

Name _____ **Of Mice and Men**



***Of Mice and Men* Chapter 4 Reading Activity**

Chapter 4 - *Loneliness in the Barn*

In the quiet of the barn, Crooks, the Black stable-hand, is alone in his small room. Lennie wanders in, curious and friendly, and Crooks at first resists but then talks to him. Crooks opens up about his deep loneliness, explaining that being excluded because of his race makes him bitter. When Lennie tells him about the dream farm, Crooks imagines joining, but quickly dismisses it, claiming dreams like that never come true.

Candy joins the conversation, giving Crooks more hope for a moment, but Curley's wife interrupts. She mocks all of them for being weak and powerless. When Crooks pushes back, she cruelly reminds him of his racial position, and he withdraws, losing the little hope he allowed himself to feel. Curley's wife also reveals her bitterness-she's lonely, stuck in an unhappy marriage, and feels ignored by the men. The scene ends with the group divided again, their dreams weakened by harsh reality.

Questions (Answer in complete sentences)

1. How does Crooks's isolation affect his personality and outlook on life?
2. Why does Crooks briefly become interested in the dream of the farm, and why does he later reject it?
3. What does Curley's wife reveal about her own life that helps explain her behavior on the ranch?
4. How do Crooks, Candy, Lennie, and Curley's wife all represent different forms of loneliness in this chapter?
5. What message is Steinbeck suggesting about society and outsiders through this barn scene?