

shell boosted along, waggling from side to side. A sedan driven by a forty-year old woman approached. She saw the turtle and swung to the right, off the highway, the wheels screamed and a cloud of dust boiled up. Two wheels lifted for a moment and then settled. The car skidded back onto the road, and went on, but more slowly. The turtle had jerked into its shell, but now it hurried on, for the highway was burning hot.

And now a light truck approached, and as it came near, the driver saw the turtle and swerved to hit it. His front wheel struck the edge of the shell, flipped the turtle like a tidily-wink, spun it like a coin, and rolled it off the highway. The truck went back to its course along the right side. Lying on its back, the turtle was tight in its shell for a long time. But at last its legs waved in the air, reaching for something to pull it over. Its front foot caught a piece of quartz and little by little the shell pulled over and flopped upright. The wild oat head fell out and three of the spearhead seeds stuck in the ground. And as the turtle crawled on down the embankment, its shell dragged dirt over the seeds. The turtle entered a dust road and jerked itself along, drawing a wavy shallow trench in the dust with its shell. The old humorous eyes looked ahead, and the horny beak opened a little. His yellow toe nails slipped a fraction in the dust.

End of Chapter 3

He drove his old car into a town. He scoured the farms for work. Where can we sleep the night? Well, there's a Hooverville on the edge of the river.

He drove his old car to Hooverville. He never asked again for there was a Hooverville on the edge of every town. The rag-town lay close to water. The houses were tents, weed-thatched enclosures, paper houses, a great junk pile. The man put up his own tent as near to water as he could get. Or if he had no tent he went to the city dump and brought back cartons and built a house of corrugated paper. When the rains came the house melted and washed away.

He scoured the countryside for work, and the little money he had went for petrol to look for work.

The Grapes of Wrath

highway embankment, reared up ahead of him. For a moment he stopped, his head held high. He blinked and looked up and down. At last he started to climb the embankment.

Front clawed feet reached forward but did not touch. The hind feet kicked his shell along, and it scraped on the grass, and on the gravel. As the embankment grew steeper and steeper, the more frantic were the efforts of the land turtle.

Pushing hind legs strained and slipped, boosting the shell along, and the horny head protruded as far as the neck could stretch. Little by little the shell slid up the embankment until at last a parapet cut straight across its line of march, the shoulder of the road, a concrete wall four inches high. As though they worked independently the hind legs pushed the shell against the wall. The head upraised and peered over the wall to the broad smooth plain of cement. Now the hands, braced on top of the wall, strained and lifted, and the shell came slowly up and rested its front end on the wall. For a moment the turtle rested. A red ant ran into the shell, into the soft skin inside the shell, and suddenly head and legs snapped in, and the armored tail clamped in sideways. The red ant was crushed between body and legs. And one head of wild oats was clamped into the shell by a front leg. For a long moment the turtle lay still, and then the neck crept out and the old humorous frowning eyes looked about and the legs and tail came out. The back legs went to work, straining like elephant legs, and the shell tipped to an angle so that the front legs could not reach the level cement plain. But higher and higher the hind legs boosted it, until at last the center of balance was reached, the front tipped down, the front legs scratched at the pavement, and it was up. But the head of wild oats was held by its stem around the front legs.

Now the going was easy, and all the legs worked, and the highway embankment, reared up ahead of him. For a moment he stopped, his head held high. He blinked and looked up and down. At last he started to climb the embankment. Front clawed feet reached forward but did not touch. The hind feet kicked his shell along, and it scraped on the grass, and on the gravel. As the embankment grew steeper and steeper, the more frantic were the efforts of the land turtle. Pushing hind legs strained and slipped, boosting the shell along, and the horny head protruded as far as the neck could stretch. Little by little the shell slid up the embankment until at last a parapet cut straight across its line of march, the shoulder of the road, a concrete wall four inches high. As though they worked independently the hind legs pushed the shell against the wall. The head upraised and peered over the wall to the broad smooth plain of cement. Now the hands, braced on top of the wall, strained and lifted, and the shell came slowly up and rested its front end on the wall. For a moment the turtle rested. A red ant ran into the shell, into the soft skin inside the shell, and suddenly head and legs snapped in, and the armored tail clamped in sideways. The red ant was crushed between body and legs. And one head of wild oats was clamped into the shell by a front leg. For a long moment the turtle lay still, and then the neck crept out and the old humorous frowning eyes looked about and the legs and tail came out. The back legs went to work, straining like elephant legs, and the shell tipped to an angle so that the front legs could not reach the level cement plain. But higher and higher the hind legs boosted it, until at last the center of balance was reached, the front tipped down, the front legs scratched at the pavement, and it was up. But the head of wild oats was held by its stem around the front legs.

