I could swear that I saw my wife and kids by the red shoe-the evil red creature that lurks in the woods. It was said that it lures children before they are never to be seen again. The corner of the school is haunting enough, but this, I cannot bear. As if Satan thought I could endure more than Dante himself, he landed me here.

The giant thing contains a squiggly yellow mark on it, resembling a shoelace. The mark starts from the bottom of the dirt into the eyelet. No loop formed is the same as the rest, as if some child drew on it—all messy.

But, by some horror, I hear a voice. A voice that has been haunting me in my dreams since she left.

*John. John. Don't fret. It is me.*

The words. The softness in her voice. How I used to kiss the mouth that formed those words. I cover my ears to prevent anything else from entering me.

The voice laughs. *John, you have always been so paranoid. Relax. I am okay. The kids are fine.*

I fall back onto my knees and whimper. The suffering. As if I thought all would end. When will it end?

The voice continues. *Your family is ok*

“I won’t listen to any more of this. You sicken me!” I yell through ground teeth as some foam escapes between them.
The voice laughs annoyingly. Mocking me.

*When will you learn John? Your selfishness brought me here. Your kids are gone. We are all safe, but it was not until we all fell apart from your world. We were unsafe with you.*

The heel of the shoe is no match for the rest of it- no way for the shoe to hold any giant wearing it. As the heel looks sturdy, bulky, and square, the rest of the shoe looks cushioned, soft, and elegant. I must admit that it’s a perfect balance, giving me some comfort before I run from whatever the hell I stumbled into.

I try to make the rest of the shoe out-the other side of the shoe. This one, compared to the evil silkiness of the last, is damaged, no yellow lace. Empty.

I take back a memory- our wedding together.

*Do you, John Mal, take Ellie Goldberg to be your lawfully wedded wife?*

Another with her showing me her work.

*Do you like it? I think one of the UC schools wants to place this on their campus.*

And an image with her in it and our little ones. They were laughing-laughing with me.

We walk along the soft texture of the restaurant carpet; enjoying each other’s energy. Her red heels, along with the yellow marks, reflect the lights around us, making her stand out as the most beautiful woman there.

Suddenly, I am in another memory. I see another version of me holding those same red shoes. The yellow laces are gone and I see her on the ground screaming. I'm grabbing her dress. The children, crying behind our sofa. I throw the shoe at her face.

Another memory, and I’m on the school grounds. It's dark, so I can barely make out my figure burying what looks like three bodies-two of which were my children. The other has her feet dangling out of the bag. The red shoes.
John

Reality kicks back in. I rest on my knees and look up. The wooden statue still remains in its same shape.

*You cannot deny it anymore.*

The voice echoes into my canals as I fall and rest my hands on the side of the shoe with the yellow lace. I take in all her perfections. How she used to always shine in light and glimmer in darkness.

*You cannot deny that you know you still love me. And forever more…*

In my peripheral vision, I see the ghosts of my children run onto the shoe to play. I throw myself back onto my feet and escape the school grounds before I hear her voice. But she speaks before I do so.

*I’ll still be here to haunt you.*

*I won.*