Providence Players of Fairfax – AUDITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Of Mice and Men
By John Steinbeck
Directed by John Coscia

One of Steinbeck’s most acclaimed works, this American classic chronicles four days in the lives of migrant workers, George and Lennie. Unlikely friends, they move from town to town hoping to work and save enough to own their own piece of land. But Lennie stirs up trouble, and George must choose between his friend and his dream. This vivid picture of the Great Depression conveys a tale of friendship, loneliness and unfortunate circumstances for even “the best laid schemes of mice and men.” Winner of Best Play by the New York Drama Critic’s Circle.

Ten Roles (9 Men – 1 Woman) – All Open

The Providence Players of Fairfax is a non-profit community theater troupe. All participation is on a volunteer, non-compensated basis.

Performance Dates and Times
Preview: October 2, 2014 7:00pm Curtain

Evening Performances: Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays; 7:30 pm Curtain
October 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17 & 18

Matinees: Sundays; 2:00 pm curtain
October 5 & 12

Audition Dates
Wednesday June 25, 7:00 - 9:30 pm (In the James Lee Urbanites Room)
Thursday June 26 7:00 - 9:30 pm (In the James Lee Urbanites Room)
Call-Backs (if needed - by invitation):
Monday June 30 6:30 - 9:30 pm (In the James Lee Urbanites Room)
Providence Players of Fairfax –
AUDITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Location
The James Lee Community Center
2855 Annandale Road
Falls Church, VA 22042
Auditions will be held in the Urbanites Room – NOT IN THE THEATER. The Urbanites Room is located to the left of the main desk at the front entrance of the community center.

Audition Information/Instructions

- **PLEASE RSVP to** providenceplayers@cox.net **with the dates you plan on auditioning.**

- **HOW WE WORK:** You are encouraged to plan to come to auditions on more than one of the audition evenings. This is not a requirement. Most PPF auditions have actors up and down to read multiple times in multiple combinations and scenes. Most actors find this fun. As space allows, you will be able to watch all the auditions. You may be asked to go into the hallway with audition partners and work a bit on a scene. We will do our best to get you up multiple times reading for parts you are interested in. You will also be asked to read for other parts you may not be auditioning for. The Providence Players strives to make our productions open to interested and engaged actors & actresses, regardless of their level of experience. We try and make our auditions as relaxing and fun as possible.

- **AUDITION PROCESS:** Auditions will consist of readings from the script - No monologue required.

- **AUDITION SIDES:** Sides for the audition process will be supplied at auditions and are included in this announcement. Additional sides may be added at the auditions

- **AUDITION FORM:** Resumes and headshots will be accepted, but are not required. Please **ALSO COMPLETE** the attached PPF Of Mice and Men Audition Form and bring it with you to the audition.

- **MEMBERSHIP:** The Providence Players of Fairfax is a membership organization. Membership is not required to audition. If cast, actors in addition to production team members will be asked to become members of the Providence Players ($10) for the season (if they are not already).

- **RSVP:** Please send us an RSVP if you plan to audition to providenceplayers@cox.net (or email us any questions you may have).

Rehearsal Schedule:
A copy of the preliminary stage rehearsal schedule is included with this announcement and will be available online and at auditions. Stage rehearsals begin September 2, 2014. In addition to the stage rehearsal schedule, additional full cast readings of the play and some selected scene study and character work will scheduled based on actor availability in July and August prior to the stage schedule. The schedule for these will be finalized a week or two after auditions. Unless indicated otherwise, all rehearsals will happen at the James Lee Community Center. Rehearsals will be held in the evenings roughly from 6:30/6:45 to 9:45 pm and on Saturdays and Sundays as indicated.

**Please come to auditions prepared to list any availability conflicts over this time period.**
Providence Players of Fairfax –
AUDITION ANNOUNCEMENT

*Of Mice and Men as Described by the Publisher*

Two drifters, George and his friend Lennie, with delusions of living off the "fat of the land," have just arrived at a ranch to work for enough money to buy their own place. Lennie is a man-child, a little boy in the body of a dangerously powerful man. It's Lennie's obsessions with things soft and cuddly, that have made George cautious about who the gentle giant, with his brute strength, associates with. His promise to allow Lennie to "tend to the rabbits" on their future land keeps Lennie calm, amidst distractions, as the overgrown child needs constant reassurance. But when a ranch boss' promiscuous wife is found dead in the barn with a broken neck, it's obvious that Lennie, albeit accidentally, killed her. George, now worried about his own safety, knows exactly where Lennie has gone to hide, and he meets him there. Realizing they can't run away anymore, George is faced with a moral question: how should he deal with Lennie before the ranchers find him and take matters into their own hands.

*Of Mice and Men Character Descriptions*

Notes on age: all of the character’s ages indicated below are as Steinbeck has written them, but they should not be considered set in stone. Actors should examine and try out for roles in which they feel they can successfully portray the character, regardless of the age noted. Meaning if you are 25 and think you can pull off 50, by all means give it a shot! This goes both ways as well - if you are older, feel free to give a younger role a shot. Director John Coscia will ultimately decide on the best age range and mix for characters based on the needs of the play and the actors who audition so assume some flexibility from the listed age ranges. Characters are listed in order of appearance.

Also, please be aware that this play is notable for its particularly offensive language and prejudicial opinions held by the characters regarding people of color. The complex history of racism in Northern California and the country at large is a persistent topic of analysis, discussion, and occasionally censorship with this play. Rather than passively and unthinkingly accepting the words on the page, we choose to view this facet of the play as a deliberate choice of Steinbeck’s to represent a time and place in our country, and as a chance for us as actors to reflect on these offensive views through the more-informed lens of the present day.

Setting: Farm and ranch land in an unnamed Northern Californian valley. 1930s.

**George Milton, 30–35 years old**

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.

**Lennie Small, 30–35 years old**

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.

**Candy, 60–70 years old**

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 (will be portrayed by an actual dog on stage).

**The Boss, flexible age, over 40 years old**

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.

**Curley, 22–30 years old**

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.

**Curley’s Wife, 19–25 years old**

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,
Providence Players of Fairfax –
AUDITION ANNOUNCEMENT

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.

**Slim, 35-50 years old**

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.

**Carlson, 35-50 years old**

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 enjoy simple pleasures, but he has little sympathy for Curley when convinces him to let him take the dog out back and shoot it.

**Whit, flexible age, 25-50 years old**

Another one of the ranch hands, noted as a youngish laborer. 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.

**Crooks, African American, 40-60 years old**

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. He does take somewhat of a
Providence Players of Fairfax
Audition Form

OF MICE AND MEN

Please fill out each section below
Attach a resume and/or headshot to this form (optional)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The Providence Players of Fairfax is a membership organization. If you are cast and are not already member, you will be asked to become one. Membership is $10 per season.

**OF MICE AND MEN – Character Preferences**

___ I wish to be considered for any role.

___ I wish to be considered for any role, but have a strong preference for the roles checked below.

___ I would prefer to only be considered for the following roles (checked):

**MALE ROLES**

___ George      ___ Lennie      ___ Candy      ___ Curley

___ Slim       ___ The Boss     ___ Carlson     ___ Whit       ___ Crooks

**FEMALE ROLES**

___ Curley’s Wife

Notes about Role Preference:
Providence Players of Fairfax
Audition Form

OF MICE AND MEN

**Scheduling Conflicts?**
*Please review the audition announcement, show dates, and preliminary production calendar*

The Director will be scheduling read-throughs and table work sessions in August and possibly in late July, prior to starting the official production schedule. These will be especially important for George and Lennie. Stage rehearsals will be intensive during September and October and all actors will be consistently called.

Do you have vacation plans in July/August and when (for our scheduling purposes)?

Any known conflicts with a periodic read-through and/or table work session in July and August?

Please list known conflicts for September Rehearsals:

Please list known conflicts for October Rehearsals:
Providence Players of Fairfax
Audition Form
OF MICE AND MEN

Give us a sketch of your Theater Background
A resume may be attached in lieu of filling out the table below, though it is not required.

