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Heavenly Bodies Maxine Chernoff

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Maxine Chernoff

HEAVENLY BODIES

—When is that huge meteor scheduled to hit Earth?

—I heard something about 2035.

—You mean in thirty-seven years the world might end?

—The world wouldn't end.

—If a meteor of that size hits Earth, we'll be destroyed.

—We might be destroyed, but there'd still be a world.

—Do you mean a universe?

—I guess that's what I mean.

—How will there be a universe if we're not there to form the concept?

—Do you think we're so important that the whole universe can't exist if we don't? What was here before we were born?

—History was here.

—That's exactly it. We're simply a part of it all, like a whorl in a tree trunk.

—Why didn't you say a grain of sand on a beach?

—Okay, a grain of sand on a beach.

—How can someone who knows so much about the universe be persuaded to use a cliché?

—Death is a cliché.

—What do you mean?

—It's given to us, and we can do nothing to change it.

—But you're saying our own deaths don't matter. Not now. Not in thirty years, not if the universe gets destroyed.

—Exactly.

—So what should we do?

—About what?

—What should we do to prevent the ' meteor from destroying us?

—I guess we could intercept it.

—Who, you and me?

—The government.

—I knew it.

—Knew what?

—You're some kind of hired assassin.

—What do you mean?

—You're hired by the government to make me think I don't matter, not even if I die.

—How does that make me an assassin?

—It's conceptual. You erase me with your thoughts.

—So maybe I'm more of an artist than an assassin.

—How much do they pay you?

—Who?

—The government.

—Why would the government hire me to convince you of anything? Are either of us so important?

—Here you go again. You just won't admit it.

—Admit what?

—That when we die the universe will perish.

—Okay. When we die the universe will perish. Does that make you feel better?

—Yes, momentarily.