Now the going was easy, and all the legs worked, and the

Chapter Three

THE concrete highway was edged with a mat of tangled, broken, dry grass, and the grass heads were heavy with oat beards to catch on a dog's coat, and foxtails to tangle in a horse's fetlocks, and clover burrs to fasten in sheep's wool; sleeping life waiting to be spread and dispersed, every seed armed with an appliance of dispersal, twisting darts and parachutes for the wind, little spears and balls of tiny thorns, and all waiting for animals and for the wind, for a man's trouser cuff or the hem of a woman's skirt, all passive but armed with appliances of activity, still, but each possessed of the anlage of movement.

The sun lay on the grass and warmed it, and in the shade under the grass the insects moved, ants and ant lions, to set traps for them, grasshoppers to jump into the air and flick their yellow wings for a second, sow bugs like little armadillos, plodding restlessly on many tender feet. And over the grass at the roadside a land turtle crawled, turning aside for nothing, dragging his high-domed shell over the grass. His hard legs and yellow-nailed feet thrashed slowly through the grass, not really walking, but boosting and dragging his shell along. The barley beards slid off his shell, and the clover burrs fell on him and rolled to the ground. His horny beak was partly open, and his fierce, humorous eyes, under brows like fingernails, stared straight ahead. He came over the grass leaving a beaten trail behind him, and the hill, which was the

THERE was music from my neighbour's house through the summer nights. In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars. At high tide in the afternoon I watched his guests diving from the tower of his raft, or taking the sun on the hot sand of his beach while his two motor-boats slit the waters of the Sound, drawing aquaplanes over cataracts of foam. On week-ends his Rolls-Royce became an omnibus, bearing parties to and from the city between nine in the morning and long past midnight, while his station wagon scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all trains. And on Mondays eight servants, including an extra gardener, toiled all day with mops and scrubbing-brushes and hammers and garden-shears, repairing the ravages of the night before.

Every Friday five crates of oranges and lemons arrived from a fruiterer in New York - every Monday these same oranges and lemons left his back door in a pyramid of pulpless halves. There was a machine in the kitchen which could extract the juice of two hundred oranges in half an hour if a little button was pressed two hundred times by a butler's thumb.

At least once a fortnight a corps of caterers came down with several hundred feet of canvas and enough coloured lights to make a Christmas tree of Gatsby's enormous garden. On buffet tables, garnished with glistening hors-d'œuvre, spiced baked hams crowded against salads of harlequin designs and pastry pigs and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold. In the main hall a bar with a real brass rail was set up, and stocked with gins and liquors and with cordials so long forgotten that most of his female guests were too young to know one from another.

By seven o'clock the orchestra has arrived, no thin five-piece affair, but a whole pitful of oboes and trombones and saxophones and viols and cornets and piccolos, and low and high drums. The last swimmers have come in from the beach now and are dressing upstairs; the cars from New York are parked five deep in the drive, and already the halls and salons and verandas are gaudy with primary colours, and hair bobbed in strange new ways, and shawls beyond the dreams of Castile. The bar is in full swing, and floating rounds of cocktails permeate the garden outside, until the air is alive with chatter and laughter, and casual innuendo and introductions forgotten on the spot, and enthusiastic meetings between women who never knew each other's names.

The lights grow brighter as the earth lurches away from the sun, and now the orchestra is playing yellow cocktail music, and the opera of voices pitches a key higher. Laughter is easier minute by minute, spilled with prodigality, tipped out at a cheerful word. The groups change more swiftly, swell with new arrivals, dissolve and form in the same breath; already there are wanderers, confident girls who weave here and there among the stouter and more stable, become for a sharp, joyous moment the centre of a group, and then, excited with triumph, glide on through the sea-change of faces and voices and colour under the constantly changing light.

Suddenly one of these gypsies, in trembling opal, seizes a cocktail out of the air, dumps it down for courage and, moving her hands like Frisco, dances out alone on the canvas platform. A momentary hush; the

orchestra leader varies his rhythm obligingly for her, and there is a burst of chatter as the erroneous news goes around that she is Gilda Gray's understudy from the Follies. The party has begun.

I believe that on the first night I went to Gatsby's house I was one of the few guests who had actually been invited. People were not invited - they went there. They got into automobiles which bore them out to Long Island, and somehow they ended up at Gatsby's door. Once there they were introduced by somebody who knew Gatsby, and after that they conducted themselves according to the rules of behaviour associated with an amusement park. Sometimes they came and went without having met Gatsby at all, came for the party with a simplicity of heart that was its own ticket of admission.

I had been actually invited. A chauffeur in a uniform of robin's-egg blue crossed my lawn early that Saturday morning with a surprisingly formal note from his employer: the honour would be entirely Gatsby's, it said, if I would attend his 'little party' that night. He had seen me several times, and had intended to call on me long before, but a peculiar combination of circumstances had prevented it - signed Jay Gatsby, in a majestic hand.