Acting Experience:

High School  ___Y___ N - Approx. Number of Productions ______
College        ___Y___ N - Approx. Number of Productions ______
Community     ___Y___ N - Approx. Number of Productions ______
Pro (Paid)    ___Y___ N - Approx. Number of Productions ______

Overall Production Experience:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production Role</th>
<th># Shows</th>
<th>Production Role</th>
<th># Shows</th>
<th>Production Role</th>
<th># Shows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Set Decoration</td>
<td></td>
<td>Choreography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Managed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Props</td>
<td></td>
<td>Musician</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Crew</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td></td>
<td>House Mgmt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Design</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sound</td>
<td></td>
<td>Publicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Construction</td>
<td></td>
<td>Costumes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Photography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Painting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Makeup/Hair</td>
<td></td>
<td>Musician</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Important: Would you be interested in getting involved in the production if you are not cast?

______Yes          ______ No          ______ Unsure

Please give us a brief sense of any theater work over the past three years:
Directed by John Coscia

Oct 3 thru 18 2014
### July 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independence Day Holiday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PPF Committee Meeting Date</td>
<td>PPF Play Reading Night</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PPF Board Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Full Cast Readings, Character work, scene studies and other pre-stage rehearsal work will be scheduled in July and August based on actor availability.

*Of Mice and Men* Preliminary Production Calendar As of June 1, 2014 – Subject to Change
August 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PPF Play Reading Night</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PPF Board Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Full Cast Readings, Character work, scene studies and other pre-stage rehearsal work will be scheduled in July and August based on actor availability.
### Providence Players *Of Mice and Men* Preliminary Production Calendar

#### September 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM – 10PM</td>
<td>PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM – 10PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM – 10PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>PPF Theater Use Set Build Weekend 9 AM – 5 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>PPF Committee Meeting Date</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM – 10 PM</td>
<td>PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM – 10 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM – 10 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 9AM to 5 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>PPF Board Meeting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM – 10 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM – 10 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>PPF Theater Tech Weekend 9:00 AM – 5 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM – 10 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM – 10 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td>PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM – 10 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>PPF Theater Use-Dress Rehearsal 9A M to 6 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td>PPF Theater Use Dress Rehearsal 5:00 PM – 10 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>PPF Theater Use Dress Rehearsal 5:00 PM – 10 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Of Mice and Men* Preliminary Production Calendar As of June 1, 2014 – Subject to Change

Page 4 of 5
# Of Mice and Men Preliminary Production Calendar

## October 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 PPF Theater Use Dress Rehearsal 5:00 PM –10 PM</td>
<td>2 PPF Student &amp; Senior Preview Performance 7PM 5:00 PM –11PM</td>
<td>3 PPF Performance 7:30 PM 5:00 PM –11 PM</td>
<td>4 PPF Performance 7:30 PM 5:00 PM –11 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 PPF Performance Matinee 2 PM 12 PM-6PM</td>
<td>6 PPF Committee Meeting Date</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9 PPF Thursday Performance 7:30 PM 5:00 PM –10 PM</td>
<td>10 PPF Performance 7:30 PM 5:00 PM –11 PM</td>
<td>11 PPF Performance 7:30 PM 5:00 PM –11 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 PPF Performance Matinee 2 PM 12 PM-6PM</td>
<td>13 Columbus Day Holiday</td>
<td>14 PPF Play Reading Night</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16 PPF Thursday Performance 7:30 PM 5:00 PM –10PM</td>
<td>17 PPF Performance 7:30 PM 5:00 PM –11PM</td>
<td>18 PPF Performance 7:30 PM 5:00 PM –11PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 PPF Strike 9 AM – 5 PM</td>
<td>20 PPF Board Meeting</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of Mice and Men

Audition Sides
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 (Skeptically) 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” one night, the way any guy would. (GEORGE lifts his bed tick and looks underneath, leans over, inspects sacking carefully. LENNIE does same with his bed.)

GEORGE. (Half satisfied) Well, if there's any gray-backs in this bed, you're gonna hear from me! (Unrolls blankets and puts his razor, soap, comb, bottle of pills, liniment and leather wristband in box.)

CANDY. I guess the boss'll be out here in a minute to write your name in. He sure was burned when you wasn't here this morning. Come right in when we was eatin' breakfast and says, "Where the hell they new men?" He give the stable buck hell, too. Stable buck's a nigger.

GEORGE. Nigger, huh!

CANDY. Yeah. (Continues) Nice fellow, too. Got a crooked back where a horse kicked him. Boss gives him hell when he's mad. But the stable buck don’t give a damn about that.

GEORGE. What kinda guy is the boss?

CANDY. Well, he's a pretty nice fellow for a boss. Gets mad sometimes. But he's pretty nice. Tell you what. Know what he done Christmas? Bring a gallon of whiskey right in here and says, "Drink hearty, boys, Christmas comes but once a year!"

GEORGE. The hell he did! A whole gallon?

CANDY. Yes, sir. Jesus, we had fun! They let the nigger come in that night. Well, sir, a little Skinner name Smitty took after the nigger. Done pretty good too. The guys wouldn't let him use his feet so the nigger got him. If he could a used his feet Smitty says he would have killed the nigger. The guys says on account the nigger got a crooked back Smitty can't use his feet. (Smile a reverse at memory)

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 soled 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) Then guys just come. (CANDY exits slush 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.) 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?

GEORGE. His name's Lennie Small.

BOSS. Lennie Small. (Writing) Le's see, this is the twentieth. Num 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 nervouys 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: (Lougly.) 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.

BOSS: (Looking his thumbs in his belt.) Say, what you sellin'?

GEORGE: Huh?

BOSS: I said what stake you got in this guy? You takin' his pay away from him?

GEORGE: No. Of course I ain't!

BOSS: Well, I never seen one guy take so much trouble for another guy. I just like to know what your percentage is.

GEORGE: He's my . . . cousin. I told his ole lady I'd take care of him. He got kicked in the head by a horse when he was a kid. He's all right. . . . Just ain't bright. But he can do anything you tell him.

BOSS: (Turning half away.) Well, God knows he don't need no brains to buck barley bags. (Turns back.) But don't you try to put nothing over, Milton. I got my eye on you. Why'd you quit in Weed?

GEORGE: (Promptly.) Job was done.

BOSS: What kind of job?

GEORGE: Why . . . we was diggin' a cesspool.

BOSS: (After a pause.) All right. But don't you try to put nothing over 'cause you can't get away with nothing. I seen wise guys before. Go out with the grain teams after dinner. They're out pickin' up barley with the thrashin' machines. Go out with Slim's team.

GEORGE: Slim?

BOSS: Yeah. Big, tall Skinner. You'll see him at dinner. (Up to this time the boss has been full of business, calm and suspicious.

In following lines he relaxes, but gradually, as though he wanted to talk but felt the burden of his position. Turns toward door, u. c., but hesitates and allows a little warmth into his manner.)

GEORGE: (Obviously on guard.) We was three days in Frisco lookin' at the boards.

BOSS: (With heavy jocularity.) Didn't go to no night clubs, I s'pose?

GEORGE: (Stiffly) We was lookin' for a job.

BOSS: (Attempting to be friendly.) That's a great town if you got a little jack, Frisco.

GEORGE: (Refusing to be drawn in.) We didn't have no jack for nothing like that.

BOSS: (Realizes there is no contact to establish, grows rigid with his position again.) Go out with the grain teams after dinner. When my hands work hard they get pie and when they loaf they bounce down the road on their can. You ask anybody about me. (Turns, walks out.)

GEORGE: (Turns to LENNIE.) So you wasn't gonna say a word! You was gonna leave your big flapper shut. I was gonna do the talkin' . . . You goddamn near lost us the job!

LENNIE: (Stares hopelessly at hands.) I forgot.

GEORGE: You forgot. You always forget. Now, he's got his eye on us. Now, we gotta be careful and not make no slips. You keep your big flapper shut after this.

LENNIE: He talked like a kinda nice guy towards the last.

