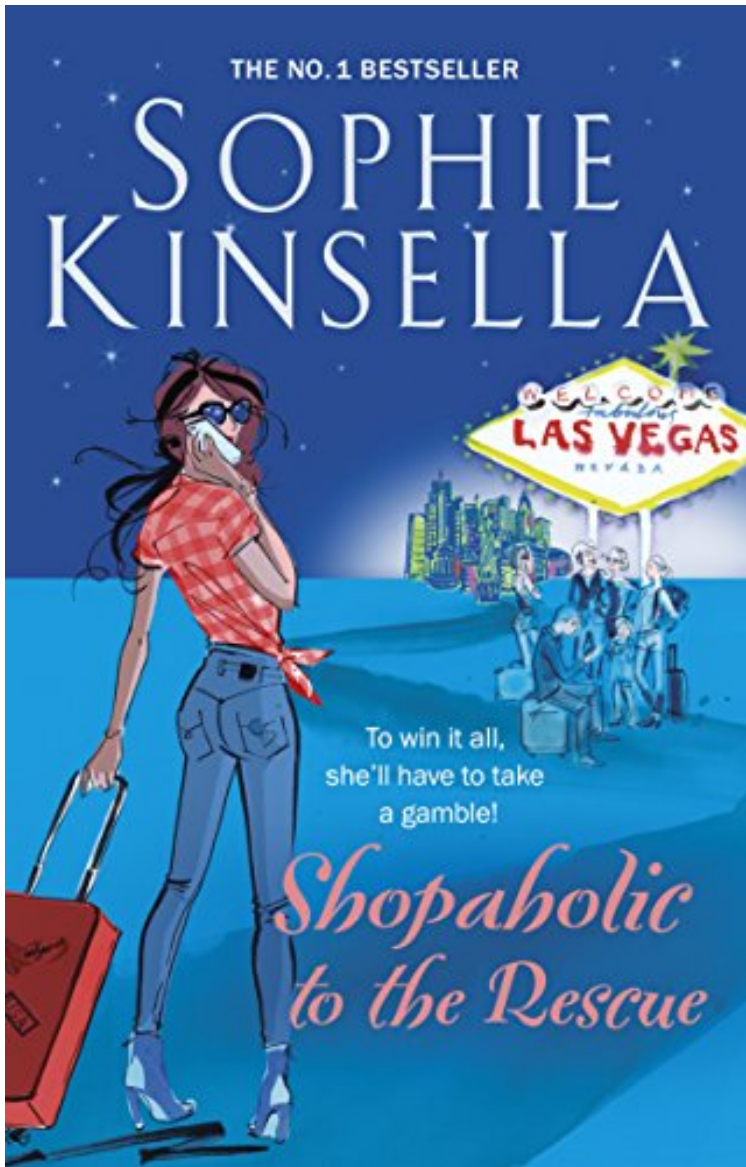


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# Shopaholic to the Rescue: (Shopaholic Book 8) (Shopaholic Series)



Par Sophie Kinsella  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurTo Las Vegas . . . and beyond!Becky Brandon (ne Bloomwood) is on a major rescue mission! Hollywood was full of surprises, and now she's on a road trip to Las Vegas to help her friends and family.She's determined to get to the bottom of why her dad has mysteriously disappeared, help her best friend Suze and even bond with Alicia Bitch Long-legs (maybe...).As Becky discovers just how much her friends and family need help, she comes up with her biggest, boldest, most brilliant plan yet! So can she save the day just when they need her most?Becky is setting out to make things right in this laugh-out-loud, feel-

good conclusion to her American adventure that began with SHOPAHOLIC TO THE STARS. ExtraitFrom: dsmeath@locostinternet.com To: Brandon, Rebecca Subject: A request Dear Mrs. Brandon, It has been a long time since I saw you last. I hope you and your family are flourishing. As for myself, I am enjoying a life of retirement but find my mind often casting back fondly to episodes from my professional life at Endwich Bank. I have therefore decided to embark upon an autobiography or memoir, provisionally entitled: Good and Bad Debts: The Ups and Downs of a Patient (and Not So Patient!) Fulham Bank Manager. I have written two chapters already, which were well received by members of my local horticultural club; several present even expressed the opinion: They should put it on TV! Well, I dont know about that!! I might say, Mrs. Brandon, that you were always one of my more colorful customers and had a unique approach to your finances. (I heartily hope and believe that you have mended your ways with maturity.) We crossed swords many a time, but I trust we reached some sort of entente cordiale by the time of my retirement? I therefore

