~~Wind~~

~~Weary~~

Worn

~~Wary~~

~~Whittle~~

General Plot idea: When people grow old and are approaching death, a clone is made. Then, the old self gives directions to the new one, guiding the young with improvements. How better to learn from mistakes than to never make them in the first place?

William ventures through a dust storm to find Bill. Bill sits on a chair at a wood cabin.

Bill instructs William to shoot him. He can’t bring himself to do it. But won’t trust anyone else.

William has dilemma because he doesn’t think anyone can survive without the “Seer” to guide them.

Bill also has gun, but it’s empty, just a threat against William. Agrees that others will chase William, but at least he’ll make his own decision.

William pulls trigger. Unknown if Bill dies.

The thought of answers and the lack of direction kept Sonny walking. The ground was tough, cracked, old, and it had been many hours since he’d seen signs of life. He felt alone after his mind went quiet, unsure if his path was known and right. A river of sand was carried in the wind, eroding his skin and confidence, but nonetheless carrying him deeper into the unknown. He wondered how the sand got here. He wondered if it knew where to go.

For miles, he walked with the sun and the sand and his voiceless head. He regretted putting this request last, since there was nothing to look forward to after. But he had avoided this, fearing what this meant, and now he paid the price. His Seer had said he would.

The supplies had been gathered. Goodbyes had been said. Then he’d been left with a name, coordinates, and the command to walk. No notes about what he’d find other than that he’d find out. And that there was no time to fuck around.

So Sonny left the safe world he knew to become lost in the sands.

And it was with sand in his hair and a deadly determination that Sonny came upon the shack.

It was sturdy but small. It was hard to determine whether it was meant to serve one man or generations, although it could likely do both. Sonny thought it would’ve been difficult to build a wooden hut out here in the sands. Looking closer, he realized it wasn’t wood: it was glass. A building made entirely of glass, stained the color of oak. The building had no cracks, not even a nick on its perfectly smooth surface. It was perfection in glass. He wondered how a structure like this could come to be, complete with wood/glass doors, framing, and a wide porch.

Comparatively, the man sitting on the porch was tough, cracked, and old. He matched the dessert, but looked like the wood that the glass building was imitating, a whittled man. To Sonny, the man was a relic of bygone times, like he was a cowboy dragged through time, complete with tasseled boots and a wide hat atop sandy hair.

And, strapped around his waist, was an original Smith & Wesson pistol.

The man looked with weary eyes through the boy that had appeared from the sands that looked like ash. He rasped, “Howdy, Sonny. The sands are strong today.”

Sonny glared at the man. He didn’t know this man, nor these coarse sands, nor this glass house. Warily, he walked up the pristine steps of the porch. He dropped the bag he had been hauling at his feet. It made a resonant sound against the glass floor. They looked at each other as the note drifted off, lost to the wind. They watched it go.

The man was silent, either unwilling or too tired to speak. Sonny recalled his final task. “Are you Jack?”

The man stared a bit longer, his gaze shifting between recollection and curiosity. The lines of his face rearranged into a familiarly slight smile. “You’ve got your man. How can I be of service?”

“And you live in this house?”

“I consider it a vase, but yes.”

“I was told to find you.”

“Did you want to?”

“No.”

“But you did.”

“My Seer told me to.”

A glint shimmered through Jack’s gaze, apprehensive and hopeful. “Why don’t you sit down for a rest, Sonny? You’ve come a long way.” Jack waved a hand and glass from the porch lifted to form an uncomfortably hard chair. “Beer?” He reached into the floor to pull out two ice-cold bottles.

“I’m not old enough.”

“Trust me, I’ve lived enough to know when someone needs a drink.”

Sonny hated to refuse a host’s offer. Jack knew he would. Sonny dragged his heavy bag to the chair and sat, taking the offered drink from Jack’s outstretched hands. They both drank for a while.

Jack addressed the sun ahead of them, so he didn’t have to look at the boy; “You hate the silence.”

“What makes you say that?”

“I hated the silence too. More than the constant noise in my head.”

Sonny drank for a bit before responding to that. He realized he missed the voice in his head, seeking solace in Jack’s rasp instead. “They gave me direction. Made it simple.”

“I suppose.” Jack’s hand passed over his hat rim, dusting off the sand. “Sometimes, I wish they still talked to me too. It’s been years since I had purpose.”

Sonny stared at the old man sitting next to him, wondering. Then he asked, “What was your purpose?”

Jack sighed and sat back in his chair. “I guess there’s no use beating around the bush with you, is there?” Then he found Sonny’s eyes, and said “I’m the antagonist. I’ve done a lot of things for what I believed in, and I’m proud of that. My Seer told me how to. But there’s always gotta be a right and a wrong, Sonny. They decided we were wrong. It’s always been this way, and it’s planned to always be this way.”

Sonny looked at the old man, understanding some things and becoming more lost on others. He tried not to feel awkward or on edge. “But isn’t the plan supposed to change?”

“Incrementally. Once you’ve been down that dirt road a few times, it’s hard to take any other path.”

“And how many times have you been down the road?”

“I’m the 43rd copy.”

“Oh.” The sun lowered over the horizon. “They’ve repeated this a lot then.”

“Yep. Every time, they get closer to their ideal

“So then why are you here?”

“You mean spatially? Or spiritually?”

“Both.”

“Spatially, because my Seer left me this place after I got out of jail. It belonged to his Seer, and his Seer before, back to the beginning. Only we know where it is.”

“What does that make me?”

Jack’s eyes twinkled. “The new owner.”

Sonny suddenly realized where he’d heard Jack’s voice before. It sounded different not in his head all the time. At the same time, he wondered if the other 42 versions were buried out there in the sand. He noticed there were no gravestones. “And spiritually?”

Sun, shattering. Sonny, broken.

“I’m you.”

“I know.”

“Jackson! Pull the fucking trigger!”

unspoken questions

He took Sonny’s head in both of his hands.

“You’ve condemned me to be the villain you always were.”

“No. Worse. I’ve given you free will.

With his good intentions, Sonny wondered if he’d taken his truck down the road to hell. But he hoped that his bloody feet atoned for his misgivings.