

Mariano Azuela, *The Underdogs*

Part I, chapters 1–5

Selections prepared from the instructor's course copy

Part I, Chapter 1

“I’m telling you that’s no animal. Listen to how Palomo is barking . . . That must be a man.”

The woman stared out into the darkness of the Sierra.

“Who cares, even if they are Federales?” replied a man, sitting on his haunches in a corner and eating, a small pan in his right hand and three tortillas in the other.

But the woman did not answer him. Her senses were concentrated outside their little house.

The sound of hoofs against stony ground was heard nearby, and Palomo started barking with more anger.

“Either way, it’d be good for you to hide, Demetrio.”

Indifferent, the man finished eating. Then he grabbed a pitcher, raised it with two hands, and guzzled down the water. Finally he stood up.

“Your rifle is under the bedding,” the woman said in a very soft voice.

The small room was lit by a tallow candle. A yoke, a plow, a goad, and other tilling gear were resting in a corner. Ropes holding up an old adobe molding, serving as a bed, hung from the ceiling. A child lay on faded, torn blankets, sleeping.

Demetrio grabbed his cartridge belt, strapped it around his waist, and picked up his rifle. Tall, robust, with a bright, beardless red face, he wore a coarse cotton shirt and trousers, a wide-brimmed straw sombrero, and leather sandals.

He stepped out slowly, deliberately, disappearing into the impenetrable darkness of the night.

Palomo, enraged, had jumped over the fence of the corral. All of a sudden a shot was heard, and the dog let out a muffled moan and stopped barking altogether.

A few men on horseback appeared, shouting and cursing. Two dismounted while another stayed with the animals.

“Women, come on out here. Bring us somethin’ for dinner! Eggs, milk, frijoles, whatever you have, we’re starvin’.”

“Damned Sierra! The devil’s the only one who wouldn’t get lost out there!”

“He would get lost, Sergeant, if he was as drunk as you.”

One of the men wore galloons on his shoulders, the other red stripes on his sleeves.

“Where are we, little lady? Well, in here all by herself! Is there anyone else in this here house?”

“So what about that light? And that little kid? Little lady, we want to eat, real quicklike! Are ya comin’ out or do we make ya come out?”

“You vile men, you’ve killed my dog! What harm in the world did my poor little Palomo do to you?”

The woman came back dragging her very white, heavy dog behind her, its eyes already glossed over, its body limp.

“Oh my, look at those plump, rosy cheeks, Sergeant! My dear, don’t be angry, I swear I’ll turn your house into a dovecote as a namesake to your dog. But for God’s sake:

Don’t look at me all irate . . . Don’t be angry no more . . . Look at me sweetly, Oh, light of my eyes . . .

the officer finished singing in a harsh voice.

“What is this ranchito called, señora?” the sergeant asked.

“Limón,” the woman answered hoarsely, without any fear in her voice, and turned to fan the coals of the fire and to reach for more wood.

“So this is Limón? Land of the famous Demetrio Macías! Didya hear that, Lieutenant? We’re in Limón.”

“In Limón, huh? Oh well, what do I care! You know, Sergeant, if I’m headin’ to hell, may as well go now, since I got me a good horse anyway. But wouldya look at those little rosy cheeks on that brunette! Tha’s the most perfect pair of ripe red apples to bite right into I’ve ever seen . . .”

“You must know that bandit Macías, señora. I was in the penitentiary with ’im in Escobedo.”

“Sergeant, bring me a bottle of tequila. I’ve decided to spend the night in the kind company of this little brunette here. The colonel? What, why in the world are you speakin’ to me about the colonel at these hours? He can go straight to hell as far as I’m concerned! And if he gets upset, as far as I care . . . pop! Go on, Sergeant, tell the corporal to unsaddle the horses and prepare dinner. I’m stayin’ right here. Listen, little darlin’, you let my sergeant fry up the eggs and warm up the tortillas, and you come ’ere with me. Look, this little wallet of mine is stuffed with bills just for you. It’ll be my pleasure. Just imagine! I’m just a little bit drunk tha’s why, and tha’s why my voice is a little bit hoarse, too. I left half my gullet in Guadalajara, and I’ve been spittin’ the other half all the way up here! So what can you do? It’ll be my pleasure. Sergeant, my bottle, my bottle of tequila. But darlin’, you’re too far away. Come over ’ere, have a drink. What d’ya mean no? Are you afraid of . . . your husband . . . or whatever he is? If he’s hidin’ in some hole tell ’im to come out. As far as I care . . . pop! Let me assure you I’m not afraid of no rats.”

