

“Would you shut up for once in your goddamn life, Derek?”

The kid sighed, hoisting the shovel over his shoulder. “Ya know, I thought this would take longer.”

“I thought you wanted *me* to shut the hell up, and now all you’re doing is talking,” Derek growled. “We’d be done already if you’d just focus.”

“I know I have a problem with talking too much, you don’t have to mention it. It’s just with *you* sentence length isn’t the issue. It’s *tone*.”

“Ok, now it’s my turn to tell you to shut the hell up,” Derek shot back without taking his eyes off the dead horse he was hefting into the hole they had dug in one great grunt and sweep.

The kid put his hands on his hips, his gloves wrapping around his skinny fingers, overwhelming them. “Showoff.”

“Well come down and help, then.”

He jumped down to the whole, landing roughly. “Grab that end.”

The two lifted the horse and positioned it carefully. Derek wiped his forehead gruffly after they finished, wishing his beard didn’t feel so grimy. “Need help up?” he asked as the kid struggled to reach the edge of the whole. He didn’t answer with anything but a grunt, finally getting his long fingers around the soft grass above them. Derek could hear his quiet sounds of smug exclamation as he pulled himself to the surface. He followed after carefully, keeping his eyes down.

The kid had lifted his shovel back up, staring expectantly at Derek once he finally made eye contact. Derek just looked around, subconsciously memorizing the scenery. It was a windy day and the grass was just starting to turn green again. The farm surrounding

them was everything Derek had ever known. He wondered in his lifetime how many holes he'd dug just like this.

The kid was starting to get teary eyed, and the gun in Derek's back pocket was started to chafe. Derek grunted a "get to work," and grabbed his shovel. He rushed to get the first couple piles of dirt right on the face just in time for the kid to start copying his movements. He tried to ignore the sniffles coming from beside him, but other than that they worked in relative silence.

The wind kept blowing the driest pieces of dirt away from the hole, but other than that they covered it rather quickly. They worked well together. The kid stuck his shovel in the dirt triumphantly in the end, proud of his work, just in time for his face to fall as he saw the harness a few yards away. He slowly walked over to it as Derek watched him, and he lifted the harness up delicately before returning it to the ground centering the former hole. The kid stroked the soft leather and wondered how many times he had treated it to get it this soft.

Derek put a light hand on his shoulder, a reminder. The sun would set soon, and there were things to get done. The kid nodded, following him to the pick up truck. He wiped his eyes with his sleeve, smudging dirt all across his face. Derek rolled his eyes.

They argued the whole way back about what radio station to listen to.