

pristine.

This is the most stunning, iridescent shoe I've ever seen, she thought. But what woman in her right mind would ever attempt to wear spike heels on a jetty? What's it doing here and where's the other shoe?

“What do you make of this?” Cassie called down to Peggy and Barb as she held the shoe up high by its skinny long heel. “I don't see the other shoe anywhere.”

Peggy stared at the shoe, then back at Cassie, with an expression of horror.

“The other shoe is not missing; it's on this woman's foot. Don't call for an ambulance, call the police.

“This was not an accident. This was murder!”

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FRIDAY NIGHT, OCTOBER 11

From the oversize windows of the sunroom, Tegan Hartwood took one last look at the crashing waves below the bluffs, put down her moist watercolor brush, then excitedly descended to the second level of her beachfront house in Carlsbad and hurried to unlock the door to her special room.

Once inside, she opened the waiting designer shoebox, reassured that the dazzling, incandescent spike heels she had so carefully

chosen for tonight would be the perfect finishing touch to her silver dress.

Her mouth automatically watered as lights from the huge crystal chandelier shined down on her brand new silver stunners, and the shoes responded by reflecting colors from the hundreds of other shoes in the vast collection that surrounded them. She could almost taste these new ones and felt the familiar reflexive thrill as she slid her feet smoothly inside. She swallowed and was satiated by their delectable glow. These shoes are gorgeous and so am I, she knew, as she gazed into the seven-foot free-standing mirror. The current culture, through movies, commercials and ads had conditioned men to respond to a certain look

and she definitely had that look.

She swished her long, copper blonde hair from side to side, then admired the slender hips and solid, perky figure she worked so hard to maintain. She hadn't needed any cosmetic surgery so far, not even a breast lift. She flinched at the thought of her recent Botox and laugh line injections. It's taking a little more effort, time and money lately, she thought, but I still look twenty years younger than my calendar age.

These shoes make 461 pairs, she noted, gazing at the universe of intoxicating colors, bold patterns and rich textures captured in the shoes, many of which were true works of art. She looked slowly around the room at her