wonder if I might interview you for my book at a time convenient to yourself? I await your reply with pleasure. Yours sincerely, Derek Smeath Bank Manager (Retd.)From: dsmeath@locostinternet.comTo: Brandon, Rebecca Subject: Re: Re: A request Dear Mrs. Brandon, I write in disappointment. I approached you in good faith, as a fellow professional, or even, dare I say, friend. I hoped to be treated as such. If you do not wish to be interviewed for my memoir, then that is your choice. However, I am saddened that you felt the need to concoct an elaborate lie. Clearly this ridiculous, convoluted story about racing after your father towards Las Vegas to uncover some mystery and make sure poor Tarkie isnt being brainwashed is entirely fictitious. How many times, Mrs. Brandon, have I held missives from you in which you have claimed to have broken your leg, suffered from glandular fever, or told me that your (imaginary) dog has died? I had hoped that as a mature, married mother, you might have grown up a little. However, I find myself sadly disappointed. Yours sincerely, Derek Smeath From: dsmeath@locostinternet.com To: Brandon, Rebecca Subject: Re: Re: Re: Re: A request Dear Mrs. Brandon, To say I was astonished by your most recent email would be an understatement. Thank you very much for the series of photographs. I can indeed see that you are standing on the edge of a desert. I see the RV that you are pointing at and the close-up of the map of California. I also observe your friend Lady Cleath-Stuart in one picture, although whether it is totally obvious from her tortured expression that her husband has gone missing is not for me to say. May I please ask you to clarify: Your father has gone missing and so has your friends husband? Both at once? Yours sincerely, Derek Smeath From: dsmeath@locostinternet.com To: Brandon, Rebecca Subject: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: A request Dear Mrs. Brandon, My goodness, what a story! Your email was a little garbled, if I may say-would these be the correct facts? Your father came to visit you in Los Angeles because he discovered some news regarding an old friend, Brent, whom he had not seen for many years. He then disappeared on a mission, leaving only a note in which he referred to putting something right. He has enlisted the help of Lord Cleath-Stuart (Tarkie), who has been through a difficult time lately and is in a vulnerable state. He has also co--opted a chap named Bryce. (Strange names they have in California.) Now you are following the three to Las Vegas in the fear that Bryce is a nefarious character who may wish to extract money from Lord Cleath-Stuart. In answer to your query, Im afraid I do not have any blinding insights with which to help you, nor did anything similar ever happen while I was at the bank. Although we did once have a rather shady client who attempted to deposit a bin bag full of 20 notes, whereupon I phoned the financial authorities. I will be recounting that tale in my book, believe me!! I wish you every success in tracking down the missing three, and if I can be of any help whatsoever, please do not hesitate to contact me. Yours sincerely, Derek Smeath ONE OK, says Luke calmly. Dont panic. Dont panic? Luke is saying dont panic? No. Noooo. This is all wrong. My husband never says Dont panic. If hes saying Dont panic, then what he really means is: Theres every good reason to panic. God, now Im panicking. Lights are flashing and the police siren is still sounding. All I can think are wild random thoughts like, Do handcuffs hurt? and Who shall I call from my jail cell? and Are the jumpsuits all orange? A policeman is heading toward our hired Class C twenty-six-foot motor home. (Blue gingham drapes, flowered upholstery, six beds, although bed is an exaggerationtry six skinny mattresses plonked on planks of wood.) Hes one of those cool-looking American policemen with mirror shades and a tan, and hes very scary. My heart starts to thump and I automatically start searching around for a hiding place. OK, maybe this is a slight overreaction. But Ive always been nervous around policemen, ever since I smuggled six pairs of dollies shoes out of Hamleys, at age five, and a policeman came up to me and boomed, What have you got there, young lady? and I nearly jumped out of my skin. He was admiring my helium balloon, it turned out. (We sent the dollies shoes back in an envelope after Mum and Dad found them, with a letter of apology, which I wrote myself. And then

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Hamleys wrote back and said, Dont worry, very nicely. I think thats the first time I realized that writing a letter is actually a very good way to get yourself out of a tricky situation.) Luke! I mutter urgently. Quick.

