## Act II, Scene 1 page 31-48 Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ hr\_\_

## (in lieu of or to augment class discussion points)

1. While Lennie is out in the barn looking at his new pup, Slim comments to George how “funny” it is that they travel together. Candy told us back on page 22 that guys on ranches don’t listen and talk to each other so we know that Slim means “funny” in the sense that it’s amusing, but how does he mean the word “funny”? (p. 31-32)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ He means it as unusual or out of the normal behavior.

2. Why do you think George doesn’t lie to Slim the way he lied to the boss? (p. 32)

He needs to confine. Although they say they don’t talk, they do. All humans need someone to talk to and share their feelings.

3. Would he have been so open to Carlson? What’s the difference between the characters of Slim and Carlson? (p. 32)

They are equals; you don’t have to worry as much if you tell the truth to someone who has no power over you. He wants companionship (even though he says it’s dangerous). Slim inspires confidence.

4. How did George used to treat Lennie and why? (p. 32)

He used to play tricks on him. It was fun and it made him feel smart next to Lennie.

He thought that since Lennie was too dumb to understand George’s maliciousness, it didn’t count. No one was being hurt.

5. What one incident made him stop playing jokes? Why did this change George? (p. 32)

Told Lennie to jump in the water when he knew Lennie couldn’t swim. He thanks George for pulling him out.

It wasn’t so much fun any more. Lennie would never get mad. It’s sickening to take advantage of someone who is so trusting. He trusts George so much that Lennie wouldn’t even defend himself against George. George realized someone was being hurt by his cruel behavior. That someone was himself.

### 6. What does Slim say about being a nice person? What does George attribute meanness to? (p. 33)

A guy doesn’t need sense to be nice. In fact, it’s the opposite: Smart guys are hardly ever nice fellas. George says smart guys know to not talk to others; therefore they don’t have any fun in life. It turns them mean because humans need to talk to others.

#### 7. Why does George end up telling Slim about what happened in Weed? If it’s a kind of Freudian slip, why does he gain by exposing himself?

#### (A Freudian slip in this case is George’s subconscious making him say something that forces him to say more because of some other reason that his conscious mind tried to reject.) (p. 34)

George complains about what a nuisance Lennie is. Slim wonders if he wants to get rid of him. George says he’s so

dumb that he gets in trouble, like what happened in Weed—. If it is a Freudian slip, that means on some level he said it intentionally because he wants to reach out to others and not turn mean. Remember guys on a ranch aren’t supposed to talk to each other.

8. How can George tell Lennie has brought the pup into the bunkhouse? (p. 34)

Lennie has coat over his shoulder like a cape; he’s hunched over; goes straight to bunk, face to wall, knees drawn up.

9. Carlson comes in the bunkhouse after the game of horseshoes is over and apparently the smell reminds him of his favorite topic. George and Whit, sorry for the position Candy is in, bring up distractions to get Carlson’s mind off the dog. What are the distractions? (p. 35 and 36)

George talks about a guy he knew in Weed who had an Airedale that could herd sheep. Whit talks about his mutt that we

wouldn’t have trade for a well-bred dog. Then Whit talks about a letter to the editor that one of the ranch hands wrote.

10. What brutal gestures of Carlson’s are so blunt and inhumane? (top of p. 36)

“If you was to take him out and shoot him—right in back of the head. (Leans over and points.) …right there, why he’d

never know what hit him. … I’d put the gun right there. (Points with his toe.) Right back of the head.

11. What finally makes Candy give in? Quote the line. (top of p. 37)

Slim sides with Carlson. “Better let him go, Candy.” Candy looks to “each person for some hope.” Whit is the last to give in and then it’s done. The others actually look away to avoid the responsibility of making a moral choice: cowards.

12. Why does Slim say, “Take a shovel”? (p. 37)

To bury the dog, so Candy won’t see the body.

13. How do the men act after Carlson leads Candy’s dog away? (p. 37-8)

They try to act normal. Slim talks about his mule’s hoof needing tar. George asks who wants to play cards. Slim reminds Candy he can have any pup. It’s so quiet they hear a rat. Whit reminds George to lay out cards if they’re going to play. After the gun shot, they can be more natural.

14. What two pieces of info does Crooks bring? (p. 38)

Tar is heated up and ready for Slim. And the big new guy is messing around with the pups.

15. First Curley is described as having ants in his pants. Now Whit says he has yellow jackets in his drawers. What’s the idea behind this metaphorical language? (p. 39)

Curley is anxious about keeping his wife in line and men away from her. She doesn’t seem to know her place.

#### 16. What are the similarities and differences between Old Susy and Gladys? (p. 39-40)

They both run whorehouses. But Suzy’s is down to earth, no fancy stuff, but clean and friendly. Gladys’s place might

be more high class and expensive, but the drinks are watered down and the girls aren’t clean and you can’t just hang around and be sociable and not “flop.”

