

## Of Mice and Men

### Section 1

The book starts out with a description of the setting, a river bed in rural California. Multiple little details are given, such as the “golden foothill slopes”. This story takes place around the time of the Great Depression, meaning that practically everyone is poor, and looking for some kind of job in order to “put food on the table.” In this chapter, two characters are introduced, Lennie and George. Complete opposites, yet somehow end up becoming partners on their dull journey of traveling throughout rural Cali in order to find a job. Lennie is a large built up man, but shouldn't be judged by his appearance. On the inside he's a petite child-like man. George is much shorter and not as built up, but is known as the “brains” for their journey. One of the major problems for Lennie is that he likes to “pet” things, for a long time, and very strongly. He does this to not only animals, but also girls, which goes back to the very beg of the story. For “petting” a girl in a red dress Lennie had costed his and George's job.

### Section 2

George and Lennie arrive at the new ranch. In the bunkhouse, they meet an old guy named Candy. His name seems especially inappropriate since he is missing a hand, has bristly white whiskers, and an ancient dog that stinks. Candy gives George the low job on the ranch. The boss shows up and questions George and Lennie about their work history. George does all the talking, which makes the boss suspicious. He can't understand why George is looking out for Lennie, and, honestly, I'm not sure either. George lies and says he and Lennie are cousins, and that they left their last job because it was done. He leaves out that the job ended when Lennie was accused of rape/inappropriate petting. The boss leaves and Candy comes back in with his dog, who used to be a great sheepherder before he got old and stinky. The boss's son comes in. He's a mal-butt cocky tough-guy type and immediately sizes up George and Lennie as potential victims. He tries to engage Lennie in an argument, but George interferes. Candy explains things. The boss's son—named Curley because he has curly hair—used to be a lightweight fighter and now picks fights with every big guy he meets. George gives Lennie another piece of fatherly advice: avoid Curley like the plague—unless Curley actually touches him, in which case, kick his butt. And if anything bad happens, Lennie can go to his safe spot near the river. Speaking of bad things, Curley's wife enters the bunkhouse, “looking” for “Curley.” Unlike most other characters in the book, Curley's wife has no name, unless “tramp,” “loo loo,” and “jail-bait” are considered to be names. Lennie can't take his eyes off of Curley's wife, and she doesn't make it easy to put his eyes anywhere else, either. Slim, the “prince of the ranch”, walks by and sends Curley's wife on her way. Lennie then gets another Lecture, this time about staying away from Curley's wife. Lennie, with an admirable sense of self-preservation, says that he doesn't like this place—but they've got to stay until they can buy a ranch of their own. Curley shows up at the door looking for his wife. He and George snark at each other a little, but no one whips out any roundhouse punches. Not yet, at least. The chapter ends with the dinner bell ringing, causing the mini “fight” to end.