he's bright, because he ain't. But he can put up a four hundred pound bale.

CARLSON

Yeah. He don't give nobody else a chance to win. *(Stops and sniffs the air. Looks around until he sees CANDY'S dog.)* God Almighty, that dog stinks. Get him outa here, Candy. I don't know nothing that stinks as bad as ole dogs. You got to get him outa here.

CANDY

(lying on his bunk, reaches over, pats dog, speaks softly) I been round him so much I never notice how he stinks.

CARLSON

Well, I can't stand him in here. That stink hangs round even after he's gone. *(Walks over, stands looking down at dog.)* Got no teeth. All stiff with rheumatism. He ain't no good to you, Candy. Why don't you shoot him?

CANDY

(uncomfortably) Well, hell, I had him so long. Had him since he was a pup. I herded sheep with him. *(Proudly.)* You wouldn't think it to look at him now. He was the best damn sheep dog I ever seen.

GEORGE

I knowed a guy in Weed that had an airedale that could herd sheep. Learned it from the other dogs.

CARLSON

(sticking to his point) Lookit, Candy. This ole dog jus' suffers itself all the time. If you was to take him out and shoot him-right in back of the head... *(Leans over and points.)*... right there, why he never'd know what hit him.

CANDY

(unhappily) No, I couldn't do that. I had him too long.

CARLSON

(insisting) He don't have no fun no more. He stinks like hell. Tell you what I'll do. I'll shoot him for you. Then it won't be you that done it.

CANDY

(sits up on bunk, rubbing whiskers nervously, speaks plaintively) I had him from a pup.

WHIT

Let 'im alone, Carl. It ain't a guy's dog that matters. It's the way the guy feels about the dog. Hell, I had a mutt once I wouldn't a traded for a field trial pointer.

CARLSON

(being persuasive) Well, Candy ain't being nice to him, keeping him alive. Lookit, Slim's bitch got a litter right now. I bet you Slim would give ya one of them pups to raise up, wouldn't ya, Slim?

SLIM

(studying dog) Yeah. You can have a pup if you want to.

CANDY

(helplessly) Mebbe it would hurt. *(After a moment's pause, positively.)* And I don't mind taking care of him.

CARLSON

Aw, he'd be better off dead. The way I'd shoot him he wouldn't feel nothin'. I'd put the gun right there. *(Points with his toe.)* Right back of the head.

SLIM

Aw, let 'im alone, Carl.

CARLSON

Why, hell, he wouldn't even quiver.

WHIT

Let 'im alone. *(Produces magazine.)* Say, did you see this? Did you see this in the book here?

CARLSON

See what?

SLIM

Right there. Read that.

CARLSON

I don't want to read nothing... It'd be all over in a minute, Candy. Come on.

WHIT

Did you see it, Slim? Go on, read it. Read it out loud.

SLIM

What is it?

WHIT

Read it.

52

ACT TWO

CANDY *(at sound of his voice, both LENNIE and GEORGE jump as though caught in some secret)* You know where's a place like that?

GEORGE *(solemnly)* S'pose I do, what's that to you?

CANDY You don't need to tell me where it's at. Might be any place.

GEORGE *(relieved)* Sure. That's right, you couldn't find it in a hundred years.

CANDY *(excitedly)* How much they want for a place like that?

GEORGE *(grudgingly)* Well, I could get it for six hundred bucks. The ole people that owns it is flat bust. And the ole lady need medicine. Say, what's it to you? You got nothing to do with us!

CANDY *(softly)* I ain't much good with only one hand. I lost my hand right here on the ranch. That's why they didn't can me. They give me a job swampin'. And they give me two hundred and fifty dollars 'cause I lost my hand. An' I got fifty more saved up right in the bank right now. That's three hundred. And I got forty more comin' the end of the month. Tell you what . . . *(Leans forward eagerly.)* S'pose I went in with you guys? That's three hundred and forty bucks I'd put in. I ain't much good, but I could cook and tend the chickens and hoe the garden some. How'd that be?

GEORGE *(eyes half closed, uncertainly)* I got to think about that. We was always goin' to do it by ourselves. Me an' Lennie. I never thought of nobody else.

