

And just like that it dawns on you, and it starts moving and gains a contour and a texture different from the immense whiteness you have been starring at. You fathom depth of the wintery world, as its first creature starts crawling and scraping to get free, maybe it is teeth grinding, maybe it's a coarse hissing you hear. The snow now starts falling around you, and a fraction of a second later you start falling too, with it. The flailing legs or tentacles of the creature are clicking away somewhere above and behind you and the whiteness has turned to a darkness, still falling, still and white.

Now this flowing, spinning and falling seems to be a stable of this world, and you find yourself looking for contrasts, and suddenly catch a glimpse of yourself, clearly standing out against the storm. *Now tell me, what do you see?*

I see fur and naked skin. It is a half naked barbarian man with a kind face surrounded by dark beard and long hair. An axe is holster on each side, though they are small axes. I also see a mountain wall.

The mountain opens as a set of jaws beneath you, widening to both sides, with a darkness licking the depths of its centre. A fur like mass of spines crawls towards the naked mountain tops. Like a flickering hit to your head you loose focus and sight of the mountains, instead the naked fury body appears to be hammering down from the white sky towards you. And you for a moment see it from a thousand angles..

It all blacks out again, and again you are falling. *But tell me, did you bring a name? A memory of any importance?*

*Yes, my name is Hic. Hic the Wanderer.*

*Hmm... Hic it is?* Then, in the midst of all that widening and jaw like darkness, a small round white spot appears. A far away white circle. A rather big circle of white and black dots. Whiteness, right below you, with slabs of grey.. a big rectangular opening in the snow covered ground below you. Smack.

**Oh my dear sir, Im so sorry. So sorry. I missed, I have utterly failed you my dear dear sir. It is my fault, my miserable fault. I simply dig the hole two feet to far to the left. The left of you that is. Thats actually the east. So, if you understand me right, you actually landed, well, you landed where you landed, hehe, that you did, yes you sure did, and with a smack. But I dig the hole a couple of feet too far to the one side, the left side... for you, but thats all that matters. Im so sorry.**

I try to keep calm and not show how confused I am but say anyway "Who are you? Am I supposed to know you?"

*Curious you are... lets see if we can change that!* Well, that is of little to no importance. Yes, I would say it is almost precisely the exact same coordinates... who I am and no importance. To you that is, naturally. But where oh where did I go wrong. This has never happened before you know. Never before have I missed anyone, not even by a fraction of a foot. The only one who wasn't caught safely was the fellow who hired me to do this job. A grim fellow, a grim fellow indeed. Now if you would excuse me.

The grey old man slowly lets the spade fall on the pile of dirt you are lying on. Reaches for his hedge shears, and drops to his knees next to your

face.

Please lye still, this will hurt like hell, but Ill be brief.  
"What are you trying to do here, I'm not...sure why not"

Afraid are you? Youre not the first to be afraid. Lots of people shit their pants or dress or what not. Well, close your eyes and I'll cut your head for you. This is all my fault, now let me do the dirty work so you can get on with it.

Just some few moments ago a strange thought came to me and I have decided to go with it. I close my eyes.

You hear the rusty blades of the hedge shears slide apart and feel the worn iron against you throat. The old mans starts working the shears, trying to cut through your skin. You feel the opening and closing the shears around you neck... feel you throat squashed and loose the ability to breathe. It cracks and burns in you neck, but he seems to be unable to cut through. You hear him swearing and puffing as he works his tool.

Oh my, close but no cigar so to speak. Let me take a little breather and gather my strength. These old hands are not what they used to be. Im so sorry, but we will fix it.

"No worries, take your time" I put my hands behind my head, waiting patiently.

Let me just sing a little while I rest that always gets my mind a little off things. The old man pulls a violin from many tools in the wheelbarrow next to the dirt pile. He starts tuning it, and soon begins singing - please find the song here (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ja9iENIjU8U&NR=1>):

Sun is red; moon is cracked  
Daddy's never coming back  
Nothing's ever yours to keep  
Close your eyes, go to sleep  
If I die before you wake  
Don't you cry, don't you weep  
Nothing's ever as it seems  
Climb the ladder to you dreams  
If I die before you wake  
Don't you cry, don't you weep  
Nothing's ever yours to keep  
Close your eyes; go to sleep

The old man is slowly waltzing around the plot you are lying on. He is utterly out of rhythm, but has the demeanour and stumbling grace of a old lady knowing that this stage appearance might be the thousands time, but that her curtain is about to fall. He wears a fine little hat and a grey suit covered in dirt. His shoes are old and worn, but shinning, as if he just cleaned and waxed them.

