



*Stiletto*s

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Retold Fairy Tales

“All those women desperate for a bit part,” the casting director said to her assistant. “Like dollar store Barbies.”
“That one might clean up,” her assistant said.

He nodded at Ashleigh, who met his eyes briefly, caught eavesdropping.

* * *

Walking home, Ashleigh saw the hottest pair of stilettos...6" Lucite spikes with strappy platforms. They cost more than her rent.

I can only wish.

At her apartment door was a box containing the stilettos, a little black dress, and an invitation to a gala. No note. She didn't know who sent them, but she didn't care.

Thank you, Fairy Godmother.

* * *

At the gala, she tottered painfully, like every other woman there, balancing an untouched martini. She smiled at everyone, always inching her way closer to the casting director's entourage.

Some men in dark suits kept track of her, but everyone else ignored her. The torture of the shoes was a waste of time as again, she looked just like everyone else.

“Nice shoes, Bitch.”

A toe kicked her stiletto to the side, twisting her ankle, knocking her to the floor, and sloshing her martini across the casting director's back.

Beside her stood stilettos identical to hers. The face high above them showed red lips in a bitter smile. “Oopsie.” The casting director shrugged out of her bolero and glared at her. “You'll pay for that.” She thrust the garment in Ashleigh's face.

“Of course, Ma’am.” Ashleigh slipped off the shoes, struggling to get up without flashing everyone.

The casting director stomped away.

Dark Suit moved in. “Lemme see those shoes.” Not waiting for an answer, he grabbed them, nodding to the other suits. “Where’d you get these?”

“They were a gift.” She pointed at her attacker. “She has them, too. She kicked me.”

Dark Suit said, “Hers are genuine. We’ll need these for evidence.”

“Take them. Good riddance.”

The director’s assistant reached for the director’s bolero. “I’ll see to this. Don’t worry.” He helped Ashleigh hobble to the side of the room, staring at her face. “Do I know you?”

“The cattle call this afternoon.” Ashleigh smiled. “I cleaned up.” She balanced on one foot, dangling the empty glass. “Shoes aren’t enough to get this crowd’s attention.”

“She noticed you,” he said. “Viciously.”

“So did you. Thanks for helping.”

Dark Suit rushed back to her. “Where are the shoes? What did you do with them?”

“You took them.” She held out her ankle, clutching the assistant’s arm for balance. “I can’t walk. Ask him.”

“She’s been right here.”

Dark Suit rubbed his brow. “Shoes can’t just disappear!”

“Not my problem, Suit. Can I press charges?”

Dark Suit shook his head. “Not my department. I just need the shoes.”

“Find my fairy godmother then.” Ashleigh waved her hand. “Isn’t it past midnight?”

Dark Suit slunk away.

The staff brought a wheelchair and said a cab was waiting.

“You don’t need a princess,” Ashleigh said, “Just me.”

He handed her his card. “Call me when you can walk.”

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