

The Price of Romance

By

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INT. SCANNER'S POV, CHECKOUT - DAY

Black.

Sugary background music. Small grunts of effort. The squeak of technology being installed.

MIKE (O.S.)

And don't say I never give you anything.

TINA (26) sweet cheerful shop assistant, 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 appears above him framed by Valentine balloons. Scanner's shutter begins a long sigh -

MIKE (30s) senior assistant, edges into view.

MIKE

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

TINA

Worked though didn't it?

Mike's footsteps retreat. Tina's saucy grin turns wistful. She leans her ample chest forward. Scanner's shutter bar sounds a wolf whistle. Tina's arms rise in surprise.

The shadow of a shopping basket passes over Scanner. Tina calms and serves up a smile. She runs the Customer's grocery items over the lens.

TINA (CONT'D)

Enter your pin in now...Thanks.

MIKE (O.S.)

(via tannoy)

We have a number of Valentine gifts available in store -

Tina forms an apologetic smile as she passes the receipt and the card to the customer.

She rests her elbows either side of the Scanner bed, staring into the middle distance. Her hands appear above Scanner as if in prayer.

(CONTINUED)

A pixellated heart forms on his screen - expands and bursts. She misses it. Scanner scrolls through an array of codes, getting faster and faster until -

A bunch of roses, plus price detail, SUPERIMPOSES in front of his view of Tina. Scanner beeps.

TINA

Whoa. What's happening?...Mike?

Mike comes into view. Tina points towards the cash register.

TINA (CONT'D)

Look - but there's no flowers.

MIKE

That a hint?

He holds her gaze for a beat, breaking before real commitment - to Tina's slight frustration.

Scanner zooms through codes at lightening speed and selects: SUPER: A box of chocolates - beep - SUPER: A sappy Valentine's day card - beep.

TINA

There, look. How, how are you doing that?

MIKE

What makes you think it's me?

Pixillated hearts dance on Scanner's screen.

Mike peers into Scanner's lens.

Scanner sends out a huge white smoky flash.

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

TINA

Shit, are you alright?

Red mist clouds Scanner's screen. Mike sinks his head into Tina's embrace with a satisfied smile.

Mike gives Scanner a smug wink and lifts up a pointy finger - it nears.

A switch clicks off.

Black.