

PICKLES & GUNS

Written by

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INT. TRENDY BROOKLYN SHOP - MIDDAY

All the hallmarks of a trendy boutique Brooklyn shop are on full display. Artisanal soaps, pickle jars, knit wool caps, exposed brick walls, and LAIRD (40s) a bored store clerk with more beard oil in his curled mustache than shits to give. The place has - unsurprisingly - no customers.

A little bell CHIMES as the door swings open.

In walks RUBY (19).

She's pure punk. Shredded jeans, tattered Ramones t-shirt, septum piercing, a pink streak in her hair, rings on almost all her fingers, and a tattoo of a koala eating a sprinkled donut on her forearm. With flames behind it, because why not.

Her SHOULDER BAG is a cacophony of band pins and Sharpie doodles, and it's obviously heavy.

Laird barely looks up from his phone, but arches a judgmental eyebrow in Ruby's direction before continuing to ignore her.

She smirks. Showtime.

RUBY
(over the top)
Ho. Lee. Shit! Would you look at
this place?

She picks up a jar of pickles. Gives it a shake as she holds it up like Yorick's skull to read the label.

RUBY (CONT'D)
Hand picked from rent-controlled
rooftop gardens, zero pesticides,
zero government oversight, natural
funk.
(to herself)
Natural funk? Blech.
(loudly)
Thirty-seven fifty? That's like...
(counting the pickles)
\$6.50 a pickle! Damn, son! Pickle
business is where it's at!

Ruby's got Laird's attention now.

LAIRD
Can I help you find something?

She returns the pickle jar to the shelf and then playfully makes her way to the checkout counter. She inspects a bar of handmade soap on the counter. Gives it big ol' whiff.

RUBY
Woof. Pungent. What is that,
lavender and onion?

LAIRD
It's honeysuckle and hand expressed
Vermont mint extract, actually.

She exaggeratedly feigns being impressed.

RUBY
(hand to her chest like a
Southern belle)
Oh, my. How fancy.

She hoists her bag up and - FWUMP - drops it in front of him.
He recoils.

RUBY (CONT'D)
Look. I'm sure you're raking it in
with all these farm-to-table
tchotchkes -

LAIRD
(offended)
Excuse me?

RUBY
- but I'm here for the good shit,
Laird.

Laird's demeanor shifts from "offended shop clerk" to "deadly serious."

LAIRD
(cold)
Who are you?

RUBY
(like what he's saying is
adorable)
Oh Laird, Laird, Laird. Compadre.
Amigo. That's not the question you
want to ask.

She leans in close to his face.

RUBY (CONT'D)
You should really be asking, "Is
the money good enough to not care
who she is?"

She zips open the bag just wide enough to pull out a single
stack of \$100 bills that she plops in front of him.

Laird sizes her up. Licks his lips as he wrestles with his next move...then he sits up straight. He puts his phone face down on the counter and pushes a button underneath.

The sound of a LOCK CLICKING SHUT comes from the front door. Automatic blinds activate, turning the warm light streaming in from outside into vertical slits.

Laird picks up the stack of money and thumbs through it, checking for counterfeits. Satisfied, but still suspicious of Ruby, he pushes another button under the counter.

The exposed brick wall behind Laird FLIPS OPEN, revealing an entire gallery of GUNS, BOMBS, and TACTICAL GEAR. It's straight out of a spy movie, down to the track lighting.

RUBY (CONT'D)

Flashy.

Her eyes dart back and forth, taking in the inventory.

RUBY (CONT'D)

(as if struck by an idea)

Ooh! You know what this would go great with?

She hops over to the shelf with the pickles and snags a jar. She POPS it open and fishes one out, pinky up all fancy-like.

RUBY (CONT'D)

(to herself)

Fun-kay.

LAIRD

You going to pay for that?

CRUNCH.

RUBY

(mockingly)

You going to pay for that.

She dabs the wet pickle stump on the stack of money and raises her eyebrows, challenging him to say anything.

She turns her attention to the wall of weapons.

RUBY (CONT'D)

Gotta say, this is some decent hardware. Your reputation precedes you, mon frere.

CRUNCH.

RUBY (CONT'D)
My brain is like - *pew pew pew* -
going *off* with ideas. You could get
into some REAL nasty trouble with
this stuff.

She points at a modified assault rifle with the pickle.

RUBY (CONT'D)
I mean - lookit that thing.
(using the pickle like a
Groucho Marx cigar)
Compensate much?

LAIRD
I been pretty patient so far, kid.
We gonna make a deal or what?

CRUNCH. She taps the pickle to her chin, considering her options.

RUBY
Hm. I'm just not sure these fit my
whole vibe, y'know. How about you
show me the *REAL* real good shit?

LAIRD
(poker face)
This is what I got.

Exaggeratedly annoyed, Ruby rolls her eyes.

RUBY
Ugh. Fiiiine. I guess we're doing
this.

She unzips the bag and throws out another stack of \$100 bills
on the counter.

Laird doesn't budge.

Ruby narrows her eyes at him.

RUBY (CONT'D)
That's really how you're gonna play
it? Laird. Buddy. I thought we were
pals.

Laird crosses his arms.