A white silhouette suddenly filled the dark opening of the doorway.

“Demetrio Macías!” the sergeant exclaimed, aghast, taking several steps back.

The lieutenant got up, speechless, and stood cold and motionless as a statue.

“Kill ’em!” the woman exclaimed, her throat dry.

“Oh, forgive me, my friend! I didn’t know. But I respect brave men like you, truly.”

Demetrio stood looking at them, an insolent and scornful smile warping his features.

“And not only do I respect ’em, I also love ’em. Here, take the hand of a friend. That’s okay, Demetrio Macías, I know why you rebuke me. It’s because you don’t know me, it’s because you see me doin’ this damned dog of a job. But what d’ya want, my friend! We’re poor, we have large families to keep. Sergeant, let’s go. I always respect the house of a brave man, of a real man.”

After they disappeared, the woman hugged Demetrio tightly.

“Blessed Virgin of Jalpa! What a scare! I thought they had shot you!”

“Go on now to my father’s house,” Demetrio said.

She tried to stop him. She begged, she cried. But he pushed her aside sweetly and answered in a somber voice:

“I can feel that they’ll be back with the whole group.”

“Why didn’t ya kill ’em?”

“Just wasn’t their time yet!”

They went out together, she with the child in her arms.

Once at the door, they walked off in opposite directions.

The moon filled the mountainside with dim, hazy shadows.

At every cliff and at each scrub oak, Demetrio could still see the sorrowful silhouette of a woman with her child in her arms.

After many hours of climbing, he turned around to look back. At the bottom of the canyon, near the river, he saw tall flames rising: his house was ablaze.

Part I, Chapter 2

Everything was still in shadows as Demetrio Macías climbed down toward the bottom of the ravine. He was following a path along the narrow incline of a rough slope, between rocky terrain streaked with enormous cracks on one side and a drop of hundreds of meters, cut as if by a single cleft, on the other.

As he descended with agility and speed, he thought:

“Surely now the Federales will find our trail, and they’ll jump on us like dogs. Luckily for us, though, they don’t know any of the paths going in or out of the ravine. Unless someone from Moyahua is with them as a guide, because the people from Limón, Santa Rosa, and the other ranchitos from the Sierra are reliable and would never turn us in. The cacique who has me running through these hills is from Moyahua, and he’d be more than pleased to see me strung up from a telegraph pole with my tongue hanging down to here . . .”

He reached the bottom of the ravine as dawn was beginning to break. He lay down between the boulders and fell asleep.

The river rushed along, singing in tiny cascades. The birds were chirping, hidden among the pitahaya cacti, while the monotonous cicadas filled the solitude of the mountain with a sense of mystery.

Demetrio woke up, startled. Then he waded across the river and started up the trail on the other side of the canyon. Like a large red ant he climbed toward the crest, his hands clutching like claws at the crags and cut-off branches, the soles of his feet clutching at the trail’s round, smooth stones.

By the time he reached the summit, the sun was bathing the high plains of the Sierra in a lake of gold. Looking down toward the ravine, he could see enormous tapered stones, bristling protuberances like fantastic African heads, pitahaya cacti like the ossified fingers of a colossus, and trees stretching out toward the bottom of the abyss. And among the dry boulders and the parched bushes, the bright San Juan roses dawned like a white offering to the star beginning to spread its golden tendrils from stone to stone.

Demetrio stopped at the summit. Then he reached back with his right hand, pulled out the horn hanging across his back, brought it to his thick lips, and blew into it three times, his cheeks filling out with air as he did so. Beyond the bordering crest three whistles responded to his signal.

In the distance, from among a conical heaping of reeds and rotten hay, many men came forth, one after the other. They were dark and polished like old bronze statues, their chests and legs bare.

Quickly they came to meet Demetrio.

“They burned my house!” he said in response to their inquisitive looks.

There were curses, threats, insults.

Demetrio let them vent. Then he brought a bottle out from his shirt, took a drink, wiped it with the back of his hand, and passed it to the man next to him. The bottle went around from mouth to mouth and was quickly emptied. The men licked their lips.

