

Rabbit, Run

Jan Stavinoha

Jan Stavinoha is the owner of the author of the following story. He was born in Prague, escaped the military and, later, the Russians, alighted briefly in London, finally finding himself and the love of his life in Amsterdam. Here he published eight novels and books of short stories in Dutch, not his own language but the one in which he became a writer. The first translation of his work into his native tongue, Czech, is to be published soon.

I too, a *canis familiaris* called Arthur by my owner, follow the developments on the Balkan peninsula, a region which is ideal for rabbit hunting in my opinion. But because I don't have a human brain, nervous system or stomach, the current international and political situation makes me so depressed and nauseous that I regularly have to throw up.

Immediately after the murder, pillaging and rape broke out in the former Yugoslavia I contacted the Dutch Animal Protection Agency because I wanted to do something about the suffering in the Balkans. Because it's been my experience that in emergencies this organization works both faster and more efficiently than the United Nations.

In a response written on recycled letter paper, the director of the Animal

Protection Agency explained that their organization only defended the interests of animals and that I, as a house-pet called Arthur, should consider myself lucky that I was not born into this century as a *homo sapiens*.

I got some medicinal drops for my depression and nausea that my owner drips into my nose twice a day. I am the kind of dog that uses the 250 million nerve cells in his olfactory organ every day, but I couldn't find anything special in those drops. Just plain alcohol, which my owner administers to himself in ever larger doses as he watches the daily news.

That my owner doesn't feel the urge to throw up from the stench spread by international politics is due in my opinion to the fact that politics as a higher form of thought is exclusively the domain of the earth's main tenants. As *homo sapiens* one must possess highly developed digestive organs to be a politician, something with which we dogs are not endowed. Dogs, however, were the first species of the animal kingdom to realize what wonderful opportunities human evolution offered. That's why we adapted ourselves to human habits and aspirations at a very early stage. And remarkably, these seem to suit us perfectly. People like to be disturbed in their sleep as little as we do. They like to eat and drink, lick and sniff their kind with pleasure and are proud of their droppings, just like us. That's why I can't understand that after all these centuries of successful co-existence human affairs make me feel so sick and despairing. And I'm not the only one who feels like puking from the reports about Bosnia-Herzegovina. Some 40,000 other dogs in Amsterdam suffer from the same trouble.

Worst of all is that none of us dogs is really interested in the puked up vomit. According to animal experts, that means a zoological-genetic disaster because our vomit always contains a large dose of information that can keep us up-to-date on recent events. Such a display of indifference towards vomit is worrying. That prevents a further advance towards what evolution still has in store for us dogs. When the *canis familiaris* no longer comprehends the state of affairs in his environment, serious misunderstandings can occur. That's why it would be sensible for the *homo politicus* to try to make the situation more viable for us and attempt to increase the chance of a vomitless society. In Europe alone, our zoological species is already represented by some 48 million individuals. And that's not even including the creatures that, according to some politicians, don't derive from pure stock.

As a hunting dog, I find the slaughter of people instead of animals, as it occurs in Bosnia-Herzegovina, completely wrong and unacceptable. I have always considered a human life a very interesting phenomenon, a fine combination of pride and self-love. A person gladly trades in today for tomorrow because he can't vomit up reality. Moreover, people are always ready to offer their zoological fellows to

juicy worms and maggots as corpses. This has to do with the fact that people are always under the impression that they have a noble mission on this planet. Namely, to announce the truth. Animals don't have that. Personally, I can appreciate the road that the stuff of humanity has travelled, from animal to *homo sapiens*, a road that was long and painful. But to my great disappointment, Bosnia-Herzegovina - and the whole world actually - is flooded with people who want to live happy and content in an extremely unrealistic way.

I, a *canis familiaris* with 250 million nerve cells in my olfactory organ, am convinced that if we really want to create a better quality of life on this planet we should populate the world with rabbits. The twentieth century *homo sapiens* doesn't appreciate the fact that a few precious, politically astute brains are working for his welfare. At some point, of course, every politician has enough of the ungratefulness of those millions of people, who are full of hatred and resentment and suffer from poverty, disease and hunger. It's only logical that such brains don't want their intelligence and knowledge to be abused.

That's why they would do better to put rabbits on this planet rather than people, especially since Bosnia-Herzegovina is so ideal for hunting parties. I know how rabbits think, and I'm certain that the rabbit is capable of understanding and even appreciating the psychological playing field of the contemporary politician. Only then will better times finally dawn on Earth.

The rabbit, known to experts as an *oryctolagus*, will only expect carrots, cauliflower, lettuce and the occasional strawberry from politicians. From the moment of birth, the animal finds itself in danger, never demands a safe fatherland and can maintain several wives without transgressing any religious or moral principles. Thanks to the mentality that the animals have developed, phenomena such as nationalism and rape will disappear from the face of the earth.

Rabbits have the advantage over humans that their bodies fit neatly into trash bags and can thus be easily removed. Dead rabbits never appear repugnant on television and never lead to charitable telethons. A rabbit cheerfully hops across burned and devastated farmlands because areas with a wide view are places where you can keep an eye on your surroundings. A rabbit never considers a second house on the *Cote d'Azur*, doesn't need a pension, doesn't want to be a famous writer, doesn't care about raw materials and subsidies and doesn't need to understand life. That's why such an animal finds it quite normal to die.

As a hunting dog, I know that kind of rodent. And I can assure you that, when a rabbit unexpectedly kicks the bucket, he sees it as proof of the usefulness of his existence. But if that happens to people they melodramatically call it murder. For a rabbit, death is just something that happens to him sooner or later. Death cuts

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life short in a natural and sensible way and keeps the animal young.

Phenomena such as ethnic difference, hate and war will disappear from the planet, taking the clouds of stench from political thought with them, only when we make rabbits the main tenants of the earth. And this turning point will found a new and enviable society.

Arthur the Beagle

Translated by James Geary