Are we supposed to bribe them? How much cash have we got? Becky, says Luke patiently, I said, dont panic. Therell be a perfectly good reason why theyve pulled us over. Should we all get out? says Suze. I say we stay in the vehicle, says Janice, sounding edgy. I say we act perfectly normal, as though weve got nothing to hide. We have got nothing to hide, says Alicia, sounding exasperated. Everyone needs to relax. Theyve got guns! says Mum wildly, peering out of the window. Guns, Janice! Jane, please calm down! says Luke. Ill go and talk to them. He gets out of the RV, and the rest of us look around at one another anxiously. Im traveling with my best friend, Suze; my very much un-best friend, Alicia; my daughter, Minnie; my mum; and her best friend, Janice. Were on our way to Las Vegas from L.A., and already weve argued about the air-conditioning, the seating arrangements, and whether Janice should be allowed to play Celtic pipe music to calm her nerves. (Answer: no. Five votes to one.) Its a tad fraught, this road trip, and weve only been going for two hours. And now this. I watch as the cop approaches Luke and starts talking. Doggie! says Minnie, pointing out of the window. Big, big, big doggie. A second cop has come up to Luke, with an intimidating-looking police dog. Its a German shepherd and its sniffing around Lukes feet. Suddenly it looks up at the RV and barks. Oh God! Janice emits an anguished cry. I knew it! Its the narcotics squad! Theyre going to sniff me out! What? I turn to stare at her. Janice is a middle-aged lady who likes flower arranging and doing peoples makeup in lurid shades of peach. What does she mean, sniff her out? Im sorry to have to tell you, everybody... She gulps dramatically. But I have illicit drugs about my person. For a moment, nobody moves. My brain is refusing to compute these two elements. Illicit drugs? Janice? Drugs! Mum exclaims. Janice, what are you talking about? For jet lag, Janice moans. My doctor was so unhelpful, I had to resort to the Internet. Annabel at the bridge club gave me the website, but it had a disclaimer: May be prohibited in certain countries. And now that dog will sniff them out and well get hauled in for questioning She breaks off at the sound of frenzied barking. I have to admit, the police dog seems quite keen on coming over to the RV. Its pulling on its leash and yelping, and the policeman keeps looking down at it in irritation. You bought prohibited drugs? Suze explodes. Why would you do that? Janice, youre going to jeopardize the whole trip! Mum sounds apoplectic. How could you bring Class A drugs to America? Im sure theyre not Class A, I say, but Mum and Janice are too hysterical to listen. Get rid of them! Mum is saying shrilly. Now! Here they are. Janice takes two white packets out of her bag, her hands fumbling. I never would have brought them if Id known Well, what shall we do with them? demands Mum. Everyone swallow one blister pack, says Janice, pulling them out of the boxes in agitation. Thats the only thing we can do. Are you nuts? retorts Suze furiously. Im not swallowing unlicensed tablets from the Internet! Janice, you have to dispose of them, says Mum. Get out and scatter them by the side of the road. Ill distract the police. No, well all distract the police. Everybody out of the RV. Now. The police will notice! wails Janice. No, the police wont notice, says Mum firmly. Do you hear me, Janice? The police wont notice. Not if youre quick. She opens the door of the RV and we all pile out into the already blazing hot day. Were parked by the side of the freeway, with scratchy, scrubby desert stretching away on either side, as far as you can see. Go on! Mum hisses to Janice. As Janice picks her way over the dry ground, Mum bustles up to the policemen, Suze and Alicia in tow. Jane! says Luke, looking taken aback to see her by his side. It wasnt necessary for you to get out. He shoots me a glance that says What the hell are you doing? and I shrug helplessly back. Good morning, officer, Mum says, addressing the first policeman. Im sure my son-in-law has explained the situation. My husband has gone missing on a secret life-or-death mission. Its not necessarily life or death. I feel the need to clarify. Every time Mum uses the phrase life or death, Im certain her blood pressure goes up. I keep trying to soothe her, but Im not sure she wants to be soothed. Hes in the company of Lord Cleath-Stuart, Mum continues, and this is Lady Cleath--Stuart. They live in Letherby Hall, one of the top stately homes in England, she adds proudly. Thats irrelevant! says Suze. One of the cops takes off his sunglasses to survey Suze. Like Downton Abbey? My wife is nuts for that show. Oh, Letherby is far better than Downton, says Mum. You should visit. Out of the corner of my eye I notice Janice, standing in the desert in her aqua floral two--piece dress, madly scattering pills behind a giant cactus. She could hardly be less discreet. But luckily the policemen are distracted by Mum, who is now telling them about Dads note. He left it on his pillow! shes saying indignantly. A little trip, hes calling it. What kind of married man just ups and leaves on a little trip? Officers. Luke has been trying to get a word in. Thank you for informing me about the taillight. Perhaps we could carry on with our journey now? Theres a short silence as the cops look consideringly at each other. Dont panic, says Minnie, looking up from where shes been playing with her favorite dolly, Speaky. She

