

ain't gonna let me tend no rabbits, if he fin's out you got killed."

He scooped a little hollow<sup>1</sup> and laid the puppy in it and covered it over with hay, out of sight<sup>2</sup>; but he continued to stare at the mound he had made. He said, "This ain't no bad thing like I got to go hide in the brush. Oh! no. This ain't. I'll tell George I foun' it dead."

He unburied the puppy and inspected it, and he stroked it from ears to tail. He went on sorrowfully<sup>3</sup>, "But he'll know. George always knows. He'll say, 'You done it. Don't try to put nothing over on me.' An' he'll say, 'Now jus' for that you don't get to tend no rabbits!'"

Suddenly his anger arose. "God damn you," he cried. "Why do you got to get killed? You ain't so little as mice." He picked up the pup and hurled<sup>4</sup> it from him. He turned his back on it. He sat bent over his knees and he whispered, "Now I won't get to tend the rabbits. Now he won't let me." He rocked<sup>5</sup> himself back and forth in his sorrow<sup>6</sup>.

From outside came the clang of horseshoes on the iron stake, and then a little chorus of cries<sup>7</sup>. Lennie got up and brought the puppy back and laid it on the hay and sat down. He stroked the pup again. "You wasn't big enough," he said. "They tol' me and tol' me you wasn't. I di'n't know you'd get killed so easy." He worked his fingers on the pup's limp<sup>8</sup> ear. "Maybe George won't care," he said. "This here God damn little son-of-a-bitch wasn't nothing to George."

One end of the great barn was piled high with new hay and over the pile hung the four-taloned Jackson fork<sup>1</sup> suspended from its pulley. The hay came down like a mountain slope<sup>2</sup> to the other end of the barn, and there was a level place<sup>3</sup> as yet unfilled with the new crop. At the sides the feeding racks were visible, and between the slats<sup>4</sup> the heads of horses could be seen.

It was Sunday afternoon. The resting horses nibbled<sup>5</sup> the remaining wisps<sup>6</sup> of hay, and they stamped their feet and they bit the wood of the mangers<sup>7</sup> and rattled the halter chains. The afternoon sun sliced in through the cracks of the barn walls and lay in bright lines on the hay. There was the buzz of flies in the air, the lazy afternoon humming<sup>8</sup>.

From outside came the clang of horseshoes on the playing peg and the shouts of men, playing, encouraging, jeering. But in the barn it was quiet and humming and lazy and warm.

Only Lennie was in the barn, and Lennie sat in the hay beside a packing case under a manger in the end of the barn that had not been filled with hay. Lennie sat in the hay and looked at a little dead puppy that lay in front of him. Lennie looked at it for a long time, and then he put out his huge hand and stroked it<sup>9</sup>, stroked it clear from one end to the other.

And Lennie said softly to the puppy, "Why do you got to get killed? You ain't so little as mice. I didn't bounce you hard<sup>10</sup>." He bent the pup's head up and looked in its face, and he said to it, "Now maybe George

1. the four-taloned Jackson fork un

grappin à quatre dents

2. a mountain slope le versant d'une montagne

3. a level place un espace libre

4. slats barreaux

5. nibbled mâchonnaient

6. wisps brindilles

7. mangers mangeoires

8. humming bourdonnement

9. stroked it le caressa

10. bounce you hard bousculé fort

1. scooped a little hollow fit un petit creux

2. out of sight hors de vue

3. sorrowfully tristement

4. hurled jeta violemment

5. rocked balança

6. sorrow chagrin

7. chorus of cries clameur

8. limp flasque

Curley's wife came around the end of the last stall<sup>1</sup>. She came very quietly, so that Lennie didn't see her. She wore her bright cotton dress and the mules with the red ostrich feathers. Her face was made up and the little sausage curls were all in place. She was quite near to him before Lennie looked up and saw her.

In a panic he shoveled<sup>2</sup> hay over the puppy with his fingers. He looked sullenly<sup>3</sup> up at her.

She said, "What you got there, sonny boy<sup>4</sup>?"

Lennie glared at her<sup>5</sup>. "George says I ain't to have nothing to do with you—talk to you or nothing."

She laughed. "George giving you orders about everything?"

Lennie looked down at the hay. "Says I can't tend no rabbits if I talk to you or anything."

She said quietly, "He's scared Curley'll get mad. Well, Curley got his arm in a sling<sup>6</sup>—an' if Curley gets tough<sup>7</sup>, you can break his other han'. You didn't put nothing over on me about gettin' it caught in no machine."

But Lennie was not to be drawn<sup>8</sup>. "No, sir. I ain't gonna talk to you or nothing."

She knelt<sup>9</sup> in the hay beside him. "Listen," she said. "All the guys got a horseshoe tenement<sup>10</sup> goin' on. It's on'y about four o'clock. None of them guys is goin' to leave that tenement. Why can't I talk to you? I never get to talk to nobody. I get awful lonely."

Lennie said, "Well, I ain't supposed to talk to you or nothing."

"I get lonely," she said. "You can talk to people, but I can't talk to nobody but Curley. Else<sup>1</sup> he gets mad. How'd you like not to talk to anybody?"

Lennie said, "Well, I ain't supposed to. George's scared I'll get in trouble."

She changed the subject. "What you got covered up there?"

Then all of Lennie's woe<sup>2</sup> came back on him. "Jus' my pup," he said sadly. "Jus' my little pup." And he swept<sup>3</sup> the hay from on top of it.

"Why, he's dead," she cried.

"He was so little," said Lennie. "I was jus' playin' with him . . . an' he made<sup>4</sup> like he's gonna bite me . . . an' I made like I was gonna smack him<sup>5</sup> . . . an' . . . an' I done it. An' then he was dead."

She consoled him. "Don't you worry none. He was jus' a mutt<sup>6</sup>. You can get another one easy. The whole country is fulla mutts."

"It ain't that so much," Lennie explained miserably. "George ain't gonna let me tend no rabbits now."

"Why don't he?"

"Well, he said if I done any more bad things he ain't gonna let me tend the rabbits."

She moved closer to him and she spoke soothingly<sup>7</sup>. "Don't you worry about talkin' to me. Listen to the guys yell out there. They got four dollars bet<sup>8</sup> in that tenement. None of them ain't gonna leave till it's over."

"If George sees me talkin' to you he'll give me hell," Lennie said cautiously. "He tol' me so."

1. stall box (pour chevaux)

2. shoveled jeta

3. sullenly d'un air renfrogné

4. sonny boy mon petit

5. glared at her lui lança un regard furibond

6. in a sling en écharpe

7. gets tough joue les durs

8. was not to be drawn ne se laissait pas embarquer

9. knelt s'agenouilla

10. tenement tournoi

1. else ou bien

2. woe désespoir

3. swept balaya

4. made = looked

5. smack him lui donna une tape

6. mutt batarde

7. soothingly sur un ton rassurant

8. bet de pariés