

Her feet were killing her by Jean SHELDON (2007)

Roxy closed the heavy door with her foot and took her mail from her box. As she started up the stairs and sighed when the door of her landlady's apartment opened.

Hello, Mrs. Larkin. How are you this evening?" She had nothing against Mrs Larkin, but all she wanted to do was go upstairs and relax.

"I'm fine Ms. Franks. Do you have a minute to stop by and visit?"

She had put off visiting for the entire two months since she moved into the second floor flat. "Okay, just for a minute, Mrs. Larkin, I really need to take these shoes off, my feet are killing me."

Mrs. Larkin ushered her into her home. "Let me pour you a small glass of wine, Ms. Franks" She filled two glasses and gave one to Roxy. "Here you are, dear."

Roxy noticed something unusual, right in front of her. "What are these?" She pointed at something on the coffee table. "They look like old fashioned stockings."

"Oh, they are. They're silk stockings. My husband, James, bought me five pair after he came back from the war. We married in 1945, but he died in 1947 and since I don't go out often, they've lasted a long time. This is the last pair though. Go ahead and feel them." Mrs Larkin smiled.

Roxy took a sip of wine. "Oh, these are wonderful, quite a bit nicer than these panty hose I'm wearing." She smiled at the small white haired woman.

"Yes, it's a shame they don't make them anymore. How's your wine, dear ?"

"I think it was just what I needed. I'm starting to relax. You haven't had any yourself ?"

"Oh I've had a couple of sips."

Roxy looked at the room again. She noticed something that seemed completely out of place.

"Do you use hand-weights, Mrs. Larkin?"

"Oh, no, those were my husband's weights."

"How did your husband die, if you don't mind my asking?"

"I don't mind, but it's not a very pretty story. A woman moved into the building a few months after we bought it. She called herself Stacey, I believe. They found her strangled and my husband lying next to her with a bullet in his head. The police said he killed her and then shot himself. It was his gun but I never believed that for a moment. She was a tall redhead girl and looked a lot like you in fact. She was beautiful."

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"I'm sorry, Mrs. Larkin. It must have been awful for you"
The old woman shrugged.

Roxy felt strange. "I think I better go up to my apartment, I'm feeling a little dizzy."
"All right, Ms. Franks. I'm delighted you had a chance to stop by."

When Roxy unlocked the door and went inside, the mail slipped from her fingers. "What is wrong with me, I only had half a glass of wine and I feel drunk." She fell onto the couch. Her vision blurred but she saw that someone had come in and was standing in front of her with a silk stocking. But her body wouldn't move as the silky stocking wrapped around her neck and tightened.

"Hello, Stacey. Maybe this time you'll leave us alone for good."

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"What do you think, Sergeant?"

Sergeant Borelli looked around the apartment and. "I read over the old files. This is the fifth redhead strangled with a silk stocking in this building in the last sixty years, and the first one was supposed to have been killed by Mr. Larkin, who killed himself. If Mrs Larkin had not had alibis for the other murders, she'd be our best suspect. What did she say?"

"She didn't have an alibi this time. She just said that she hadn't seen Ms. Franks for a few days, and the last time she saw her, she said her feet were killing her so she couldn't stop in for a visit. Larkin's the only person who's been in the building the entire sixty years, but she's eighty-seven years old. How could she strangle someone as young and healthy as Ms. Franks?"

"You're right, I doubt that she could."