

Help!

by

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Oh, no! How did I get here? Heat rises from the desert floor in waves of pain. I'm sweltering. I have no water. I'm miles from nowhere. There are power lines leading off to the horizon. So, it must be the 1900's, at least, but I'm not wearing any sunscreen. I have a straw hat, but it has a big hole, and what is left keeps flying off my head in the desert's oven gusts. Damn! I do not belong here! This is all wrong. I'm supposed to be on one of those great plains—in the Midwest. I belong on a farm in the late 1800's, enjoying life as a little girl, with ma and pa and sis. All I'm wearing is my gingham-checked dress. I'm barefoot, for Christ's sake! This is ridiculous! It's so hot. Can't anyone see that a farmer would never settle in a place like this, devoid of vegetation or animals? My writer must be a moron.

What's this? Oh, great! A jungle! A steaming bug-infested jungle. Lots of plants and animals here! Only, this is all wrong. I hear strange noises. It's daytime, and all I can do is run screaming through the place hoping someone will hear me and take me out of here. Oh! It's nighttime, and I'm just curling up in a tight ball and whimpering in fear of all the disgusting slithery slimy things that keep making the most awful noises. This is really wrong. And it's still way too hot.

Y-y-you've got to be kidding! I'm freezing! What the hell am I supposed to do on the top of Mt. Everest? I d-d-don't even have a jacket! My straw hat just blew off and floated down below. I'm not going after it. What does she think? That I'm going to climb down for it? Screw the hat! I'm supposed to be in civilization. Get me out of here!

Now, where am I supposed to drive a car? Even if traffic were ever to begin moving again, where would I go to get myself off this damned freeway? The noise, the odors, the crush of people all trapped in this canal of debris on wheels— it gives me the willies. There doesn't appear to be any escape. People are tired and angry. Oh, no! Someone's shooting off a gun! Just great! Everywhere I turn, I see angry people! Will someone please kick the writer?

Well ... at least I'm wearing a space suit. I wouldn't have lasted a San Diego second out here in my little dress and no shoes. The writer definitely has issues. She must be some kind of sadistic witch to even consider putting a farm girl out here. If I weren't in this suit, I have a

feeling I'd be a frozen blob of goo by now. Isn't *that* all kinds of fun? Am I laughing yet? Where's my damned grassy field in which to run and play? Get me out of here, moron!

Why is she doing this to me? What did I ever do to her? Hey, a plains in the MIDWEST, dummy! Oh, this is a plain all right – *in Africa!* And – and, I have a really strange feeling something's wrong. I don't have my dress anymore. But I'm not naked. I don't have my bare feet anymore, either. Instead, oh God, I have hooves. Four of them! I-I think I'm a gazelle! Oh! I'm way behind the herd! I need to run and catch up fast. But...how do you run with four legs? This is more than ridiculous. I've been set up! Oh, God! There it is. I just knew it! A lion. And a tiger, too! Gee, wasn't one enough? Why is she trying so desperately to kill me? Why? It can't possibly be what I'm thinking. She wouldn't do all this to me for just *that* reason alone. But...she is! So what if I'm a story character! I have feelings, too, damn it!

I HATE CONFLICT!

