

6 Months Later

Now that Lennie is out of the way, I guess that I can actually do something with my life. But, It's been 6 months since leaving the farm and I still don't have a job. Oh, here's a sign. A mentally handicapped hospital needs an attendant. I can do that, and it pays well too. \$150 a month. "At that rate, I'll be able to get that land soon enough. Ain't that right," I asked Candy? "We sure are," he replied with enthusiasm. As we stepped into the complex, the first thing I saw was the reception desk with a young, pretty, receptionist sitting behind the desk, polishing her nails. Lennie would have enjoyed watching her I pondered. She asked us what we wanted, and I told her that we were just here to find out 'bout the job. After getting a quick overview and job description, I was ready to work right away. Candy was also lucky enough to get hired as a nurse for \$100 a month. I stepped into the bedroom and I saw about 25 kids sitting around a middle-aged man, listening to a story. As I stepped in, the story teller stepped over to me and told me what I had to do. Educate them and talk to them. That was it. I was getting paid \$150 just to teach a group of handicapped kids. I sat down next to the story teller, Bob, and I looked around and carefully observed them. As I did this, I could see Lennie's face flashing in my mind. What was happening to me. Why couldn't he just leave me alone. I survived through my first day of work, reluctantly. The hospital also provided housing. That night, I had the most horrible dream of my life. I could see Lennie petting hundreds of rabbits, one at a time. But he was crying and screaming in rage. The rabbits were dying. "George, why do they die? Don't let them die George, please. Can I still tend the rabbits? I know I done a bad thing," exclaimed Lennie. I got up, screaming. "Lennie, please leave me alone, please," I asked. It was silent. Nobody was awake. I looked like a complete nut with all those kids, including Candy, staring at me. Candy just went back to sleep. He was the only one that could understand the pain that I was going through. This happened to me several nights after the first nightmare. Each one would consist of rabbits, lots of them, and Lennie. After a while, they just told me to leave because they thought that the kids were already tortured with their own handicaps. Candy wanted to stay, so I told him that I would come back for him when I gathered enough money. After one day alone, I had done a lot of thinking. Mostly about Lennie and the others, but one thing I thought a lot about was the things Lennie said. "I could go off to the mountains and find a cave, you know. And I wouldn't eat any ketchup," he would say. Now that I think about it and know what it feels like to be alone, I am glad that Lennie stayed with me the whole time, till death had separated the two of us. I also realize that he always obeyed me and tried really hard to help me. He tried so hard to keep those pups alive, and yet they died. He was such a hard worker, worked harder than any of us. I also realize that we couldn't do some of the things that he could do. Such as understanding a person more deeply than any of us. He knew more about myself than I did. And he always kept up to a task, like trying to be able to remember. He could never do that. He would have taken good care of those rabbits. If only he had a chance. He could prove to me, to everybody else, and most importantly himself, that he was capable of doing something right. Sure he killed Curly's wife, but she sure as hell was a bitch. She probably didn't deserve to die, but Lennie didn't know any better? He probably thinks that she's still alive, stupid boy. Wait a minute. I'll ask for one more chance at the hospital, and then Candy and I could get ready to leave after just one month. I guess I'll start to walk back the ten miles it took to get here. I know, I'll get a wife, and invite people to stay at my new ranch. And Candy could invite people too. It would be great. But why am I so happy?? I just killed my best friend; he was so helpless. Maybe he's better off know, but I will never know. All that I can think about now is what Lennie said to me just before he died. "George, can I still tend the..... the rab-bits."

