

## *Of Mice and Men*: Chapter 1 Close Reading

**Directions:** Read the following three passages and annotate your thoughts, ideas, and/or questions as you read.

Lennie dipped his whole head under, hat and all, and then he sat up on the bank and his hat dripped down on his blue coat and ran down his back. “That’s good,” he said. “You drink some, George. You take a good big drink.” He smiled happily.

George unslung his bindle and dropped it gently on the bank. “I ain’t sure it’s good water,” he said. “Looks kinda scummy.”

Lennie dabbled his big paw in the water and wiggled his fingers so the water arose in little splashes; rings widened across the pool to the other side and came back again. Lennie watched them go. “Look, George. Look what I done.”

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“No—look! I was jus’ foolin’, Lennie. ‘Cause I want you to stay with me. Trouble with mice is you always kill ‘em.” He paused. “Tell you what I’ll do, Lennie. First chance I get I’ll give you a pup. Maybe you wouldn’t kill it. That’d be better than mice. And you could pet it harder.”

Lennie avoided the bait. He had sensed his advantage. “If you don’t want me, you only jus’ got to say so, and I’ll go off in those hills right there—right up in those hills and live by myself. An’ I won’t get no mice stole from me.”

George said, “I want you to stay with me, Lennie. Jesus Christ, somebody’d shoot you for a coyote if you was by yourself. No, you stay with me. Your Aunt Clara wouldn’t like you running off by yourself, even if she is dead.”

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From the darkness Lennie called, “George—you asleep?”

“No. Whatta you want?”

“Let’s have different color rabbits, George.”

“Sure we will,” George said sleepily. “Red and blue and green rabbits, Lennie. Millions of ‘em.”

“Furry ones, George, like I seen in the fair in Sacramento.”

“Sure, furry ones.”

“‘Cause I can jus’ as well go away, George, an’ live in a cave.”

“You can jus’ as well go to hell,” said George. “Shut up now.”

The red light dimmed on the coals. Up the hill from the river a coyote yammered, and a dog answered from the other side of the stream. The sycamore leaves whispered in a little night breeze.