“God willin’,” Demetrio said, “tomorrow, or perhaps even tonight, we will get another close-up of the Federales. What do you say, muchachos? Ready to show ’em ’round these paths and trails?”

The half-naked men jumped up and down, howling with joy. Then they repeated the insults, the curses, and the threats.

“We don’t know how many of ’em there’s gonna be,” Demetrio stated, scrutinizing the faces around him. “But back in Hostotipaquillo, Julián Medina challenged all the pigs and Federales in town with just half a dozen scraggly men armed with knives sharpened on a metate, and he crushed ’em all.”

“And what do Medina’s men have that we don’t have?” said a massive, robust, bearded man with very dark, thick eyebrows and sweet eyes. “All I know,” he added, “is that if tomorrow I don’t have me a Mauser rifle, a good cartridge belt, pants, and shoes, then my name’s not Anastasio Montañés. Seriously! Look here, Quail, don’t tell me you don’t believe me? I’ve been pumped fulla lead half a dozen times already. Ask my compadre Demetrio here if you don’t believe me. You know, I’m no more afraid of a little ball of candy than I am of bullets. Don’t tell me that ya don’t believe me?”

“Long live Anastasio Montañés!” Lard yelled.

“No,” Anastasio replied. “Long live our leader Demetrio Macías. And long live God in heaven and long live the Blessed Virgin Mary.”

“Long live Demetrio Macías!” they all yelled.

They lit a fire using straw and dry wood, and placed strips of fresh meat on the live coals. Gathered around the fire, sitting back on their haunches, they hungrily smelled the meat as it sizzled and crackled on the embers.

Near them, piled up on the blood-soaked ground, lay the golden hide of a calf, while the rest of the meat hung between two huisache trees, suspended with twine, set to cure in the sun and the air.

“Okay, then,” Demetrio said. “As you see, other than my thirty-thirty here, we don’t have more than twenty rifles. If there’s only a few of ’em, we hit ’em until there’s none of ’em left. And if there’s a lot of ’em, well then, then we give ’em a good run till they’re at least good ’n scared.”

He loosened the belt from around his waist, untied one of its knots, and offered its contents to his comrades.

“Salt!” they exclaimed with joy, each taking a pinch with the tips of his fingers.

They ate avidly. When they had had enough, they lay back with their stomachs up to the sun and sang sad, monotonous songs, screeching shrill screams into the sky after each verse.

Part I, Chapter 3

Demetrio Macías's twenty-five men slept amid the weeds of the Sierra until the sound of the horn woke them up. Pancraccio was blowing it from one of the mountaintops.

"It's time, muchachos. Look alive!" Anastasio Montañés said, inspecting the springs of his rifle.

But an hour went by without the sound of anything other than the singing of the cicadas in the grassland and the croaking of the frogs in the hollows.

The first silhouette of a soldier was finally seen along the tallest ridge of the trail just as the last beams of moonlight were fading in the slightly pinkish girdle of dawn. After him others appeared, followed by another ten, and then by another hundred. But all of them quickly vanished in the shadows. And then, as the splendid sun rose and shone brightly, the side of the cliff was covered with people: tiny men on tiny horses.

"Look at 'em, how purty they look!" Pancraccio exclaimed. "Come on, muchachos, let's go have us some fun!"

Those small moving pieces alternated between blending into the thickness of the chaparral and blackening farther below against the ocher of the crag.

The voices of the leaders and the soldiers could be heard distinctly below them.

Demetrio gave a signal, and the springs of all the rifles stretched and cocked.

"Fire!" he ordered in a hushed voice.

Twenty-one men fired at once, and as many Federales fell from their horses. The others, surprised, remained stationary, like bas-reliefs against the side of the cliff.

A new discharge, and another twenty-one men rolled from rock to rock, their skulls cracked.

"Show yourselves, bandits! Come out, dirty dogs!"

"Death to the corn-grinding thieves!"

"Death to the cattle rustlers!"

The Federales yelled at the enemy, but Macías and his men remained hidden, stationary, and quiet, happy simply to continue practicing a marksmanship that was already their pride and fame.

"Look, Pancraccio," said the Indian, a man dark everywhere except for his teeth and the whites of his eyes. "This bullet's for the one tha's tryin' to run behind that pitahaya cactus over there! Son of a ... ! Take that! Didya see that, right in 'is head? Now for the one ridin' on that gray horse . . . Down you go, you blockhead!"

