

ANTIGONE + MAUDE

#2

by Stanley Lieber

ESME

There wouldn't be room in her bag. It was too full. Esmé tried several different configurations before giving up and stuffing the thing into her jacket pocket. Nobody was paying attention, anyway. She probably could have just carried it out of the store. Fine, then.

THE DERELICT

"Dad's gonna be gone for two days," Antigone said.

"Three, but who's counting?" Maude was finishing up the dishes, her cardigan sleeves pushed way up over her elbows, poofed out comically just below her shoulders. "He'll probably sleep for three more after he gets back."

"Then why are we working so hard, sis?"

"You have a point," Maude said, and turned off the faucet.

BILL FOMO

Bill couldn't get the fucking screws unscrewed. His laptop was ruined. The other guys at work weren't paying attention, thank Christ, but he was starting to sweat. He took a swig of Pepsi, some of it spilled on the table. Tried again.

Nope, this screw was definitely stripped.

Not to put too fine a point on it but presently the alarm sounded. Another run. Bill wiped his forehead with the back of his hand and laid his screwdriver down on the table.

Nobody better touch this while I'm gone, he said to himself.

ORORO

Esmé was behaving recklessly. Two years younger, she hadn't yet developed the patience Ororo worked so hard to sustain. She was impulsive, her judgement lacking. So much like Ororo herself in her younger days.

Placed her hand softly on Esmé's shoulder. Soft, but firm.

It was time to leave.

MAUDE FOMO

Yeah, her store had great light. Maude liked to stretch out on one of the checkout counters and gaze aimlessly into the translucent dust as it danced gayly in the sunlight leaking in near the rear entrance of her Sears. Her Chuck Taylors hung over the edge of the counter, occasionally kicking against a small stand of faux leather wallets. She wasn't overly concerned about knocking over the stand.

She suddenly noticed a man, tall, with long brown hair, standing over near a rack of dress slacks, examining the price tag on a polyester number that obviously wouldn't fit him.

This mall had been closed for years. How in the Hell did he get in here?