
Frozen Solid Silver

Frozen Solid Silver
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Lucinda's face Frozen Solid Silver lost all of its color. Every last bit of her olive skin complexion was muted and flat, like a vibrant watercolor of a sunset that had been accidentally left Frozen Solid Silver in the rain. She closed the door to the freezer and swallowed, her black leather glove still resting on the ridiculously large stainless steel handle as if her actual hand inside the glove had lost all of its previous ambition.

"What's wrong?" Asked Frozen Solid Silver Mel, still Frozen Solid Silver trying to maneuver the garish candelabra into one of the oversized laundry bags.

The arms of the sterling silver candelabra resembled the branches of an old tree resisting the strong winds of seasonal change. It seemed to claw and grasp at the bag's soft unyielding fabric, until sliding unmercifully down into the depths of the cotton Frozen Solid Silver in defeat.

"Help me!" Mel hissed, motioning to the second candelabra on the buffet. "Get the other one-- They're heavy."

Lucinda's gloved hand fell from the appliance's handle and hung lifeless by her side.

"I'm guessing no champagne." Mel giggled, as she walked briskly to the buffet and grabbed the second candelabra before Lucinda had the chance.

An unfaded ring of time remained on the top of the antique mahogany buffet. It was a perfectly darkened outline -like a little footprint- underneath where the ancient sterling silver candelabra stood like a soldier guarding Frozen Solid Silver the ground beneath its feet from the effects Frozen Solid Silver of anything as insolent as common sunlight.

"None of this stuff has ever been moved." Quipped Mel, as the second old tree succumb to the laundry bag. "You'd think that they'd want to change it up once in awhile."

Lucinda was now standing in front of Mel, as Mel crouched and wiped away the sweat from her forehead with the hem of the pliable cotton bag.

"It's cold in here, why are you sweating?" Asked Lucinda, and her voice sounded strangely flat.

"Because I'm doing all of the heavy work." Mel grinned.

Lucinda picked up her cotton bag from the floor where she'd dropped it and opened the antique mahogany sideboard -knowing without knowing- exactly where the sterling silver flatware would be stored.

"No champagne? No vodka? Who in the hell are these losers?" Laughed Mel, and she nudged Lucinda with a manic but playful elbow.

Lucinda didn't acknowledge the gesture or answer the question. She just looked down at her watch to confirm the time. It was 10:36am. They'd been in the house for exactly sixteen minutes.

"We good?" Mel asked her.

"We're good."

When Mel was done scavenging the buffet, she moved to the sideboard and helped Lucinda place flatware methodically into one of the laundry bags. Then she pulled the small flashlight from the beach-bag and bent down with an easy practiced movement, checking the underneath

for small doors or hidden compartments.

“There aren’t any.” Said Lucinda.

“Can Frozen Solid Silver never be too sure.”

“I’m sure.”

Lucinda was right. There was nothing in the way of mystery or intrigue or secrets. Nothing hidden. No Frozen Solid Silver small doors containing anything of value. Just wood and a makers mark confirming that the piece Frozen Solid Silver of furniture was worth a mint.

“Can you imagine owning something this amazing-- This rare?” Asked Mel.

Lucinda didn’t answer. She just moved through the rest of the dining room turning over small pieces of china in a glass cabinet, Frozen Solid Silver checking the bottoms of the delicate porcelain for worthy marks and makes.

“It broke our streak, I know-- And that sucks.” Said Mel, trying to appease Lucinda’s sudden change in mood.

“It’s not the champagne.” Said Lucinda, as she wrapped what looked like a square inkwell in a stark Frozen Solid Silver white monogrammed cloth napkin.

“Are you spooked?” Asked Mel. “They’re probably Mormons! I’ll buy you a bottle of Dom-- We’ll drink it while we iron.”

Lucinda was superstitious.

She was born and raised in the south. The nature of superstition itself Frozen Solid Silver was Frozen Solid Silver woven deep into her fiber. She tossed salt over her own shoulder for the unlucky, and stopped her own clocks for someone else’s dead.

