

BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN

JACK and ENNIS have loaded the horses into the back of ENNIS'S pickup truck. We can hear Jack vacillate between truth and lie here, opting for the latter (the short story has the beautiful phrase “the sparks flying up with their truths and lies”). Obviously, he is talking about Randall. It is no problem telling Ennis he sees another woman; but it would be a problem to tell him he is seeing another man. Despite his claim otherwise in scene 141 (“Is that a problem?”) Jack knows this very well. Mood between them is tense, as always, when their time together is about to end. The gate is shut on the horses. Then they carry more gear into Jack’s pickup. JACK throws his rifle on the backseat of the cab. After they finish, JACK opens the driver door of the pickup, grunts. Leans against it. ENNIS leans against the side of the car.

JACK

(morose)

Guess I'll head on up to Lightnin' Flat. See the folks for a day or two.

ENNIS

(uncomfortable, nervously rubbing the side of the car)

There's somethin' I been meanin' to tell you, bud.

(pause)

It's likely November before I can come out here again, after we ship stock and before winter feedin' starts again.

(ENNIS chews a finger.)

JACK

(stunned)

November?

(pause)

Well, what in the hell ever happened to August?

ENNIS

(sighs)

Well...

JACK

Christ, Ennis!

(pause)

You know, you had a fuckin' week to say some little word about this.

(ENNIS is silent. Gnawing at a finger, spitting out what he pulls off.)

JACK (CONT'D)

(anger rising, pacing away)

And why's it we're always in the friggin' cold weather? We oughta go south, where it's warm, you know. We oughta go to Mexico.

(He walks off to the lake shore, stands facing the mountains on the other side.)

ENNIS

Mexico?

(tries to lighten the mood)

Hell, Jack...you know me. 'Bout all the travelin' I ever done is goin' around the coffeepot, lookin' for the handle.

(An uncomfortable silence.)

ENNIS (CONT'D)

C'mon Jack, lighten up on me. We can hunt in November, kill us a nice elk. Can try if I can get Don Wroe's cabin again. We had a good time that year, didn't we?

(A beat.)

JACK

(quietly, bitter disappointment)

There ain't never enough time, never enough.

(turns, looks at Ennis)

You know, friend, this is a goddamn bitch of an unsatisfactory situation. You used to come away easy, and now it's like seein' the Pope.

ENNIS

(shrugs)

Jack, I gotta work. Huh? I mean, in them earlier days I just quit the jobs. You...

(a beat)

...you forget what it's like bein' broke all the time.

(a beat)

You ever hear of child support? I'll tell you this, I can't quit this one. And I can't get the time off.

(A pause. JACK turns away again, faces the lake. ENNIS shrugs his shoulders.)

ENNIS (CONT'D)

Was hard enough gettin' this time. The trade-off was August.

(pause)

You got a better idea?

(JACK slowly turns back to ENNIS.)

JACK

(bitter, accusatory)

I did, once.

ENNIS

(sarcastic, under his breath)

You did once...

(Pause. Then ENNIS walks up to JACK at a deliberate pace. Mexico was THE place—he has heard.)

ENNIS

(cold)

You been to Mexico, Jack Twist? Huh? 'Cause I hear what they got in Mexico for boys like you.

(JACK, braced for it all these years, and here it comes, late and unexpected.)

JACK

Hell yes, I been to Mexico. Is that a fuckin' problem? A tense silence. They stand close, staring each other in the eyes.

ENNIS

I'm gonna tell you this one time, Jack fuckin' Twist. And I ain't foolin'. What I don't know, all them things...

(punches Jack in the chest)

...that I don't know...could get you killed if I'd come to know them. I ain't jokin'!

(spits on the ground, violently)

JACK

Yeah, well, try this one...

(pause)

...and I'll say it just once.

ENNIS

Go ahead!

JACK

Tell you what, we could of had a good life together, a fuckin' real good life, had us a place of our own. But you didn't want it, Ennis, so what we got now is Brokeback Mountain.

(gestures at the mountains behind him)

Everything built on that. It's all we got, boy, fuckin' all, so I hope you know that if you don't never know the rest.

(ENNIS turns his back on JACK)

ENNIS

(under his breath)

Godammit.

JACK

You count the damn few times we been together in nearly twenty years, and you measure the short fuckin' leash you keep me on, then ask me about Mexico and you tell me you'll kill me for needin' somethin' I don't hardly never get. You have no idea how bad it gets. I'm not you. I can't make it on a couple of high-altitude fucks once or twice a year.

(A beat. ENNIS'S breathing is becoming heavy, laboured. He is slowly collapsing.)

JACK (CONT'D)

You're too much for me, Ennis, you son of a whoreson bitch.

(pause; he's back at the lakeside, facing the mountains again; voice faltering)

I wish I knew how to quit you.

(Like vast clouds of steam from thermal springs in winter, the years of things unsaid and now unsayable—admissions, declarations, shames, guilts, fears—rise around them.)

(ENNIS stands as if heartshot, turned away, face gray and deep-lined. Fights a silent battle, grimaces. Almost crying. Turns back to face JACK.)

ENNIS

(fighting back tears)

Then why don't you?! Why don't you let me be, huh? It's because of you, Jack, that I'm like this. I'm nothin'... I'm nowhere...

(ENNIS groans in despair, pressing his hands against his forehead. JACK starts towards him, reaches for him.)

JACK

Ennis... it's okay...

(But ENNIS jerks away, pushes him back.)

ENNIS

Get the fuck off me!

(JACK moves towards him again, clasps him in a firm embrace, and this time, ENNIS doesn't resist. His legs give way, he falls to his knees, crying.)

JACK

Come here...it's all right. It's all right...damn you, Ennis.

(They hug one another, a fierce, desperate embrace.)

ENNIS

(sobbing)

I just can't stand this anymore, Jack...