

# SHOE



AMY LAURENS

## **Shoe**

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The shoe lay by the road, waiting. Someone would pick it up. Someone always did.

Jenna halted. A shoe lay in her way. A shoe, just one, lying on its side. Strange.

She peered at it. Black, pointy toe with pleats in the leather... It looked exactly like Carina's shoes, the ones Jenna had been envying for the last month. Gorgeous shoes. She'd tried them on once when Carina was out.

But this was only one shoe. She couldn't wear one. She turned away.

*Tink.*

Jenna looked back. The shoe stood upright – and it stared at her forlornly.

Wind gusted down the street and the shoe rocked on its slender heel. Jenna knelt in front of it. It looked so vulnerable...

The wind puffed again, and Jenna decided. She scooped the shoe up. It didn't

matter that it was pair-less. She couldn't leave it out here alone.

\* \* \*

Jenna set the shoe on the table. She'd polished it until it gleamed, and set against the mahogany table it created a pleasant still-life.

Pleasing... But the shoe looked empty.

Jenna drummed her fingers on her chin, wondering if it was stupid to try on a pair-less shoe.

The light bulb overhead flickered and the shoe seemed to wink at her. "I'll keep your secret," it might have said.

Jenna grinned. She kicked off her sneakers and wriggled out of her socks. She slipped her foot into the shoe, giggling – then frowned.

It was too big.

But only just. She might be able to manage... Jenna stood, and twitched in surprise as the soft leather contracted. She must have been mistaken. The shoe fit perfectly.

*I wonder what it looks like,* she thought.

Unwilling to remove the shoe, she tottered to her bedroom and posed in front of her mirror.

She tilted her head, examining her foot's reflection. The clouds drifted and a shaft of sunlight shot through her window, pinning the shoe in its beam.

Jenna gasped. Not only did the shoe fit her perfectly, it was *stunning*. Her ankles had never looked so slender, and the height of the heel showed off her calf to its full advantage.

*Hmm. I wonder.* She had a dress, a slinky black number with a swishy skirt that she'd had on that time she'd tried Carina's shoes...

She pulled it out of the wardrobe, slipped into it, and stood before the mirror again. And frowned. The mirror was too small.

*Carina has a full-length mirror.*

The thought came out of nowhere, but Jenna smiled happily. *So she does.*

She trotted down the hall to her sister's bedroom. She threw her head up, sucked in her stomach, and admired her reflection.

The clouds shifted again, and a gleam in the mirror caught Jenna's eye.

Carina's shoes.

It wasn't like Carina to leave her things lying around. And yet there were the shoes, sprawling out from under the bedspread.

Jenna looked down at the shoe on her foot, then back at Carina's pair. It wasn't

even like she'd have to try *both* of them on...

An image of Carina, hands on hips, popped into her mind. "If you don't stop going through my stuff whenever I'm not here I'm going to get a lock for my door."

Jenna gave a guilty shiver – but she'd never *hurt* anything. Carina *always* overreacted.

Jenna pressed her fingers against her lips. The lights flickered, and Carina's shoes winked at her. She nodded. "Okay. Just one of you."

She dropped to the floor and pulled the left shoe on, wriggling her toes in delight. She scrambled to her feet and posed again. Perfect!

Her right foot began to tap. She frowned. When did she decide to do that?

*Oh.* Probably about the same time she'd begun to hear that wildly infectious music, thrumming past her ears like blood, rushing and roaring and making her want to dance.

She whirled, giggling as her dress fanned out. The music sped up and Jenna twirled again.

But the room was too small. It wasn't made for dancing.

She skipped out to the lounge room. Much better. This time when she twirled

there were no walls to impede the perfect flare of her skirt.

Impulsively, she reached up and pulled out her hair-band. She shook her head, dark waves cascading over her shoulders. She spun again, clapping her hands as her hair flared out like her skirt.

People should see this.

Jenna flung open the front door, raced down the path, and onto the street. A deep belly-laugh surged up and she clapped in time to the music. Her feet seemed to have taken on a life of their own, and she tapped and twisted and kicked, the black shoes inky shadows in the evening light.

One shadow slightly darker than the other.

Jenna kicked again and again, lifting her legs high to mark the rhythm.

A car approached.

She noticed it out of the corner of her eye, but it didn't really matter. She was dancing, the driver would see that. Surely no one could help but be infected the moment they heard the music – and they'd hear it as soon as they came near, for it was loud and strong.

She giggled and ducked in mock curtsy to the on-coming vehicle. Its roar blended into the song with deep percussion

undertones that tugged at Jenna's stomach. She hugged herself.

"Come!" she yelled. "Come and join!"

The car obeyed, racing closer as though it couldn't wait to dance with Jenna and the wild music.

Jenna spread her arms, welcoming the car. She reached out to hug it, wanting to whip it up around so that it too could feel the weightlessness of the dance.

Her laugh changed to a scream as the car hit her.

Her body fell limply to the road. She might have just been sleeping.

Her right foot twitched. The shoe fell off.

It lay by the road, waiting. Someone would pick it up. Someone always did.

END



**Amy Laurens** is an Australian fantasy writer and high-school English teacher. She lives with her husband and dog, one of whom tends to bash the laptop's keyboard to get attention. When not glued to the laptop or teaching, Amy can be found baking in the kitchen or outdoors with her camera - and you can find her online at [www.amylaurens.com](http://www.amylaurens.com).

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