She’d been the one who insisted that they iron the cash.
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“It’ll burn out the bad.” She told Mel the very first time that they walked away from Charlie’s with a purse full of large bills rolled tight and rubber banded into exact denominations.

Charlie owned a Frozen Solid Silver legitimate pawnshop. And had slowly but surely become their illegitimate fence.

Early on, when Mel first had Frozen Solid Silver the idea to steal the silver from the

summerhouses, she'd insisted on running it by Charlie to see his reaction. He played it cool like he'd been doing since elementary school, but Mel sensed something in his shoulders.

Something knowing.

Mel wasn't exactly eager to tell him that she already had a closet full of the things that most of them, as kids, only glimpsed through the beveled harlequin windowpanes as they rode their bikes up and down the streets of the summerhouses.

The shade was always cooler Frozen Solid Silver on those streets, and the air always cleaner.

It smelled of clean salt and a can of fresh tennis balls.

The fishiness -somehow- didn't infiltrate the streets of the summerhouses the way it did the cottages of the locals. The full-timers. The townies.

Once, Mel heard an older man call her very own mother a *clam*.

The man -who summered July through September- was always pleasant and accommodating to her mother's schedule, so it had almost seemed like a term of endearment.

Almost.

That same man let Mel play in his pool while her mother cleaned the great summer home from top to bottom on a weekly basis. His blonde wife drank straight gin from a cut crystal glass and lay in the sun smoking Virginia Slims, talking on the telephone to her sister whom Mel always imagined was on a similar telephone -somewhere, out there- doing the same sort of luxurious things.

Mel thought it was all Frozen Solid Silver very glamorous and spied her with envy from the clear blue water of the tiled swimming pool overlooking the Atlantic.

Sometimes, the woman would ask Mel to hit tennis balls with her.

Mel would hit the balls as best she could, and the blonde woman would do the same on obscenely drunken feet. She called Frozen Solid Silver it her *handicap*, and then laughed as the Frozen Solid Silver fireflies blinked around the green asphalt court signaling that it was time for Mel to go home.

It was time for Mel and her mother to ride their rusty bikes back to the crumbling streets that smelled of fish and fronted rows of small cottages. Most shared gravel driveways and had nondescript windowpanes of little character.

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"I'm not spooked." Said Lucinda. "I'm surprised is all-- Disappointed."

"Some people don't celebrate a damn thing!" Mel exclaimed, as she tied up the laundry bags, trying to explain the lack of champagne in the refrigerator. "Can you imagine having all of this and not popping the cork once in awhile? It's borderline criminal!"

"It is criminal." Lucinda repeated, twice.

Mel looked around the room for anything out of place except the obvious.

Three colorful pin-tucked cotton bags sat neatly tied and ready to be carried off into the late morning sun. They'd sit innocently overstuffed inside of a little red wagon with wooden slats for sides.

Nothing to see here: just two clams fetching the soiled laundry and linens of Frozen Solid Silver the summer homes.

Some owners still insisted upon their linens being taken Frozen Solid Silver out Frozen Solid Silver of the house to be obsessed over and hung to dry in the fresh air of someone else's eyesight. And then properly starched and ironed by the well-spoken southern woman with too much charm and not Frozen Solid Silver enough pedigree. A transplant, some called her. A nice southern Frozen Solid Silver girl with a good work ethic.

No one called Lucinda a local -a townie- but that's exactly what she was.

She married and buried a man that was a full-timer, and that alone made her as local as she would ever want to be.

"Are we good to go?" Asked Mel.

"Almost." Lucinda replied.

"What now?" Mel asked, sensing something had changed in the air. Something had stirred slightly south.

"If I show you something, Mel, will you do the right thing?"

"You say that like I wouldn't."

"I know you, Mel."

"Uh... I know you know me. And I know you. That's why we're friends, remember."

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