CANDY I'd make a will. Leave my share to you guys in case I kicked off. I ain't got no relations nor nothing. You fellas got any money? Maybe we could go there right now.

OF MICE AND MEN

53

GEORGE *(disgustedly)* We got ten bucks between us. *(He thinks.)* Say, look. If me and Lennie work a month and don't spend nothing at all, we'll have a hundred bucks. That would be four-forty. I bet we could swing her for that. Then you and Lennie could go get her started and I'd get a job and make up the rest. You could sell eggs and stuff like that. *(They look at each other in amazement. Reverently.)* Jesus Christ, I bet we could swing her. *(His voice is full of wonder.)* I bet we could swing 'er.

CANDY *(scratches stump of his fist nervously)* I got hurt four years ago. They'll can me pretty soon. Jest as soon as I can't swamp out no bunkhouses they'll put me on the county. Maybe if I give you guys my money, you'll let me hoe in the garden, even when I ain't no good at it. And I'll wash dishes and little chicken stuff like that. But hell, I'll be on our own place. I'll be let to work on our own place. *(Misstrably.)* You seen what they done to my dog. They says he wasn't no good to himself nor nobody else. But when I'm that way nobody'll shoot me. I wish somebody would. They won't do nothing like that. I won't have no place to go and I can't get no more jobs.

GEORGE *(stands up)* We'll do 'er! God damn, we'll fix up that little ole place and we'll go live there. *(Wonderingly.)* S'pose they was a carnival, or a circus come to town or a ball game or any damn thing. *(CANDY nods in appreciation.)* We'd just go to her. We wouldn't ask nobody if we could. Just say we'll go to her, by God, and we would. Just milk the cow and sling some grain to the chickens and go to her.

LENNIE And put some grass to the rabbits. I wouldn't forget to feed them. When we gonna to do it, George?

14

ACT ONE

GEORGE (amiably) Aw, shut up.

LENNIE (after long pause) George?

GEORGE What is it?

LENNIE I'm shutting up, George. (Coyote howls again.)

Curtain

Scene Two

Late Friday morning. Interior of a bunkhouse. Walls, white-washed board and bat. Floors unpainted. A heavy square table C with upended boxes around it used for chairs. Over each bunk there is a box nailed to the wall, which serves as two shelves on which are the private possessions of the working men. On top of each bunk a large alarm clock ticking madly. A box or two, or three, here and there, which can on occasion be used for chairs. The sun is streaking through the windows, U.C. One or two others may be used as needed. NOTE: Articles in boxes on wall are soap, talcum powder, razors, pulp magazines, medicine bottles, combs, and from nails on the sides of the boxes a few neckties. A hanging light from ceiling over table, with a round dim reflector on it.

The curtain rises on an empty stage. Only the ticking of the many clocks is heard. CANDY, GEORGE and LENNIE are first seen passing open window U.C.

CANDY This is the bunkhouse here. Door's around this side.

(Latch on door C rises and CANDY enters, a stoop-shouldered old man, dressed in blue-jeans and denim coat. He carries a big push broom in his left hand. His right hand is gone at the wrist. He grasps things with his right arm between arm and side. CANDY walks into the room, followed by GEORGE and LENNIE.)

CANDY (con conversationally) The boss was expecting you last night. He was sore as hell when you wasn't here to go out this morning. (Points with handless arm.) You can have them two beds there.

OF MICE AND MEN

15

GEORGE

I'll take the top one . . . I don't want you falling down on me. (Steps over to one of the bunks, throws his blankets down. Looks into nearly empty box shelf over it, then picks up a small yellow can.) Say, what the hell's this?

CANDY

I don't know.

GEORGE

Says "positively kills lice, roaches and other scourges." What the hell kinda beds you givin' us, anyway? We don't want no pants rabbits.

CANDY

(shifts broom, holding it between his elbow and his side, takes can in left hand, studies label carefully) Tell you what . . . last guy that had this bed was a blacksmith. Helluva nice fellow. Clean a guy as you'd want to meet. Used to wash his hands even after he et.

GEORGE

(with gathering anger) Then how come he got pillow-pigeons? (LENNIE puts his blankets on bunk and sits down, watching GEORGE with his mouth slightly open.)