GEORGE: (Angrily) He's the boss, ain't he? Well, he's the boss first an a nice guy afterwards. Don't you have nothin' to do with no boss, except do your work and draw your pay. You can't never tell whether you're talkin' to the nice guy or the boss. Just keep your goddamn mouth shut. Then you're all right.

LENNIE: George?

GEORGE: What you want now?

LENNIE: I wasn't kicked in the head with no horse, was I, George?

GEORGE: Be a damn good thing if you was. Save everybody a hell of a lot of trouble!

LENNIE: (Flattered.) You says I was your cousin.

GEORGE: Well, that was a goddamn lie. And I'm glad it was. Why, if I was a relative of yours — (Stops and listens then steps to front door, looks out.) Say, what the hell you doin', listenin'?
CANDY. (Comes slowly into room. By a rope, he leads an ancient
drag-footed blind sheep dog. Sits on box, presses hind quarters
of dog down.) Naw... I wasn't listenin'... I was just
standin' in the shade a minute, scratchin' my dog. I jest now
finished swampin' out the washhouse.

GEORGE. You was pokin' your big nose into our business? I don't
like nosey guys.

CANDY. (Looks uneasily from GEORGE to LENNIE, then back.) I
just come there... I didn't hear nothing you guys was sayin'.
I ain't interested in nothing you was sayin'. A guy on a ranch
don't never listen. Nor he don't ask no questions.

GEORGE. (Slightly mollified.) Damn right he don't! Not if the guy
wants to stay workin' long. (Manner changes.) That's a helluva
ole dog.

CANDY. Yeah. I had him ever since he was a pup. God, he was a
good sheep dog, when he was young. (Rubs cheek with knuckles.)
How'd you like the boss?

GEORGE. Pretty good! Seemed all right.

CANDY. He's a nice fella. You got ta take him right, of course.
He's runnin' this ranch. He don't take no nonsense.

GEORGE. What time do we eat? Eleven-thirty? (CURLEY enters,
dressed in working clothes. 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 crutch. 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. (Aside to 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!

1 See p. 5, Production Note.
LENNIE. (Eagerly.) Let's go, George. Let's get out of here. It's mean here.

GEORGE. (Shortl) I tell you we gotta stay a little while. We gotta get a stake. (Sounds of running water and rattle of basins are heard.) Shut up now, the guys'll be comin' in! (Pensively.) Maybe we ought to wash up... But hell, we ain't done nothin' to get dirty.

SLIM. (Enters C. He is a tall, dark man in blue-jeans and short denim jacket. Carries a crushed Stetson hat under his arm and combs his long dark daff hair straight back. Stands and moves with a kind of majesty. Finishes combing his hair. Smooths out his crushed hat, creases it in the middle and puts it on. In a gentle voice.) It's brighter'n a bitch outside. Can't hardly see nothing in here. You the new guys?

GEORGE. Just come.

SLIM. Goin' to buck barley?

GEORGE. That's what the boss says.

SLIM. Hope you get on my team.

GEORGE. Boss said we'd go with a jerk-line skinner named Slim.

SLIM. That's me.

GEORGE. You a jerk-line skinner?

SLIM. (In self-disparagement.) I can snap 'em around a little.

GEORGE. (Terribly impressed.) That kinda makes you Jesus Christ on this ranch, don't it?

SLIM. (Obviously pleased.) Oh, nuts!

GEORGE. (Chuckles.) Like the man says, "The boss tells you what to do. But if you want to know how to do it, you got to ask the mule skinner." The man says any guy that can drive twelve Arizona jack rabbits with a jerk line can fall in a toilet and come up with a mince pie under each arm.

SLIM. (Laughing.) Well, I hope you get on my team. I got a pair a punks that don't know a barley bag from a blue ball. You guys ever bucked any barley?

GEORGE. Hell, yes. I ain't nothin' to scream about, but that big guy there can put up more grain alone than most pairs can.

SLIM. (Looks approvingly at GEORGE.) You guys travel around together?

GEORGE. Sure. We kinda look after each other. (Points at LENNIE with thumb.) He ain't bright. Hell of a good worker, though. Hell of a nice fella too. I've known him for a long time.

SLIM. Ain't many guys travel around together. I don't know why. Maybe everybody in the whole damn world is scared of each other.

GEORGE. It's a lot nicer to go 'round with a guy you know. You get used to it an then it ain't no fun alone any more. (Enter CARLSON. Big stomached, powerful. His head still drips water from scrubbing and dousing.)

CARLSON. Hello, Slim! (Looks at GEORGE and LENNIE)

SLIM. These guys just come.

CARLSON. Glad to meet ya! My name's Carlson.

GEORGE. I'm George Milton. This here's Lennie Small.

CARLSON. Glad to meet you. He ain't very small. (Chuckles at his own joke.) He ain't small at all. Meant to ask you, Slim, how's your bitch? I seen she wasn't under your wagon this morning.

SLIM. She slung her pups last night. Nine of 'em. I drowned four of 'em right off. She couldn't feed that many.

CARLSON. Got five left, huh?

SLIM. Yeah. Five. I kep' the biggest.

CARLSON. What kinda dogs you think they gonna be?

SLIM. I don't know. Some kind of shepherd, I guess. That's the most kind I seen around here when she's in heat.

CARLSON. (Laughs.) I had an airedale an' a guy down the road got one of them little white foozy dogs, well, she was in heat and the guy locked her up. But my airedale, named Tom he was, he et a woodshed clear down to the roots to get to her. Guy come over one day, he's sore as hell, he says, "I wouldn't mind if my bitch had pups, but Christ Almighty, this morning she slung a litter of Shetland ponies. . . ." (Takes off hat, scratches his head.) Got five pups, huh! Gonna keep all of 'em?

SLIM. I don't know, gotta keep 'em awhile, so they can drink Lulu's milk.

CARLSON. (Thoughtfully.) Well, looks here, Slim, I been thinkin'. That dog of Candy's is so goddamn old he can hardly walk. Stinks like hell. Every time Candy brings him in the bunkhouse, I can smell him two or three days. Why don't you get Candy to shoot his ol' dog, and give him one of them pups to raise up? I can smell that dog a mile off. Got no teeth. Can't eat. Candy feeds him milk. He can't chew nothing else. And leadin' him around on a string so he don't bump into things . . . (The triangle outside begins to ring wildly. Continues for a few moments, then
stops suddenly.) There she goes! (Outside a burst of voices as men go by.)

SLIM. (To Lennie and George.) You guys better come on while they're still somethin' to eat. Won't be nothing left in a couple of minutes. (Exit SLIM and CARLSON. LENNIE watches GEORGE excitedly.)

END # 3

LEN: Geor/g!
GEOR/G (Rumpling cards into a pile.) Yeah, I heard 'im, Lennie... I'll ask 'im!
LEN: (Excitedly) A brown and white one.
GEOR/G Come on, let's get dinner. I don't know whether he's got a brown and white one.
LEN: You ask him right away, George, so he won't kill no more of 'em!
GEOR/G Sure! Come on now—let's go. (They start for door.)
CURLEY. (Bounces in, angrily) You seen a girl around here?
GEOR/G (Coldly) 'Bout half an hour ago, mebbe.
CURLEY. Well, what the hell was she doin'?
GEOR/G. (Insultingly) She said she was lookin' for you.
CURLEY. (Measures both men with his eyes for a moment.) Which way did she go?
GEOR/G. I don't know. I didn't watch her go. (CURLEY scowls at him a moment, then turns and hurries out door.) You know, Lennie, I'm scared I'm gonna tangle with that bastard myself. I hate his guts! Jesus Christ, come on! They won't be a damn thing left to eat.
LEN: Will you ask him about a brown and white one? (They go out.)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE 1

