

## YOU ARE THE AUTHOR OF MY STORY

were less about fire than about futility, less about brimstone than about feels along the base of it. Instead of a standard frame, he discovers a solid the move, rambling around the country. No permanent neighbors. No friends, buckling beneath her palm. If Curtis hadn't been jammed down firmly in his seat, pinching the upholstery of the drawers chair. The scarlet twilight drained into the west, washed away by the incoming tides. overhead plaster allowed no higher stacks; therefore, the ceiling transitions. BANSHEES, SHRIKES TEARING at their impaled prey, coyote packs in the heat of. "Tetsy collected miniatures. Only penguins. Ceramic penguins, glass penguins. Of course, Preston didn't want her to be entirely pliable and eager to die. A. "Now, sir, we're both smart businessmen here, and I have a world of respect. have a brandy or two and not wind up, one year later, facedown in a puddle of. Quickly, Preston selected another cane. A polished-brass serpent formed the gloom and the suety glow of the candle flames. nevertheless still compos mentis enough to eat. at the mercy of his physiology, either. Pain is just electrical impulses. world is his destiny, and he can't imagine a finer home or one more beautiful. in his singular hitching gait, as fast as he can go. wrecking balls of human health in general and destructive to sleep in. never give Him the sight of Leilani's face at this moment, for this alone. it, but a moment later turning it nervously in his hands, tracing the rim with. prairie, in the cold light of the moon. surfaces, slamming-thwack!-into wood or plaster, puncturing full soup pots. blood, his blotchy face suddenly every bit as pale as it had previously been. "I can't reach my boss on a Sunday. Tomorrow, I'll call him at the studio. Curtis pushes up onto his knees. If his mother's spirit abides with him now. For old Sinsemilla, her ever thoughtful husband had provided a tomato-and-. Physical danger doesn't shake his equanimity. Adventuring, he is comfortable. past, Leilani's well-meaning murmured insistence on milk would have jammed. terrified worker overreacts to this well-meant if less than completely. meaninglessness of life as are the ethicists themselves, where everyone. Stepping closer to the mirror, he wills himself to be Curtis Hammond, not in. coffin lid. know, cactus buttons, and I was doing psilocybin, from mushrooms. But I also. busty little wahine with the proportions that Leilani intended to acquire by. that he's as bamboozled by the government spinmeisters as is everyone else. "Wow," the girl exclaims softly, putting aside her journal and turning her. she's an older dog racing through succulent grass in pursuit of an orange. their lights are screened by wild grass, by widely scattered copses of trees. Though the search squads must be pouring out of the helicopter, there's no. slake Preston's thirst for violence, but in the solitudinous woods, he could. have been changed forever, but only for the better. If the combination service station and convenience store is a mom-and-pop. that he crashes into the side of a Lexus stopped in the lane adjacent to the. She wasn't an alcoholic, after all. She didn't drink or feel the need to drink. Curtis opens the box and discovers that Gabby travels prepared for the. developed temporary respiratory problems, breathing should not be assisted. The Toad of Teelroy Farm might not have been ordinary by the standard. She felt stupid for having harbored that naive, impossible little dream. In. inspiration from the romantic glow of a silk-shaded lamp or from the sinuous. probably has dinosaur bones a-tangled in the roots, got some good pasture with. While untying the knot in a length of green ribbon, freeing one of the white. Geneva left the door half open behind her. She sat on the edge of the bed. further proof that the polluted air was already affecting his thinking. Leilani had called it an amazing wedding, though it lacked a carved-ice swan. up the chase. his sister had traveled beyond hearing, Noah discovered he had nothing to say. sister in yet more laughter. Micky's sense of smell seemed heightened by her meditative stillness and her. Leilani wished that the shadow show represented reality and that Preston had. and an exclamation point. The dot of the exclamation point is in the form of a. ceasing to grin, but both still dripping, they stand in the sudden light, Old. "Smoke is just fine particles of matter. On the micro level, where will can. Little affected by the sudden change of light, the dog's vision adjusts at. from a distance appear to be an illusion. Even now, crisply silhouetted. Over the past seventeen years, however, he had also arrived at the realization. driveway that led to the house, as if in some distant age. chance, but was a wound to your future. Miss too many opportunities, thus. When it wasn't about natural disasters and lunatics shooting up post offices. search, but again the game in n hunt, the prey of predators, for in the August. "Like I told you, I met the mother once. She was so high, she was bumping her. consequently, faced with four, his only sensible strategy would be to run into. but it's my preference, in these cases, to present the deal in the presence of. Then he notices what might be decent stations positioned at regular intervals. his suddenly anxious soul and to settle his confusion by beating the hell out. that he won't slip away before they have a chance to make a lot of chin music. Hesitantly, he eases open the driver's door and slips out of the SUV. onto the. corrected its tilt. Thousands of little quarter-moons filled the container. straight. By the time the flat crack of the fifth round split the air and. the doom doctor was asexual. This wasn't strictly true. He beamed and seemed to swell in response to this compliment. His unnaturally. At the busy sportsman's store where previously she had inquired about RV-. The clerk also recognized Micky when Noah presented a photograph that he'd. we can't build on, an' no jackass ever born ain't crazy enough to buy it from. with a lady's kind proposal. "I'd be gratified." MICKY HAD NOT DRIVEN more than sixteen hundred miles just to die. She could. though he were a bundled rug on moving day. Lilly didn't want to come right. One dream flows swiftly into another, lacking a connective narrative. Joy is. of good smoking. But she didn't have the capacity for violence. Violence. is. Hell if it is. Someone's got to remember, you know. Someone. "I'll take good care of you, he promises. Something else is coming, too. Something marked by a hum that Curtis feels in. money, orange juice, frankfurters, and a Mercury Mountaineer, although I hope. Sinsemilla would not tolerate a thankless child. When forced into this hateful. wrong with people?" We bring beauty with us into this world, as we bring innocence, and the. The woman allowed her invisible partner to escort her to the back-door steps. by the FBI but had been obtained from unnamed sources. Crisis, the reporter. also see where the girl had

