

4-1-2005

## The Perfect Pair

Jennifer Ashley

California Polytechnic State University - San Luis Obispo, [jashley@calpoly.edu](mailto:jashley@calpoly.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/moebius>

---

### Recommended Citation

Ashley, Jennifer (2005) "The Perfect Pair," *Moebius*: Vol. 3: Iss. 1, Article 16.  
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/moebius/vol3/iss1/16>

This The Gamut is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Liberal Arts at DigitalCommons@CalPoly. It has been accepted for inclusion in Moebius by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@CalPoly. For more information, please contact [mwyngard@calpoly.edu](mailto:mwyngard@calpoly.edu).

## THE PERFECT PAIR

*Jennifer Ashley*

Lucy saw them through the window, strappy aquamarine heels with flecks of gold. They reminded her of fishing lures. She strutted inside, gestured to the shoes and the storeowner nodded, sending an employee to the back to retrieve the perfect size.

As Lucy slipped her right foot in the sling back heel, she felt a delicious thrill. The two hundred dollar price tag seemed like a sale. Everyone watching—the storeowner, the employee—remained hushed, in awe of Lucy’s religious attention to the shoes. They knew this ritual well. She stopped in several times a week and never failed to leave the store with at least one new pair: platforms, mary janes, t-strap pumps, Vivaldi slides, Bellini thongs.

The storeowner and her employee agreed that Lucy was beautiful but her most stunning feature was her feet. Her toes angled down in a perfect line. Her soles were pink and soft as a baby’s. Her delicate ankles must drive men crazy, they said across the counter only moments after Lucy floated out the store.

And Lucy, Lucy of course knew this too. Why else spend all her disposable income on shoes? She could walk into a party wearing four hundred dollar pumps and men in the room would suddenly turn her way, unaware of the exact cause of their irrepressible attraction. Women would slit their eyes, unable to pinpoint the source of their envy. Men would buy her cocktails and escort her to balconies and offer to fly her to private villas on the coasts of Spain and France. They wanted to uncover what it was about her. And Lucy would twist her lips in a smile, never lowering her eyes so as to give away the secret.

Because her feet were her most seductive feature, she did everything to keep them looking fabulous. She went to her pedicurist twice a week. She never walked barefoot, not even on carpet. And it was practically a full time job shopping for the best shoes.

She kept her favorite pair on top of her television, their own private altar. They were red silk heels, the color of ripe cherries. She bought them in San Sebastian and was so enamored with the rich red of the satin, she contemplated buying two pair in case one was damaged or stolen during shipping. But the storeowner assured her they would arrive safely to the states as he folded the cherry-colored shoes in gold tissue and placed them in a velvet-lined box.

They were the first thing she saw when she got home from work and the last thing she saw before going to bed at night. Her succulent red shoes. They sparkled on their altar, the glowing television. People were immediately drawn to them when visiting her house. And Lucy would tense up if someone gestured toward them with a compliment: What cute shoes! forcing her to dash between the person and the television so as to stop their foreign hands from marring the virgin satin.

The week before, one woman asked if she could try them on and Lucy abruptly changed the subject to yogurt and asked if the woman would like some or maybe a cup of cottage cheese? It was then that Lucy realized she would have to invest in a special glass case. This pair was too precious to be exposed to the hazards of everyday life.

The carpenter came at the end of the week. She showed him to the shoes and he pulled out an arm's length of yellow measuring tape, allowing it to retract recklessly as he scratched out some numbers on paper. He was extremely focused: sketching ideas at her kitchen table with a sharp pencil, tapping on her wall to find studs.

In bed that night, she imagined making love to the carpenter: her hands grasping the strong shoulder muscles, her feet dangling off the bed in sparkling red heels.

The next afternoon, he brought over samples of wood and various stains and thick sheets of tinted glass: sky blue, pink rose, pale green. She answered the door in her newest pair of aquamarine heels and flexed her ankle as he walked in.

She asked if he'd like something cold to drink but he held out a piece of wood, prompting her to feel it. "They ship it straight from Japan," he said. "Very few trees like these left." She braised her hand against his wrist as she reached for the delicate grain.

"Spectacular," she said. "I'm rethinking the placement of the case. What do you think about the bedroom?" He followed her down the hall. "I was thinking it could go here," she said. And the light in the case would go on when the bedroom lights turn off. She flicked the bedroom light off, and he noticed that her closet was illuminated.

"May I?" He stepped forward.

She slid open the doors of her closet and they walked in. He ran his hand over the elaborate cedar shelving, admiring the carpentry. The woman admired her shoes. There were hundreds of them: each sitting at attention, waiting to be chosen.

It was then that she found herself unbuttoning her blouse. She let her skirt fall to the floor until she was wearing nothing but her open-toed, gold-flecked heels. Then she

## Ashley: The Perfect Pair

ran her hand along the finish of the shelf until it met his wrist and they breathed in the seductive scent of the cedar. The carpenter turned around and in the brilliant light of her walk-in closet, he traced his fingers down the curve of her neck to her breast, the jut of her hip to the small of her knee and down to the delicate hill of her ankle. He kneeled to unfasten the leather strap around her heel and then touched his lips to each of her perfectly painted toes.

“I am going to build you so many things,” he said. He was speaking to the immaculate shape of her irresistible feet. 