

The Dork Shoe

by Gary Moshimer

A strange man tapped my door and held up the shoes for me to see. "It is the Dork Shoe," he said. I looked past him at his dusty station wagon filled with boxes.

"I have your size right here." I observed the halo of his gray hair as he shoe-horned me in. He was right; they fit perfectly. And they were very ugly: narrow towards the heel and ballooning near the toe. And turd-brown. But mesmerizing.

He said, "Now walk a little. See what you think."

I did that across my living room. They were like butter, these Dork Shoes.

"This will just be the beginning for you," he said, smiling with cracked teeth.

"How much for these?"

"Nothing right now. Try them for a while, then pay me what they're worth."

I shook his tiny, hot hand and he sped off.

On the sidewalk to work the Dork Shoes were worshipped. Old men dropped, polishing with their hankies and crying out. Women of all ages spun around my thin frame, toeing the bulb of the shoe with their freed toes. Kids poked them with plush toys. I walked proudly with my feet spread out, a real dork! Pictures were taken.

At work I was followed, folks peeked and crawled at my cubicle, getting close. "Where did you get those?" I was asked. "Secret," I said, and folks knocked their heads on my desk.

My job was stacking and unstacking papers. With the Dork Shoes I decided I was worth more. I went to the boss, poked a shiny bulb into his face, and quit.

I walked across town, gathering a following of worshippers, to Barnes paper. Here they had machines to stack paper. Old Barnes swooned over the shoes and offered anything. My new position was running the machines. The pistons reflected beautifully in the Dork Shoes.

There was a shy young woman, Liza. She said she had altars at her place. She would build one for my shoes, and for me. Her smile melted my heart, and I followed to her apartment.

She built with Fruit Loop boxes. I crunched and slid off, but the Dork Shoes looked wonderful under a spotlight. We made love looking at them.

In no time I rose to manager, asked Liza to marry me, and bought a bigger house. We talked of children.

But the shoes were getting worn; I wore them all the time, sometimes to bed. How would I find the salesman with not even a card? I scanned on-line. I took out ads. Nothing. I was afraid that life would not keep on so wonderfully.

But then one day he pulled up to my house. Relieved, I gave him a thousand dollars, but he handed it back. His hair halo now had spikes like horns. His car was no longer packed with boxes, but souls with their heads down. Above a black cloud opened to a jagged road.

