



This is mine, Sujon Sixty-Nine

RUMMAN R KALAM

"This watermelon is not for sale, sir," said the man with the heavy moustache. He waved his arm, indicating the watermelons in front of him. "Why not take a look at these?"

The customer was a heavyset balding man who seemed wider than he was tall with a soul patch that would remind one of the Tesla logo. A pair of horn-rimmed glasses seemed glued to his face as the skin bulged around the frame with the hinges showing the same strength and resilience the rest of his fastenings did. He wore metal watches on each wrist, one encrusted with rubies and the other what seemed to be emeralds.

"Hmpf," he grunted, eyes still fixated on the watermelon.

The choice watermelon was indistinguishable from the others, except that it was next to the seller instead of being on the pile.

"Sir?" the seller asked.

"Yes?" the soul patch jerked down and up.

"Do you need help picking a watermelon?"

"Yes."

"What are you looking for? I have the seedless ones here, the local ones here, and—"

"These?" The man spread his short arms

wide. "These... sale?"

"Yes, sir," replied the vendor. "These are the ones for sale."

The shopkeeper narrowed his eyes at the man. The watches, the clothing, the strange demeanour all pointed towards what he heard about eccentric, foreign rich men. Maybe he was trying to figure out the price of the entire shop?

While he was playing detective inside his head, the customer pointed at the drink the shopkeeper kept behind the counter and looked inquisitively at him.

"Sir, my lemonade is not for sale."

The man kept staring.

Guessing that the customer didn't understand what he said, the shopkeeper took a lemon and a bottle of water in each hand and pointed at the lemonade.

The customer pointed at the watermelons again.

"Watermelon," he said.

"Yes, sir. Correct," replied the seller.

The customer pointed at the lemonade now.

"Water... lemon?"

The shopkeeper's mouth hung open slightly as he tried to gather the right words for the reply.

Taking advantage of the pause, the customer reached his hand out and grabbed the top of the watermelon that sat

propped up on a chair next to its seller.

"How much?"

"S-sir, please!" the seller pleaded, "Don't touch my watermelon!"

The customer quickly retracted his hand.

"I understand that you want this watermelon, but I want to take this one to my mother-in-law later this evening. I already chose it and sent her pictures of it. Please choose any other watermelon, sir."

The customer stared at the vendor for a moment, unblinking. Now that the vendor thought about it, the man did not blink. Not even once since he entered the shop.

"Mother-in-law? Old?" the bespectacled customer asked.

"Yes, sir. She is 86 but still strong enough to hold onto her own teeth."

"See... mother-in-law old."

"Yes, sir. She is old," he replied, glad that the man was speaking more than two words at a time.

"Old? Stay not very long. Me," he pointed to himself. "Need watermelon more," he said, reaching out for the watermelon again.

"Sir, please. If you don't want any other watermelon, then you are free to go to a different vendor but do not grab my watermelon or I will call the authorities," this time the watermelon-seller wanted to be

stern to the foreign man who clearly had no sense of personal boundaries.

"Police?" asked the customer, reaching into the shopping bag that was next to him. The vendor's eyes bulged in fear as he eyed the man taking out a massive handgun too large to ever fit into this small, pudgy hands. "Here. You take," he shoved the gun, side first at the seller. "Now you are police. Now give watermelon?"

The watermelon-seller stood clutching the gun with both hands close to his body; rigid with terror.

The customer took the watermelon under his arm.

"Thank. Trade is fair now? Big fair."

The vendor quickly nodded, just wanting this crazy man to go away.

The man crossed the road and set the watermelon down on the pavement. He took a few steps back, rushed towards the watermelon and kicked it at an oncoming truck's grills. The fruit hit the grill in speed and burst into a mist of pink dotted by chunks of green. The man kept staring at the vendor until his bus arrived. When he turned around to board the bus, the vendor saw "SUJON" written behind the man's back and the number "69" underneath it. Why was his plain polo a jersey? Why do I have his gun?

Then the cops entered his shop.