

# Chapter 31

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As part of my new daily regimen of torture, Nina has made it her goal to make shopping as challenging for me as she possibly can.



She has written out a list of items we need from the grocery store. But they are all very specific. She doesn't want milk. She wants organic milk from Queensland Farm. And if they don't have the exact item she wants, I have to text her to let her know and send her pictures of other possible replacements. And she takes her sweet time texting me back, but I have to stand there in the goddamn milk aisle waiting.

Right now, I'm in the bread aisle. I send Nina a text:

They are out of Nantucket sourdough bread. Here are some possible replacements.

I send her photographs of every single kind of sourdough bread they have in stock. And now I have to wait while she looks at them. After several minutes, I receive a text back from her:

Do they have any brioche?

Now I have to send her pictures of every brioche bread they have. I swear, I'm going to blow my brains out before I finish this shopping trip. She's deliberately tormenting me. But to be fair, I did sleep with her husband.

As I'm snapping photographs of the bread, I notice a heavysset man with gray hair watching me from the other end of the aisle. He's not even being subtle about it. I shoot him a look, and he backs off, thank God. I can't deal with a stalker on top of everything else.

As I wait for Nina to contemplate the bread a little further, I let my mind wander. As usual, it wanders to Andrew Winchester. After Nina's revelation that I had been in

prison, Andrew never found me to “talk,” like he said he would. He has been effectively scared off. I can’t blame him.

I like Andrew. No, I don’t just like him. I’m in love with him. I think about him all the time, and it’s painful to share a home with him and not be able to act on my feelings for him. Moreover, he deserves better than Nina.

I could make him  happy. I could even give him a baby like he wants. And let’s face it, anything is better than her.

But even though he knows we have a connection, nothing will ever happen. He knows I went to prison. He doesn’t want an ex-convict. And he’s going to keep on being miserable with that witch, probably for the rest of his life.

My phone buzzes again.

Any French bread?

It takes another ten minutes, but I manage to find a loaf of bread that meets Nina’s expectations. As I roll my shopping cart to the checkout, I notice that heavysset guy again. He definitely is staring at me. And more unsettlingly, he doesn’t have a shopping cart. So what exactly is he doing?

I check out as quickly as I possibly can. I load the paper bags filled with groceries back into my shopping cart, so I can push it out into the parking lot to my Nissan. It’s only as I’m getting close to the exit that a hand closes around my shoulder. I lift my head and that heavysset man is standing over me.

“Excuse me!” I try to jerk away, but he holds tight to my arm. My right hand balls into a fist. At least a bunch of people are watching us, so I have witnesses. “What do you think you’re doing?”

He points to a small ID badge hanging from the collar of his blue dress shirt, which I hadn’t noticed before. “I’m supermarket security. Can you come with me, Miss?”

I'm going to be sick. It's bad enough I spent almost ninety minutes in this place, shopping for a handful of items, but now I'm being arrested? For what?

"What's wrong?" I gulp.

We have attracted a crowd. I notice a couple of women from the school pick-up, who I'm sure will gleefully report back to Nina that they saw her housekeeper being apprehended by supermarket security.

"Please come with me," the guy says again.

I push my cart with us because I'm scared to leave it behind. There are over two hundred dollars' worth of groceries in there, and I'm sure Nina would make me pay for all of them if they were lost or stolen. I follow the man into a small office with a scratched-up wooden desk and two plastic chairs set up in front of it. The man gestures for me to sit down, so I settle down in one of the chairs, which creaks threateningly under my weight.

"This has got to be a mistake..." I look at the man's ID badge. His name is Paul Dorsey. "What's this about, Mr. Dorsey?"

He frowns at me as his jowls hang down. "A customer alerted me that you were stealing items from the supermarket."

I let out a gasp. "I would never do that!"

"Maybe not." He sticks his thumb into the loop of his belt. "But I have to investigate. Can I see your receipt, please, Miss...?"

"Calloway." I dig around in my purse until I come up with the crumpled strip of paper. "Here."

"Just a warning," he says. "We prosecute all shoplifters."

I sit in a plastic chair, my cheeks burning, while the security guard painstakingly looks through all my purchases and matches them up with what's in the cart. My stomach

churns as I consider the horrible possibility that maybe the clerk didn't ring something up properly, and he'll think I stole it. And then what? They prosecute all shoplifters. That means that they'll call the police. And that would be a violation of my parole for sure.

It hits me that this would work out pretty well for Nina. She would get rid of me without having to be the mean person who fired me. She would also get some pretty sweet revenge on me for having slept with her husband. Of course, it's a little harsh to be sent to jail for adultery, but I get the feeling Nina may look at it differently.

But that can't happen. I didn't steal anything from the grocery store.

He's not going to find anything in that cart that isn't on my receipt.