

CURLEY'S WIFE

(+ George, Lennie, Candy, Crooks) (9)

START

speaks savagely.) I s'pose ya lookin' for Curley? (CURLEY'S WIFE appears in door.) Well, Curley ain't here.

CURLEY'S WIFE. (*Determined now.*) I know Curley ain't here. I wanted to ast Crooks somepin'. I didn't know you guys was here.

CANDY. Didn't George tell you before—we don't want nothing to do with you. You know damn well Curley ain't here.

CURLEY'S WIFE. I know where Curley went. Got his arm in a sling an' he went anyhow. I tell ya I come out to ast Crooks somepin'.

CROOKS. (*Apprehensively.*) Maybe you better go along to your own house. You hadn't ought to come near a colored man's room. I don't want no trouble. You don't want to ask me nothing.

CANDY. (*Rubbing his wrist stump.*) You got a husband. You got no call to come foolin' around with other guys, causin' trouble.

CURLEY'S WIFE. (*Suddenly angry.*) I try to be nice an' polite to you lousy bindle bums—but you're too good. I tell ya I could of went with shows. An'—an' a guy wanted to put me in pitchers right in Hollywood. (*Looks about to see how she is impressing them. Their eyes are hard.*) I come out here to ast somebody somepin' an' —

CANDY. (*Stands up suddenly, knocks nail keg over backward, speaks angrily.*) I had enough. You ain't wanted here. We tole you you ain't. Callin' us bindle stiffs. You got floozy idears what us guys amounts to. You ain't got sense enough to see us guys ain't bindle stiffs. S'pose you could get us *canned*—s'pose you *could*. You think we'd hit the highway an' look for another two-bit job. You don't know we got our own ranch to go to an' our own house an' fruit trees. An' we got friends. That's what we got. Maybe they was a time when we didn't have nothing, but that ain't so no more.

CURLEY'S WIFE. You damn ol' goat. If you had two bits, you'd be in Soledad gettin' a drink an' suckin' the bottom of the glass.

GEORGE. Maybe she could ask Crooks what she come to ask an' then get the hell home. I don't think she come to ask nothing.

CURLEY'S WIFE. What happened to Curley's hand? (CROOKS laughs. GEORGE tries to shut him up.) So it wasn't no machine. Curley didn't act like he was tellin' the truth. Come on, Crooks—what happened?

CROOKS. I wasn't there. I didn't see it.

CURLEY'S WIFE. (*Eagerly.*) What happened? I won't let on to

Curley. He says he caught his han' in a gear. (CROOKS is silent.)
Who done it?

GEORGE. Didn't nobody do it.

CURLEY'S WIFE. (Turns slowly to GEORGE.) So you done it. Well,
he had it comin'.

GEORGE. I didn't have no fuss with Curley.

CURLEY'S WIFE. (Steps near him, smiling.) Maybe now you ain't
scared of him no more. Maybe you'll talk to me sometimes now.
Ever'boday was scared of him.

GEORGE. (Speaks rather kindly.) Look! I didn't sock Curley. If he
had trouble, it ain't none of our affair. Ask Curley about it. Now
listen. I'm gonna try to tell ya. We tole you to get the hell out
and it don't do no good. So I'm gonna tell you another way. Us
guys got somepin' we're gonna do. If you stick around you'll gum
up the works. It ain't your fault. If a guy steps on a round pebble
an' falls down an' breaks his neck, it ain't the pebble's fault, but
the guy wouldn't of did it if the pebble wasn't there.

CURLEY'S WIFE. (Puzzled.) What you talkin' about pebbles? If
you didn't sock Curley, who did? (Looks at others, then steps
quickly over to LENNIE.) Where'd you get them bruises on your
face?

GEORGE. I tell you he got his hand caught in a machine.

LENNIE. (Looks anxiously at GEORGE, miserably.) He caught his
han' in a machine.

GEORGE. So now get out of here.

CURLEY'S WIFE. (Goes close to LENNIE, speaks softly, note of af-
fection in her voice.) So . . . it was you. Well . . . maybe
you're dumb like they say . . . an' maybe . . . you're the only
guy on the ranch with guts. (Puts hand on LENNIE's shoulder. He
looks up in her face and a smile grows on his face. She strokes his
shoulder.) You're a nice fella.

GEORGE. (Suddenly leaps at her ferociously, grabs her shoulder
and whirls her around.) Listen . . . you! I tried to give you a
break. Don't you walk into nothing! We ain't gonna let you mess
up what we're gonna do. You let this guy alone an' get the hell
out of here.

CURLEY'S WIFE. (Defiant but slightly frightened.) You ain't tellin'
me what to do. (BOSS appears in door, stands legs spread, thumbs
hooked over his belt.) I got a right to talk to anybody I want to.

GEORGE. Why, you — (GEORGE, furious, steps close—hand is

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