About seven-thirty Friday evening. Same as last scene. The evening light is seen coming in through window, but it is quite dark in bunkhouse. 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 bunkhouse 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.
GEOR/G. 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.
GEOR/G. (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 amols.")
SLIM. Funny how you and him string along together.
GEOR/G. 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.
SLIM. Didn't hurt the girl none, huh?
GEORGE. Hell, no; he jes' scared her.
SLIM. He's a funny guy.
GEORGE. Funny! Why, once time, you know what that big baby
done? He was walking along a road—— (Enter Lennie through
c door. Wears coat over his shoulder like a cape and walks
bunched over.) Hi, Lennie. How do you like your pup?
LENNIE. (Breathlessly.) He's brown and white jus' like I wanted.
(Goes directly to his bunk and lies down. Face to wall. Knees
drawn up.)
GEORGE. (Puts down cards deliberately.) Lennie!
LENNIE. (Over his shoulder.) Huh? What you want, George?
GEORGE. (Sternly.) I tol ya, ya couldn't bring that pup in here.
LENNIE. What pup, George? I ain't got no pup. (George goes
quickly over to him, grabs him by shoulder and rolls him over.
Picks up a tiny puppy from where Lennie has been concealing
it against his stomach. Lennie, quickly.) Give him to me, George.
GEORGE. You get right up and take this pup to the nest. He's got
to sleep with his mother. Ya want ta kill him? Jes' born last night
and ya take him out of the nest. Ya take him back or I'll tell
Slim not to let you have him.
LENNIE. (Pleadingly.) Give him to me, George. I'll take him back.
I didn't mean no bad thing, George. Honest I didn't. I jus' want
to pet him a little.
GEORGE. (Giving pup to him.) All right, you get him back there
quick. And don't you take him out no more. (Lennie scuttles out
of room.)
SLIM. Jesus, he's just like a kid, ain't he?
GEORGE. Sure he's like a kid. There ain't no more harm in him
than a kid neither, except he's so strong. I bet he won't come in
here to sleep tonight. He'll sleep right alongside that box in the
barn. Well, let him. He ain't doin' no harm out there. (Light has
faded outside and it appears quite dark there. Enter Candy lead-
ing his old dog by a string.)
CANDY. Hello, Slim. Hello, George. Don't neither of you play
horseshoes?
SLIM. I don't like to play every night.
CANDY. (Goes to his bunk, sits down, presses dog to floor beside
him.) Either you guys got a slug of whiskey? I got a gut ache.

SLIM. I ain't. I'd drink it myself if I had. And I ain't got no gut
ache either.
CANDY. Goddamn cabbage give it to me. I knowed it was goin' to
before I ever et it. (Enter Carlson and Whit.)
CARLSON. Jesus, how that supper can pitch shoes! 1318-1319.
SLIM. He's plenty good.
WHIT. Damn right he is.
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.) Good
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, pets 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 just
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.

WHIT. 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?

WHIT. 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.

SLIM. (Reads slowly.) "Dear Editor: I read your mag for six years and I think it is the best on the market. I like stories by Peter Rand. I think he is a whining-ding. Give us more like the Dark Rider. I don't write many letters. Just thought I would tell you I think your mag is the best dime's worth I ever spent." (Looks up questioningly.) What you want me to read that for?

WHIT. Go on, read the name at the bottom.

SLIM. (Reading.) "Yours for Success, William Tenner." (Looks up at WHIT.) What ya want me to read that for?

CARLSON. Come on, Candy—what you say?

WHIT. (Taking magazine, closing it impressively. Talks to cover CARLSON.) You don't remember Bill Tenner? Worked here about three months ago?

SLIM. (Thinking.) Little guy? Drove a cultivator?

WHIT. That's him. That's the guy.

CARLSON. (Has refused to be drawn into conversation.) Look, Candy. If you want me to, I'll put the old devil outa his misery right now and get it over with. There ain't nothin' left for him. Can't eat, can't see, can't hardly walk. Tomorrow you can pick one of Slim's pups.

SLIM. Sure... I got a lot of 'em.

CANDY. (Hopefully.) You ain't got no gun.

CARLSON. The hell I ain't. Got a Luger. It won't hurt him none at all.

CANDY. Mebbe tomorrow. Let's wait till tomorrow.

CARLSON. I don't see no reason for it. (Goes to his bunk, pulls bag from underneath, takes revolver out.) Let's get it over with. We can't sleep with him stinking around in here. (Snaps shell into chamber, sets safety, puts revolver into hip pocket.)

SLIM. (As CANDY looks toward him for help.) Better let him go, Candy.

CANDY. (Looks at each person for some hope. WHIT makes gesture of protest, then resigns himself. Others look away, to avoid responsibility. At last, very softly and hopelessly) All right. Take him. (He doesn't look down at dog at all. Lies back on his bunk. Crosses his arms behind his head, stares at ceiling. CARLSON picks up string, helps dog to its feet.)

CARLSON. Come, boy. Come on, boy. (To CANDY, apologetically.) He won't even feel it. (CANDY does not move nor answer.) Come on, boy. That's the stuff. Come on. (Leads dog toward door.)

SLIM. Carlson?

CARLSON. Yeah.

SLIM. (Curtly.) Take a shovel.

CARLSON. Oh, sure, I get you. (Exit CARLSON with dog. GEORGE follows to door, shuts it carefully, sets latch. CANDY lies rigidly on his bunk. Next scene is one of silence and quick staccato speeches.)

END # 4

SLIM. (Loudly) One of my lead mules got a bad hoof. Got to get some tar on it. (A silence.)

GEORGE. (Loudly.) Anybody like to play a little euchre?

WHIT. I'll lay out a few with you. (They take places opposite each other at table but GEORGE does not shuffle cards. Ripples opposite deck. Everybody looks over at him. He stops. Silence again.)

SLIM. (Compassionately.) Candy, you can have any of them pups you want. (No answer from CANDY. There is a little gnawing noise on stage.)

GEORGE. Sounds like there was a rat under there. We ought to set a trap there. (Deep silence again.)

WHIT. (Exasperated.) What the hell is takin' him so long? Lay out some cards, why don't you? We ain't gonna get no euchre played this way. (GEORGE studies backs of cards. After long si-
lence, a shot in the distance. All start a bit, look quickly at CANDY.  
For a moment he continues to stare at ceiling, then rolls slowly 
over and faces wall. GEORGE: shuffles cards noisily, deals them.)  
GEORGE. Well, let's get to it.  
WHIT. (Still to cover the moment.) Yeah . . . I guess you guys 
really come here to work, huh?  
GEORGE. How do you mean?  
WHIT. (Chuckles.) Well, you come on a Friday. You got two days 
to work till Sunday.  
GEORGE. I don't see how you figure.  
WHIT. You do if you been round these big ranches much. A guy 
that wants to look over a ranch comes in Saturday afternoon. He 
gets Saturday night supper, three meals on Sunday and he can 
quit on Monday morning after breakfast without turning a hand. 
But you come to work on Friday noon. You got ta put in a day 
and a half no matter how ya figure it.  
GEORGE. (Quietly.) We're goin' stick around awhile. Me and 
Lennie's gonna roll up a stake. (Door opens. CROOKS puts in his 
head. lean-faced Negro with pained eyes.)  
CROOKS. Mr. Slim.  
SLIM. (Who has been watching CANDY.) Huh? Oh, hello, Crooks, 
what's the matter?  
CROOKS. You tol me to warm up tar for that mule's foot. I got 
it warm now.  
SLIM. Oh, sure, Crooks. I'll come right out and put it on.  
CROOKS. I can do it for you if you want, Mr. Slim.  
SLIM. (Standing up.) Naw, I'll take care of my own team.  
CROOKS. Mr. Slim.  
SLIM. Yeah.  
CROOKS. That big new guy is messing round your pups in the barn. 
SLIM. Well, he ain't doin' no harm. I give him one of them pups.  
CROOKS. Just thought I'd tell ya. He's takin' 'em out of the nest 
and handling 'em. That won't do 'em no good.  
SLIM. Oh, he won't hurt 'em.  
GEORGE. (Looks up from cards.) If that crazy bastard is foolin' 
round too much just' kick him out. (SLIM follows CROOKS out.)  
WHIT. (Examining cards.) Seen the new kid yet?  
GEORGE. What kid?  
WHIT. Why, Curley's new wife.  
GEORGE. (Cautiously.) Yeah, I seen her.
"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 and take your chance of gettin' burned, why, you know where to go." She says: "They's guys round here walkin' bow-legged because they liked to look at a kewpie doll lamp."

