

Kleptomania definition: A disorder that results in an irresistible urge to steal items you do not need or that have little value.

It is estimated that two-thirds of kleptomaniacs are women.

OVER BLACK:

The BELL announcing the closing of the museum.

FADE IN:

TEASER

INT. NATIONAL MUSEUM STORE - AFTERNOON

POV: An exquisite amber necklace on display. We see it from all sides. POV of a watcher we haven't yet seen. VERA. A frumpy, older woman. The kind you don't notice, even when she's standing right in front of you.

AVA (V.O.)

My grandmother was the great beneficiary of sexism. No one suspected a doddering old lady could have been wrapped up in a fraud.

We see the store GUARD notice a TEENAGE BOY, and follow him. They walk right past Vera, as she slips the necklace into her purse.

AVA

Let alone in charge of it. But how did it all happen?

INT. MUSEUM - LATER

Vera slips the necklace to SISTER JUDY, a nun and Vera's contemporary, who leaves the museum. The ALARM rings. And Sister Judy stops.

MUSEUM GUARD

Go ahead, Sister. Sometimes it just goes off.

AVA (V.O.)

Of course it was an accident. Otherwise a nun would be stealing and that couldn't happen...

INT. VERA'S HOME - DAY

Younger Vera chasing a YOUNG GIRL, AVA, 5, who will not get dressed for school.

AVA (V.O.)

When I look back on how we got entangled, I realize that it all started because Grandma needed to feel 'seen'. Not just for her caretaking abilities, which clearly she found mind-numbing...

Vera 'gives up' and hands the young girl a donut for breakfast.

AVA (V.O.)

But for her astuteness, her insights...

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Vera picks up young Ava from school. She spies a man and approaches a teacher.

VERA

That man has a school laptop in his bag.

The teacher and the principal stop the man and retrieve the laptop.

INT. VERA'S HOME - NIGHT

AVA (V.O.)

Maybe no one would have died if we had noticed that she needed more attention...

Vera, at home, cooking. Her husband reads the newspaper. Young Ava plays a video game.

AVA

But we didn't. Unfortunately, not everyone missed that she needed attention.

INT. STORE - DAY

ALLEN, 50s, a bureaucrat with no social media footprint who is incongruously suave, notices that Vera steals a fine china plate. Knocks into her and her bag falls. The plate shatters.

ALLEN

(charms)

I'm so sorry. You must allow me to pay for it.

Allen pays for the plate, and they begin talking.

AVA (V.O.)

Grandma welcomed his attention.

INT. MUSEUM - DAY

Allen and Grandma at the museum.

VERA

My husband would be glad to give us a behind-the-scenes tour. He's a guard at the museum.

ALLEN

Really?

AVA (V.O.)

But Allen already knew that. It was his job. He needed a way into the museum to facilitate his plan.

INT. GOVERNMENT OFFICE - DAY

Allen enters his office. The door shuts to reveal:

Close On SIGN: "ASST. DIRECTOR OF COUNTERINTELLIGENCE"

AVA (V.O.)

Of course, Grandma couldn't have known the evil that Allen would bring into our lives. At least I tell myself that. Or am I being sexist?