CANDY

Tell you what. This here blacksmith, name of Whitey, was the kinda guy that would put that stuff around even if there wasn't no bugs. Tell you what he used to do. He'd peel his boiled potatoes and take out every little spot before he et it, and if there was a red splotch on an egg, he'd scrape it off. Finally quit about the food. That's the kind of guy Whitey was. Clean. Used to dress up Sundays even when he wasn't goin' no place. Put on a necktie even, and then set in the bunkhouse.

GEORGE

(sceptically) I ain't so sure. What da' ya say he quit for?

CANDY

(puts can in pocket, rubs his whiskers with knuckles) Why . . . he just quit the way a guy will. Says it was the food. Didn't give no other reason. Just says "give me my time"

WHIT

I see what you mean. No, they ain't been no trouble yet. She's only been here a couple of weeks. Curley's got yellow jackets in his drawers, but that's all so far. Every time the guys is around she shows up. She's lookin' for Curley. Or she thought she left somethin' layin' around and she's lookin' for that. Seems like she can't keep away from guys. And Curley's runnin' round like a cat lookin' for a dirt road. But they ain't been no trouble.

GEORGE

Ranch with a bunch of guys on it ain't no place for a girl. Specially like her.

WHIT

If she's give you any ideas you ought to come in town with us guys tomorrow night.

GEORGE

Why, what's doin'?

WHIT

Just the usual thing. We go in to old Susy's place. Hell of a nice place. Old Susy is a laugh. Always cracking jokes. Like she says when we come up on the front porch last Saturday night: Susy opens the door and she yells over her shoulder: "Get your coats on, girls, here comes the sheriff." She never talks dirty neither. Got five girls there.

GEORGE

What does it set you back?

WHIT

Two and a half. You can get a shot of whiskey for fifteen cents. Susy got nice chairs to set in, too. If a guy don't want to flop, why, he can just set in them chairs and have a couple or three shots and just pass the time of day. Susy don't give a damn. She ain't rushin' guys through, or kicking them out if they don't want to flop.

GEORGE

Might go in and look the joint over.

WHIT

Sure. Come along. It's a hell of a lot of fun-her crackin' jokes all the time. Like she says one time, she says: "I've knew people

that if they got a rag rug on the floor and a kewpie doll lamp on the phonograph they kewpie doll lamp on the phonograph they think they're runnin' a parlor house." That's Gladys's house she's talkin' about. And Susy says: "I know what you boys want," she says. "My girls is clean," she says. "And there ain't no water in my whiskey," she says. "If any you guys want to look at a kewpie doll lamp you guys want to look at a kewpie doll lamp and take your chance of gettin' burned, why, you know where to go." She says: "They's you guys round here walkin' bowlegged because they liked to look at a kewpie doll lamp."

Gladys runs the other house, huh?

GEORGE

Yeah.

WHIT

(Enter CARLSON. CANDY looks at him.)

CARLSON

God, it's a dark night. (Goes to his bunk, starts cleaning his revolver.)

WHIT

We don't never go to Gladys's. Gladys gits three bucks, and two bits a shot and she don't crack no jokes. But Susy's place is clean and she got nice chairs. A guy can set in there like he lived there. Don't let no Manila Goos in, neither.

GEORGE

Aw, I don't know. Me and Lennie's rollin' up a stake. I might go in and set and have a shot, but I ain't puttin' out no two and a half.

WHIT

Well, a guy got to have some fun sometimes. (Enter LENNIE, who creeps to his bunk, sits down.)

GEORGE

Didn't bring him back in, did you, Lennie?

LENNIE

No, George, honest I didn't. See?

WHIT

Say, how about this euchre game?

GEORGE

Okay. I didn't think you wanted to play.

(Enter CURLEY excitedly.)

CURLEY

Any you guys seen my wife?

OF MICE AND MEN

59

Scene Two

Ten o'clock Saturday evening. The room of the stable buck Crooks, a lean-to off barn. There is a plank door up C; a small square window RC. On one side of door a leather working bench with tools racked behind it, and on other, racks with broken and partly mended harnesses, collars, hames, traces, etc. UL Crooks' bunk. Over it two shelves. On one a great number of medicine cans and bottles. On the other a number of tattered books and a big alarm clock. UR a single-barrelled shotgun and on floor beside it a pair of rubber boots. A large pair of gold spectacles hangs on a nail over Crooks' bunk.

