

The Price of Romance

By

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INT. SCANNER'S POV, SUPERMARKET CHECKOUT - DAY

Black. The indistinct hum found round supermarket checkouts. The squeak of technology being installed.

MIKE

Here, don't say I never give you anything.

TINA (26) checkout girl, plants a loud giggly kiss and--

Light seeps into SCANNER - so much more than a mere reader of bar-codes. Scanner sees retreating lips and a red lip-print on his lens. Tina mists it with a spray and wipes him gently with a cloth. Scanner's vision clears.

Tina's head appears above him framed by heart-shaped magenta balloons. MIKE (30) badge labelled 'store technician' edges into view.

MIKE

You didn't have to kiss it to turn it on.

TINA

Worked though didn't it?

Tina breaks into a broad grin and leans her ample chest forward. Scanner's shutter bar sounds double approval. Mike's footsteps retreat.

A CUSTOMER'S shadow passes over Scanner's lens.

Tina serves up a smile. She runs the Customer's grocery items over the lens. Scanner beeps contentedly.

TINA (CONT'D)

Enter your pin now...Thanks.

SUPERMARKET TANNOY ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Treat that special someone with our range of gifts available in store.

Tina rests her elbows either side of the Scanner bed. Her hands appear above it as if in prayer.

A small pixellated heart forms on Scanner's screen. It expands to the edges of the screen and disappears, unseen.

Scanner scrolls through an array of codes, getting faster and faster until he brakes on one.

A bunch of roses superimpose in front of his view of Tina. Scanner beeps.

(CONTINUED)

TINA

Whoa. What's happening?

Tina's face looms close. A buzzer sounds.

SUPERMARKET TANNOY ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Technician to checkout ten.

Mike's footsteps near. Tina points to the price screen.

TINA (CONT'D)

Look - but there's no flowers.

MIKE

That a hint?

TINA

You wish.

Scanner zooms through codes at lightening speed and selects:

SUPER: A box of chocolates.

Scanner beeps. Mike's chin reappears.

SUPER: A sappy Valentine's day card.

Scanner beeps again.

TINA

How, how are you doing that?

MIKE

What makes you think it's me?

Pixillated hearts dance on Scanner's screen. Tina frowns. Mike peers into Scanner's lens.

Scanner sends out a huge white flash.

Mike squirms in blinking agony. Tina pulls him to her chest.

TINA

Shit, are you alright?

Red mist clouds Scanner's view. Mike sinks his head into Tina's embrace with a smug smile. He winks at Scanner and lifts up a pointy finger - it nears--

A switch clicks off.

Black.