

There was a pause, of course. Then her voice returned. "Just come up and show me what you mean."

I pressed the button. "See, this is the other thing. I mean I understand that you probably would like some human contact, lady, but you should be able to understand what I mean without me needing to walk you through it in person."

"Fine," she said. "I'm not bored. I was just teasing. I'm very occupied." She paused. "I'm thinking a thousand interesting facts and things. Come up, come up, hurry. I want to show you."

I pressed the button. "I have places to be, lady."

"Oh, really?" she said. "Who are you? Another conservation scientist out making the rounds, taking advantage of poor, defenseless housewives?"

I pressed the button. "No!"

"Are you Johnny Appleseed?" she asked, her voice echoing over the field. "Out sprinkling your seeds?" The house shook with hysterical laughter. "Oh, Johnny, Johnny, Johnny!"

I looked back at the shed.

I pressed the button. "Hun, I need to head across the strait here. I'm going to take the door with me, but I'll be back someday."

"What door?" she answered. "You can't take anything!"

I pressed the button. "The door on the shed, miss."

I pointed to the shed door and then I walked out on the lawn while I held the arm out. I saw a shadow run to the window, the outline of an unkempt triangle of curly hair. The

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