Entrance leads into barn proper. From that direction and during the whole scene come the sounds of horses eating, stamping, jingling their halter chains, and now and then whinnying. Two empty nail kegs are in the room to be used as seats. Single unshaded small-candle-power carbon light hanging from its own cord.

As curtain rises, CROOKS sits on his bunk rubbing his back with liniment. Reaches up under his shirt to do this. His face is lined with pain. As he rubs he flexes his muscles and shivers a little. LENNIE appears in open doorway, nearly filling the opening. Then CROOKS, sensing his presence, raises his eyes, stiffens and scowls. LENNIE smiles in an attempt to make friends.

CROOKS (sharply) You got no right to come in my room. This here's my room. Nobody got any right in here but me.

LENNIE (fawning) I ain't doin' nothing. Just come in the barn to look at my pup, an seen your light.

CROOKS Well, I got a right to have a light. You go on and get out of my room. I ain't wanted in the bunkhouse and you ain't wanted in my room.

LENNIE (ingenuously) Why ain't you wanted?

CROOKS (furiously) 'Cause I'm black. They play cards in there. But I can't play because I'm black. They say I stink. Well, I tell you all of you stink to me.

60

ACT TWO

LENNIE

(*helplessly*) Everybody went into town. Slim and George and everybody. George says I got to stay here and not get into no trouble. I got seen your light.

CROOKS

Well, what do you want?

LENNIE

Nothing . . . I seen your light. I thought I could jus' come in and set.

CROOKS

(*stares at LENNIE a moment, takes down spectacles, adjusts them over his ears, says in a complaining tone*) I don't know what you're doin' in the barn anyway. You ain't no skinner. There's no call for a bucketer to come into the barn at all. You've got nothing to do with the horses and mules.

LENNIE

(*patiently*) The pup. I come to see my pup. Well, God damnit, go and see your pup then.

CROOKS

Don't go no place where you ain't wanted. (*advances a step into the room, remembers and backs to door again*) I looked at him a little.

LENNIE

Slim says I ain't to pet him very much. (*anger gradually going out of his voice*) Well, you been taking him out of the nest all the time. I wonder the ole lady don't move him some place else.

CROOKS

(*moving into room*) Oh, she don't care. She lets me. (*scowls, then gives up*) Come on in and set awhile. Long as you won't get out and leave me alone, you might as well set down. (*A little more friendly.*) All the boys gone into town, huh?

CROOKS

All but old Candy. He jus' sets in the bunkhouse sharpening his pencils. And sharpening and figurin'.

LENNIE

(*adjusting glasses*) Figurin'? What's Candy figurin' about?

CROOKS

OF MICE AND MEN

61

LENNIE

'Bout the land. 'Bout the little place.

CROOKS

You're nuts. You're crazy as a wedge. What land you talkin' about?

LENNIE

The land we're goin' ta get. And a little house and pigeons.

CROOKS

Just nuts. I don't blame the guy you're traveling with for keeping you out of sight.

LENNIE

(*quietly*) It ain't no lie. We're gonna do it. Gonna get a little place and live on the fat of the land.

CROOKS

(*settling himself comfortably on his bunk*) Set down. Set down on that nail keg.

LENNIE

(*hunched over on little barrel*) You think it's a lie. But it ain't no lie. Ever' word's the truth. You can ask George.

CROOKS

(*puts chin on his palm*) You travel round with George, don't you?

LENNIE

(*proudly*) Sure, me and him goes ever' place together.

CROOKS

(*after pause, quietly*) Sometimes he talks and you don't know what the hell he's talkin' about. Ain't that so? (*Leans forward.*) Ain't that so?

LENNIE

Yeah. Sometimes.

CROOKS

Just talks on. And you don't know what the hell it's all about.

LENNIE

How long you think it'll be before them pups will be old enough to pet?