Dressed up in white flannels I went over to his lawn a little after seven, and wandered around rather ill at ease among swirls and eddies of people I didn't know - though here and there was a face I had noticed on the commuting train. I was immediately struck by the number of young Englishmen dotted about; all well dressed, all looking a little hungry, and all talking in low, earnest voices to solid and prosperous Americans. I was sure that they were selling something: bonds or insurance or automobiles. They were at least agonizingly aware of the easy money in the vicinity and convinced that it was theirs for a few words in the right key. [E-J]

There was dancing now on the canvas in the garden; old men pushing young girls backward in eternal graceless circles, superior couples holding each other tortuously, fashionably, and keeping in the corners - and a great number of single girls dancing individualistically or relieving the orchestra for a moment of the burden of the banjo or the traps. By midnight the hilarity had increased. A celebrated tenor had sung in Italian, and a notorious contralto had sung in jazz, and between the numbers people were doing 'stunts' all over the garden, while happy, vacuous bursts of laughter rose toward the summer sky. A pair of stage twins, who turned out to be the girls in yellow, did a baby act in costume, and champagne was served in glasses bigger than finger-bowls. The moon had risen higher, and floating in the Sound was a triangle of silver scales, trembling a little to the stiff, tinny drip of the banjoes on the lawn.

I was still with Jordan Baker. We were sitting at a table with a man of about my age and a rowdy little girl, who gave way upon the slightest provocation to uncontrollable laughter. I was enjoying myself now. I had taken two finger-bowls of champagne, and the scene had changed before my eyes into something significant, elemental, and profound.

At a lull in the entertainment the man looked at me and smiled.

Your face is familiar,' he said, politely. 'Weren't you in the First Division during the war?'

The Great Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald, 1926

4 In that place, where they tore the nightshade and black-
berry patches from their roots to make room for the
Medallion City Golf Course, there was once a neighbor-
hood. It stood in the hills above the valley town of Medal-
5 lion and spread all the way to the river. It is called the
suburbs now, but when black people lived there it was
called the Bottom. [...]

There will be nothing left of the Bottom (the foot-
bridge that crossed the river is already gone), but perhaps
it is just as well, since it wasn't a town anyway: just a
neighborhood where on quiet days people in valley houses
could hear singing sometimes, banjos sometimes, and, if a
valley man happened to have business up in those hills—
collecting rent or insurance payments—he might see a dark
woman in a flowered dress doing a bit of cakewalk, a bit
of black bottom, a bit of "messing around" to the lively
notes of a mouth organ. Her bare feet would raise the
saffron dust that floated down on the coveralls and bun-
6 split shoes of the man breathing music in and out of his
harmonica. The black people watching her would laugh
and rub their knees, and it would be easy for the valley
man to hear the laughter and not notice the adult pain that
rested somewhere under the eyelids, somewhere under
their head rags and soft felt hats, somewhere in the palm
of the hand, somewhere behind the frayed lapels, some-
where in the sinew's curve. He'd have to stand in the back
of Greater Saint Matthew's and let the tenor's voice dress
him in silk, or touch the hands of the spoon carvers (who
had not worked in eight years) and let the fingers that
danced on wood kiss his skin. Otherwise the pain would
escape him even though the laughter was part of the pain.
A shucking, knee-slapping, wet-eyed laughter that could
even describe and explain how they came to be where they
were.

A joke. A nigger joke. That was the way it got started. 35
Not the town, of course, but that part of town where the
Negroes lived, the part they called the Bottom in spite of
the fact that it was up in the hills. Just a nigger joke. The
kind white folks tell when the mill closes down and they're
looking for a little comfort somewhere. The kind colored 40
folks tell on themselves when the rain doesn't come, or
comes for weeks, and they're looking for a little comfort
somehow.

A good white farmer promised freedom and a piece of
bottom land to his slave if he would perform some very 45
difficult chores. When the slave completed the work, he
asked the farmer to keep his end of the bargain. Freedom
was easy—the farmer had no objection to that. But he
didn't want to give up any land. So he told the slave that
he was very sorry that he had to give him valley land. He
had hoped to give him a piece of the Bottom. The slave
blinked and said he thought valley land was bottom land.
The master said, "Oh, no! See those hills? That's bottom
land, rich and fertile."

"But it's high up in the hills," said the slave.

"High up from us," said the master, "but when God
looks down, it's the bottom. That's why we call it so. It's
the bottom of heaven—best land there is."

So the slave pressed his master to try to get him some.
He preferred it to the valley. And it was done. The nigger 50
got the hilly land, where planting was backbreaking, where
the soil slid down and washed away the seeds, and where the
wind lingered all through the winter.

Which accounted for the fact that white people lived
on the rich valley floor in that little river town in Ohio, 65
and the blacks populated the hills above it, taking small
consolation in the fact that every day they could literally
look down on the white folks.

