**“Of Mice and Men” Character List**

**Lennie** - A large, lumbering, childlike migrant worker. Due to his mild mental disability, Lennie completely depends upon George, his friend and traveling companion, for guidance and protection. The two men share a vision of a farm that they will own together, a vision that Lennie believes in wholeheartedly. Gentle and kind, Lennie nevertheless does not understand his own strength. His love of petting soft things, such as small animals, dresses, and people’s hair, leads to disaster.

**George** - A small, wiry, quick-witted man who travels with, and cares for, Lennie. Although he frequently speaks of how much better his life would be without his caretaking responsibilities, George is obviously devoted to Lennie. George’s behavior is motivated by the desire to protect Lennie and, eventually, deliver them both to the farm of their dreams. Though George is the source of the often-told story of life on their future farm, it is Lennie’s childlike faith that enables George to actually believe his account of their future.

**Curley’s wife** - The only female character in the story, Curley’s wife is never given a name and is only mentioned in reference to her husband. The men on the farm refer to her as a “tramp,” a “tart,” and a “looloo.”Dressed in fancy, feathered red shoes, she represents the temptation of female sexuality in a male-dominated world. Steinbeck depicts Curley’s wife not as a villain, but rather as a victim. Like the ranch-hands, she is desperately lonely and has broken dreams of a better life.

**Candy** - An aging ranch handyman, Candy lost his hand in an accident and worries about his future on the ranch. Fearing that his age is making him useless, he seizes on George’s description of the farm he and Lennie will have, offering his life’s savings if he can join George and Lennie in owning the land. The fate of Candy’s ancient dog, which Carlson shoots in the back of the head in an alleged act of mercy, foreshadows other events in the story.

**Crooks** - Crooks, the black stable-hand, gets his name from his crooked back. Proud, bitter, and caustically funny, he is isolated from the other men because of the color of his skin. Despite himself, Crooks becomes fond of Lennie, and though he derisively claims to have seen countless men following empty dreams of buying their own land, he asks Lennie if he can go with them and hoe in the garden.

**Curley** - The boss’s son, Curley wears high-heeled boots to distinguish himself from the field hands. Rumored to be a champion prizefighter, he is a confrontational, mean-spirited, and aggressive young man who seeks to compensate for his small stature by picking fights with larger men. Recently married, Curley is plagued with jealous suspicions and is extremely possessive of his flirtatious young wife.

**Slim** - A highly skilled mule driver and the acknowledged “prince” of the ranch, Slim is the only character who seems to be at peace with himself. The other characters often look to Slim for advice. For instance, only after Slim agrees that Candy should put his decrepit dog out of its misery does the old man agree to let Carlson shoot it. A quiet, insightful man, Slim alone understands the nature of the bond between George and Lennie.