

# Wish You Were Here

[Pink Floyd](#)

## My interpretation of the lyrics

So, so you think you can tell  
Heaven from hell? - *links to religion & right vs. wrong*  
Blue skies from pain?

Challenging someone who thinks they know everything – direct mode of address – pain vs. peace heaven vs. hell good vs. evil

Can you tell a green field  
From a cold steel rail?  
A smile from a veil?  
Do you think you can tell?

These questions suggest that someone has difficulty distinguishing obvious differences – this suggests a feeling of absence from reality/ lack of clarity & sense of direction?

Did they get you to trade  
Your heroes for ghosts?  
Hot ashes for trees?  
Hot air for a cool breeze?  
Cold comfort for change?  
Did you exchange  
A walk-on part in the war  
For a leading role in a cage?

Sacrificing certain things to gain alternatives that are suggested to be better – giving up an important role for a life that makes you feel trapped & serves no real purpose

How I wish, how I wish you were here – *missing someone*

We're just two lost souls – *confusion, loss of direction & purpose*

Swimming in a fish bowl – *suggests feeling of entrapment whilst the outside world simply spectates*

Year after year – *suggesting repetition of the same thing*

Running over the same old ground – *repeating the same routine*

What have we found?

The same old fears – *not getting anywhere – no further forward – stagnant life – despite what we have done we are still stuck with the same fears of life*

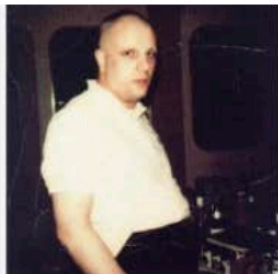
Wish you were here – *crying out for a loved on to return to them*

## Band's intended meaning behind the lyrics

**Syd Barret was the original songwriter and singer who created the psychedelic rock of Pink Floyd only to leave the band in 1968 with mental problems – he was replaced by David Gilmour – an old school friend**

So, so you think you can tell  
Heaven from Hell,  
Blue sky's from pain.

Waters and Gilmour are trying to make Syd understand that what he's doing is wrong. When one is addicted to something they think they know better than everyone else and they want him to think twice about his life. The authors collaborated to give a whole set of choices to their audience, challenging them to push themselves to go beyond their comfort zones, saying that what may look like Hell now could turn out to be heaven.



Syd Barret photo

Can you tell a green field  
From a cold steel rail?

This is a reference to Syd Barrett's solo song, "If It's In You", from [The Madcap Laughs](#) album ("Hold you tighter so close/Yes you are/Please hold on to the steel rail").

A smile from a veil?

Do you think you can tell?

It's like asking again : are you sure you want to be doing this? Maybe it's a final chance.

And did they get you to trade

Your heroes for ghosts?

"They" in this case refers to Syd's inner voices that keep him straying... so, everything he believed earlier doesn't stand anymore? (Syd's beliefs that is). The heroes here can be all the great musicians and poets that make the inspiration for his art, and the ghosts are all the hallucinations that make his life an empty place.

Hot ashes for trees?

Hot air for a cool breeze?

Cold comfort for change?

Past good experiences and times can be changed for some new greater ones. However, the author says here that these will not be the same. What's gone is gone. And that change is not necessarily better than what he's used to.

And did you exchange  
A walk on part in the war  
For a lead role in a cage?

Syd have chosen to forgot his chance to be a small part of something hugely important, instead selfishly insisting on being the main event (by using drugs, not cooperating etc). He missed an opportunity to do anything great because what he's doing and will do alone is severely bounded and will be soon forgotten. Asking to Syd if it's too late to turn back, and if the drugs have completely taken over his life.

How I wish, how I wish you were here.  
We're just two lost souls  
Swimming in a fish bowl,  
Year after year,

This song, along [Video of the "Shine On You Crazy Diamond"](#) highlight the child-heroes they had been and how Syd couldn't handle it. Now they were famous and they were looking back, wishing that the one who had gotten them off-the-ground was there to share it with them. Living the same life, making the same mistakes, just going around in circles aimlessly "year after year".

Running over the same old ground.  
And how we found  
The same old fears.

When you don't broaden your horizons and stick to your own comfort zone and to the same old feelings of fear, then you'll make the same mistakes over and over.

Wish you were here.

All those years of experience and nothing is gained, back to square one... he wishes Syd was there with him to share that moment. And that happen. Because Syd visit the [Abbey Road Studios](#) while the Pink Floyd records **Shine on you crazy diamond**. Nobody recognize him at first. He was already a ghost.