"It is not your song, is it not? But yet you sing it as if it is yours, yours by heart. But it will never be and that is why you will never find what it is you seek. For you don't know what it is you seek, do you?"  
Never FIND? You have no idea, no idea all together. You are the first one I ever missed. Ever! And why I don't know, not yet, still don't know, no. But don't be hasty... he whispers the last part as his flaming eyes fall back to their misty eye sockets, and his cooling gaze wanders about your face.

This is your song, this is the song I sang to your sons and daughters. If only I hadn't made that stupid mistake you would be dead and gone and done climbing ladders yes. Im am so sorry about that though, that really was my mistake.

"But was it really a mistake? Was it not just something that happened and you where the actor of that moment? Isn't it rather a mistake to see it as a mistake, could you not be wrong? I remember it well, the first time you sang because our hearts has never stopped bleeding since then.

Spoken like a lawyer and a poet in the same shoe... *trying to get out of it are we?* Well I don't know about none of that. This shouldn't happen, no. I have your stone slab too, it has a fine poem on it yes yes. *With eyes steaming with fury and white foam covering his mouth the old mans shouts into the darkness: COME OVER HERE WITH THE NEW STONESLAB YOU FUCKING ASS OF A DONKEYFUCKING WHORE. NOW WILL YOU GET ON WITH IT WILL YOU?* He straightens himself and listens. Then a voice that seems to be coming from behind him answers with a trembling female voice: *Oh yes my lord, don't be angry. Lets we go now, come on, Ill get our hands busy with it, Im so sorry.*

The old man turns away from you and starts walking. As he turns you notice a pair of trembling lips on the back of his head.

I stare at the lips in awe, being not able to say anything!

The man and the lips disappear in the mist, you can hear the quarrelling and soon hear the sound of something heavy hitting the ground... then a dragging sound and the huffing and puffing of the old man.

With my hands still behind my head I wait for something to happen. I feel I want to be the victim and observer in this moment, not the actor.

**Shraggadishraggadysrrrh... BAMsmack. The ground shivers as the monster from the sky smashes to the ground next to you. A couple of flailing insect arms are crushed as the monster hits the ground. A couple of pieces fly your direction.**

***Now tell me Mr. Wanderer. What kind of body are you bringing into this? Please fill me in here? What kind of brutality and alertness do you have at your disposal?***

From my point of view I am not bringing anything into this. It seems, however, that I cannot be entirely sure. This monster was falling behind me earlier but I don't know why and I am not sure it belongs here. I am forced to give this some thought. What are my weapons of choice? Maybe choice itself

You hear the voice of the old man yelling through the mist: *WHAT NOW??? ARE YOU TALKING TO ME DEAR SIR YOU FOOL? IM GETTING YOUR STONESLAB DAMNIT Ohh... don't you worry. The monster you cannot control, nor much else it seems. And no, I - I am not the old man. But how about you get you physical abilities together before this monster makes pudding of you?*

Well, if you ask for it I guess an answer is due.

**Faculties**

Strength 2

Agility 2

Endurance 2

Beauty 0

Instinct -2

Intuition -4

Intelligence 0

Will 0

**Senses**

Vision 0

Hearing 0

Smell -2

Taste -2

Touch 2

Clairvoyance -3

Balance 5

**Skills**

Combat 4

Exploration 0

Socialisation -2

Creation -2

Concentration 0

*And now get on with it, roll 1d10 for instinct and then for agility. You have at the moment -5 to all senses and faculties, since you are utterly confused and feel a certain soreness and stiffness in your body.*

Instinct 9, Agility 2

You notice the flying insect parts but the stiffness of your body deprives you of your usually swift reactions. *Please roll two d6 to see how much hurt we have been able to inflict on you.*

$6 + 5 = 11$

*Hehe... well that's a start. Your HP is now reduced to 109*

The monster gets on its feet in a swirling clattering of movement. He seems to be sizing you up for an attack for a moment. *Now sir, what are you going to do about this?*

I am going to wait for him to attack, standing perfectly still. When he is close to me I will dodge and crawl under him out behind him and then attempt to jump up on the vile beast and then stick my axe in his neck.

The beast grows in front of you, and through his belly pops a forest of spikes. It towers above you and now jumps at you. Legs spread out to both sides, bloody spikes aimed at you. Please roll another instinct and agility check. *Oh you are so doomed.*

Instinct 7, Agility 10

You feel your body coming back to you, feel a little warmer, a little more alert. You manage to roll under the beast that is now spiked to the pile of dirt you had been decorating till now. You try to turn and get up and jump and raise you axes in one motion. Please roll 5d10

I rolled 20

*Oh my dear, 20 all in all... The animal tears the dirt pile apart as it rolls onto its back and receives you with its spiked stomach. Please roll d6es until you reach at least 40. How many times did you roll?*

10 times

*Now, you do feel the bony spikes scratching against your skin. But before we pierce you, tell me something. Tell me 10 things you did before you died.*

I didn't really do anything, things just seem to happen and it doesn't seem to matter if you "do" them or not.

