

JOHN GREY

MATT MUGGED

He just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, that's all.

Of course late night in the city is always wrong on both counts, like when the clubs let out and everybody's strutting or staggering to the backstreet where they parked their cars.

He discovered that a crowd can become a man alone without him even thinking about it.

The clubbers go their own way, none of them are his, and there's always guys hanging out that you don't want to mess with—mostly gangs, but sometimes, if he's big and brawny enough or wielding a Glock, just the one.

It was three brutes who came at him.

One grabbed his arms, wrenching them behind his back, the second slapped him across the face, the third rifled his pockets, grabbed his wallet, his phone, then snatched his watch from his wrist for good measure.

But not the shoes. At least not the shoes.

They took a good look at them and just shook their heads, shoved him down to the sidewalk, and ran off.

He didn't know whether to feel relieved or insulted.

He drove home in pain, in embarrassment, in anger, spent an hour cancelling credit cards, his phone number, and crawled into bed, although he didn't sleep so well.

There are times when even a soft, comfy mattress can be the wrong place at the wrong time, like when thoughts converge from out of the darkness and there's three of them to only the one doing the thinking. One thought grabbed his arms, the second slapped his face,

the third took just about everything he had on him.
But not the shoes. At least not the shoes.
They were still lying at the foot of the closet where he tossed them.
Lucky they didn't take the damn things, he reckoned,
for what would he cancel: his shoes or his feet?