

Of Mice & Men: extract 2

➔ Meeting the two main characters of the novella

This extract directly follows the first one, the description of the clearing.

1 For a moment the place was lifeless, and then two men emerged from the path and came into the opening by the green pool.
They had walked in single file down the path, and even in the open one stayed behind the other. Both were dressed in denim trousers and in denim coats with brass buttons.
5 Both wore black, shapeless hats and both carried tight blanket rolls slung over their shoulders. The first man was small and quick, dark of face, with restless eyes and sharp, strong features. Every part of him was defined: small, strong hands, slender arms, a thin and bony nose. Behind him walked his opposite, a huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, and wide, sloping shoulders; and he walked heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws. His arms did not swing at his sides, but hung loosely.
10 The first man stopped short in the clearing, and the follower nearly ran over him. He took off his hat and wiped the sweat-band with his forefinger and snapped the moisture off. His huge companion dropped his blankets and flung himself down and drank from the surface of the green pool; drank with long gulps, snorting into the water like a horse. The small man stepped nervously beside him.
15 "Lennie!" he said sharply. "Lennie, for God' sakes don't drink so much."
Lennie continued to snort into the pool. The small man leaned over and shook him by the shoulder. "Lennie. You gonna be sick like you was last night."
20 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.
25 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."
30 George knelt beside the pool and drank from his hand with quick scoops.
"Tastes all right," he admitted. "Don't really seem to be running, though. You never oughta drink water when it ain't running, Lennie," he said hopelessly. "You'd drink out of a gutter if you was thirsty."
He threw a scoop of water into his face and rubbed it about with his hand, under his chin and around the back of his neck. Then he replaced his hat, pushed himself back from the river, drew up his knees and embraced them. Lennie, who had been watching, imitated George exactly. He pushed himself back, drew up his knees, embraced them, looked over to George to see whether he had it just right. He pulled his hat down a little more over his eyes, the way George's hat was.
35

1. Vocabulary: read the text carefully and find the translation for the following words in context.
(en donner aussi la nature ex: noun, adj, vb....)

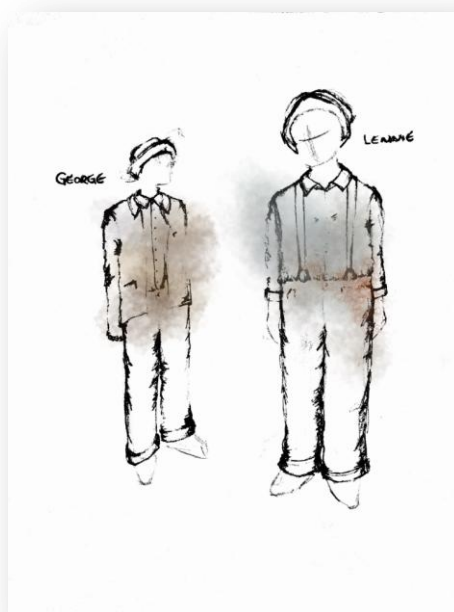
1. path (l. 1)	
3. pool (l. 2)	
5. shapeless (l.5)	
7. restless (l. 6)	
9. sloping (l. 9)	
11. swing (l. 10)	
13. gulps (l. 16)	
15. dipped (l. 20)	
17. bindle (l. 25)	
19. dabbled (l. 27)	
21. running (l. 32)	
23. a scoop (l. 34)	

2. opening (l. 2)	
4. brass (l.4)	
6. blankets (l. 5)	
8. wide (l. 9)	
10. dragging (l.9)	
12. wipe (l. 13)	
14. to snort (l. 18)	
16. bank (l. 20)	
18. scummy (l. 26)	
20. wiggled (l. 27)	
22. gutter (l. 33)	
24. chin (l. 34)	

2. Now, read the text again: you should be able to **picture it** and **act it** in class!

3. Pick up information on both characters, and write it in the bubbles, colour the picture.

George



Lennie

→ Use the information you found to infer the personality of each character and their background (use expressions of opinion, hypotheses and justification, at least 5 sentences)

→ What shows that Lennie is very dependent on George?

→ Translate from line 5 "Both wore..." to line 11 "...hung loosely."