CROOKS

(*laughs again*) A guy can talk to you and be sure you won't go blabbin'. A couple of weeks and them pups will be all right. (*Musing.*) George knows what he's about. Just talks and you don't understand nothing. (*Mood gradually changes to excitement.*) Well, this is just a nigger talkin', and a busted-back

68

ACT TWO

GEORGE
(*turns suddenly and looks out door into the dark barn, speak savagely*) I s'pose ya lookin' for Curley? (Curley's Wife appears in door.) Well, Curley ain't here.

CURLEY'S WIFE
(*determined now*) I know Curley ain't here. I wanted to ast Crooks somepin'. I didn't know you guys was here.

CANDY
Didn't George tell you before-we don't want nothing to do with you. You know damn well Curley ain't here.

CURLEY'S WIFE
I know where Curley went. Got his arm in a sling an' he went anyhow'. I tell ya I come out to ast Crooks somepin'.

CROOKS
(*apprehensively*) Maybe you better go along to your own house. You hadn't ought to come near a coloured man's room. I don't want no trouble. You don't want to ask me nothing.
(*rubbing his wrist stump*) You got a husband. You got no call to come foolin' around with other guys, causin' trouble.

CURLEY'S WIFE
(*suddenly angry*) I try to be nice an' polite to bindle bums-but you're too good. I tell ya I could of went with shows. An'-an' a guy wanted to put me in pitchers right in Hollywood. (*Looks about to see how she is impressing them. Their eyes are hard.*) I come out here to ast somebody somepin' an' -

CANDY
(*stands up suddenly, knocks nail keg over backward, speaks angrily*) I had enough. You ain't wanted here. We tole you you ain't. Callin' us bindle stiffs. You got floozy idears what us guys amounts to. You ain't got sense enough to see us guys ain't bindle stiffs. S'pose you could get us canned-s'pose you could. You think we'd hit the highway an' look for another two-bit job. You don't know we got our own ranch to go to an' our own

OF MICE AND MEN

69

house an' fruit trees. An' we got friends. That's what we got. Maybe they was a time when we didn't have nothing, but that ain't so no more.

CURLEY'S WIFE
You damn ol' goat. If you had two bits, you'd be in Soledad gettin' a drink an' suckin' the bottom of the glass.

GEORGE
Maybe she could ask Crooks what she come to ask an' then get the hell home. I don't think she come to ask nothing.

CURLEY'S WIFE
What happened to Curley's hand? (Crooks laughs. GEORGE tries to shut him up.) So it wasn't no machine. Curley didn't act like he was tellin' the truth. Come on, Crooks-what happened?

CROOKS
I wasn't there. I didn't see it.

CURLEY'S WIFE
(*eagerly*) What happened? I won't let on to Curley. He says he caught his hand' in a gear. (Crooks is silent.) Who done it?

GEORGE
Didn't nobody do it.

CURLEY'S WIFE
(*turns slowly to GEORGE*) So you done it. Well, he had it comin'.

GEORGE
I didn't have no fuss with Curley.

CURLEY'S WIFE
(*steps near him, smiling*) Maybe now you ain't scared of him no more. Maybe you'll talk to me sometimes now. Everybody was scared of him.

GEORGE
(*speaks rather kindly*) Look! I didn't sock Curley. If he had trouble, it ain't none of our affair. Ask Curley about it. Now listen. I'm gonna try to tell ya. We tole you to get the hell out and it don't do no good. So I'm gonna tell you another way. Us guys got somepin' we're gonna do. If you stick around you'll gum up the works. It ain't your fault.

74

ACT THREE

LENNIE

(*explaining sadly*) He was so little. I was jus' playin' with him-an' he made like he's gonna bite me-an' I made like I'm gonna smack him-an'-I done it. An' then he was dead.

CURLEY'S
WIFE

(*consolingly*) Don't you worry none. He was just a mutt. The whole country is full of mutts.

LENNIE

It ain't that so much. George gonna be mad. Maybe he won't let me-what he said I could tend.

CURLEY'S
WIFE

(*sits down in hay beside him, speaks soothingly*) Don't you worry. Them guys got money bet on that horseshoe tenement. They ain't gonna leave it. And tomorra I'll be gone. I ain't gonna let them run over me.