*Oh well then, if you have no currency of the dead, then, as a poor man, you must row on the river of the world...*

The spikes smash through your skin, and you feel your warm blood flowing from your stomach. The beast shrieks and starts throwing itself from side to side. You now have 69 HP left.

*Well, I hope you like full stops sir, since I think I see one coming.*

I am disgusted by my own blood. I think I am dying and I don't like it but what can I do if things just happen anyway?

Flickering and scratches appear in your visual field. And again the perspective seems to change to an insect-like thousands. From thousands of angles you see the old man letting a big tombstone fall in the grass next to the flailing insect. It has a poem inscribed on it:

In my dark intervals  
When in me no one is there  
And all is mists and walls  
That life offers anywhere,

If, quickly raising my eyes  
From where in me I lie low,  
I see the far horizon  
With sunset and sunrise flowing

The old man is bending over the stone. He seems to be reading. You hear a cracking, like that of bones or old skulls laughing. The old man turns to you and the insect pulls something else from the wheelbarrow. Again you seem to be back in the body hurling from side to side. *Now, please roll 1d6.*

I rolled 5

As you shake from side to side you catch a glimpse of your belly and the blood flowing from it. Your HP is now down to 64.

What is happening here? I am dying and you are preparing my grave. Is this the way it was supposed to be? I can't take seeing my own blood leaving my body much longer and I can't move, the bleeding gets worse then.

*Well sir, you are supposed to be dead, and it seems we have found a way we both agree upon. So it shouldn't take much longer.*

Oh well oh well... let me tell you a story while this clamorous harbinger of blood and death tears you apart. I must admit, it is nice to have a visitor once in a while.

The old man settles himself on your tombstone and seems to be thinking.

I am listening

I sleep. At waking - if I dreamed, I do not  
Know what my dream had in it.  
I sleep - if without dreaming, I wake up

*Hrmm... sorry to interrupt, but we gotta keep the blood flowing sir, as you  
now, all the small brooks makes quite the river, and this is how we keep  
that big river flowing. Please roll 2d6*

Yes, the Blood...I am starting to feel one with it.  
6 + 1 = 7

In front of a space, open,  
Unfamiliar since what I woke to meet  
Is what I don't know yet.  
Best is to neither dream nor not dream and  
Unwake without end.

*Well, Hic, the force is strong within you, and your brook is making one  
last swing of it. You HP is dwindling, it is 57 by now.*

Well, sir and friend, what do you think of it? I sleep. At waking - if I  
dreamed, I do not know what my dream had in it. Oh I love this metaphor of  
rooms disconnected. Imagine your teeth were yellow doors, and you could bit  
your way through... Ill plant nice flowers on your grave for you, and there  
will be a game of dice waiting for you in the dark.

As the old man keeps mumbling, the insect of eternal bestiality flips the  
two of you into the air and spins around. You both land with a wet and loud  
smack, and again you feel that flickering and loss of consciousness.

Oh well, you will soon be awake without end, dreaming yet not dreaming.  
Seeing without a center to see from, and everything you can think of will  
be true... before the ocean was blue.

The old mans has picked the fiddle up again:  
you were lost in a flood run red with your blood's Nigerian skeleton crew  
everything you can think of is true  
the dish ran away with the spoon  
dig deep in your heart for that little red glow  
we're decomposing as we go

***Now, welcome to the end of your story. The last blood is cleaning away the  
single digits of your HP. And you are no longer able to flicker back to the  
centered visual perspective.***

As you die the insect withers and shrinks to a tiny beetle, then climbs  
into the shiny shoe of the gravedigger. He puts the fiddle back in the  
wheelbarrow and rolls your battered corpse into the grave he had prepared  
for you.

As the dirt starts falling on the body in the grave, a tiny, fragile voice  
appears:

Hell above and heaven below  
All the trees are gone  
The rain has a such a lovely sound  
To those who're six feet underground  
The leaves will bury every year  
And no one knows I'm gone  
Leave me golden tell me dark  
Hide from Graveyard John  
The moon is full here every night  
And I can bathe here in his light  
The leaves will bury every year  
And no one knows I'm gone

*Now, Hic. Wander no further. Welcome to the epilogue of your story.*

Thank you. Now let me pose you the last unanswered question that the end of my life allows. Was the song ever yours or was it only yours to sing?

*Oh I don't sing songs, I just devour them. But this voice you hear, it is yours. Though the lips are forever stuck on John's greasy neck.*

And, when he shall die, Take him and cut him out in little stars, And he will make the face of Heaven so fine That all the world will be in love with night And pay no worship to the garish sun.

*THE END*