beams up at one of the policemen. Dont panic. Sure thing. He beams back at her. Cute kid. Whats your name, honey? The police wont notice, replies Minnie conversationally, and at once theres a prickly silence. My stomach clenches tight and I dont dare glance at Suze. Meanwhile, the smile on the cops face has frozen.

Im sorry, what did you say? he asks Minnie. Notice what, sweetheart? Nothing! I say shrilly. Weve been watching TV; you know what children are like.... There we are! Janice arrives by my side, breathless. All done. Hello, officers, what can we do to help you? The two cops seem disconcerted to see yet another person joining the group. Maam, whereve you been? asks one. I was behind the cactus. Call of nature, Janice adds, clearly proud of her prepared answer. Dont you have facilities in the RV? says the light-haired cop. Oh, says Janice, looking thrown. Oh, goodness. I suppose we do. Her confident air melts away and her eyes dart about wildly. Goodness. Um... well... in actual fact... I felt like a walk. The dark-haired cop folds his arms. A walk? A walk behind a cactus? The police wont notice, says Minnie to Janice confidently, and Janice jumps like a scalded cat. Minnie! Goodness, dear! Notice what? Ha-ha-ha! Cant you shut that child up? says Alicia in a furious undertone. It was a nature walk, Janice adds weakly. I was admiring the cacti. Beautiful... um... prickles. Beautiful prickles? Is that the best she could come up with? OK, Im never going on a road trip with

Janice again. She looks totally uncool and guilty. No wonder the cops seem suspicious. (Ill admit that Minnie hasnt exactly helped.) The policemen are looking at each other meaningfully. Any minute now theyre going to say theyre bringing us in or calling the feds. I have to do something, quick. But what? Think, think. . . And then inspiration strikes. Officer! I exclaim. Im so glad weve met, because I have a favor to ask. I have a young cousin whod love to become a police officer, and hed be so grateful for an internship. Could he contact you? Youre Officer Kapinski.... I get out my phone and start typing in the name, copying it off his

badge. Perhaps he could shadow you? There are official channels, maam, says Officer Kapinski discouragingly. Tell him to look on the website. Oh, but its all about personal connections, isnt it? I blink innocently at him. Are you available tomorrow? We could meet after work. Yes! Well be waiting for you outside the precinct. I take a step forward and Officer Kapinski backs away. Hes so talented and chatty. Youll love him. So well see you tomorrow, shall we? Ill bring croissants, shall I? Officer Kapinski looks utterly freaked out. Youre good to go, he mutters, and turns on his heel. Within about thirty seconds, he, his colleague, and the dog are back in the police car and zooming off. Bravo, Becky! applauds Luke. Well done, love! chimes in Mum. That was close. Janice is trembling. Too close. We need to be more careful. What is all this? says Luke, baffled. Why did you get out of the RV? Janice is on the run from the narcs, I say, and almost want to giggle at his expression. Look, Ill explain on the road. Lets get going.

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