

into the house, come back for more, and again until the car's empty. How can they afford all that meat, Donna's mother wonders. She'll open a can of salmon and put together patties tonight, and she'll get through the Hy-Vee tomorrow.



*How to clean: Easy-Off. Deeply misleading*



It's tomorrow, and here are the cops. She sits in her assigned seat in the living room. Donna's father's at work already. One of the boys claims a scratchy throat, but she sends them all to school anyway. Tomorrow's Saturday. He can rest then. Probably trying to wiggle out of a test. His face is blotchy, like bad bananas. She looks through him when she whispers, "Get to school."

These might be different cops. Hard to tell. One of them says, "We have news."

Her heartbeat leaps into a new, fast patter. "Good news?"

The other cop glares at his partner and sighs. "We found something of your daughter's." He holds up a red knitted mitten in a Baggie. The thumb's chewed up. "Do you recognize this mitten?" he asks. "We found it outside Drug Fair, in the parking lot. It had been covered with snow."

Donna's mother can't breathe. But when she can, she says, "No." She hates these two smug faces.

The cops exchange glances.

"Ma'am," the second one says.

Donna's mother says, "I've never seen that mitten." She jumps up, runs to the coat closet, and drags out an avalanche of knitted mittens. Donna's grandmother in Cedar Rapids is a speedster knitter, so mittens and hats and scarves fill this closet, this house, some proof that someone loved Donna and thought about her. "Look," Donna's mother says. "Donna's mittens are right here." She flings handfuls of mittens in the air, one after the other,