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The Pebble, the Sword, the Bullet by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | May 2018

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by Mike Bozart

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They were pretty good – even if a bit unlikely – friends in the beginning. Ned was a husky; white-as-1950s-north-Texas; short-brown-haired; sometimes sullen, and often serious; formerly protestant, but now firmly atheist; street-book smart; science-fiction-devouring; metallurgy-informed abstract artist in his late 40s. Yoel was a black-haired, Mediterranean-skin-toned, suave, skirt-chasing, usually upbeat, Jewish, aspiring actor-comedian in his mid-30s, who was also a drummer in a jazz-pop band (think Sade). These two disparate dudes would meet at a fledgling co-op art gallery (the now-long-gone 23 Studio) in the NoDa district of Charlotte (NC, USA) on a Saturday afternoon in the mid-1990s for a public-access TV show (Z-Axis) shoot. They did a bizarrely surreal impromptu skit involving a mad scientist (Ned) being interviewed by an in-on-the-joke investigative reporter (Yoel). They played off of each other quite well, and seemed to like the end result.

Now, what was the primary thing that these two had in common? Answer: a love for primo weed (high-grade marijuana). And, Ned had plenty of it, as he was an indoor (dining room) grower. All of the weed-partaking artists, actors and musicians in NoDa knew that his crop ruled. The potency was off the charts. Some who had ingested Ned's notoriously overpowering green brownies had trouble speaking, thought that there was no oxygen in the air, and were afraid to drive their cars. Yes, it was that strong. Trust me. I got zapped by it, too.

Move up several years – to 1998. Ned, who has been living in an end-of-the-road duplex next to Sugar Creek Community Park, informs Yoel that the longtime lower-level tenant (an elderly lady) has moved out, and that the apartment is now available. Yoel jumps on it, and moves in the next week.

All is going swimmingly as someone first said in 1622. But then, for whatever reason (possibly nonpayment of product received), Ned and Yoel stop talking. Additionally, Ned stops selling his super-strong weed to Yoel. And, as you might have guessed, Yoel is none too happy about it.

This cold war goes on for several weeks at their isolated, dual dwelling. Ned strategically avoids seeing Yoel by always glancing out his window at the driveway before leaving his flat. Additionally, he begins to park his old, brown,

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