

Excerpt from: “And the Cupcake Goes To...”

Pride is a funny thing though. You could be at your last dollar, your last can of beans and you still cannot bring yourself to the realization that you are not going to make ends meet. I waited till we were down to our last can of soup, and last macaroni box, before I headed to the grocery store across town (as to prevent from being recognized by anyone I knew). I pulled into the parking lot with two of my daughters, who were excited about the thought of having a full refrigerator again. I exited the car with reluctance, and entered the grocery store as if “Poor government assisted mother” was stamped across my forehead, and a sign hung on my back stating, “I can’t afford to pay for my food.” I grabbed the cart as I went around placing an array of fruits and vegetables into my cart convinced that everyone around me was watching me, judging me, and I began to rush through the aisles like a race car driver headed for the finish line, as my children asked, “Where’s the fire?” They walked beside me lighting up with each new item that entered our cart. I tried to match their enthusiasm but was much too busy checking for family and friends who would spot me and my card.

After filling the cart we made our way to the checkout, as I began to unload the cart, and wait for the groceries to be bagged. There I stood with the abysmal anticipation of having to hand over the card displaying my weakness, displaying my vulnerability, and I went into a state of panic as the cashier shouted out the total amount of my purchases. I reflected back to my ex-husband, the #Q!!\$4, sorry, last time, I promise, and I wished pretty bad things on him at that moment as I handed over my card and saw the cashier smirk as if he was saying, “Okay, she is one of those people,” and again my humbling situation brought over my alter ego pride, and I held my head as high as I could, without bringing any attention to myself, as the clerk swiped the card, and told me where to sign. I signed in such a hurry the FBI couldn’t have read my signature. My children, who were already pushing the cart out through the door, had the first package of cupcakes opened before we entered the car.

I sat down behind the wheel as my daughter’s smiled saying what a great system this was, and I reminded them of why we had to do this because of the !!!###\$\$, sorry, it just slipped out, but I put it in nicer terms, and used this as an educational moment stressing how important it was to finish school and rely on your education. I then stuffed my face with a cupcake, and began to back out of the parking slot, a statistic, but my kids would eat well this month and I would be able to make my rent.
