

Only A Digit Away

Fred looked across the table to his date. "So what you're telling me is this device is a phone?" He pointed to a large piece of equipment with a keypad and an antenna on it.

Lucy held the device up and nodded. "Yep, it's called a cell phone. A new invention my company is producing."

"A cell phone." Fred said carefully "where's the cord?"

Lucy shook her head "You're silly, there is no cord. It runs through airwaves." She looked at her watch "I've got to get going. Thanks for dinner."

Fred nodded as his blonde friend stood and walked away taking her new toy with her. Hey envied Lucy, she was always showing off the various new inventions her company developed. He knew she wasn't suppose to share them with him, but she didn't seem to care.

He knew that he wanted a cell phone., Fred wanted Lucy's cell phone. He imagined what power he would have. Not to mention how much money he could end up making.

Fred stood from the table and left the restaurant. Outside, Lucy was waiting for him. Fred was startled to see her. "What are you still doing here?"

Lucy didn't respond. She just stood there with a confused look on her face. As Fred approached his friend, he noticed blood dripping from her hand. "What happened?"

Lucy struggled to speak. "Only a digit away." She handed Fred the phone as she collapsed to the ground dead.

Fred's hands were shaking. He heard a woman scream and point in his direction.

"That man! He killed her."

Fred started to run, he didn't want the police to arrest him for a crime he didn't commit

As he turned a corner, Fred almost ran into a man wearing a trench coat. "Slow down young man" the stranger said as he grabbed Fred's shoulders. "Where are you running to?"

Fred stuttered a reply. "No...no...where."

The man looked at the phone in Fred's hands. "I see." Taking a step back and to the side, he pointed down an alleyway. "I won't keep you."

Fred started to walk down the alley as the man said "one more thing. I'm only a digit away."

Fred froze in his tracks. Lucy had said something along those lines. He turned to ask the man what he meant. The man was no where to be found. Fred clutched onto the phone tighter and ran down the alleyway to his apartment.

Once inside, the cell phone. started to ring. Fred decided against answering it. He didn't know what tracking capabilities the police had and didn't want to find out.

Walking into his bedroom, Fred decided to sleep it all off somewhat hoping it was all a bad dream.

Fred found it strange that he was calm when he got ready for bed. As he laid his head down on the pillow, he fell asleep right away and entered the dreaming world.

In his dream, Fred saw clouds. Everywhere there were clouds. Some were white, others blue and some were red. Fred was standing on a red cloud. It wasn't drifting as quickly as the blue clouds or the white clouds. the cloud he was standing on was hardly moving at all.

As he looked around, Fred saw Lucy standing on a blue cloud. He tried to get her attention but had little luck.

"It's no use Fred." A voice said from behind. "She can't hear you."

Fred turned to see the familiar form of the man he had seen in the alley. "Why?"

The man pointed towards Lucy. "She's in another existence. If you want to talk to her, answer the phone."

The dream ended. Fred woke up to the sound of the cell phone. ringing. He got out of bed and headed over to the device. The power light was flashing a red light on and off. On and off. As Fred picked up the phone, he thought about what the man in the trench coat had said. He pressed the power button and felt blood trickle down his hand as he fell to the floor.

Fred woke up in a place similar to that in his dream. Instead of being on the red cloud, he was standing on the blue cloud next to Lucy. She currently had her back facing him. Fred put his hand on Lucy's shoulder. Lucy turned around quickly and somewhat startled.

"What are you doing here?" She paused. "You answered the phone."

Fred nodded "Yes I did." He was concerned by Lucy's voice. Something was wrong.

Lucy shook her head. "It happened again."

Nothing was making sense to Fred. "Lucy do you want to tell me what is going on here?"

Lucy started pacing back and forth. She also started shaking her head and talking to herself.

Fred reached out to stop her. "Lucy what's wrong?"

Lucy stared into Fred's eyes, almost allowing herself to become lost in the green that they were. "They warned me and I didn't listen."

Fred held his friend's shoulders "Who?"

Lucy began to cry. "My bosses." She replied. "They told me it wasn't ready. That things might happen." She paused as more tears flowed "But they didn't expect it to turn out like it did."

"What are you talking about?" Fred demanded.

Lucy shook her head "Don't you see Fred? We're dead. That device killed us!"

"No Lucy, it didn't kill you." The man in the trench coat said. "It simply took your soul."

Fred turned around to face the man in black. "Excuse me?" He let go of Lucy. "I saw her die."

The man smiled, "As you should have. That was the desired effect."

Lucy took a step forward and pointed at the man. "They steal souls for use as a labor force." Putting her hand down she continued. "The people they take, their bodies on earth become mindless zombies."

The man nodded his confirmation. "It's the truth. They act like you, even talk like you. In the end they basically are you. Except for the fact of not having a soul of course."

Fred clenched a fist "And when every soul on earth is under your control? What will you do then?"

The man's smile became bigger. "Oh we have it under a tight control. It will take millions of years to get everyone. If by chance that does happen, we'll use the planet for fuel and move on to the next system."

Lucy sighed a sigh of defeat.

Fred held up a finger. "But why through a device that isn't widely in use? There's only one prototype."

The man nodded. "True, but in time everyone will have a cell phone. Just give it time."

"How can you be so sure?" Fred asked.

The man laughed out loud. "I've got a feeling everything will go according to plan."

The End