

Inventory Time excerpt By N.S. Howard

Jordon drove into the parking lot and then checked her face in the small vanity mirror. She noticed one other vehicle in the lot, a black SUV.

“Must be Derrick’s. That’s his style alright.” She muttered under her breath as she walked to the steel door to the warehouse. She tugged the bottom of her green T-shirt down over her blue jeans. The tight-fitting jeans had a tear on the back of the right thigh and a hole on the left knee. They looked fashionable but also suitable for work in a warehouse.

The door was locked and her knock on the steel plate seemed to absorb all of the impact. Then she looked to her left and saw a buzzer. She pressed it and shortly after was rewarded when Derrick opened the door.

“Hi there, Jordon. You’re two minutes late. That’ll have to come off your coffee break.” He grinned at her.

“You’re a mean boss.”

“You don’t know how mean I can be yet.” He smiled at her.

“I’m not worried; you don’t know what I can take.”

“Maybe we’ll find out that later.”

She gave a smile back and looked around. The small office consisted of an old steel desk, a table, chairs and file cabinets. Just outside the office was a set of double garage doors used for delivery of goods. Beyond that, she saw rows of steel shelving that held boxes of inventory. In the far corner, a mesh wire screen room held a few more boxes.

“Where’s Sarah?”

Jordon shrugged. “Late as usual, I guess.”

“Could be trouble for her then.”

“Does she lose her whole coffee break then?” She grinned.

“Might be worse. I might have to net out special discipline.”

Jordon giggled. “Can I watch?”

“You, my lady, have a wicked side.”

“Do I get punished for that?” She gave him a smile and walked away to the desk. “What do we have to do here?”

He took a deep breath and then slowly exhaled. “Each of those sheets lists inventory items. We count the items, write it down and hope the number corresponds to what is in the database.”

She looked at a sheet of paper. “So what does “Std Sz Pc 8736” mean?”

“Standard size paper clip model number 8736, obviously.” He smiled. “You’ll figure out the codes after a while.”

“Somebody shoot me.”

He laughed. “Just pick an item on the shelf, count it, and find it on the sheet.”

A few minutes later Jordon heard the buzzer announcing the arrival of Sarah.

Jordon gave Sarah a smile as she sat next to her. “You may be in for trouble, showing up late.”

“Oh, some trouble I like.” She smiled back at Jordon and took a look behind her where Derrick was working among the metal shelves.

“Yeah, well I think his getting into trouble may refer to a different kind of discipline.” Jordon twisted in her chair, lifting her leg and smacked the side of her ass.

“Oooh, that kind.”

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Sarah wiped her hands on her jeans. Like Jordon, she wore an old t-shirt and jeans, guessing that the warehouse was going to be dusty and dirty. “This is too boring. I need a break.”

Jordon looked over to where Derrick was counting items in a small cardboard box. “I think you may find it best if you do not mention you need a break. He may give you a rough time about that. Something about discipline for being late, and we know what that may mean.” She gave her a grin.

Sarah looked around. “I don’t see a blackboard where I would have to write out lines so I guess he was talking about a different kind of punishment.” She gave a smile as she sat in one of the worn office chairs next to Jordon. She looked inside a box of square metal clips. “What are these things?”

Jordon peered into the box and then called out to Derrick. “Hey, big boy, what the heck are these things and do we really have to count them?”

Derrick walked over to where they sat. “I can show you what they’re for.” He reached over and grabbed another box, about a foot along on each side. He pulled out a yellow plastic ribbon through a slot at the top and began to weave it around Jordon’s forearm to the chair’s arm.

Jordon looked at the binding tape around her arm and opened her mouth in a pretence of surprise. She watched as he encircled her other arm with the more ribbon and then took the loose end back toward the box. He took one of the metal clips and slipped it over the two stands of ribbon.

“There. The clip locks the two ends tight.”

Jordon tried to move her arms. “Effective, I guess.”

Sarah giggled. “She gets all the fun.”

Derrick used a utility knife to cut the ribbon and walked over to Sarah with the loose end. Sarah looked above her at Derrick as he began to wrap it around her upper arms and torso to the back of the chair.

“Hey, is this some kind of a sneak attack?” Sarah lightly pulled at the ribbon at her chest with her fingers.

He took another metal clip and secured the ribbon.

Jordon looked at Sarah and then at Derrick. “Very clever, but how are we suppose to do any work this way?”

“I’m not sure you were accomplishing any work anyway. Your counting was a little inaccurate compared to the data base.”

Jordon laughed. “Please, kind sir. Another chance?”

Derrick cut the plastic ribbons with a utility knife. “I guess if I don’t, I’ll have to do all the counting myself.”

Jordon lifted her hands in the air. “Free at last.”

Derrick rolled up the plastic ribbon and pushed it in the garbage can. “I’ll order in some lunch. Pizza okay?”

Sarah sighed. “Any chance of getting a beer or booze thrown in with it?”
He laughed. “Tell you what, there’s a liquor store a block away. I’ll pick something as well. But you ladies better not make any more counting errors.”

