

**Crooks Lennie**  
**Side 1**

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. (*Ingenuously.*) Why ain't you wanted?

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

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 jus' come in and set.

CROOKS. (*Stares at LENNIE a moment, takes down spectacles, adjust them over his ears, says in a complaining tone.*) I don't know what you're doin' in the barn anyway. You ain't know skinner. There's no call for a buckner 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, go and 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'.

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' ta get. And a little house and pigeons.

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

LENNIE. (*Quietly.*) It ain't no lie. We're gonna do it. Gonna get a 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?

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. (*His 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 don' 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 jus' like me. Livin' in a kennel.

LENNIE. (*Furious, walks over toward CROOKS.*) Who hurt George?

CROOKS. (*Recoiling 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 hurting George.

CROOKS. (*Very gently.*) Maybe you can see now. You got George. S'pose you couldn't go in the bunkhouse and play rummy '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 in got dark, but then you got to read books. Books ain't no good. A guy needs somebody ... to be near him. (*His tone whines.*) 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 lonely, 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 was 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 get 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. Jus' like heaven. Everybody wants a little piece of land. Nobody never gets to heaven. And nobody gets no land.

LENNIE. We are too.