17. Curley comes in looking for his wife. The only ranch hand not present is Slim. So what does Curley assume? What do the others think of Curley’s suspicions? (p. 40)

Curley suspects Slim of messing with his wife. The others are amazed: 1) Slim isn’t the type and 2) Slim could handle

Curley. Curley must really be wanting to fight someone to go after Slim.

18. The hands all want to see this fight. All leave except three. Who is left and why? (p. 40-1)

George doesn’t want to get messed up in anything; they are only here to make money: we “got to make a stake”

Lennie doesn’t understand the appeal; besides he sticks with George.

Candy is quietly mourning the death of his dog.

19. In talking to Lennie about what Lennie had seen in the barn, George finally decides that Slim is innocent of all charges. But he brings up the contrast of a good cat-house v. tarts like Curley’s wife. What’s the difference? (p. 41)

Tarts are trouble. They put Andy Cushman in San Quentin (prison). But at a cat-house a man can get a woman, get

drunk and get it out of his system without the threat of trouble. With a cat-house, a man knows just what it will cost him.

#### 20. What new idea do we learn about George and Lennie’s dream when it comes to having to people like Curley and people like Slim? (p. 43)

If we don’t like a guy, we tell him to “Get to hell out.” And since it’s their place, the guy would have to go. But if they like the guy, he could spend the night.

21. Candy interrupts their discussion of their dream. Can George blame Candy for eavesdropping as he did earlier? (p. 43)

No, Candy was in the room all along, but they forgot about him.

22. Candy wants to know if the place is real. George is suspicious until Candy says it could be any place. Then George feels comfortable enough to tell him some details, plus he wants to brag a little. What are the details? (p. 43)

Old people who own it are broke and would sell for $600 because the woman is sick and needs medicine.

#### 23. What does Candy offer? (p. 43)

He was paid a settlement when he lost his right hand: $250. He has $50 more in the bank and he’s due $40 at the end of

the month. That’s $340.

24. What’s George’s initial reaction? (p. 43) What’s his secondary reaction? (p. 44)

At first he is hesitant: their dream didn’t include another person. Also, the two of them only have $10 saved up. But then he sees that if they work for a month they’ll have another $100. They could put $440 down and secure the place. George could keep working for the rest.

#### 25. Why can’t they tell anybody their plans? Don’t they want to brag about how different they are? (p. 43-44)

If the boss finds out, he might can them because they might make other people antsy.

26. Curley’s wife was listening but ironically she wasn’t interested in what they were saying until they say what? (p. 45)

George mentioned that he can smell her stink and that she’s a tart: “You know, seems to me I can almost smell that carnation stuff that goddamn tart dumps on herself”

27. Curley’s wife says she is not a tart, but George says if that’s so, then why does she hang around the guys? What’s her answer? Does it ring a bell? Does it remind you of why George shared his troubles with Slim? (p. 45)

She’s lonely. She’s as lonely as the men who are smart enough to know they can’t trust others, and so they turn mean.

28. Now Curley and the others come in from the barn. Curley’s wife takes off but her scent remains. Curley has tried to intimidate Slim, then Carlson, and then Whit even throws in “Glove full of Vaseline.” But then Curley sniffs the air. Why does George stand up and say, “Somebody got to beat the hell outa you. I guess I am elected”? (p. 46)

George is trying to preempt a Lennie and Curley fight. So he offers up himself.

29. Lennie has two tendencies when he gets excited and doesn’t know how to behave because he doesn’t understand what’s going on:

A. What does Lennie have a tendency to do when he gets excited? Remember this tendency was foreshadowed when the Boss wants to know why Lennie won’t answer for himself after George has just said Lennie can do anything you tell him: “Then why don’t you let him answer?” (p. 20) How does this tendency play a role in this new scene? (p. 46)

Lennie laughs or giggles when he’s anxious or nervous. This directs Curley’s attention from George to Lennie, which is

where Curley has wanted to go.

B. What else does Lennie have a tendency to do when he gets excited? (Remember this tendency was foreshadowed when the girl lets out a squawk when he touched her dress? (p. 12, 33) How does this tendency play a role in this new scene? (p. 46)

He gets mixed up and holds on “’cause that’s the only think he can think to do” from page 33 when talking to Slim.

#### 30. What is George’s concern now that the Boss’s son has tangled with Lennie just as he predicted?

#### They will get canned because he is the boss’ son.

#### 31. How does Slim save it? (p. 47)

Slim sees how it is (it was good that George told him their background), tells Curley hand was caught in a machine.

