

## Vegan Vegan

“Okay, let’s go through this one more time.” From behind the glare of the lamp pointed in my face, Officer Croyden scrapes his chair across the interview room floor until it comes to rest beneath the blackboard on the wall. On the board, the same five-letter word is written twice in neat cursive chalk letters.

“You’re trying to tell me, we’ve got an interplanetary diplomatic incident on our hands because you didn’t realise Ambassador Ayala’s wife was a Vegan?”

“No...I mean, yes, but it’s not like that. Look, all I wanted was to have a nice quiet meal out with my family.”

“Which resulted in you assaulting the Ambassadors wife?”

“Well, technically, yes, but it was an accident.”

“Because she’s a Vegan?”

“No...I mean yes. I made a mistake. You see, we sat down, and my daughter, she’s a vegan.”

“Your daughter’s a Vegan?”

“Yes.”

“Then I find it hard to believe that you’d mistake the Ambassador’s wife?”

“No, my daughter’s a vegan.”

“That’s what I just said.”

“No.” I point to the top word on the blackboard.

“My daughter is a vegan. Adjective. No capital. So I went over to the salad buffet to get something she could eat.”

“And that’s where you assaulted Mrs. Ayala?”

“Accidentally!”

“Because she’s also a vegan?”

“No. She’s a Vegan.”

Officer Croyden pinched the point between his brows as if it hurt. “I’m not talking about your daughter Mr. Freeman, I’m talking about the Ambassador’s wife.”

“Yes, I know. She’s a Vegan. Noun. Capital.” I said, pointing to the bottom word written in chalk on the blackboard. Look, it’s an easy mistake to make. They’re a small slender race of beings.”

“All the more sensitive to being assaulted!”

“Well, yes, but what with the silver skin.”

“Mrs. Ayala was wearing a ceremonial crown to help her be recognised!”

“Well, yes, but it does have these sort of pointy prongs, and I was kind of distracted so I...”

“You’re saying your mistake was to mistake the wife of the Ambassador of Vega for a fork?”

“My mistake was to mistake a noun for an adjective...and she was standing right next to the salad bar!”

There was a knock on the interview room door. A tall man in uniform enters, approaches Officer Croyden, and whispers some whispers into his ear.

Officer Croyden nodded, carefully listening to what he was hearing, before dismissing the uniformed man, to exit via the exit, leaving the two of us alone in the empty room once more.

“It looks like it’s your lucky day,” he said. “Your story checks out. Seems like someone else in the restaurant overheard your vegan daughter order a vegan order. And it seems this kind of adjective-verb-noun confusion isn’t the first time Mrs. Ayala has experienced this experience.” He got up from the chair, walked over to the other side of the interview room, and opened the door. “Looks like you’re a free man Mr. Freeman.”