Still, it was lovely up in the Bottom. 70

The black people would have disagreed, but they had no
time to think about it. They were mightily preoccupied
with earthly things—and each other, wondering even as
early as 1920 what Shadrack was all about, what that little
girl Sula who grew into a woman in their town was all
about, and what they themselves were all about, tucked
up there in the Bottom. 75

Toni Morrison,
Sula, 1973

1 She looked up. Perhaps she didn't recognise Ben against the glare of the sun outside; perhaps she simply hadn't expected him at all. Expressionless, she stared at him.

5 "Oh, my Baas," she said at last.

"I've been to the undertaker's to see him, Emily," he said, standing clumsily erect, not knowing what to do with his hands.

10 "It is good." She looked down at her lap, the black headscarf obscuring her face. When she looked up again, her features were as expressionless as before. "Why did they kill him?" she asked. "He didn't do them nothing. You knew Gordon, Baas."

Ben turned to Stanley as if to ask for help, but the big man was standing in the doorway whispering to one of the women.

15 "They said he hanged himself," Emily went on in her low droning voice drained of all emotion. "But when they brought his body this morning I went to wash him. I washed his whole body, Baas, for he was my husband. And I know a man who hanged himself he don't look like that." A pause. "He is broken, Baas. He is like a man knocked down by a lorry."

20 As he numbly stared at her some of the other women started talking too:

"Master mustn't take offence from Emily, she's still raw inside. What can we say, we who stand here with her today?

25 We're still lucky. They picked up my husband too, last year, but they only kept him thirty days. The police were kind to us."

30 And another woman, with the body and the breasts of an earth-mother: "I had seven sons, sir, but five of them are no longer with me. They were taken one after the other. One was killed by the tsotsis. One was knifed at a soccer match. One was a staffrider on a train and he fell down and the wheels went over him. One died in the mines. The police took one. But I have two sons left. And so I say to Emily she must be happy for the children she has with her today. Death is always with us."

35 There was a brief eruption when a young boy came bursting into the little house. He was already inside before he noticed the strangers and stopped in his tracks.

40 "Robert, say good day to the baas," Emily ordered, her voice unchanged. "He came for your father." Turning briefly to Ben: "He is Robert, he is my eldest. First it was Jonathan, but now it is he."

Robert drew back, his face blunt with resentment.

"Robert, say good day to the baas," she repeated.

"I won't say good day to a fucking boer!" he exploded, swinging round viciously to escape into the angry light outside.

A Dry White Season,

Andre Brink, 1979

"How I long to see her again! I never met with anybody who delighted me so much. Such a countenance, such manners!—and so extremely accomplished for her age! Her performance on the piano-forte is exquisite."

"It is amazing to me," said Bingley, "how young ladies can have patience to be so very accomplished, as they all are."

"All young ladies accomplished! My dear Charles, what do you mean?"

"Yes, all of them, I think. They all paint tables, cover skreens and net purses. I scarcely know any one who cannot do all this, and I am sure I never heard a young lady spoken of for the first time, without being informed that she was very accomplished."

"Your list of the common extent of accomplishments," said Darcy, "has too much truth. The word is applied to many a woman who deserves it no otherwise than by netting a purse, or covering a skreen. But I am very far from agreeing with you in your estimation of ladies in general. I cannot boast of knowing more than half a dozen, in the whole range of my acquaintance, that are really accomplished."

"Nor I, I am sure," said Miss Bingley.

"Then," observed Elizabeth, "you must comprehend a great deal in your idea of an accomplished woman."

"Yes; I do comprehend a great deal in it."

"Oh! certainly," cried his faithful assistant, "no one can be really esteemed accomplished, who does not greatly surpass what is usually met with. A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word; and besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions, or the word will be but half deserved."

"All this she must possess," added Darcy, "and to all this she must yet add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading."

"I am no longer surprised at your knowing *only* six accomplished women. I rather wonder now at your knowing *any*."

"Are you so severe upon your own sex, as to doubt the possibility of all this?"

"I never saw such a woman. I never saw such capacity, and taste, and application, and elegance, as you describe, united."

Mrs. Hurst and Miss Bingley both cried out against the injustice of her implied doubt, and were both protesting that they knew many women who answered this description, when Mr. Hurst called them to order, with bitter complaints of their inattention to what was going forward. As all conversation was thereby at an end, Elizabeth soon afterwards left the room.

"Eliza Bennet," said Miss Bingley, when the door was closed on her, "is one of those young ladies who seek to recommend themselves to the other sex, by undervaluing their own; and with many men, I dare say, it succeeds. But, in my opinion, it is a paltry device, a very mean art."

"Undoubtedly," replied Darcy, to whom this remark was chiefly addressed, "there is meanness in *all* the arts which ladies sometimes condescend to employ for captivation. Whatever bears affinity to cunning is despicable."

Miss Bingley was not so entirely satisfied with this reply as to continue the subject.

