

# Amazon Review of Bioré Deep Cleansing Pore Strips (14 Count)

Someone in Australia is hiding needles in strawberries. Queensland resident Hoani Hearne suffered severe abdominal pain after eating a strawberry from his local Woolworth supermarket, north of Brisbane. He bit into the strawberry, finding half a sewing needle, wondering where the other half had gone as it moved through him, into him. “Whoever this is, they’re inhumane. They have no empathy,” Hearne tells a journalist. Over dinner at his girlfriend’s house later that week, she recounts the episode to her parents. Her story ends with, “And that was the worst thing that ever happened to me,” and Hearne realizes that she hadn’t ever told a story about him until this very moment, and that she still wasn’t really telling one.

Of course, this could not be an isolated incident. Australia was plagued. Hundreds of reports from Sydney to the Gold Coast linked Instagram photos of halved strawberries, stabbed. #strawberrycrisis. They called it a copycat prank. Strawberry sales plummeted. Woolworth stopped carrying Berry Obsession and Berrylicious-brand berries. Videos of farmers tossing buckets of berries go viral and New Zealand pulls their imports. Jim Ripepi of Australian Strawberry Distributors releases a statement, “Please don’t be scared of strawberries. You’ve got to buy strawberries,” but he knows, deeply, that nobody really *needs* strawberries. Life could go on without strawberries. When he climbs into bed with his wife at night, it’s only 9:30 and she’s already rolled to the side, lights off and still awake.

When a photo surfaced of a needled mango, Woolworth announced that it would stop selling sewing needles. Headline reads: Australian Fruit Trade Plunged into Chaos. Queensland Acting Chief Superintendent Terry Lawrence pledges his heart to the case. “This is deliberate. This is terrorism.” Don’t say terrorism, he’s advised. Say contamination. He continues to call it terrorism. “I’ll catch the Fruit Felon,” he promises the public; he’s coined the moniker. In his dreams, Terry Lawrence chases a faceless man down the blurry streets of Brisbane; the menace leaves behind a trail of needles. Lawrence is careful not to step

on them. Lately, his ex-wife has been calling him after midnight, waking him up, wanting to reconnect. Though he had been trying to win her back for months, he checks his phone with half-open eyes and dissolves back into the chase.

Australians are not buying fruit altogether; this is widespread panic. Parliament passes new legislation. Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Attorney-General Christian Porter announce an amendment to the *Criminal Code Act of 1995*. This amendment increases jail time for anyone convicted of intentionally tainting food to fifteen years. “We are protecting a sixteen-million-dollar fruit industry, but, more importantly, we are protecting our people,” they say in a joint statement. Morrison and Porter walk offstage as reporters lob questions en masse. At sunset, on the fifth floor of Four Seasons Sydney, Morrison rubs lavender oil on a shirtless Porter’s shoulders as he leans back into him. They are the most important people alive. They usually don’t do this on a weeknight, but Porter’s been so stressed about strawberry laws that he needs to pretend he’s working late.

After weeks of paranoia, strawberries are cautiously restocked at several Woolsworth locations. Kids are revealing fresh fruit in their school lunches like rare artifacts. Farmers post smiley selfies next to barrels of fresh fruit, and New Zealand opens its doors to Australian pears. Bree Milano returns confidently from the store with punnets full of assorted berries. She gives the strawberry a once over, pricking it with a toothpick, before giving it to her five-year-old son. She crouches down to his height, hands him the strawberry, and kisses him on the forehead. He looks at her, takes a bite, lets it dribble down his chin, looks back at her, and says, “Mom, your nose looks like a strawberry. All those little black dots.”

Mortified, Milano rushes to the bathroom. Leaning in close to the mirror, she pinches around her nose to extract the blackheads, but it only seems to make them more pronounced, inflamed. She orders a fourteen-count pack of Bioré Deep Cleansing Pore Strips on Amazon; when they arrive two days later, Milano unwraps the plaster strips and wets them to her face like papier-mâché. She emerges, poreless. She leaves a glorious, buoyant review of the Bioré Deep Cleansing Pore Strips (14 Count), retelling the story of her five-year-old son and how embarrassed she was. The review gets two hundred likes, and when Milano bends down to pick up her son, she doesn’t explain what pores are, or the natural dips of human skin, or how every person on earth experiences their body differently, but hopes instead that he forgets her strawberry nose, and receives her when he’s older as a lovely, smooth construction.

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