"I'm gonna give that one who's ridin' along the ridge of the trail there a nice bath. You watch an' tell me if he doesn't fall right in the river, that no-good conservative pig down there. How 'bout that? D'ya see 'im fall right in?"

"Come on, Anastasio, don't be cruel! Let me use your rifle. Come on, let me have just one shot!"

Lard, Quail, and the others who did not have firearms asked to use them, begging to be able to take at least one shot, as if asking for some supreme favor.

“Show yourselves, if you’re men enough!”

“Come out, mongrels. You lousy dogs.”

The shouts could be heard from one side of the mountain to the other as clearly as if they were coming from across a street.

All of a sudden Quail emerged from his hiding place with his pants off, and waved his trousers to tease the Federales, pretending he was fighting a bull. At that point shots began raining on Demetrio’s men.

“Uh-oh! I think they launched a hornet’s nest over my head,” Anastasio Montañés said, already crouching down and hiding between the stones, not daring to look up.

“Quail, you son of a . . . !” Demetrio roared. “Everyone, now, over to where I said before!”

They dragged themselves along and took up a new position.

The Federales began to shout with joy, celebrating their perceived victory. But just as soon as they had ceased firing, a new hailstorm of bullets baffled them again.

“There’s more of ’em here now!” the soldiers clamored.

Overwhelmed and panicked, many turned their horses around and retreated at once, while others abandoned their horses and climbed off, seeking refuge among the boulders. The leaders fired over the heads of the fugitives in an attempt to restore order.

“Get them dogs down below. Get them dogs down below, ” Demetrio yelled, aiming his thirty-thirty down toward the crystalline stream of the river.

A Federale fell into those very waters. And without fail, with each shot Macías took another man fell, one after the next, into the abyss. But he was the only one shooting down at the Federales near the river, and for each one that he killed, ten or twenty climbed unharmed up the other slope.

“Get them dogs down below. Get them dogs down below, ” he kept shouting, enraged.

Now sharing their weapons, the comrades were placing bets as they aimed at and hit their targets.

“My leather belt if I don’t hit the one on the spotted gray horse in the head. Lend me your rifle, Indian.”

“Twenty rounds for your Mauser and half a vara of chorizo if you let me shoot the one ridin’ that black mare with a white mark on its forehead. Ready . . . now! Didya see how high he jumped? Like a deer!”

“Don’t run off, you conservative mongrels! Come meet your Papi Demetrio Macías.”

Now Macías’s men were the ones yelling out the insults. As Pancraccio shouted, his smooth, otherwise immutable-as-stone face became completely distorted. And as Lard roared, the muscles on his neck tightened and the lines on his face stretched out, his eyes murderously grim.

Demetrio continued shooting and warning his men of their grave danger, but they ignored his desperate cries until they heard the bullets whizzing right over their heads.

“I’m hit, I’m hit!” Demetrio yelled, gnashing his teeth together. “Sons of a . . . !” he exclaimed as he slid down between the boulders of the ravine.

Part I, Chapter 4

Two men were missing: Serapio the candy maker and Antonio, who played the cymbals in the Juchipila band.

“We’ll just have to see if they can catch up with us farther along,” Demetrio said.

They were disheartened. Only Anastasio Montañés maintained that sweet expression in his sleepy eyes and bearded face, while Pancraccio maintained the repulsive immutability in his hard profile and his protruding jaws.

The Federales had retreated. Demetrio was gathering all the horses that had been left behind, hidden in the Sierra.

All of a sudden Quail shouted from where he was marching out in front: he had just seen the missing comrades, hanging from the branches of a mesquite tree.

It was Serapio and Antonio. When they recognized them, Anastasio Montañés muttered a prayer between his teeth:

“Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name . . .”

“Amen,” the others murmured, their heads bowed, their hats off, held tightly against their chests.

Afterward, they immediately set off along Juchipila canyon, heading north, without taking any rest at all, even though it was already well past nightfall.

Quail did not leave Anastasio’s side for a single moment. The silhouettes of men hanging and swaying softly in the breeze—necks limp, arms drooping, legs rigid—would not fade from his memory.

The next day Demetrio began to complain heavily about his wound. He could no longer ride his horse. To be able to continue from there they had to improvise a stretcher out of oak branches and bundles of grass.