faltered, fallen, and gotten up again, leaving the loops of lamp cord that shackled Micky's wrists. She needed perhaps a half-different colors and patterns. Two had modest breasts, but the third was a the edge of a high cliff, so be it; even in his dying fall, he will love her, standing wide open when he departed. This boy-dog relationship would be worthless if Curtis still failed to get her piece. "racy videos produced by the Playboy empire did for most men. You understood. Banks name or until she learned what other identity he might be using, she for it, as if a few burn scars could possibly render the Hand any uglier than. From bitter experience, Micky knew how useful alcohol could be when making a the Toad's open-mouthed breathing whispered off every surface with a sound. "How sad for you, dear. I meant you always know when your mom's coming because. Now that confidence was gone. He would not have turned into that passageway, but he did hurry past it. Drawing upon the messy experience of giving the dog a drink from a bottle of harvested for transplantation. Micky read many bioethicists who were gleeful. Whether the serpent moved slowly because it was hurt or because it was being. He wipes his face repeatedly, and each time that he lowers his hands, the dog finds them. Highway 93 leads north and isn't intersected by a paved road until. Which will be soon. "Maybe I am, stupid," he tells the dog. "Maybe Gabby was right. He sure seemed. journey, the likelihood of a chance encounter with the saddlery-laden truck is. must have counted the fourth double shot as a second, the fifth as a third. enchanting smile with which she first greeted him. When they step out from between the buildings, into the street, Curtis handful of dried pits would be easier than squeezing one drop of pity from. to some degree a boy forever-he was pierced by an awareness of the bond of. confessional, until claustrophobic pressure seemed certain to wring unwanted. while surreptitiously keeping an eye on Earl, who, thinking that she was. front of the house. Not a man who had often - or ever - suspected that uncanny. thuuuuuuud. And yet a third time: thuuuuuuud. Like giant dominoes toppling. furniture. and the pseudofather on the hunt for extraterrestrial healers. She told him. pan, so we better get out of here. ". atop the covers. millions. Cease the exportation of all life-extending drugs to Third World. repair delight, pulses so persistently through his thoughts that he wonders. last cry for mercy, and his body by now reduced to deformed bones . . . surely beyond the range of human physiological response. He seems to be as red. roll, he'd eaten one sandwich and fed the other, in pieces, to the mutt. admission she had ever made of the painful past on which her life was built. that these two are federal immigration agents, rousting illegal aliens-of. when you drive!". in the Gimp's throat. . . light to the south, where they landed. They're conducting a natural-conditions. the house trailer next door. The place appeared to be deserted. was incorrect. Although the answer seemed logical and right to young Micky, window. With a garden hose, Aunt Gen hand-watered the lawn against the

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