Red Shoes by Terry Miles.

She pulled on her red shoes and stood up to look in the mirror. Her eyes looked at the black holes in the empty skull of the skeleton that was reflected back at her. She wondered what had triggered its image. It could only mean one thing she thought, death. She pondered for a moment and asked herself what she was doing just before the apparition appeared. Putting on her shoes, her favourite shoes. What is significant about that, she thought. “When was the last time I wore them,” she asked herself. It was the previous Saturday. She had met a man who found her interesting. She had gone back to his flat and found to her amazement that he had a fetish for shoes. How he had admired her red shoes. How he couldn’t stop fondling them. How their smell sent him into raptures. He became indignantly offended when she had failed to sell him her favourite red shoes even when he had offered to pay for her taxifare home. What is more, he might be in the wine bar this evening. She wondered if all men in New York were as strange as this. She was from a small town in Wyoming and had never come across anyone with a shoe fetish before. He could be even more weird than that. Didn’t the apparition prove it? She looked in her handbag and made sure the Smith & Weston was loaded. She finished dressing and assured herself that she would keep her handbag with her throughout the evening. “Never out of my sight,” she muttered to herself as she left her flat.

 She didn’t go to the singles bar straight away, she called in at two other bars, but there were no single men in them, no single men that fitted her description as slim, handsome and available. Eventually, she was drawn back to the single’s bar she had been the previous weekend.

 She ordered a Bloody Mary and sat down at the table in the corner where the lighting was the least severe. She looked around and didn’t see the man who admired her shoes.

 “Hello,” a voice said.

 She turned her head slightly to her left and saw the man. Yes, he was slim and good looking and he had money as he had proven when he had offered her a good price for her shoes, not to mention her taxifare home.

 “Would you like another drink?” he asked.

 “No, I’ve had a couple already.”

 Mind if I sit down?”

 “No, please do.”

 He sat down and they started talking. She wanted to know more about him and asked many questions always skirting around the more personal and intimate ones. Yes, he had a good job in the high-tech field. He worked out a couple of times a week and was interested in modern art. That wasn’t one of her interests. She liked nice clothes and watching Stephen King movies.

 “Would you like to come back with me? I’ll pay for your taxi home.”

 She accepted his offer and they walked the three blocks to his apartment.

 On entering his apartment, she took off her coat and flung it over a chair; she sat on the other easy chair with her handbag by her side.

 “What would you like to drink?” he asked.

 “A Bloody Mary,” she replied.

 He handed her the drink and knelt before her.

 She opened her handbag and took out her handkerchief and wiped her tomato juice coated lips.

 He took off her shoes and fondled her feet. He looked up at her and looked down at her feet and shoes. She put the handkerchief back into her handbag as she smiled at him. She noticed a funny look on his face before he massaged her feet and looked down. She pulled the gun out of her handbag and shot him. She didn’t like the expression on his face. He gulped. She shot him again and he slumped onto the white carpet. She put on her shoes and looked at the blood seeping out of him onto and into the soft pile of the virgin white carpet. She searched through his jacket pockets and found his wallet. She took twenty dollars and left the apartment.

 Clutching her handbag she walked onto the sidewalk and turned the corner and walked two blocks and caught site of a cab. She got into the cab and gave the driver the address of a bar two blocks from where she lived. The driver sped passed the address and sped onwards.

 She heard a click as the driver locked the doors and drove even faster.

 “Where are you taking me?” She asked.

 “You’re coming with me.”

 She took off her coat.

 “What are you doing?” the driver asked.

 “Just taking off my coat.”

 “Carry on,” the driver said, encouragingly.

A set of traffic lights turned red ahead and the driver stopped. She opened her handbag, took out her handkerchief and blew her nose, very gently.

“Have you got a cold?”

“No,” she replied as she put the handkerchief back into her handbag. As she was about to withdraw her hand, She took hold of her Smith and Weston. She raised her hand behind the driver and brought her protector to behind his head and blew his brains out. As it was at point blank range she felt the blood and brain matter splatter onto her face, neck and breasts. She, being, the petit person she was slid over the back of the front seat and took hold of the driver’s remote and unlocked the doors. She got out the cab and opened the rear passenger door, grabbed her coat and put it on. She grabbed her handbag and put the remote in it and took out her handkerchief. She wiped the rear door’s handles both inside and out and shut the door. She opened the front door and wiped the handles before she left the scene. She walked another two blocks, crossed the road and hailed another cab. This time the cabbie dropped her off close to her home.

 She walked two blocks, put the driver’s remote in a trash can and walked another block to her home. She entered her flat, slipped off her shoes, took off her coat and went into her bathroom and put it into the bath. ‘What a bore all this is,’ she thought as she turned on the hot water tap, added some washing powder, let the water run until her bloody coat was covered with soapy water. She turned the tap off and went into her kitchen and took off her clothes. She put them into the washing machine. She switched it on and went back into her bathroom to take a shower. After the shower she went into her bedroom and put on clean clothes. She went back into the hallway and slipped on her red shoes and entered her sitting room. She poured herself another Bloody Mary and sat down in a comfy chair. She slipped off her favourite shoes and Exclaimed, “Damn! Bit’s of the driver are on them. Never mind, I’ll deal with them later.” She put her feet onto the footstool and switched the television on with her remote. “Funny,” she said to herself, “two weirdos in one day, that’s only the third time it’s happened.

The End.