



# CITIZEN'S ARREST

*Dad, that old man is stealing plums!*

by Kelly Hogan

IT IS THE SPRING OF 1974. I am nine years old. I am standing behind my dad in the check-out line at our neighborhood A&P on Ponce de Leon Avenue in Atlanta, Georgia. My dad is holding our shopping basket—fish sticks, Corn Chex, Mr. Bubble, Michelob, black Kiwi shoe polish, and a big can of Consort for Men hairspray. It's taking a long time to get through the line because the cashier lady pushed two buttons at once and jammed up the cash register. She called for a manager on the little bendy microphone, but we're still waiting.

I concentrate on the racks of candy to my left—candy that I don't even bother asking for, because I know I won't get any. My dad came back from flying helicopters in Vietnam two years ago. He says that my little brother and I got weak from living with our mom while he was gone, so he's trying to make us strong. That means reveille every morning, a duty roster for chores, yes-sir-no-sir 24-7, and zero candy.

When he first came back, my dad tried to act normal. I remember seeing him outside in a lawn chair last summer, studying from a giant notebook labeled C&S BANK. The sun was shining on his perfect hair, but he didn't look happy. Then, new things started showing up around our apartment: heavy black flashlights, wooden nightsticks, handcuffs, and a gun. Now my dad is a policeman. He's training my brother and me to live "by the book."

An older gentleman is in line behind me. He reminds me of my Paw Paw. He's wearing grey Hush Puppies and a dark blue tucked-in polo shirt with a little white penguin stitched on it. He has a mustache—not bushy like my dad's, but thin and fancy. Just a line

drawn above his lip, like Rhet Butler or Martin Luther King, Jr.—two of my biggest crushes. He catches me staring and smiles at me, just like my Paw Paw would. Then he casually takes a big juicy black plum out of a plastic bag in his cart and inserts the whole thing in his mouth. I can't believe he just did that. I have to turn around.

Three seconds later, he sets a plum pit, slurped perfectly clean, on the candy rack just at my eye level, next to the Chuckles. Then he does it again. Another wet plum pit next to the first, then another, and another. He's spreading germs! He's stealing! I need to report it to the police!

I move forward and tug on my dad's belt loop and whisper, "Dad! Dad!" He turns around, already annoyed from having to wait in line for so long.

"What?"

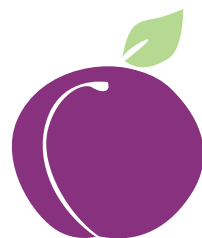
"The man behind us is stealing plums!"

I motion toward the man with my head and point at the collection of sticky pits on the shelf, but my dad only sighs, rolls his eyes, and says, "You need to learn to mind your own business."

"But! But, Dad!"

He turns around.

I feel burnt. I feel stupid. My cheeks are hot. I'm confused. I'm embarrassed. I'm mad. I sneak a look back at the plum man (who now doesn't remind me of my Paw Paw *at all*), but he isn't looking at me anymore. He's looking up at the store ceiling like nothing ever happened, humming along to "Billy, Don't Be a Hero" coming out of the round silver speaker. 🍷



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*Kelly Hogan is a singer and writer whose most recent solo album is I Like to Keep Myself in Pain.*

PHOTO, PAGE 8 by *Kate Medley*.



## COCA-COLA FUDGE CAKE

by *Laura Lippman*

*Bestselling novelist Laura Lippman, creator of private eye Tess Monaghan, has won every major award in crime fiction. She usually sets her work in or around Baltimore, though her Georgia roots shine through in this recipe.*

—JP

THIS RECIPE FOR COCA-COLA FUDGE CAKE has been in my family for years and I am no longer clear on its origins. I always thought it came from one of those old-fashioned group projects that schools and neighborhoods used to do, and that it might be from the Lovett School in Atlanta, which my first cousin attended. But maybe not. One thing I know for sure is that it is important not to gussy it up, although I feel bad about using margarine these days and sometimes substitute real butter, a sentence that encapsulates something important about the times in which we live, although I'm not sure what it is.

Whenever I tell people—well, non-Southerners—about Coca-Cola Fudge Cake, they say "Ewwww." When I serve it to them, they ask for seconds. And the recipe.