JANE AUSTEN,
Pride and Prejudice, 1813

Sojourner Truth (1797-1883): Ain't I A Woman?

Delivered 1851
Women's Convention, Akron, Ohio

Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what's this they call it? [member of audience whispers, "intellect"] That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negroes' rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.

Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain't got nothing more to say.

"Let's not go any farther," I called to Maude. "It's so crowded."

"Just a little bit—I'm looking for Mummy." Maude kept pulling my hand.

Suddenly there were too many people. The little spaces we had managed to push into became a solid wall of legs and backs. People pressed up behind us, and I could feel strangers pushing at my arms and shoulders.

Then I felt a hand on my bottom, the fingers brushing me gently. I was so surprised that I did nothing for a moment. The hand pulled up my dress and began fumbling with my bloomers, right there in the middle of all those people. I couldn't believe no one noticed.

When I tried to shift away, the hand followed. I looked back—the man standing behind me was about Papa's age, tall, gray haired, with a thin moustache and spectacles. His eyes were fixed on the platform. I could not believe it was his hand—he looked so respectable. I raised my heel and brought it down hard on the foot behind me. The man winced and the hand disappeared. After a moment he pushed away and was gone, someone else stepping into his place.

I shuddered and whispered to Maude, "Let's get away from here," but I was drowned out by a bugle call. The crowd surged forward and Maude was pushed into the back of the woman ahead of her, dropping my hand. Then I was shoved violently to the left. I looked around but couldn't see Maude.

"If I may have your attention, I would like to open this meeting on this most momentous occasion in Hyde Park," I heard a voice ring out. A woman had climbed onto a box higher than the rest of the women on the platform. In her mauve dress she looked like lavender sprinkled on a bowl of vanilla ice cream. She stood very straight and still.

"There's Mrs. Pankhurst," women around me murmured.

"I am delighted to see before me a great multitude of people, of supporters—both women *and* men—of the simple right of women to take their places alongside men and cast their ballots. Prime Minister Asquith has said that he needs to be assured that the will of the people is behind the call for votes for women. Well, Mr. Asquith, I say to you that if you were standing where I am now and saw the great sea of humanity before you as I do, you would need no more convincing!"

The crowd roared. I put my hands on the shoulders of the woman beside me and jumped up to try and see over the crowd. "Maude!" I called, but it was so noisy she would never have heard me. The woman scowled and shrugged off my hands.

Mrs. Pankhurst was waiting for the sound to die down. "We have a full afternoon of speakers," she began as it grew quiet, "and without further ado—"

"Maude!" I cried.

It wasn't me, it wasn't me
 5 me, Mr. Gropé. It was Brother and Bear. Brother shot you. It wasn't me. They made me come with them. You got to tell the law that, Mr. Gropé. You hear me, Mr. Gropé?"

5 But he was talking to a dead man.

Still he did not run. He didn't know what to do. He didn't believe that this had happened. Again he couldn't remember how he had gotten there. He didn't know whether he had come there with Brother and Bear, or whether he had walked in and seen all this after it happened.

40 He looked from one dead body to the other. He didn't know whether he should call someone on the telephone or run. He had never dialed a telephone in his life, but he had seen other people use them. He didn't know what to do. He was standing by the liquor shelf, and suddenly he realized he needed a drink and needed it badly. He snatched a bottle off the shelf, wrung off the cap, and turned up the bottle, all in one continuous motion. The whiskey burned him like fire—his chest, his belly, even his nostrils. His eyes watered; he shook his head to clear his mind. Now he began to realize where he was. Now he began to realize fully what had happened. Now he knew he had to get out of there. He turned. He saw the money in the cash register, under the little wire clamps. He knew taking money was wrong. His nannan had told him never to steal. He didn't want to steal. 95 But he didn't have a solitary dime in his pocket. And nobody was around, so who could say he stole it? Surely not one of the dead men.

He was halfway across the room, the money stuffed inside his jacket pocket, the half bottle of whiskey clutched in his hand, when two white men walked into the store.

That was his story.

The prosecutor's story was different. The prosecutor argued that Jefferson and the other two had gone there with the full intention of robbing the old man and then killing him so that he could not identify them. When the old man and the other two robbers were all dead, this one—it proved the kind of animal he

really was—stuffed the money into his pockets and celebrated the event by drinking over their still-bleeding bodies.

The defense argued that Jefferson was innocent of all charges except being at the wrong place at the wrong time. There was absolutely no proof that there had been a conspiracy between himself and the other two. The fact that Mr. Gropé shot only Brother and Bear was proof of Jefferson's innocence. Why did Mr. Gropé shoot one boy twice and never shoot at Jefferson once? Because Jefferson was merely an innocent bystander. He took the whiskey to calm his nerves, not to celebrate. He took the money out of hunger and plain stupidity.

