

# Black Ice

by Tess Pearson

She rose before morning, dressed in low lamplight, and stuffed the duffle bag full. She unbolted the back door and pulled on her boots, still caked with mud from yesterday's reconnaissance. The orange glow of her cigarette intensified with each drag. She stood against the wall, tilting her head back, caressing the scar running ear to mouth. A lone bird cried out. It was time. Today was the sweet day. Her grin pulled taut, teeth peeling into the cold night like ripe fruit being split open. A cackle escaped her. She was ready. Her lips wavered for a moment, threatening grimace. Then, stubbing out the cigarette, she lifted the bag over her shoulder, slung on her hat, and walked round to the street. She unlocked and mounted the fixed wheel, riding into the tender morning. To the unsuspecting eye of commuters, she looked like a cycle courier going about her day. Her intentions lay hidden beneath a semblance of the ordinary, invisible as ice on the road that cold morning. The hard, slick trick of it keeping her balance sharp. The strap of the bag dug into her clavicle, the only telltale sign of the heavy tools inside.



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