

Shiny, tiny, little thing

Once upon a time there was a shiny, tiny, little thing; a thing reposing on route 29. The same route which Linda used to take everyday from home to work, and the same route she used to take from work back home. And everyday, Linda, she would pass by the shiny, tiny, little thing that lay there on the road, always at the same exact spot, all flickering shine, on route 29. And twice everyday when Linda drove by the shiny, tiny, little thing, that lay there on the road, always at the same exact spot- well, she wondered. She wondered what that shiny, tiny, thing was.

In the mornings, the sun would crash onto the shiny, tiny, little thing and it would glimmer and glitter, all garnished with glow and shimmer, into the waking world. At night, the headlights of passing cars would crash into the shiny, tiny, little thing and it would glimmer and glitter, all garnished with glow and shimmer, into the slumbering world. Everyday. At the same exact spot- all flickering shine, on route 29.

Like a little piece of heaven, or a ripe fruit waiting to be picked, it lay there, a promising promise or a piece of jewelry, the dazzle of diamonds, or a lump of gold. *Why, maybe that's what it is*, Linda, she would think to herself, while she also thought that it was quite awfully strange, that the shiny, tiny, little thing never moved, never even budged. It just stayed there, lay there, at the same, precise, unmistakable spot, all shimmer and shine on route 29.

And Linda- after contemplating the possibilities of gold, of the mystery finally being dissolved and resolved as a 25 carat chunk of dreams- she would then move on to reflect about the dough, and the big spending. Oh yeah, the shoes and the clothes and the dinners in France, the handsome lovers and mink fur. Then, slightly drooling and eyes sparkling with excitement, she would suddenly be at work.

She would then look for a parking space, blinking away the daze as her dreams finally shattered, quickly crashing back into her quotidian reality. In rote, she would carry on to the everyday.

It would be like winning the lottery, Linda would think to herself while driving back from work. Because maybe it was a very expensive thing indeed, an expensive piece of jewelry perhaps; some rich guy's wife's necklace that somehow slipped off her neck

(sometimes Linda would even elaborate in further details, and carefully draw out the chain of events of how that ensued), and escaped out of a window of a very expensive car. Or maybe it was a really nice stone.

But then, on other days, she thought, well, maybe it was just a thing. A shiny, tiny, little thing, that didn't really mean anything. That was a possibility.

Well, either way, she had to find out what it was.

Days passed and she didn't make inquiries, and the shiny, tiny, little thing kept on lying there. Untouched, unmoved, neglected, perhaps, but certainly not forgotten, at the same exact spot, all flickering shine, on route 29. Because, the shiny, tiny, little thing's position was quite the problematic one, in terms of stopping the car to examine the thing. There were no shoulders to speak of, just grassy knolls decorated with gray, wooden fences and dehydrated grass, and the occasional carcass of road kill. In short, there was no place to park safely. The only option was to stop the car right there, in the middle of the road, by the shiny, tiny, little thing.

The other problem was that, the shiny, tiny, little thing's location also succeeded a swift curve in the road, which meant that a car stopping by it would not be foreseeable. Thus, getting down to the button of the mystery, just never happened.

The weeks passed by, and then months, and after all the daydreaming and the recurring fantasies that were slowly getting out of hand (*heck, I could even reserve myself a spot on the first commercial flight to the moon, with all that money!*), curiosity had to be quenched. And then, one night, it was.

On that night Linda drove back home from work, and thought, *well, this is it. I have to find out. And, she thought, it would only take but a second. Step out, pick up the thing, and go back in.*

Thus, Linda began sweating cold sweat, and her heart fluttered in her chest like a confused butterfly. Beneath her the road winded and twisted in the dark as she drove on, accompanied by the distant, hollow howl of some lonely canine, and the stars glistened

like diamonds, and the moon smiled its blue smile from above. And there was nobody else on the road.

Then, there was the curve, and then the headlights of the car crashed into the shiny, tiny, little thing, and it glimmered and glittered, all garnished with glow, and shimmered into the slumbering world. There it was, lying there, at the same exact spot.

Linda, eyes wide, dry throat, knuckles white-tight on the stirring wheel, she slowed down, and could now hear the crickets in the fields around her, as the moist air traveled in through her open window, weaving with the soft sounds of the songs that emanated from the radio, carrying the night and the cold grass and the scents of the earth into her car.

She stopped by the shiny, tiny, little thing, just a hair past that swift curve. She stepped out of her car, leaving her door open ajar; the chime sound ringing to remind her that the headlights were on, and that the keys were still in the keyhole. Her eyes were fixed on the shiny, tiny, little thing.

She took a few, long steps to where the shiny, tiny, little thing lay, while the radio from her car sang quiet ballads, and the engine rattled softly. Linda bent over to scoop up the shiny, tiny, little thing, and that's when a car came swooshing around the corner, and that's when, for a moment, her breath caught in her chest, as she realized, *Why, who would have thought that it was a-*