50 "Gentlemen of the jury, look at this—this boy. I almost said man, but I can't say man. Oh, sure, he has reached the age of twenty-one, when we, civilized men, consider the male species has reached manhood, but would you call this—this a man? No, not I. I would call it a boy and a fool. A fool is not aware of right and wrong. A fool does what others tell him to do. A fool got into that automobile. A man with a modicum of intelligence would have seen that those racketeers meant no good. But not a fool. A fool got into that automobile. A fool rode to the grocery store. A fool stood by and watched this happen, not having the sense to run.

60 "Gentlemen of the jury, look at him—look at him—look at this. Do you see a man sitting here? Do you see a man sitting here? I ask you, I implore, look carefully—do you see a man sitting here? Look at the shape of this skull, this face as flat as the palm of my hand—look deeply into those eyes. Do you see a modicum of intelligence? Do you see anyone here who could plan a murder, a robbery, can plan—can plan—can plan anything? A cornered animal to strike quickly out of fear, a trait inherited from his ancestors in the deepest jungle of blackest Africa—yes, yes, that he can do—but to plan? To plan, gentlemen of the jury? No, gentlemen, this skull here holds no plans. 70 What you see here is a thing that acts on command. A thing to hold the handle of a plow, a thing to load your bales of cotton,

a thing to dig your ditches, to chop your wood, to pull your corn. That is what you see here, but you do not see anything capable of planning a robbery or a murder. He does not even know the size of his clothes or his shoes. Ask him to name the months of the year. Ask him does Christmas come before or after the Fourth of July? Mention the names of Keats, Byron, Scott, and see whether the eyes will show one moment of recognition. Ask him to describe a rose, to quote one passage from the Constitution or the Bill of Rights. Gentlemen of the jury, this man planned a robbery? Oh, pardon me, pardon me, I surely did not mean to insult your intelligence by saying 'man'—would you please forgive me for committing such an error?

"Gentlemen of the jury, who would be hurt if you took this life? Look back to that second row. Please look. I want all twelve of you honorable men to turn your heads and look back to that second row. What you see there has been everything to him—mama, grandmother, godmother—everything. Look at her, gentlemen of the jury, look at her well. Take this away from her, and she has no reason to go on living. We may see him as not much, but he's her reason for existence. Think on that, gentlemen, think on it.

"Gentlemen of the jury, be merciful. For God's sake, be merciful. He is innocent of all charges brought against him.

"But let us say he was not. Let us for a moment say he was not. What justice would there be to take this life? Justice, gentlemen? Why, I would just as soon put a hog in the electric chair as this.

"I thank you, gentlemen, from the bottom of my heart, for your kind patience. I have no more to say, except this: We must live with our own conscience. Each and every one of us must live with his own conscience."

The jury retired, and it returned a verdict after lunch: guilty of robbery and murder in the first degree. The judge commended the twelve white men for reaching a quick and just verdict. This was Friday. He would pass sentence on Monday.

Ten o'clock on Monday, Miss Emma and my aunt sat in the same seats they had occupied on Friday. Reverend Mose Ambrose, the pastor of their church, was with them. He and my aunt sat on either side of Miss Emma. The judge, a short, red-faced man with snow-white hair and thick black eyebrows, asked Jefferson if he had anything to say before the sentencing. My aunt said that Jefferson was looking down at the floor and shook his head. The judge told Jefferson that he had been found guilty of the charges brought against him, and that the judge saw no reason that he should not pay for the part he played in this horrible crime.

Death by electrocution. The governor would set the date.

Jefferson

to the

Ernest Gainer,

A Lesson Before Dying,

Published 1991

1 "If you don't want me I can go off in the hills an' find a cave. I can go away any time."

5 "No—look! I was jus' foolin', Lennie. 'Cause I want you to stay with me. Trouble with mice is you always kill 'em." He paused. "Tell you what I'll do, Lennie. First chance I get I'll give you a pup. Maybe you wouldn't kill it. That'd be better than mice. And you could pet it harder."

10 Lennie avoided the bait. He had sensed his advantage. "If you don't want me, you only jus' got to say so, and I'll go off in those hills right there—right up in those hills and live by myself. An' I won't get no mice stole from me."

15 George said, "I want you to stay with me, Lennie. Jesus Christ, somebody'd shoot you for a coyote if you was by yourself. No, you stay with me. Your Aunt Clara wouldn't like you running off by yourself, even if she is dead."

20 Lennie spoke craftily, "Tell me—like you done before."

"Tell you what?"

"About the rabbits."

George snapped, "You ain't gonna put nothing over on me."

25 Lennie pleaded, "Come on, George. Tell me. Please George. Like you done before."

"You get a kick outta that, don't you? Awright, I'll tell you, and then we'll eat our supper. . . ."