GEORGE. Gladys runs the other house, huh?

WHIT. Yeah. (Enter CARLSON. CANDY looks at him.)

SHY. (Late at 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 any 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 Goo-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 exultingly.)

CURLEY. Any you guys seen my wife?

WHIT. She ain't been here.

CURLEY. (Looks threateningly about.) Where the hell's Slim?

GEORGE. Went out in the barn. He was goin' put some tar on a split hoop.

CURLEY. How long ago did he go?

GEORGE. Oh, five, ten minutes. (CURLEY jumps out the door.)

WHIT. (Standing up.) I guess maybe I'd like to see this. Curley must be spoilin' or he wouldn't start for Slim. Curley's handy, goddamn handy. But just the same he better leave Slim alone.

GEORGE. Thinks Slim's with his wife, don't he?

WHIT. Looks like it. Course Slim ain't. Least I don't think Slim is. But I like to see the fuss if it comes off. Come on, le's go.

GEORGE. I don't want to git mixed up in nothing. Me and Lennie got to make a stake.

CARLSON. (Finishes cleaning revolver, puts it in his bag, stands up.)

I'll look her over. Ain't seen a good fight in a hell of a while. (WHIT and CARLSON go out.)

GEORGE. You see Slim out in the barn?

LENNIE. Sure. He told me I better not pet that pup no more, like I said.

GEORGE. Did you see that girl out there?

LENNIE. You mean Curley's girl?

GEORGE. Yeah. Did she come in the barn?

LENNIE. (Cautionally.) No—anyways I never seen her.

GEORGE. You never seen Slim talkin' to her?

LENNIE. Uh-uh. She ain't been in the barn.

GEORGE. Okay. I guess them guys ain't gonna see no fight. If they's any fightin', Lennie, ya get out of the way and stay out.

LENNIE. I don't want no fight. (GEORGE lays out solitaire hand. LENNIE picks up face card, studies it. Turns it over, studies it again.) Both ends the same. George, why is it both ends the same? GEORGE. I don't know. That jus' the way they make 'em. What was Slim doin' in the barn when you seen him?

LENNIE. Slim?

GEORGE. Sure, you seen him in the barn. He tole you not to pet the pups so much.

LENNIE. Oh. Yeah. He had a can of tar and a paint brush. I don't know what for.

GEORGE. You sure that girl didn't come in like she come in here today?

LENNIE. No, she never come.

GEORGE. (Sighs.) You give me a good cat-house every time. A guy can go in and get drunk and get it over all at once and no messes. And he knows how much it's goin' set him back. These tarts is jus' buckshot to a guy. (LENNIE listens with admiration, moving his lips. GEORGE continues.) You remember Andy Cushman, Lennie? Went to grammar school same time as us?

LENNIE. The one that his ole lady used to make hot cakes for the kids?

GEORGE. Yeah. That's the one. You can remember if they's somepin' to eat in it. (Scores cards in his solitaire playing.) Well, Andy's in San Quentin right now on account of a tart.

LENNIE. George?

GEORGE. Huh?
LENNIE: How long is it goin' be till we git that little place to live on the fat of the land?
GEORGE: I don't know. We gotta get a big stake together. I know a little place we can get cheap, but they ain't givin' it away. (CANDY turns slowly over, watches GEORGE.)
LENNIE: Tell about that place, George.
GEORGE: I jus' tol' you. Jus' last night.
LENNIE: Go on, tell again.
GEORGE: Well, it's ten acres. Got a little windmill. Got a little shack on it and a chicken run. Got a kitchen orchard. Cherries, apples, peaches, 'cots and nuts. Got a few berries. There's a place for alfalfa and plenty water to flood it. There's a pig pen . . .
LENNIE: (Breaking in.) And rabbits, George?
GEORGE: I could easy build a few hutches. And you could feed alfalfa to them rabbits.
LENNIE: Damn right I could. (Excitedly.) You goddamn right I could.
GEORGE: (His voice growing warmer.) And we could have a few pigs. I'd build a smokehouse. And when we kill a pig we could smoke the hams. When the salmon run up the river we can catch a hundred of 'em. Every Sunday we'd kill a chicken or rabbit. Mebbe we'll have a cow or a goat. And the cream is so goddamn thick you got to cut it off the pan with a knife.
LENNIE: (Watching him with wide eyes, softly.) We can live off the fat of the land.
GEORGE: Sure. All kinds of vegetables in the garden and if we want a little whiskey we can sell some eggs or somethin'. And we wouldn't sleep in no bunkhouse. Nobody could canvas us in the middle of a job.
LENNIE: (Begging.) Tell about the house, George.
GEORGE: Sure. We'd have a little house. And a room to ourselves. And it ain't enough land so we'd have to work too hard. Mebbe six, seven hours a day only. We wouldn't have to buck no barley eleven hours a day. And when we put in a crop, why we'd be there to take that crop up. We'd know what come of our planting.
LENNIE: (Eagerly.) And rabbits. And I'd take care of them. Tell how I'd do that, George.
GEORGE: Sure. You'd go out in the alfalfa patch and you'd have a sack. You'd fill up the sack and bring it in and put it in the rabbit cages.

LENNIE: They'd nibble and they'd nibble, the way they do. I seen 'em.
GEORGE: Every six weeks or so they does would throw a litter. So we'd have plenty rabbits to eat or sell. (Pauses for inspiration.) And we'd keep a few pigeons to go flying round and round the windmill, like they done when I was a kid. (Seems entranced.) And it'd be our own. And nobody could can us. If we don't like a guy we can say: "Get to hell out," and by God he's got to do it. And if a friend come along, why, we'd have an extra bunk. Know what we'd say? We'd say, "Why don't you spend the night?" And by God he would. We'd have a setter dog and a couple of striped cats. (Looks sharply at LENNIE.) But you gotta watch out them cats don't get the little rabbits.
LENNIE: (Breathing hard.) You jus' let 'em try. I'll break their goddamn necks. I'll smash them cats flat with a stick. I'd smash 'em flat with a stick. That's what I'd do. (They sit silently for a moment.)
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 is. 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 needs 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 swappin'. 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 guy.? 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.
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
fourty. I bet we could swing her for that. Then you and Len-
nie 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 wrist 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. (Miserably.) 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 do it, George?
GEORGE. (Decisively.) In one month. Right smack in one month.
Know what I'm gonna do? I'm goin' write to them ole people that
owns the place that we'll take 'er. And Candy'll send a hundred
dollars to bind her.
CANDY. (Happily.) I sure will. They got a good stove there?
GEORGE. Sure, got a nice stove. Burns coal or wood.
LENNIE. I'm gonna take my pup. I bet by Christ he likes it there

