

George Boss
Side 1

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 here when we wasn't. We couldn't thumb no rides. (*GEORGE scowls meanly 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 the 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. Noon the twentieth... (*Makes positive mark. Closes book, puts it in pocket.*) Where you boys been workin'?

GEORGE. Up around Weed.

BOSS. (*To LENNIE.*) You too?

GEORGE. Yeah. Him too.

BOSS. (*To LENNIE.*) Say you're a big fellow, ain't you

GEORGE. Yeah, he can work like hell, too.

BOSS. Not much of a talker, though, is he?

GEORGE. No, he ain't. But he's a hell of a good worker. Strong as a bull.

LENNIE. (*Smiling.*) I'm strong as a bull. (*GEORGE scowls at him, LENNIE drops head in shame at having forgotten.*)

BOSS. (*Sharply.*) You are, huh? What can you do?

GEORGE. He can do anything.

BOSS. (*Addressing LENNIE.*) What can you do? (*LENNIE, looking at GEORGE, gives a high nervous chuckle.*)

GEORGE. (*Quickly.*) Anything you tell him. He's a good skinner. He can wrestle grain bags, drive a cultivator. He can do anything. Just give him a try.

BOSS. (*Turning to GEORGE.*) Then why don't you let *him* answer? (*LENNIE laughs.*) What's he laughin' about?

GEORGE. He laughs when he gets excited.

BOSS. Yeah?

GEORGE. (*Loudly.*) But he's a goddamn good worker. I ain't saying he's bright, because he ain't. But he can put up a four hundred pound bale.

BOSS. (*Hooking his thumbs in his belt.*) Say, what you sellin'?

GERGE. 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' 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 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 the 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.*) Been on the road long?

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

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

GEORGE. (*Stiffly.*) We was looking for a job.

BOSS. (*Attempting to be friendly.*) That's a great town if you got that 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 around the bounce down the road on their can. You ask anybody about me. (*Turns, walks out.*)