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Silver Silk

by Marion Umney

At first, I didn't notice her. Well, who would? She wasn't much to look at, but she was something to think about. A nondescript little woman, bland and beige, like so many. It was the non-descriptness of her that got me to thinking, critically I confess. I pigeonholed her and the pigeonhole was labelled "boring, narrow minded, probably voted for Brexit if she bothered to vote at all, scared of her own shadow."

That made it even more of a surprise when she spoke. Her voice was silver silk, enticing, enchanting, inviting. Initially I couldn't place where the sound had come from. All I knew was that it was magnetic. I had to turn my head. I had no choice and, as I did so her eyes met mine; bright blue pools, incongruous in that blandness, which drew me into them; and the voice....

"You shouldn't be here," the voice said.

I just stared, uncertain of what was happening. Where was I that I shouldn't be?

"You shouldn't be here," the voice repeated.

In a corner of my mind, I could hear my wife.

"What are you doing John? What are you staring at?"

I slowly turned back to her.

"Sorry love, but that woman just said something really strange to me."

"What woman?"

"At the table behind us."

"There's no-one there."

I turned sharply round and, to my surprise, my wife was right. She'd gone.

"Well, she was there, and she said something really strange," I paused, undecided then made up my mind. "Do you know what Ann, I think we should go."

"Oh, for goodness sake, it was you who wanted to stop for coffee. What's changed your mind?"

"Not sure, just she said...well, I just feel I'd rather go home."

"Are you OK? Not having one of your funny turns are you?"

"No I'm fine, I just think I'd rather get back."

She sighed as she gathered up her coat and bag and smiled apologetically at the waitress who was just on her way over to take our order. She stomped off up the hill towards home, while I followed, lost in confusion and disquiet.

It was two days later when I'd all but forgotten the strange woman with the silver silk voice and the bright blue eyes, that I happened to glance at the local paper and sat up with a start. On the front page was a photograph of the café with a gaping hole in the large glass window just where we had been sitting. The caption read:

Car crashes into café. Police say it was a miracle there were no casualties, and in the corner of the picture I could just see the edge of a beige coat.