"Window u. c. swings outward. CURLEY'S WIFE looks in. They
do not see her."
GEORGE. (Quickly.) Now don't tell nobody about her. Just us three
and nobody else. They're liable to can us so we can't make no
stake. We'll just go on like we was a bunch of punks. Like we
was gonna buck barley the rest of our lives. And then all of a
sudden, one day, bang! We get our pay and scram out of here.
CANDY. I can give you three hundred right now.
LENNIE. And not tell nobody. We won't tell nobody, George.
GEORGE. You're goddamn right we won't. (A silence, then GEORge
speaks irritably.) You know, seems to me I can almost smell that
carnation stuff that goddamn tart dumps on herself. END
CURLEY'S WIFE. (In first part of GEORGE's speech she starts to
step out of sight, but at last words her face darkens with anger.
At her first words everybody looks around at her and remains
rigid.) Who you callin' a tart? I come from a nice home. I was
brung up by nice people. Nobody never got to me before I was
married. I was straight. I tell you I was good. (A little plainly.) I
was. (Angry again.) You know Curley. You know he
wouldn't stay with me if he wasn't sure. I tell you Curley is sure.
You got no right to call me a tart.
GEORGE. (Sullenly.) If you ain't a tart, what you always hangin'
round guys for? You got a house an' you got a man. We don't
want no trouble from you.
CURLEY'S WIFE. (Pleadingly.) Sure I got a man. He ain't never
home. I got nobody to talk to. I got nobody to be with. Think I
can just sit home and do nothin' but cook for Curley? I want to
see somebody. Just see 'em an' talk to 'em. There ain't no women.
I can't walk to town. And Curley don't take me to no dances now.
I tell you I jus' want to talk to somebody.
GEORGE. (Boldly.) If you're just friendly what you givin' out the
eye for an' flippin' your can around?
CURLEY'S WIFE. (Sadly.) I just wanta be nice. (Sound of ap-
proaching voices: "You don't have to get mad about it, do you?
... "I ain't mad, but I just don't want no more questions, that's
all. I just don't want no more questions."
GEORGE. Get goin'. We don't want no trouble. (CURLEY'S WIFE
looks from window, closes it silently, disappears. Enter SLIM.
followed by CURLEY, CARLSON and WHIT. SLIM's hands are black
with tar. CURLEY hangs close to his elbow.)
CURLEY. (Explaining) Well, I didn't mean nothing. Slim, I jes' ast you.  
SLIM. Well, you been askin' too often. I'm gettin' goddamn sick of it. If you can't look after your own wife, what you expect me to do about it? You lay off of me.  
CURLEY. I'm just 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 bunks and pretty soon you're goin' have somethin' on your hands.  
CURLEY. (Whirls on CARLSON.) You keep out of this 'less you want to 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.) Somebody got to beat the hell outa you. I guess I'm elected. (LENNIE has been watching. Fascinated. Gives high, nervous chuckle.)  
CURLEY. (Whirls on him.) What the hell you laughin' at?  
LENNE. (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. (LENNIE looks helplessly at GEORGE. Gets up, tries to retreat upstage. CURLEY follows, slashing at him. Others mass themselves in front of the contestants. "That ain't no way, Curly—he ain't done nothing to you." "Lay off him, will you, Curly. He ain't no fighter." "Sock him back, big guy! Don't be afraid of him!" "Give him a chance. Curly. Give him a chance.")  
LENNE. (Crying with terror.) George, make him leave me alone, George.
Maybe you better go in the washroom and clean up your face.
You look like hell.
LENNIE. I didn’t want no trouble.
GEORGE. Come on — I’ll go with you.
LENNIE. George?
GEORGE. What you want?
LENNIE. Can I still tend the rabbits, George? (They go out together, side by side, through door.)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE 2

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 r. c. 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. u. l. 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. u. r. a single-barreled 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 baller chains, and now and then whimpering. Two empty nail kegs are in the room to be used as seats. Single unshaded small candlepower carbon light hanging from its own cord.¹

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, and I 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. (Indignously.) 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.
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 seen your light.
CROOKS. Well, what do you want?
LENNIE. Nothing . . . I seen your light. I thought I could just 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 bucker 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.
CROOKS. Well, God damn it, and go see your pup then. Don’t go no place where you ain’t wanted.
LENNIE. (Advances a step into the room, remembers and backs to door again.) I looked at him a little. Slim says I ain’t to pet him very much.
CROOKS. (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.
LENNIE. (Moving into room.) Oh, she don’t care. She lets me.
CROOKS. (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? LENNIE. All but old Candy. He jus’ sets in the bunkhouse sharpening his pencils. And sharpening and figurin’.

¹ See p. 5, Production Note.
CROOKS. (Adjusting glasses) Figurin'? What's Candy figurin' about?
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' to 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. (Hunches 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 nigger. It don't mean nothing, see. You couldn't remember it anyway. I seen it over and over—a guy talking to another guy and it don't make no difference if he don't hear or understand. The thing is they're talkin'. (Pounds knee with his hand.) George can tell you screwy things and it don't matter. It's just the talkin'. It's just bein' with another guy, that's all. (Hes voice becomes soft and malicious.) S'pose George don't come back no more? S'pose he took a powder and just ain't comin' back. What you do then?
LENNIE. (Trying to follow CROOKS.) What? What?
CROOKS. I said s'pose George went into town tonight and you never heard of him no more. (Presses forward.) Just s'pose that.
LENNIE. (Sharply.) He won't do it. George wouldn't do nothing like that. I been with George a long time. He'll come back tonight. . . . (Doubt creeps into his voice.) Don't you think he will?
CROOKS. (Delighted with his torture.) Nobody can tell what a guy will do. Let's say he wants to come back and can't. S'pose he gets killed or hurt so he can't come back.
LENNIE. (In terrible apprehension.) I don't know. Say, what you doin' anyway? It ain't true. George ain't got hurt.
CROOKS. (Cruelly.) Want me to tell you what'll happen? They'll take you to the booby hatch. They'll tie you up with a collar like a dog. Then you'll be just like me. Livin' in a kennel.
LENNIE. (Furious, walks over toward CROOKS.) Who hurt George?
CROOKS. (Recalling with fright.) I was just supposin'. George ain't hurt. He's all right. He'll be back all right.
LENNIE. (Standing over him.) What you supposin' for? Ain't nobody goin' to s'pose any hurt to George.
CROOKS. (Trying to calm him.) Now set down. George ain't hurt. Go on now, set down.
LENNIE. (Growling.) Ain't nobody gonna talk no hurt to George.
CROOKS. (Very gently.) Maybe you can see now. You got George. You know he's comin' back. S'pose you didn't have nobody. S'pose you couldn't go in the bunkhouse and play runny, 'cause you was black. How would you like that? S'pose you had to set out here and read books. Sure, you could play horseshoes until it got dark, but then you got to read books. Books ain't no good. A guy needs somebody . . . to be near him. (His tone wistful.) A guy goes nuts if he ain't got nobody. Don't make no difference who it is as long as he's with you. I tell you a guy gets too lonesome, he gets sick.
LENNIE. (Reassuring himself.) George gonna come back. Maybe George come back already. Maybe I better go see.
CROOKS. (More gently.) I didn't mean to scare you. He'll come back. I was talkin' about myself.
LENNIE. (Miserably.) George won't go away and leave me. I know George won't do that.
CROOKS. (Continuing dreamily.) I remember when I was a little kid on my ole man's chicken ranch. Had two brothers. They were...
always near me, always there. Used to sleep right in the same room. Right in the same bed, all three. Had a strawberry patch. Had an alfalfa patch. Used to turn the chickens out in the alfalfa patch on a sunny morning. Me and my brothers would set on the fence and watch 'em—white chickens they was.

LENNIE. (Interested.) George says we're gonna have alfalfa.

CROOKS. You're nuts.

LENNIE. We are too gonna get it. You ask George.

CROOKS. (Scornfully.) You're nuts. I seen hundreds of men come by on the road and on the ranches, bindles on their back and that same damn thing in their head. Hundreds of 'em. They come and they quit and they go on. And every damn one of 'em is got a little piece of land in his head. And never a goddamn one of 'em gets it. Just like heaven. Everybody wants a little piece of land. Nobody never gets to heaven. And nobody gets no land.

LENNIE. We are too.

CROOKS. It's jest in your head. Guys all the time talkin' about it, but it's jest in your head. (Horses; move restlessly off stage. One of them whinnies.) I guess somebody's out there. Maybe Slim. (Pulls himself painfully upright, moves toward door. Calls.) That you, Slim? END # 8

CANDY. (From outside.) Slim went in town. Say, you seen Lennie?

CROOKS. You mean the big guy?

CANDY. Yes. Seen him around any place?

CROOKS. (goes back to his bunk, sits down, says shortly.) He's in here.

CANDY. (Stands in doorway, scratching wrist. Makes no attempt to enter.) Look, Lennie, I been figuring something out. About the place.

CROOKS. (Irritably.) You can come in if you want.

CANDY. (Embarrassed.) I don't know. Course if you want me to.

CROOKS. Oh, come on in. Everybody's comin' in. You might just as well. Gettin' to be a goddam race track. (Tries to conceal his pleasure.)

CANDY. (Still embarrassed.) You've got a nice cozy little place in here. Must be nice to have a room to yourself this way.

CROOKS. Sure. And a manure pile under the window. All to myself. It's swell.