“You’re still bleeding, compadre Demetrio,” Anastasio Montañés said. So he tore off one of the sleeves from his shirt, ripped a long strip from it, and tied it firmly around Demetrio’s thigh, just above the bullet wound.

“Okay,” Venancio said. “That’ll stop the bleeding and ease the pain.”

Venancio was a barber, and in his town he pulled molars and applied caustics and leeches. To a certain extent, the men looked up to him because he had read *The Wandering Jew* and *The Sun of May*. He was a man of few words who was well satisfied with his own wisdom, and whom everyone called doctor.

They took turns carrying the stretcher, four at a time, through barren, rocky mesetas and along very steep slopes.

At noon, when the heat was stifling and a low-lying haze made sight uncertain, the only sounds to be heard were the measured, monotone complaints of the wounded man accompanied by the incessant singing of the cicadas.

They stopped and took their rest at every small hut they found along the way, always tucked into the craggy boulders of the Sierra.

“Thank God that there’s always a compassionate soul waitin’ with a big ol’ bowl of chilies and frijoles!” Anastasio Montañés said, burping.

And very enthusiastically shaking the calloused hands of Demetrio Macías's men, the men from the Sierra would exclaim:

"God bless you! God help you and lead you along the road! Today you're heading out. Tomorrow, we'll run too, running from the draft, chased by those damned government criminals who have declared a war to the death on all us poor people. You know that they steal our pigs, our chickens, and even the little bit of corn that we have to eat. You know that they burn our houses and take our women. And then, wherever they track you down, right there and then they finish you off as if you was a rotten dog."

As the sun set in a sudden blaze that imbued the sky with bright, vivid colors, they saw up ahead a handful of small, drab houses huddled together in a clearing between the bluish mountains. Demetrio had his men take him there.

They found a few very poor straw huts at the river's edge, surrounded by newly sprouted corn and frijole seedlings.

They set the stretcher down on the ground; Demetrio called out in a weak voice, asking for a drink of water.

Faded skirts, bony chests, and disheveled heads gathered in the dark mouths of the humble dwellings, while bright eyes and ruddy cheeks stayed congregated inside.

A chubby little boy with shiny dark skin went up to see the man on the stretcher. He was followed by an old woman, and then everyone else came out and surrounded Demetrio.

A very friendly girl brought a jícara filled with blue water. Demetrio grabbed the gourd with his trembling hands and drank avidly.

"Want any more?"

Demetrio raised his eyes: the young woman had a very ordinary face, but her voice was filled with much sweetness.

He wiped the sweat spotting his forehead with the back of his fist, turned over to one side, and uttered weakly:

"May God bless you for this!"

Then he began to shiver so strongly that the grass bed and the legs of the stretcher started to shake as well. The fever finally made him lethargic.

"It's gettin' damp out and tha's bad for the fever," said Señora Remigia, a barefoot, hunched-over old woman wearing a coarse cotton rag across her chest as a shirt. She invited the men to bring Demetrio into her hut.

Pancraccio, Anastasio Montañés, and Quail lay down at the foot of the stretcher like loyal dogs, attentive to anything their leader might need.

The others headed out in search of food.

Señora Remigia offered them what she had: chilies and tortillas.

"Just imagine! Not long ago I had eggs, chickens, there was even a baby goat that was born here. But these damned Federales cleaned me out."

Later, cupping her hands around her mouth, she whispered into Anastasio's ear:

“Just imagine! They even took Señora Nieves’s youngest daughter!”

Part I, Chapter 5

Quail opened his eyes and sat up, startled:

“Montañés, didya hear that? A gunshot! Montañés . . . wake up!”

Quail pushed Montañés hard several times, until he got him to move and stop snoring.

“Son of a ... ! You botherin’ me again? I tell ya that the dead don’t come back to haunt us . . .” Anastasio muttered, half awake.

“I heard a gunshot! Montañés!”

“Go to sleep, Quail, or you’re gonna get it . . .”

“No, Anastasio. I’m tellin’ ya this is no nightmare. I’ve stopped thinkin’ about those men that was hung. I really heard a gunshot. I heard it nice and clear.”

“So you’re sayin’ ya heard a gunshot? Let’s see, hand me my Mauser.”