30 George's voice became deeper. He repeated his words rhythmically as though he had said them many times before. "Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world. They got no family. They don't belong no place. They come to a ranch an' work up a stake and then they go inta town and blow their stake, and the first thing you know they're pound-

35 in' their tail on some other ranch. They ain't got nothing to look ahead to."

Lennie was delighted. "That's it—that's it. Now tell how it is with us."

40 George went on. "With us it ain't like that. We got a future. We got somebody to talk to that gives a damn about us. We don't have to sit in no bar room blowin' in our jack jus' because we got no place else to go. If them other guys gets in jail they can rot for all anybody gives a damn. But not us."

45 Lennie broke in. "But not us! An' why? Because . . . because I got you to look after me, and you got me to look after you, and that's why." He laughed delightedly. "Go on now, George!"

OF Mice & Men, John Steinbeck, 1937
(end of Section 1)

TALKING WITH THE ENEMY

1 We are now in a world of concrete. I missed the natural splendor of Robben Island. But our new home had many consolations. For one thing, the food at Pollsmoor was far superior; after years of eating pap three meals a day, Pollsmoor's dinners of proper meat and vegetables were like feast.

5 We were permitted a fairly wide range of newspapers and magazines, and could receive such previously contraband publications as *Time* magazine and the *Guardian Weekly* from London. This gave us a window on the wider world. We also had radio, but one that received only local stations and not what we really wanted: the BBC world Service. We were allowed out on the terrace all day long, except between twelve and two when the warders had their lunch. There was
10 not even a pretence that we had to work. I had a small cell near our large one that functioned as a study, with a chair, desk and bookshelves, where I could read and write during the day.

On Robben Island I would do my exercises in my own cramped cell, but now I had room to stretch out. At Pollsmoor I would wake up at five and do an hour and a half of exercise in our communal cell. I followed my usual regimen of stationary running, skipping, sit-ups, fingertip
15 press-ups. My comrades were not early risers and my programme soon made me a very unpopular fellow in our cell.

I was visited by Winnie shortly after arriving at Pollsmoor and was pleased to find that the visiting area was far better and more modern than the one on Robben Island. We had a large glass barrier through which one could see the visitor from the waist up and far more sophisticated
20 microphones so that we did not have to strain to hear. The window gave at least the illusion of greater intimacy. It was far easier for my wife and family to get to Pollsmoor than to Robben Island, and this made a tremendous difference. The supervision of visits also became more humane. Often, Winnie's visits were overseen by Warrant Officer Gregory, who had been a censor on Robben Island. I had not known him terribly well, but he knew us, because he had been
25 responsible for reviewing our incoming and outgoing mail.

At Pollsmoor I got to know Gregory better and found him a welcome contrast to the typical warder. He was polished and soft-spoken, and treated Winnie with courtesy and deference. Instead of barking, "Time up!" he would say, "Mrs Mandela, you have five minutes." [...]

FREEDOM

30 It was during those long and lonely years that my hunger for the freedom of my own people became a hunger for the freedom of all people, white and black. I knew as well as I knew anything that the oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed. A man who takes away another man's freedom is a prisoner of hatred, he is locked behind the bars of prejudice and narrow-mindedness. I am not truly free if I am taking away someone else's freedom, just as surely
35 as I am not free when my freedom is taken from me. The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity.

That was my mission, to liberate the oppressed and the oppressor both. Some say that has now been achieved. But I know that it is not the case. The truth is that we are not yet free; we have merely achieved the freedom to be free, the right not to be oppressed. We have not taken the
40 final of our journey, but the first step on a longer and even more difficult road.

I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can rest only for
45 a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended.

Nelson Mandela, 1995.

17

1

'As you said: you're fifty-seven. Mid-life crisis.'

'Mid-life? What does this mean?' snapped Samad irritably. 'Damn it, Shiva, I don't plan to live for one hundred and fourteen years.'

'It's a manner of speaking. You read about it in the magazines these days. It's when a man gets to a certain point in life, he starts feeling he's over the hill . . . and you're as young as the girl you feel, if you get my meaning.'

'I am at a moral crossroads in my life and you are talking nonsense to me.'

'You've got to learn this stuff, mate,' said Shiva, speaking slowly, patiently. 'Female organism, gee-spot, testicle cancer, the menstropause - mid-life crisis is one of them. Information the modern man needs at his fingertips.'

'But I don't wish for such information!' cried Samad, standing up and pacing the kitchen. 'That is precisely the point! I don't wish to be a modern man! I wish to live as I was always meant to! I wish to return to the Basti'

'Ah, well . . . we all do, don't we?' murmured Shiva, pushing the peppers and onion around the pan. 'I left when I was three. Puck knows I haven't made anything of this country. But who's got the money for the air fare? And who wants to live in a shack with fourteen servants on the payroll? Who knows what Shiva Bagwhati would have turned out like back in Calcutta? Prince or pauper? And who,' said Shiva, some of his old beauty returning to his face, 'can pull the West out of 'em once it's in?'