LENNIE. (Breaking in.) You said about the place.

CANDY. You know, I been here a long time. An' Crooks been here a long time. This is the first time I ever been in his room.

CROOKS. (Darkly.) Guys don't come in a colored man's room. Nobody been here but Slim.

LENNIE. (Insistently.) The place. You said about the place.

CANDY. Yeah. I got it all figured out. We can make some real money on them rabbits if we go about it right.

LENNIE. But I get to tend 'em. George says I get to tend 'em. He promised.

CROOKS. (Brutally.) You guys is just kiddin' yourselves. You'll talk about it a hell of a lot, but you won't get no land. You'll be a swampers here until they take you out in a box. Hell, I seen too many guys.

CANDY. (Angrily.) We're gonna do it. George says we are. We got the money right now.

CROOKS. Yeah. And where is George now? In town in a cat-house. That's where your money's goin'. I tell you I seen it happen too many times.

CANDY. George ain't got the money in town. The money's in the bank. Me and Lennie and George. We gonna have a room to ourselves. We gonna have a dog and chickens. We gonna have green corn and maybe a cow.

CROOKS. (Impressed.) You say you got the money?

CANDY. We got most of it. Just a little bit more to get. Have it all in one month. George's got the land all picked out too.

CROOKS. (Exploring his spine with his hands.) I've never seen a guy really do it. I seen guys nearly crazy with loneliness for land, but every time a cat-house or a blackjack game took it away from 'em. (Hesitates, then speaks timidly.) If you guys would want a hand to work for nothin'—just his keep, why, I'd come and lend a hand. Ain't so crippled I can't work like a son-of-a-bitch if I wanted to.

GEORGE. (Strolls through door, hands in pockets, leans against wall, speaks in half satiric, rather gentle voice.) You couldn't go to bed like I told you, could you, Lennie? Hell, no—you got to get out in society an' flap your mouth. Holdin' a convention out here.

LENNIE. (Defending himself.) You was gone. There wasn't nobody in the bunkhouse. I ain't done no bad things, George.

GEORGE. (Still casually.) Only time I get any peace is when you're
asleep. If you ever get walkin' in your sleep I'll chop off your head like a chicken. (Chops with his hand) CROOKS. (Coming to Lennie's defense.) We was just settin' here talkin'. Ain't no harm in that.

GEORGE. Yeah, I heard you. (A weariness has settled on him.) Got to be here ever' minute, I guess. Got to watch ya. (To CROOKS.) It ain't nothing against you, Crooks. We just wasn't gonna tell nobody.

CANDY. (Tries to change subject.) Didn't you have no fun in town?

GEORGE. Oh! I set in a chair and Susy was crackin' jokes an' the guys was startin' to raise a little puny hell. Christ Almighty—I never been this way before. I'm just' gonna set out a dime and a nickel for a shot an' I think what a hell of a lot of bulk carrot seed you can get for fifteen cents.

CANDY. Not in them damn little envelopes—but bulk seed—you sure can.

GEORGE. So purty soon I come back. I can't think of nothing else. Them guys slangin' money around got me jumpy.

CANDY. Guy got to have some fun. I was to a parlor house in Bakersfield once. God Almighty, what a place. Went upstairs on a red carpet. They was big pitchers on the wall. We set in big sof' chairs. They was cigarettes on the table—an' they was free. Purty soon a Jap come in with drinks on a tray an' them drinks was free. Take all you want. (In a reverie.) Purty soon the girls come in an' they was just as polite an' nice an' quiet an' purty. Didn't seem like hookers. Made ya kinda scared to ask 'em... That was a long time ago.

GEORGE. Yeah? An' what'd them sof' chairs set you back?

CANDY. Fifteen bucks.

GEORGE. (Scornfully.) So ya got a cigarette an' a whiskey an' a look at a purty dress an' it cost ya twelve and a half bucks extra. You shot a week's pay to walk on that red carpet.

CANDY. (Still entranced with his memory.) A week's pay? Sure. But I worked weeks all my life. I can't remember none of them weeks. But... that was nearly twenty years ago. And I can remember that. Girl I went with was named Arline. Had on a pink silk dress.

GEORGE. (Turns suddenly and looks out door into the dark barn,
Curley. He says he caught his han' 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. Ever'body 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. If a guy steps on a round pebble an' falls down an' breaks his neck, it ain't the pebble's fault, but the guy wouldn't of did it if the pebble wasn't there.

CURLEY'S WIFE. (Puzzled.) What you talkin' about pebbles? If you didn't sock Curley, who did? (Looks at others, then steps quickly over to LENNIE.) Where'd you get them bruises on your face?

GEORGE. I tell you he got his hand caught in a machine.

LENIE. (Looks anxiously at GEORGE, miserably.) He caught his han' in a machine.

GEORGE. So now get out of here.

CURLEY'S WIFE. (Goes close to LENNIE, speaks softly, note of affection in her voice.) So... it was you. Well... maybe you're dumb like they say... an' maybe... you're the only guy on the ranch with guts. (Puts hand on LENNIE's shoulder. He looks up in her face and a smile grows on his face. She strokes his shoulder.) You're a nice fella.

GEORGE. (Suddenly leaps at her ferociously, grabs her shoulder and whirls her around.) Listen... you! I tried to give you a break. Don't you walk into nothing! We ain't gonna let you mess up what we're gonna do. You let this guy alone an' get the hell out of here.

CURLEY'S WIFE. (Defiant but slightly frightened.) You ain't tellin' me what to do. (BOSS appears in door, stands legs spread, thumbs hooked over his belt.) I got a right to talk to anybody I want to.

GEORGE. Why, you — (GEORGE, furious, steps close—hand is raised to strike her. She covers a little. GEORGE stiffens, seeing BOSS, frozen in position. Others see BOSS, too. She retreats slowly. GEORGE's hand drops slowly to his side—he takes two slow backward steps. Hold the scene for a moment.)

CURTAIN

End #9
ACT III

SCENE I

Mid-afternoon Sunday.
One end of interior of barn. Backstage the hay slopes up sharply against the wall. High in upstage wall a large bay window. On each side are seen hay rakes, behind which are the stalls with horses in them. Throughout the scene the horses can be heard in their stalls, rattling their halter chains and chewing at the hay. The entrance is down R. The boards of the barn are not close together. Streaks of afternoon sun come between them, made visible by dust in the air. From outside comes the clanging of horses on the playing peg, shouts of men encouraging or jeering. In the barn there is a feeling of quiet and humming and lazy warmth.

Curtain rises on LENNIE sitting in the hay, looking down at a little dead puppy in front of him. Puts out hand and strokes it clear from one end to the other.

LENNIE (Softly) Why do you want to get killed? You ain't so little as mice. I didn't bounce you hard. (Bends pup's head up and looks in its face.) Now maybe George ain't gonna let me tend no rabbits if he finds out you got killed. (Scoops a little boll and lays the puppy in it out of sight and covers it over with hay. He stares at the mound he has made.) This ain't no bad thing like I got to hide in the brush. I'll tell George I found it dead. (Unburies pup and inspects it. Twists its ears and works his fingers in its fur. Sorrowfully) But he'll know. George always knows. He'll say: "You done it. Don't try to put nothin' over on me." And he'll say: "Now just for that you don't get to tend no—you know—whats." (His anger rises. Addresses pup.) God damn you. Why do you want to get killed? You ain't so little as mice. (Picks up pup and hurls it from him, turns his back on it. Sits bent over his knees, meaning to himself.) Now he won't let me. ... Now he won't let me. (Outside a clanging of horseshoes on iron stake and a little chains of crows. LENNIE gets up and bounds pup back and lays it in the hay and sits down. He mourns.) You wasn't big enough. They told me and told me you wasn't. I didn't know you'd get killed so easy. Maybe George won't care. This here goddamn little son-of-a-bitch wasn't nothin' to George. End 3

CANDY. (Voice from behind stalls) Lennie, where you at? (LENNIE frantically buries pup under hay. CANDY enters excitedly.) Thought I'd find ya here. Say ... I been talkin' to Slim. It's okay. We ain't gonna get the can. Slim been talkin' to the boss. Slim tol' the boss you guys is good buckers. The boss got to move that grain. 'Member what hell the boss gives us las' night? He tol' Slim he got his eye on you an' George. But you ain't gonna get the can. Oh! an' say. The boss give Curley's wife hell, too. Tole her never to go near the men no more. Give her worse hell than you an' George. (For first time notices Lennie's dejection.) Ain't you glad?

