

Pink Pointed Toe Shoes

by Cheryl Cofield

It was the summer of 1983. I'd just completed sophomore year at Ohio University and was in summer school taking an intense Spanish Immersion before going to Mexico for my junior year.

Michael Harris was a senior on the football team; tall, dark, handsome and strong. He was in summer school for algebra trying to keep up his football eligibility. I was an academic tomboy - so I could hardly believe that MICHAEL HARRIS liked ME. We'd gone bowling - to the movies - out for hot wings and cheese fries. He'd always paid for everything. He'd even held my hand sometimes and walked me home. He was always so sweet... such a gentleman.

I was dying to show him how well cooking, I invited him to my dorm room to eat beef stroganoff, sweet peas, tossed salad, and yeast rolls with butter. We ate on my orange fluffy futon in front of the blue lava lamp. After asking if he wanted peach cobbler and ice cream - I remember he said "I'd rather have a "slow dance" for dessert. (Giggle) Oooh, I'd never had a boyfriend, never been on dates, and definitely I had never slow danced. The way he looked at me ALWAYS made me feel so pretty. I felt especially pretty that day... in my long, yellow skirt,

shimmery pink blouse, and pink pointed-toed shoes. "Y-y--e-a-h ... I wanted to slow dance!"

So he taught me. He taught me to dance. We twirled around and around the room and then next to a full length mirror. He swirled me around so we could look at ourselves together. I was in front of him as he hugged from behind. Then, in less than a moment....Things changed...

"Look what you've gotten yourself into!" He said angrily. "Don't you look p-r -e- t- t-y, MY Cheri." He breathed heavily in my ear, forcing me to look in the mirror. He choked my throat with his huge hands and I could barely breathe. He pushed me hard - and pinned me to the ground. "What are you DOING, Michael?" "What... are...you...doing..." I was hurt, confused and afraid all at once. It just felt like a bad dream. He ripped my yellow skirt up - and yanked over my panties - **FULLY** intending toRAPE me...

Right then, I remembered my dark-skinned, kinky haired, grandmother had been raped in 1925 by a wealthy man from "somewhere **ACROSS** the tracks" that divided the people of Savannah, Tennessee.

Right then, I remembered that my own, fair-skinned, fragile mother had been raped at 14 - during times when grandma drowned

herself in whiskey and cheap wine - to forget the rapist from across the tracks - who fathered her frail, daughter - before violating the body of their daughter in front of her mother...

BEFORE Michael could DAMAGE ...me, a wind blew through the room and I gathered ALL of my pieces - and the strength of **SOLOMON** was in my arms. I pushed him OFF of me - then PICKED his sorry butt up and slung him across the room. I lost myself ... kicking him in the head over - and over - and over with the POINTED TIPPPPP of my pink - pointed - toed - shoes ... I looked at him and kicked him over and over until his head was bleeding ...

Finally, I kicked him over and pressed my PINK SHOE down into his throat -- remembering that my grandma had died in shame ... I pressed down harder -- remembering my mother's pain ...living as a black woman - then white- living black then living white, remembering what her own father had done ... never knowing WHO she was - and never knowing out how to trust anyone.

I was remembering the women who had come before me - and then I somehow "REMEMBERED FORWARD" that one day I'd be a GROWN woman in this world - and (Happily) remembered that I would one day have a little girl that I'd call "Zoe" - whose innocence I would fiercely and ferociously ... protect... if- only I could- take - my- foot -off -of -his-throat ...I continued pressing

...Looking down at him ...pressing down on his throat... I couldn't stop pressing down on his throat ...

I **EVENTUALLY** took my foot off his throat- completely unafraid of him - and took a step toward the door for my grandmother - a then a few steps down the hallway - for my mother - and then eventually out of the dorm all together for my future daughters. Now onto the campus, I began running and moaning the blues into the night. - And I ran -- and ran - moaning the blues into the night. I ran past Student Services ... I ran past the Counseling Center ... I ran past the police station ... I ran past ANY possibility that I'd have to answer questions about what I was wearing or why I had allowed this star football player into my dorm room. I just ran... and ran... and moaned the blues... And never said a word ...