

ONE BLEAK NIGHT

A short English tale

It was a sundrily bleak night one summertide eve, when I felt both alone and empty inside after my day of work, one where even my home didn't seem so homely at all, almost like something was watching me. I could still see the tiny, wan orange hue way off yonder toward the skyline, but it was waning quick. It was eight-nought-seven at the time, and I was ready to go off to bed. I was tired beyond belief.

So I set off all the lights in the house and got into the streen. I reckon right after I shut my eyes I fell fast asleep.

Sadly I woke up a few times in the middle of the night (I was a mite watchful given my fear of lurkers being afoot, which hapfully I didn't oft undergo), but after a while – this was about two in the morn – I got back in bed and began to feel a bit more snug. I must have dozed off again rather fast.

Now this is where things grew swithly frightening.

I had felt myself to be asleep for what I could say was a stound, and in between dreams I happened to be awake, and I could tell that the light wasn't off at all like when I first got in bed; in sooth, the light was very bright, stirringly so, and so I opened my eyes.

I beheld, wholly aghast, that I was no longer in the same room!

There was a bright, white light roughly ten feet up, the room was much smaller, the walls were now made of worn, white-meted stone, and the floor was right about what you'd see in a quartern. The bed, though, was the same and was in the room's hirn.

There was a shut, white door in the middle of the wall furthest from the bed. Even the doorknob was meted white.

In my utter dread, I durst not make a swey, lest some fiend hear from afar and come after me. Truly, I was still as could be, barely twitching a thew. After a bit, I twinged myself with my fingers to see if mayhap I was only in a dream; it readily seemed like one...

But no, this was soothfast alright.

After a handwhile of standing frozen steady (in my underwear), I chose to slowly walk, to tiptoe about the room. I couldn't hold fast forever. I felt the walls, going over each of them inchmeal, thinking I might find a hollow spot, but I found none. They all were all so hard.

A long, wearisome tide had gone by, and I beknew I had to fand opening the door sometime or other.

I slowly walked toward it and set my hand on the knob. It wasn't locked, so I slowly and softly began opening it. As the door opened, I readily feared getting a great beating over leaving the room. But no-one else was about.

Beyond the door was a dark, dimly lit hallway that was also stonen, walls unmeted, dirty and dark-brownish-grey. The hall kept going both right and left from the room, with flickering bloakerns strewn about the walls. I could barely see to the end either way.

I now had a strong will to get out of the dreadful building, but I knew not which way to go even from here. Hopefully both would lead to the same end, but there was no way to be sicker of that. Neither way looked better than the other; they were both nigh the same as far as sight could tell.

I thought about it for a long while till I made up my mind on going right, not that there was any skill to it, but only owing to it being my main hand. And eke I was now starting to feel a bit cold. But I kept onward.

I reckoned the length of the hall from the room I started in to each end to be mayhaps a hundred feet, though methinks the end to the left was a wee bit longer. Altogether about two hundred feet was the hall.

As I neighledged the door I was set much afright of what could lie on the other side. But when I fanded opening it, I beknew the door was locked. So I went to fand the left door this time.

Two hundred feet of careful, wearied walking later, I found out that one was locked too. "Fuck!" I yelled pretty loud, no longer fearing to make a din.

I went back to the room I started in. Then I started to wonder if this was in sooth a dream after all... But nay, it felt soothy, and I could feel my body well enough to know I was wide awake.

Even though I was so tired and had gotten only about three stounds of rest, I was steadfast to get free of that quartern in which I'd so unrightly found myself. So I sought some more about the room for something of worth. I knew a key would be no such thing, since I mimmered seeing no keyhole on either of the doors. I'd have to use sheer strength to break through them.

So I went back to the rightmost door and felt it to see how hollow it was. So hapfully, it was one of those doors made of two thin wooden sheets with nothing in between. I reckoned I could smash through it with my body. And eke hapfully I'm a rather heavy man, right under two hundred pounds.

On the fourth fand, the door burst, leading way to a broader, better-lit room almost akin to the one I awoke in, but mayhap bigger fifteenfold and made of a smooth grout so I thought, not hard stone, meted with a rougher white. The floor was the same as in mine. But here there was no bed, just emptiness.

So then I went and broke the left door, only to find nigh the same thing: another room, this one even more like my own, of about the same muchness as well.

I thoroughly ripped each of the walls, only to find more hard stone. Then I went back to the right room. Mind that her walls were made of grit, not sheer stone.

I ripped each wall there inchmeal as well, but it was all hopeless; nothing of any worth could I find.

I then went back to the room where my bed was and sat on it out of tiredness, and I started to swithly wonder how I could have ended up here. It goes without saying that someone must have taken me here. But my soken was twofold: *who* took me here (and, while on that thought, was it one or more than one man, for I reckon it'd be the latter); and through what infare was I

brought herein? For there was no way I could tell through which anyone could come or leave this quarterly dead end of a stead. Maybe it was through the roof?

I got up and started throughseeking the whole length and breadth of the roof (in all three rooms as well as the hallway), seeking for a break in the stone that would betoken a hidden opening, one through which I could have been lowered into here. But there was no such spot in sight.

Maybe, I thought, it only wasn't seenly but still there. But it was hard to get myself to believe that. And besides, I was getting so tired I could hardly think. So in such weakness, I chose to lay back down and fand to go to sleep again. Maybe I'd think of something new once I awoke; maybe someone would come in to feed me and I'd find out where the infare was.

I quickly drowsed off...

I mimmer I had some kind of dreams, but what happened in them I've all but forgotten. Howbeit, shortly thereafter I awoke again, what couldn't have been three stounds.

But when I opened my eyes... I couldn't believe what I saw: I was back in my house!

I leaped out of bed and got on my clothes (which I now had togang to), more lissed than I'd ever been in my whole life, and so happy I clapped my hands together and yelled out. I ran about the softly dawn-lit house to asoothe it was no lie, and then outside to see the sheen, awesome skies above me and the eastward glow of yellow and golden orange.

As I stood on the grass, hands heavenward, basking in the cool, earthy morrowtide air, I nigh forgot altogether about what dread I was in but a few wakeful handwhiles ago.

I yencame back into the house and sat down to think for a bit. Then I minded it again.

"Ah yes, I was in that weird quarterly spot right afore I fell asleep last time... And now.. I'm back here again.. What happened?..."

I wondered what would befall me when next I would slumber. Would I go back there?..

"Ah, it wouldn't matter; I could only sleep again and I reckon I'd be right back here.."

I was so tired, and no longer worried, that I went back to bed.

When next I awoke, or in sooth ever thereafter, I found myself in the very same spot as I lied down; never again did I end up in that dreadful quarterly.

It's been a yearten since, and I still think that might have been a dream after all. Only a swithly lively one. And one where I was strongly witted it wasn't.

I fand not to think too much about it, to forget about it. But I know I never will.

Now I'm wedded, and so I don't have as much a fear of going to bed alone anymore.

By the way, one more little thing: when I went to sleep that one awful night, I swear I locked the front door; I soothly mimmer doing it. But later when I woke up from that “dream” (whatever it was) and ran outside, I didn’t have to unlock it; it already was.

So maybe, as oft happens, I’m only mimmering it all wrong and I truly didn’t lock the door, or maybe it truly was locked when I got up and I was too lissed to mimmer unlocking it afore going outside. But maybe my mind isn’t playing any games after all.