

Crooks Candy, Lennie

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 a fair. Crooks. You're nuts. Lennie. We are too gonna get it. You ask George. Crooks. (Sneeringly.) You're nuts. I seen hundreds of men come by on the road and on the tracks, bridles 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. Jus' 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?~~

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

LENNIE. (Persistently.) 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 swamper 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. I ain't so crippled I can't work like a son-of-a-bitch if I wanted to.

~~George. (Struts through door, hands in pockets, leans against wall, speaks in half-sarcastic, 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. Hold in 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 sarcastic.) Only time I get any peace is when you're