

LEAD-INS TO LITERATURE



Of Mice and Men

by John Steinbeck



PRESTWICK HOUSE, INC.



Of Mice and Men

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Table of Contents

PART ONE

■ Socio-Historical Context of the Novel	5
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PART TWO

■ Plot	17
■ Theme	28
■ Setting	32
■ Characterization	36
■ Style	52
■ Symbols	56

<u>Biography</u>	60
<u>Critical Reaction</u>	64
<u>End Notes</u>	66





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PART ONE

■ Socio-Historical Context of the Novel

5



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Some Facts and Statistics about the Great Depression:

The “Dust Bowl” that swept across the American Plains during the 1920s and early 1930s was a result of bad farming practices, excessive borrowing, corporate greed, and incessant droughts.





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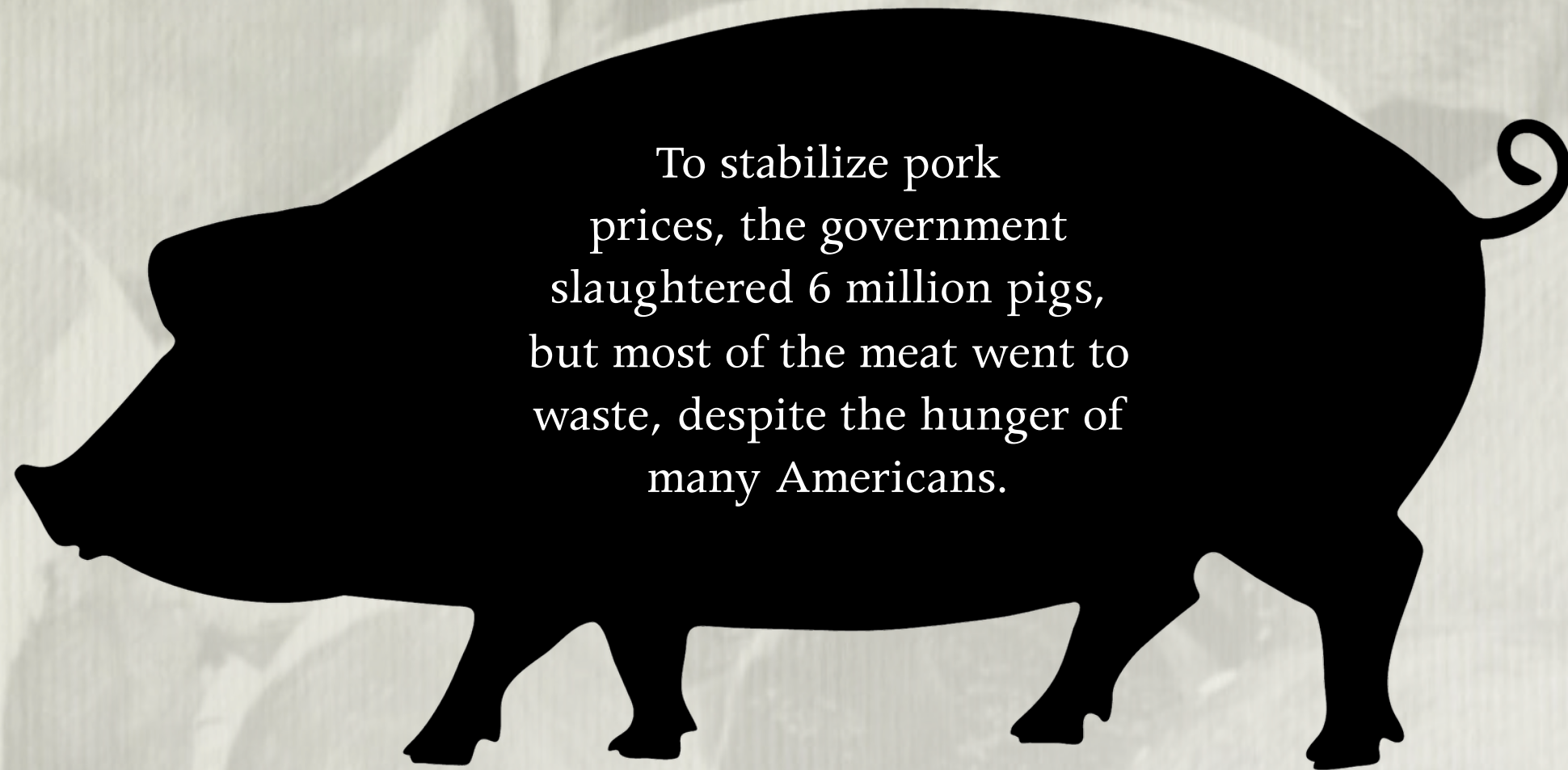
Approximately 89 million acres of farmland were left unusable for crops in the country's food-producing regions. Experts estimate that 850,000,000 tons of topsoil blew away from the Southern Plains in 1935.





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To stabilize pork prices, the government slaughtered 6 million pigs, but most of the meat went to waste, despite the hunger of many Americans.



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Depositors in banks had lost over \$140 billion by 1933, and 24.9% of eligible workers were unemployed.

Approximately 45% of all U.S. banks failed in the 1930s, as people clamored to withdraw their savings in what were called “bank runs.”



A crowd at New York's American Union Bank during a bank run early in the Great Depression.



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Full-time workers' salaries averaged only fifty cents an hour, but pay for migrant workers, like those depicted in *Of Mice and Men*, ranged from .75¢ to \$1.25 a day.