LEN NIE: Sure.

CANDY. You ain't sick?

LEN NIE: Uh-uh.

CANDY. I got to go tell George. See you later. (Exits. LENNIE alone, uncovers pup. Lies down in hay and sinks deep in it. Puts pup on his arm, strokes it. CURELY'S WIFE enters secretly. A little mound of hay conceals Lennie from her. She carries a small suitcase, very cheap. Crosses barn, buries case in hay. Stands up and looks to see whether it can be seen. Lennie, watching her quietly, tries to cover pup with hay. She sees movement.)

CURELY'S WIFE. What—what you doin' here?

LEN NIE: (Sullenly) Jus' settin' here.

CURELY'S WIFE: You seen what I done

LEN NIE: Yeah! You brang a valise.

CURELY'S WIFE: (Comes near to him) You won't tell—will you?

LEN NIE: (Still sullen.) I ain't gonna have nothing to do with you. George tol' me. I ain't to talk to you or nothing. (Covers pup a little more.)

CURELY'S WIFE: George give you all your orders?

LEN NIE: Not talk nor nothing.

CURELY'S WIFE: You won't tell about that suitcase? I ain't gonna stay here no more. Tonight I'm gonna get out. Come here an' get my stuff an' get out. I ain't gonna be run over no more. I'm gonna

1See p. 5, Production Notes.
go in pitchers. (Sees Lennie’s hand stroking pup under hay.)
What you got there?

Lennie: Nothing. Ain’t gonna talk to you. George says I ain’t.

Curley’s Wife: Listen: The guys got a horseshoe tenement out there. It’s on’ry four o’clock. Them guys ain’t gonna leave that tenement. They got money bet. You don’t need to be scared to talk to me.

Lennie: (Weakening a little.) I ain’t supposed to.

Curley’s Wife: (Watching his buried hand.) What you got under there?

Lennie: (His woes comes back to him.) Jus’ my pup. Jus’ my little ol’ pup. (Sweeps hay aside.)

Curley’s Wife: Why! He’s dead.

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 morrow 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: (Hurryin’ 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. 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.

Curley’s Wife: I hope George ain’t gonna be mad about this pup.

Curley’s Wife: Ain’t toff this to nobody before. Maybe I oughtn’t to. I don’t like Curley. He ain’t a nice fellas. I might’ve 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.

Lennie: We gonna get out a here purry soon. This ain’t no nice place.

Curley’s Wife: (Ecstatically.) 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 pitch. (Puts hand on Lennie’s arm for a moment.) All them nice clothes like they wear . . . . because this guy says I’m a natural.

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

Curley’s Wife: ’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.

Lennie: George an’ me was 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.

Curley’s Wife: My ol’ man was a sign-painter when he worked. He used to get drunk an’ paint crazy pitchers an’ waste paint. One night when I was a little kid, him an’ my ol’ lady had an awful fight. They was always fightin’. In the middle of the night he come into my room, and he says, “I can’t stand this no more. Let’s you an’ me go away.” I guess he was drunk. (Her voice takes on a curious wondering tenderness.) I remember in the night—walkin’ down the road, and the trees was black. I was pretty sleepy. He picked me up, an’ he carried me on his back. He says, “We gonna live together. We gonna live together because you’re my own little girl, an’ not no stranger. No arguin’ and fightin’,” he says, “because you’re my little daughter.” (Her
CURLIEY'S WIFE. They locked him up for a drunk, and in a little while he died.

Lennie. Then maybe I could tend the rabbits without no trouble.

CURLIEY'S WIFE. Don't you think of nothing but rabbits? (Sound of horseshoe on metal.) Somebody made a ringer.

Lennie. (Patiently.) We gonna have a house and a garden, an' a place for alfalfa. And I take a sack and get it all full of alfalfa, and then I take it to the rabbits.

CURLIEY'S WIFE. What makes you so nuts about rabbits?

Lennie. (Moves close to her.) I like to pet nice things. Once at a fair I seen some of them long-hair rabbits. And they was nice, you bet. (Despairingly.) I'd even pet mice, but not when I could get nothin' better.

CURLIEY'S WIFE. (Giggles.) I think you're nuts.

Lennie. (Earnestly.) No, ain't. George says ain't. I like to pet nice things with my fingers. Soft things.

CURLIEY'S WIFE. Well, who don't? Everybody likes that. I like to feel silk and velvet. You like to feel velvet?

Lennie. (Chuckling with pleasure.) You bet, by God. And I had some too. A lady give me some. And that lady was—my Aunt Clara. She give it right to me... (Measuring with his hands.) 'Bout this big a piece. I wish I had that velvet right now. (He frowns.) I lost it. I ain't seen it for a long time.

CURLIEY'S WIFE. (Laughing.) You're nuts. But you're kinda nice fella. Just like a big baby. A person can see kinda what you mean. When I'm doin' my hair sometimes I just set there and stroke it, because it's so soft. (Runs her fingers over top of her head.) Some people got kinda coarse hair. You take Curley, his hair's just like wire. But mine is soft and fine. Here, feel. Right here. (Takes Lennie's hand and puts it on her head.) Feel there and see how soft it is. (Lennie's fingers fall to stroking her hair.) Don't you muss it up.

Lennie. Oh, that's nice. (Strokes harder.) Oh, that's nice.

CURLIEY'S WIFE. Look out now, you'll muss it. (Angrily.) You stop it now, you'll mess it all up. (She jerks her head sideways and Lennie's fingers close on her hair and hang on. In a panic.) Let go. (Screams.) You let go. (Screams again. His other hand closes over her mouth and nose.)

Lennie. (Begging.) Oh, please don't do that. George'll be mad. (She struggle violently to get free. A soft screaming comes from under Lennie's hand. Crying with fright.) Oh, please don't do none of that. George gonna say I done a bad thing. (He raises his hand from her mouth and a hoarse cry escapes. Angrily.) Now don't. I don't want you to yell. You gonna get me in trouble just like George says you will. Now don't you do that. (She struggles more.) Don't you go yellin'. (He shakes her violently. Her neck snaps sideways and she lies still. Looks down at her, cautiously removes his hand from over her mouth.) I don't wanna hurt you. But George will be mad if you yell. (When she doesn't answer he bends closely over her. Lifts her arm and lets it drop. For a moment he seems bewildered.) I done a bad thing. I done another bad thing. (He paws up the bay until it partly covers her. Sound of the horseshoe game comes from outside. And for the first time Lennie seems conscious of it. He crouches down and listens.) Oh, I done a real bad thing. I shouldn't 'a' did that. George will be mad. And... he said... and hide in the brush till he comes. He's gonna be mad... in the brush till he comes. That's what he said. (Picks up the puppy from beside the girl.) I'll throw him away. It's bad enough like it is. (Puts pup under his coat, creeps to wall, peers out between cracks, then creeps around to end of manger and disappears. Stage is vacant except for CURLIEY'S WIFE. She lies in the hay bale covered up, and looks very young and peaceful. Her rouged cheeks and red lips make her seem alive and sleeping lightly. For a moment the stage is absolutely silent. Then the horses stomp on other side of feeding rack. Halter chains clink and from outside men's voices come loud and clear.)

Candy. (Offstage.) Lennie! Oh, Lennie, you in there? (He enters.) I been figurin' some more, Lennie. Tell you what we can do. (Sees CURLIEY'S WIFE, steps. Rubs his whiskers.) I didn't know you was here. You was tol' not to be here. (Steps near her.) You oughtn't to sleep out here. (He is right beside her, looks down.) Oh, Jesus Christ! (Goes to door, calls softly.) George, George! Come here... George!