

Doubt

Sadly, as he regarded her, he realized this was probably the last time he'll see her.

So, just what *is* it you're trying to....?

He paused, hardened his look; she turned away. He hesitated, pulled out a packet of cigarettes, lit one and offered the pack, reaching and touching her shoulder with the packet. She shrugged it off, walked to the window and stood, immobile, watching the late afternoon traffic hum.

He took a long drag, savoring the mix of gases, and sat on the bed watching her. She turned, leaned against the glass, looking down at him and murmured.

I don't *know* what t....

Sighing, she waved a hand, as though to find the next word, but gave up. Folding her arms, she straightened her body, stiffening her blouse so that her breasts ballooned, accentuating her nipples. Then, absently, one hand began rubbing her stomach, still flat.

I mean, I have to know that....

What do you mean, *you* gotta know ... what? He exhaled, long and hard, so that the smoke formed a cloud between them, drifting inexorably towards her. Hey, Linda, I'm the one who's gotta know how to....

She held up a hand. Just stop, will you, how many times do we...?

Impatiently, he stood and went to the door, and put a hand on the knob. Do you want me to...? He opened the door a crack, looked down the corridor, then back at her.

No! I need you to ... you know....

He cut her off, shaking his head, slowly but firmly. I think I've listened more than I need, and I still don't....

She raised her arms, as though pleading, but perhaps only trying to please. Is it my fault you have a wife who won't...? Her voice choked with emotion, her eyes misted over. Her arms dropped, as she slumped back against the glass, eyes down.

He closed the door, stepped towards her, a hand extended. Hey, Linda, look, I mean, we *got* to....

She looked up, met his gaze. Got to? What's that supposed to...? She stopped, her eyes widening. What are you try...?

Hey, now, just cool it, I wasn't meaning.... He took a last drag on the cigarette, and ground out the butt while he kept his eyes locked on hers. Look, you said you didn't want any more....

She cut him off. Things change – *I've* changed, so I need to know if you....

Forget it, we've been through all....

I don't care, you just can't go....

I know, I know – so, what're you thinking of...?

Well, I'm no *longer* thinking of....

Okay, okay, I got it, so what else do you...?

She looked at him, the color slowly draining from her face. He stared back, unwilling to drop his gaze, willing her to face the truth.

He shrugged, lit another cigarette, grateful for the nicotine hit. Aah, fuck it. So, just what the hell is it you're *trying* to...? He raised his eyebrows as smoke again drifted from his mouth.

Sadly, as she regarded him, she realized this was the first time she'd really seen him.

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