(*In following scene it is apparent that neither is listening to the other and yet as it goes on, as a happy tone increases, it can be seen that they are growing closer together.*)

LENNIE

We gonna have a little place an' raspberry bushes.

CURLEY'S
WIFE

I ain't meant to live like this. I come from Salinas. Well, a show come through an' I talked to a guy that was in it. He says I could go with the show. My ol' lady wouldn't let me, 'cause I was on'y fifteen. I wouldn't be no place like this if I had went with that show, you bet.

LENNIE

Gonna take a sack an' fill it up with alfalfa an'-

CURLEY'S
WIFE

(*hurrying on*) 'Nother time I met a guy an' he was in pitchers. Went out to the Riverside Dance Palace with him. He said he was gonna put me in pitchers. Says I was a natural. Soon's he got back to Hollywood he was gonna write me about it. (*Looks impressively at LENNIE.*) I never got that letter.

OF MICE AND MEN

75

I think my ol' lady stole it. Well I wasn't gonna stay no place where they stole your letters. So I married Curley. Met him out to the Riverside Dance Palace, too.

I hope George ain't gonna be mad about this pup.

LENNIE

I ain't tol' this to nobody before. Maybe I oughtn't to. I don't like Curley. He ain't a nice fella. I might a stayed with him but last night him an' his ol' man both lit into me. I don't have to stay here. (*Moves closer and speaks confidentially.*) Don't tell nobody till I get clear away. I'll go in the night an' thumb a ride to Hollywood.

CURLEY'S
WIFE

We gonna get out a here purty soon. This ain't no nice place.

LENNIE

(*estatically*) Gonna get in the movies an' have nice clothes-all them nice clothes like they wear. An' I'll set in them big hotels and they'll take pitchers of me. When they have them openings I'll go an' talk in the radio . . . an' it won't cost me nothing 'cause I'm in the pitcher. (*Puts hand on LENNIE'S arm for a moment.*) All them nice clothes like they wear . . . because this guy says I'm a natural.

CURLEY'S
WIFE

We gonna go way . . . far away from here.

LENNIE

'Course, when I run away from Curley, my ol' lady won't never speak to me no more. She'll think I ain't decent. That's what she'll say. (*Defiantly.*) Well, we really ain't decent, no matter how much my ol' lady tries to hide it. My ol' man was a drunk. They put him away. There! Now I told.

CURLEY'S
WIFE

George an' me went to the Sacramento Fair. One time I fell in the river an' George pulled me out an' saved me, an' then we went to the Fair. They got all kinds of stuff there. We seen long-hair rabbits.

LENNIE

ACT TWO

Scene One

About seven-thirty Friday evening. Same as last scene. The evening light is seen coming in through window, but it is quite dark in the barnhouse. From outside the sounds of a horseshoe game. Thuds on the dirt and occasional clangs as a shoe hits the peg. Now and then voices raised in approval or derision: "That's a good one" ... "goddamn right it's a good one" ... "Here goes for a ringer. I need a ringer" ... "Goddamn near got it, too ..."

SLIM and GEORGE come into the barnhouse together. SLIM reaches up and turns on the tin-shaded electric light. Sits down on box at table. GEORGE sits opposite.

SLIM
It wasn't nothing. I would of had to drown most of them pups anyway. No need to thank me about that.

GEORGE
Wasn't much to you, mebbe, but it was a hell of a lot to him. Jesus Christ, I don't know how we're gonna get him to sleep in here. He'll want to stay right out in the barn. We gonna have trouble keepin' him from gettin' right in the box with them pups.

SLIM
Say, you sure was right about him. Maybe he ain't bright-but I never seen such a worker. He damn near killed his partner buckin' barley. He'd take his end of that sack - (A gesture.) pretty near kill his partner. God Almighty, I never seen such a strong guy.

GEORGE
(proudly) You just tell Lennie what to do and he'll do it if it don't take no figuring.

(Outside the sound of horseshoe game goes on: "Son of a bitch if I can win a goddamn game" ... "Me neither. You'd think them shoes was anvils.")

SLIM
Funny how you and him string along together.

GEORGE
What's so funny about it?

