

Maybe he had missed something before, there had to be something left to eat in the city. He turned and saw a flash of someone ducking into a gas station across the street from the hotel. He wasn't sure if it was real or if he'd imagined it, like he'd imagined being followed, or imagined the voice that had just spoken his name. He closed his eyes and tried to shake the vision from his head. When he opened his eyes, two people filled the doorway of the gas station. One was a tall, muscular, bearded man in black suspenders. Deep blue eyes bored into him from beneath a wide-brimmed black hat. The other was a girl in a gray dress with a simple bonnet on her head. The girl left the gas station and moved toward him. He knew she wasn't real. Terror took hold of Randy's mind. It was the girl from his nightmare. This demon was trying to push her way into his consciousness. "You're not real!" he shouted. He fell to the sidewalk in the fetal position. Heavy sobs racked his body. Deep moans of fear and torment burst from his throat as she walked up to him, raised a shotgun, and pointed it at his face. "You're not real." He whispered it this time. "Leave me alone. You don't belong here."

The girl stared down at him. He could see his reflection in her tearfilled eyes. It struck him how pathetic and weak he had become. He set his jaw firmly and spit in her face. "You don't matter," he hissed.

Randy Jackson raised his hands in front of his face and closed his eyes.