

Bonne Fire

by Matt Potter

The flames shot higher and hotter and flushed my face amber and orange and red. Holding my breath, I closed my eyes.

"It's a new beginning, Madeleine," Rob said, warm on my face. "You can do it."

Stepping forward, I opened my eyes to watch her glossy face wrinkle and crackle and curl. Magazine covers ripped from their spines, defaced articles and slashed film posters, all collected since 1983 in scrapbooks and albums and shoeboxes, when (we were both sixteen) she stole the part of *Judy* in *BMX Bandits* from me and launched her international career.

"Do it, Madeleine."

Loosening my fingers, the Nicole doll dropped from my grasp and landed just out of flames' reach. I bent to pick it up but Rob sprang forward and kicked it into the fire.

Noxious fumes rose as flames licked around the perfect face and the plastic body and blonde hair melted. And the voodoo pins pinged as, folding and imploding, she was reduced to a petro-chemical puddle.

"Repeat after me," he said. "Nicole Kidman did not steal my career. *BMX Bandits* was a shit film."

"Nicole Kidman did not steal my career," I chanted. "*BMX Bandits* was a shit film."

Rob wiped away tears.

"Nicole Kidman did not steal my career. *BMX Bandits* was a shit film."

I smiled him a recovery smile.

Back inside, Rob hummed while doing the dishes.

And sneaking on the internet, I ordered a life-size Nicole Kidman doll.