SLIM
Oh, I don't know. Hardly none of the guys ever travels around together. I hardly never seen two guys travel together. You know how the hands are. They come in and get their bunk and work a month and then they quit and go on alone. Never seem to give a damn about nobody. Jest seems kinda funny. A cuckoo like him and a smart guy like you traveling together.

GEORGE
I ain't so bright neither or I wouldn't be buckin' barley for my fifty and found. If I was bright, if I was even a little bit smart, I'd have my own place and I'd be bringin' in my own crops 'stead of doin' all the work and not gettin' what comes up out of the ground. *(Falls silent for a moment.)*

SLIM
A guy'd like to do that. Sometime I'd like to cuss a string of mules that was my own mules.

GEORGE
It ain't so funny, him and me goin' round together. Him and me was both born in Auburn. I knowed his aunt. She took him when he was a baby and raised him up. When his aunt died Lennie jus' come along with me, out workin'. Got kinda used to each other after a little while.

SLIM
Uh huh.

GEORGE
First I used to have a hell of a lot of fun with him. Used to play jokes on him because he was too dumb to take care of himself. But,

- GEORGE What time do we eat? Eleven-thirty?
(CURLEY enters, dressed in working clothes. He wears brown high-heeled boots and has a glove on his left hand.)
- CURLEY Seen my ole man?
- CANDY He was here just a minute ago, Curley. Went over to the cookhouse, I think.
- CURLEY I'll try to catch him. *(Looking at the new men, measuring them. Unconsciously bends his elbows, closes his hand, and goes into a slight crouch. Walks gingerly close to LENNIE.)* You the new guys my ole man was waitin' for?
- GEORGE Yeah. We just come in.
- CURLEY How's it come you wasn't here this morning?
- GEORGE Got off the bus too soon.
- CURLEY *(again addressing LENNIE)* My ole man got to get the grain out. Ever bucked barley?
- GEORGE *(quickly)* Hell, yes. Done a lot of it.
- CURLEY I mean him. *(To LENNIE.)* Ever bucked barley?
- GEORGE Sure he has.
- CURLEY *(irritatedly)* Let the big buy talk!
- GEORGE S'pose he don't want ta talk?
- CURLEY *(pugnaciously)* By Christ, he's gotta talk when he's spoke to. What the hell you shovin' into this for?
- GEORGE *(stands up, speaks coldly)* Him and me travel together.
- CURLEY Oh, so it's that way?
- GEORGE *(tense and motionless)* What way?
- CURLEY *(letting subject drop)* And you won't let the big guy talk? Is that it?

GEORGE

LENNIE

CURLE

GEOR

CUR

GEO

CU

C

CURLEY I'm jus' tryin' to tell you I didn't mean nothing. I just thought you might of saw her.

CARLSON Why don't you tell her to stay to hell home where she belongs? You let her hang around the bunkhouses and pretty soon you're goin' have somethin' on your bands.

CURLEY *(whirls on CARLSON)* You keep out of this 'less you want ta step outside.

CARLSON *(laughing)* Why, you goddamn punk. You tried to throw a scare into Slim and you couldn't make it stick. Slim threw a scare into you. You're yellow as a frog's belly. I don't care if you're the best boxer in the country, you come for me and I'll kick your goddamn head off.

WHIT *(joining in the attack)* Glove full of vaseline!

CURLEY *(glares at him, then suddenly sniffs the air, like a hound)* By God, she's been in here. I can smell . . . By God, she's been in here. *(To GEORGE.)* You was here. The other guys was outside. Now, God damn you-you talk.

(GEORGE looks worried. Seems to make up his mind to face an inevitable situation. Stands. Slowly takes off his coat, folds it almost daintily. Speaks in an unemotional monotone.)

GEORGE Somebody got to beat the hell outa you. I guess I'm elected.

(LENNIE has been watching, fascinated. Gives his high, nervous chuckle.)

CURLEY *(whirls on him)* What the hell you laughin' at?

LENNIE *(blankly)* Huh?

CURLEY *(exploding with rage)* Come on, you big bastard. Get up on your feet. No big son-of-a-bitch is gonna laugh at me. I'll show you who's yellow.