## Act II, Scene 2 page 48-57 Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ hr\_\_

## (in lieu of or to augment class discussion points)

1. Lennie says three times, “I seen your light.” What does Crooks’ light represent to Lennie? Hint: This has come up before. It’s what motivates everyone one in this play, although many try to deny how important it is to them. (p. 49)

Light means another person. Companionship. Where is George? Wasn’t the plan not to spend any money?

2. Why do you think Crooks eventually gives in and lets Lennie sit down and talk? (bottom of p. 49)

He’s lonely, too. How many people in this play are lonely? Isolation is protection, but it comes at a cost.

3. What does Crooks do that is similar to what George used to do to Lennie before George realized how sick it made him feel? (p. 50-1)

Teases him.

4. How does Crooks specifically tease Lennie? What are the “supposes” that Crooks’ uses to terrify Lennie? (p. 51)

Makes him try to turn against George (George aint’ coming back). A man who has no friends will try to make sure others have no friends. You can hardly blame Crooks for being so mean. Lennie without George’s protection is like a man who is forced to wear black skin. It’s not fair.

5. Crooks’ particular way of being cruel has a reason behind it. He’s trying to get Lennie to feel the way he feels. How does Crooks feel? (p. 51)

Crooks is alone and has no chance of being accepted because of how society feels about the way he was born. He wants Lennie to know

what it’s like to be alone.

6. Why does Crooks let up and stop teasing Lennie? (p. 51)

Fearful of arousing the gentle giant. He sees that Lennie misunderstands and thinks that Crooks had something to do with George being hurt so he won’t come back.

#### 7. Without using the word cliché, Crooks says Lennie and George’s belief in a patch of land is just that—a cliché. What does that mean and how does it take away from Lennie’s belief in the patch of land? (p. 52)

It’s cliché because all ranch hands have this dream. It’s not unique; it’s just sad because they never get it. The land is heaven, it’s the

American Dream. Ironic, that it is so modest (compared to Gatsby’s dream).

#### 8. Candy shows up and is respectful to Crooks in that he doesn’t do something. What is it? What’s Crooks’ reaction? (p. 52)

He doesn’t enter Crooks’ room. He’s embarrassed to do so. Crooks has to pretend it’s annoying to have so many people coming through “It’s getting to be a goddamn race track.” But the stage directions say he’s trying to conceal his pleasure.

#### 9. Candy compliments Crooks on his cozy place, saying it must be nice to have privacy not like in the bunkhouse. Crooks points out how Candy has taken his bunkhouse buddies for granted. What does Crooks say about it? (p. 52)

He sarcastically says being to oneself all the time is swell. Plus he gets to smell manure.

#### 10. Why does Crooks change his attitude about the patch of land? (p. 53)

Candy has to brag about their plans in the face of Crooks’ scoffing. Even when Crooks points out that George is off spending money—he’s seen it happen too many times. No one can save his money. Crooks shifts to being impressed when Candy says the money they’ve saved isn’t in town with George. He has offers to help out. These guys seem to have done what on one with the dream of land has done; they have pooled their efforts. IT seems like it might happen for them.

11. What made George come home early? (p. 54)

He used to enjoy the entertainment at the whorehouses, but now that the dream is so real, he couldn’t join in. He could only think that a 15 cents for a drink would buy a hell of a lot of bulk carrot seed. The waste of money got him jumpy. (In the novella, George doesn’t come home early. This change gives the dream more promise.)

12. Does Candy support George’s opinion about wasting money on whorehouses? (p. 54)

No, he remembers his own whorehouse experiences. “A guy got to have some fun.” George points out that Candy for a cigarette and a whiskey and a look at a pretty girl and it cost him $12.50. A week’s pay for nothing. But Candy says it was worth it. In his old age, he has no fond memories, but he remembers that day from 20 years ago.

13. What does Curley’s wife want to talk to Crooks for? (p. 55)

She wants to know what he knows about Curley’s arm being in a sling.

#### 14. How do the men treat her? Especially Candy and then George? Why? (p. 55)

Like she’s poison. Candy tells her to get out because she thinks she has the power to get them fired. He wants her to know she doesn’t have that kind of power. If they get fired, they won’t be down and out; they have friends. George says she could gum up the works without realizing it. Like a round pebble a guy might trip on; it’s not the pebble’s fault.

15. When Curley’s wife thinks George stood up to Curley and put his arm in a sling, what does she expect from George in the future? Why? (p. 56)

Maybe he’ll talk to her more now that he’s not afraid of Curley.

#### 16. What makes George want to strike Curley’s wife? (p. 56)

She figures out it’s Lennie who hurt Curley and she gives him the eye. George knows that Lennie will not understand her “friendliness.” He can’t afford her to be leading Lennie on.

17. What do you predict the Boss will do now that his son has been hurt and his daughter in law almost hit in his presence since the new guys came? (p. 57)

He’ll can them; they are obviously trouble-makers–or–Boss knows his son has bit off more than he could chew.