Willie's Dream

You've been surviving on this endless patch of sand for about 3 weeks now. Both of you haven't spent this long on shore in.. well as long as you can remember. The stability in land baffling to a sea-goer. As a gust of wind comes by, you stand ready to steady yourself, but there are no waves here to throw your balance, in turn making you *unbalanced* on the earth.

You sometimes venture into the jungle to scavenge for food. In this foreign terrain it's difficult to provide. But you make do. But Mad Dog won't take his eyes off the horizon. Praying for a ship to find you both. You were saddened when you caught him hiding any pirate-identifiable paraphernalia, in hopes that a passing ship wouldn't immediately turn on you both and leave you for dead.

The boredom alone is unimaginable, but the hypnotizing waves of the sea surpass that feeling.

One of the final days, you are cutting your way through the vines and find a path leading to a small lagoon. The foliage above nearly blocking out the sun. It almost feels like you're back below deck. There's an apple tree? And a pear tree and "Mad Dog! There's-" you start to call out to him. But then you remember.. Mad Dog is gone. You fall to your knees in front of this dark water and stare in. You see.. Mad Dog's face looking back to you? He nods a somber smile. You nod back and take out your gun… and shoot the water where his visage ripples away. You shake your head of the memory. This is a dream.

You stare at your gun. Your last shot was used on Mad Dog. It was a mercy. Now you will live out your days here. Alone. Will you starve? Will a beast come out of the jungle to gnash and tear what's left of your soul away? Or might it be the beast of the deep seeking its revenge? That vine there is looking pretty strong.

"It's not too late." You turn to Mad Dog. His hair is damp and he sits on a rock next to you. It feels like you've been having a conversation with him for

hours… Could he feel your sorrow even in death? “Please, don’t let the guilt get to you me boy. Yer gonna need to find someone who’s even worse off than us. She needs ye.” He ruffles your hair and a stream of water falls out of his sleeve onto your shoulder.

“Well, I should go back to the bed that claims me. It’s callin’ me back with its lullaby now,” he turns away towards the shoreline and walks off.
You hang your head into the water. It’s so dark.. you can’t even see a reflection. Then you realize, it’s not that you can’t see a reflection.. There lay a dark mist rising above the water? No that’s not mist, it’s a hand-

It grabs you by the neck and pulls your face into the lagoon. It’s strength undeniable. This is it. The water… it’s time to collect. And it’s unrelenting.

You open your eyes to meet your maker. But instead.. it’a not a fearsome creature.. nor a manifestation of the sea.. it’s just a symbol? Not an image? You can barely see the blues and blacks to make out a shape. But you understand the significance.
This might be the key.
“Find me.”

A pair of hands press down on your chest. You choke out some water and breathe the fresh air.

You look up to the sky. It's light out?

Huh. You're on the beach again. An unfamiliar face leans over you.

A man with tanned skin and long black hair, a small braid dangling, stares down. He looks over to someone and calls out with an accent you can't quite put your finger on, "He's alright. Let's get him on the ship."

The ship? This is a dream still right?

"I need to.. I need to go back- Mad Dog.." You slur.

"How did he drown in 5 centimeters of water?" Another voice chimes in.

You turn your head, still laying on your back, and see that you must have fallen asleep right in the tides way. But you would have never done that.. this is STILL a dream. Right? You.. you just *killed* Mad Dog yesterday! No.. no no no… You can't be rescued *today.* That would me… NO. It HAD to be a dream.

Unless.. is this death? Is this the hell that Mad Dog spoke of?

Yes.. of *course*. The guilt.. the pain in your throat and aching in your chest.. yes. Of course. You begin to laugh at this strange world you find yourself in. Slapping the water that you finally completed your tithe to.

You cackle at this new eternity set before you.

This wasn't HOPE set before you in your rescue: this was your *sentence.*

Maybe that man did just save your life. But this was that God's way of punishing you. Is that woman.. is she your ticket out of this? To redeem your everlasting soul.

Because *this*…. This was your own living hell. The debt comes due. And now you must pay for your sins.

You look to the sky, then to the sea.

And now you have two keepers.