

Guy Walks Into A Bar

By

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INT. TAVERN - DAY

Unusual silence fills a barren tavern. No bartender. No jukebox. No clanking glasses.

Sunken into a dark booth in the farthest corner a lone, ANCIENT TRUCKER, age incalculable, gazes at his table. Name patch on his work shirt says: "WHITEY" -- faded carving into the side of the booth says the same.

Longing for a SINGLE FRENCH FRY in the middle of an empty plate stained with faint, ketchup skid marks...

His bony fingers cling to a clear, EMPTY KETCHUP BOTTLE.

Poking his head out from the booth he considers the infinite path to the distant, UNMANNED BAR and its condiments cache...

Then considers his road-worn WALKER folded up beside him...Sorry, this load's staying at the dock.

He now considers something deeper than what's on his plate.

CRRRREEEK. A door's rusty swing cracks the vacuum from the opposite end of the tavern, letting a slice of light in as well as...

A pair of BLACK BOOTS slow-march in, filled by a BIKER, 35, with a rugged build but slick polish -- blacked out save for a yellow smiley face button with "X"s for eyes.

**NOTE:** *Or, to be more obvious, a scythe stencil on the back of his leather jacket.*

He marches just a few steps deep, then halts.

SLICK

Saw an old classic parked outside.  
White paint job, white rims.  
Figured it was you.

The distant Whitey is still consumed by the last of what he once consumed, hopelessly docked, no time to talk shop.

Boots, cadence resumed, march just a few steps deeper -- but in the vastness he's not really any closer to Whitey.

SLICK

Feels like forever. Thought you  
might want to --

Slick reaches into a booth JUST ARM'S LENGTH AWAY.

(CONTINUED)

SLICK  
Catch up?

His black-gloved hand rests upon the shoulder of someone unnoticed until now: A REFINED, ELDER GENTLEMAN, wearing a white suit, reading a book alone in the booth.

MR. PEARL  
(consumed by book)  
Are you sure you are not here on  
business?

Like a sourceless echo from across a canyon, Whitey hacks up a dusty cough -- a centuries old squeezebox wheezes.

SLICK  
We can make it about business.

Mr. Pearl wipes his shoulder of Slick's black touch.

SLICK  
Lots changed since the last time  
you heard my offer.

Slick stands respectfully, waiting for an invitation to sit...

None to be found as Mr. Pearl continues reading...

So Slick commandeers the opposite side of the booth.

MR. PEARL  
And much has remained the same.

Mr. Pearl's book finally shuts, revealing an INFINITE LOOP branded on the cover. No text. Just a mobius figure eight.

SLICK  
See, that's my point. Aren't you  
painfully bored with all of  
(gestures around the room) this,  
yet?

MR. PEARL  
Your pitch, somehow, is even more  
depressing now. Lifetimes of taking  
has made you poor at asking.

SLICK  
Most of your pals didn't need a  
pitch.

Mr. Pearl's sheen wrinkles a little at this.

SLICK

Believe it. They asked me.  
Something about candles burning  
out.

MR. PEARL

The rest of The Endless, like me,  
cannot simply opt out. Exit clause  
only allows for termination via  
(nods to Slick) The Black Hand. Now  
I am the last of the ones you are  
unable to just put on your list and  
take.

SLICK

Opt out. Exit. That's what I'm  
talking about. You make it sound  
like a bad contract. Just like they  
did.

This seems profound to Mr. Pearl. Slick exploits it.

SLICK

See, I figure they saw the long  
road behind them, the long road  
ahead of them, and finally made  
sense of it. Saw the whole trip for  
what it really was and would ever  
be for guys like you: A loop. A  
curse. Bad contract.

MR. PEARL

The candle analogy would have made  
a better pitch.

SLICK

(plowing through)

And see, once you know that, once  
you see the loop all around you,  
time slows down...

MR. PEARL

I am not interested.

SLICK

(cont'd)

Each pass around the loop seems a  
little slower, until it takes ages  
just to --

MR. PEARL

Can you hurry this up?

(CONTINUED)

SLICK

I can end it right now.

Whitey wheezes from the distance -- follows with a rust-shaking cough.

Slick's offer hangs in the air, then...

A text alert sounds off in Slick's pocket.

He tears himself away to check his cellphone screen: "JAMES WHITEY WHITMORE. NOW. 3,565,899 MORE TO GO TODAY. GET GOING."

Interrupted, Slick considers his options. Realizes he has none.

MR. PEARL

No, you cannot.

Slick knows he better get back to business.

Mr.Pearl re-opens the ageless book, attention re-focused.

MR. PEARL

No exit clause in your loop.