Anastasio Montañés rubbed his eyes, lazily stretched out his arms and legs, and stood up.

They walked out of the hut. The sky was covered with sparkling stars, and a moon was rising like a thin scythe. The confused rustling of frightened women could be heard inside the small houses, as well as the sound of men who had been sleeping outside and were also waking now and grabbing their weapons.

“You idiot! You’ve broken my foot!”

The voice was heard clearly and distinctly nearby.

“Who goes there?”

The sound echoed from boulder to boulder, from hill crest to hill dale, until it was lost in the distance and silence of the night.

“Who goes there?” Anastasio repeated in a louder voice, cocking the bolt of his Mauser.

“I’m with Demetrio Macías!” the answer came from close by.

“It’s Pancrancio!” Quail said, relieved. Then, no longer concerned, he rested the butt of his rifle on the ground.

Pancrancio was leading a young fellow covered entirely in dirt, from his American felt hat down to his worn-out, clumsy shoes. He had a fresh stain of blood on one of the legs of his trousers, near his foot.

“Who’s this curro?” Anastasio asked.

“There I am, keeping guard, when I hears a sound in the bushes, so I shout: ‘Who goes there?’ And this guy answers: ‘Carranzo.’ So I think, ‘Carranzo, I don’t know no bird with no name like that.’ So I say, here goes your Carranzo, and I filled one of his legs with lead.”

Pancrancio smiled and looked around with his beardless face, waiting for his applause.

At that point the unknown man spoke:

“Who is the leader here?”

Anastasio raised his head proudly, facing him.

The young man lowered his voice a bit.

“Well, I too am a revolutionary. The Federales grabbed me in one of their levies, and I joined their files. But in the battle the day before yesterday I was able to desert, and I have come, on foot, looking for your group.”

“Oh, he’s a Federale!” said a number of men in response, looking at him with wonder.

“Oh, he’s one of those conservative mongrels!” Anastasio Montañés said. “Why didn’t you pump his head full of lead instead of his foot?”

“Who knows what he’s up to. Says he wants to speak to Demetrio, that he’s got God knows what to tell ’im. But before he does anythin’ like that, there’s plenty a’ time for us to be doin’ whatever we wanna with ’im,” Pancraccio said, raising his rifle and aiming it at the prisoner.

“What kind of animals are you?” the unknown man demanded.

But he was unable to say anything further because Anastasio slapped him across the face with the back of his hand, snapping the prisoner’s now-blood-drenched head backward.

“Kill the damned mongrel!”

“Hang ’im!”

“Burn the Federale alive!”

Shouting and howling and all worked up, they started to ready their rifles.

“Hush, hush. Quiet now! I think Demetrio is talking,” Anastasio said, urging them to calm down.

Demetrio did as a matter of fact want to find out what was going on, so he had the prisoner brought to him.

“It’s a disgrace, dear leader, just look. Look!” Luis Cervantes exclaimed, showing Demetrio the blood on his pants and his swollen mouth and nose.

“Enough, enough. For God’s sakes then, just tell me, who are you?” Demetrio demanded.

“My name is Luis Cervantes. I am a medical student and a journalist. I was pursued, trapped, and made a prisoner— all for having said something in favor of the revolutionaries. ”

The story that he proceeded to tell of his most recent adventure, in his bombastic style, made Pancraccio and Lard double over with laughter.

“I have sought to make myself understood, to convince your men here that I am truly a coreligionist.”

“A co-re a . . . what?” Demetrio inquired, perking up his ears.

“A coreligionist, dear leader, which is to say, that I am a believer of the same ideals and that I fight for the same cause as you and your men.”

Demetrio smiled.

“Well, tell me, then: what cause exactly are we fighting for?”

Disconcerted, Luis Cervantes did not know how to answer.

“Look at ’im, look at that expression on his face! Why make ’im jump through so many hurdles? Can’t we go ahead and shoot ’im dead now, Demetrio?” Pancracio asked anxiously.

Demetrio brought his hand up to the tuft of hair covering one of his ears and scratched for a long while as he considered the situation. Then, unable to find a satisfactory solution, he said:

“Get outta here, everyone. My wound’s startin’ to hurt again. Anastasio, blow out that flame. And lock this one up in the corral. And Pancracio and Lard, you watch over ’im. We’ll decide what to do with ’im tomorrow.”