Samad continued to pace. 'I should never have come here - that's where every problem has come from. Never should have brought my sons here, so far from God. Willesten Green! Calling-cards in sweetshop windows, Judy Blume in the school, condom on the pavement, Harvest Festival, teacher-tempreresses! roared Samad, picking items at random. 'Shiva - I tell you, in confidence: my dearest friend, Archibald Jones, is an unbeliever! Now: what kind of a model am I for my children?'

'Iqbal, sit down. Be calm. Listen: you just want somebody. People want people. It happens from Delhi to Deptford. And it's not the end of the world.'

144-145

2

There was a mutual, silent anger as each acknowledged the painful incident that was being referred to. A few months earlier, on Magid's ninth birthday, a group of very nice-looking white boys with meticulous manners had turned up on the doorstep and asked for Mark Smith.

'Mark? No Mark here,' Alsana had said, bending down to their level with a genial smile. 'Only the family Iqbal in here. You have the wrong house.'

But before she had finished the sentence, Magid had dashed to the door, ushering his mother out of view.

'Hi, guys.'

'Hi, Mark.'

'Off to the chess club, Mum.'

'Yes, M - M - Mark,' said Alsana, close to tears at this final snub, the replacement of 'Mum' for 'Ammu'. 'Do not be late, now.'

'I GIVE YOU A GLORIOUS NAME LIKE MAGID MAHROOZ MURSHED MUBTASIM IQBAL!' Samad had yelled after Magid when he returned home that evening and whipped up the stairs like a bullet to hide in his room. 'AND YOU WANT TO BE CALLED MARK SMITH!'

But this was just a symptom of a far deeper malaise. Magid really wanted to be in *some other family*. He wanted to own cats and not cockroaches, he wanted his mother to make the music of the cello, not the sound of the sewing machine; he wanted to have a trellis of flowers growing up one side of the house instead of the ever growing pile of other people's rubbish; he wanted a piano in the hallway in place of the broken door off cousin Kurshed's car; he wanted to go on biting holidays to France, not day-trips to Blackpool to visit aunts; he wanted the floor of his room to be shiny wood, not the orange and green swirled carpet left over from the restaurant; he wanted his father to be a doctor, not a one-handed waiter; and this month Magid had converted all these desires into a wish to join in with the Harvest Festival like Mark Smith would. Like everybody else would.

150-151

14

Ladie

Smith

White Teeth (2000)

(3)

- Because we often imagine that immigrants are constantly on the move, footloose, able to change course at any moment, able to employ their legendary resourcefulness at every turn. We have been told of the resourcefulness of Mr Schmutter, or the foot-
5. loosity of Mr Banajii, who sail into Ellis Island or Dover or Calais and step into their foreign lands as *blank people*, free of any kind of baggage, happy and willing to leave their difference at the docks and take their chances in this new place, merging with the oneness of this greenandpleasantlibertarianlandofthefree.
10. Whatever road presents itself, they will take, and if it happens to lead to a dead end, well then, Mr Schmutter and Mr Banajii will merrily set upon another, weaving their way through Happy Multicultural Land. Well, good for them. But Magid and Millat couldn't manage it. They left that neutral room as they had
15. entered it: weighed down, burdened, unable to waver from their course or in any way change their separate, dangerous trajectories. They seem to make no progress.

465

Ladia Smith,

White Teeth

(2000)

The Hypochondriac

He never has a cold, he has 'flu' which rapidly transmutes into a virus, which will probably become double pneumonia and most certainly, at the very least, have gone down on to his chest by the morning. He piteously asks his beloved whether she thinks it would
5 be all right if he took two more Nurofen. Beloved, toiling up and down the stairs with tempting trays of consommé, mutters that cyanide might be more effective. But martyr as the hypochondriac may be to passing germs, he is impervious to irony. Were he self-analytical as well as self-diagnostic, he would recall that many good
10 women and true have left following the nostalgic anecdote about his old mum soothing his fevered brow with 4711 cologne. Indigestion bodes an incipient heart attack. A sore throat is obviously the beginning of 'the bug that has been going round the office'. He shakes the thermometer in disbelief as the mercury remains stubbornly below the little red line. Will a Fisherman's Friend interfere
15 with the antibiotics he's sure to have to take? He braces himself for the worst by gathering a repellent prep school dressing gown around his tortured body. Every muscle aches, his back (always dodgy, he can't lift a thing) is a real killer and his secretary kindly reassures
20 him that Tracy in accounts was sick all night when she had 'the raging Beijing'. He's sure he heard on the car radio that it is the worst epidemic since the flu in 1957. This is almost too exciting for someone whose idea of a dangerous drug is hot lemon and honey. The hypochondriac's one regret in life is that he has never really
25 been ill.



From *Absolutely Typical*, the best social stereotypes from the Telegraph Magazine, 1996