Ruby locks eyes with him. This is a moment of immovable
object meets unstoppable force. She blows the strand of pink
hair out of her face.

RUBY (CONT'D)
Alright. That's a choice. Gotta
respect the commitment to the bit.

She throws three more stacks of \$100s in front of him.

RUBY (CONT'D)
Come on. The good shit.

Laird exhales. The money is just too good to pass up.

He presses down on a panel in the wood floor, which pops up,
revealing a hidden compartment beneath. From inside, he
slides out a suitcase with a heavy biometric lock.

Ruby chomps the remainder of the pickle and taps her
fingertips together excitedly.

RUBY (CONT'D)
That's what I'm talking about.

Laird pauses, hesitating before opening the briefcase.

LAIRD
How do I know you're not with the
feds?

RUBY
(shaking her head in
disbelief)
Really? You get all the way to this
point and NOW is when you think to
ask if I'm a cop?

Laird is at a loss for words.

LAIRD
(flustered)
I...

RUBY
Jesus, Laird. How many of these
vegan patchouli oils have you
snorted? Look at me.

She gestures to her whole outfit.

RUBY (CONT'D)
(suddenly serious)
Open it.

Begrudgingly, he acquiesces. He presses his thumb onto the
biometric lock, punches in a code and it SNAPS open.

A hiss of coolant escapes from the briefcase, little puffs of dry ice curling over the sides.

Ruby's eyes glint with anticipation as she peers inside.

The only thing in the custom cut foam padding is a simple thumb drive.

LAIRD

Names of every cop, judge, D.A. and city employee on the Garroto family payroll AND every rat they got in the five boroughs.

RUBY

I guess good things really do come in small packages. But you already knew that, am I right?

Laird gives her a deadpan look in response to the dick joke. She gives him a love tap on the shoulder.

RUBY (CONT'D)

It's a joke, bro. Chill. Clearly, you're packing.

She jerks her head at the wall with all the guns.

RUBY (CONT'D)

(turning back to the briefcase, serious)

How much?

Ruby doesn't notice Laird's hand slowly drifting back under the counter. His fingers curl around a GUN taped to the underside.

LAIRD

No.

Ruby freezes.

LAIRD (CONT'D)

You think I'm stupid? You think I'm going to sell this to some punk kid off the street with a bag full of money?

Ruby looks around.

RUBY

I mean, I was kinda hoping yeah.

LAIRD

You clearly know who I am and what I'm selling. But I don't know you. And you've got balls coming in here, calling attention to yourself dressed like that.

Ruby curtsies, proud of herself.

LAIRD (CONT'D)

What makes you think you're walking out of here alive?

Ruby takes a moment to consider.

RUBY

So...like, three mil gonna do it? Cuz I'll be honest, I'm a little short after I had to buy those damn funky pickles of yours.

LAIRD

You really don't get what's happening here, do you?

Ruby smiles to herself. She starts playing with the rings on her fingers, turning them over and over.

RUBY

Oh, Laird. My sweet, sweet little faux hipster Laird.

She puts her chin in her hands and gives him a sickeningly sweet smile.

RUBY (CONT'D)

I don't want guns. I got plenty of those. I wanted you.

She boops his nose.

Laird pulls out the gun, resting it on the counter, pointed directly at Ruby. She smiles.

RUBY (CONT'D)

Awww. I'll do ya one better.

She taps on the counter with her ring. It's got an ornate "G" on it. It's clearly a family crest. She's a Garroto.

RUBY (CONT'D)

See, here's the deal, buckaroo. You do have a reputation.

(MORE)

RUBY (CONT'D)

You been a decent little minion for my family for a long time. Honestly, top shelf. Buuuut, maybe there's some delusions of grandeur? And I don't mean this pretentious little shop you got going.

Laird is breathing heavy, panic starting to set in. He squares his jaw and cocks the gun.

RUBY (CONT'D)

Be smart now. I just needed to know what you had, and boy did you deliver. Loose lips and all that. Now, what neither of us need or want is for *someone* to pay a visit to your sister, Megan, at 83 State Street. Or your mom, Linda, at the dialysis center on Myrtle Avenue every Thursday. Right?

The tension is thick. Laird swallows. A look of horror on his face spells it out. He's fucked.

LAIRD

Please. Don't.

RUBY

Heeey! There it is. *There's* the REAL real good shit I was looking for!

She fishes another pickle out of the jar. CRUNCH.

RUBY (CONT'D)

Tell ya what. I'll take that little goober and my down payment...

She takes the thumb drive, tucks it into her jeans pocket and then scoops up all the stacks of money and shoves them down her pants.

RUBY (CONT'D)

...and then you remember who the fuck you're dealing with.

Laird opens his mouth to speak. Ruby shushes him by pressing the pickle to his lips.

RUBY (CONT'D)

Shhh. Thanks for the pickles. That funk is really worth the money.

She tilts her head playfully and presses the button under the counter to unlock the door and open the blinds. The bright midday sun washes over her.

RUBY (CONT'D)

Byeeeeee.

She exits out the front door, happy, smiling, and carefree.

Back inside, Laird is shaking. He places the gun back underneath the counter top and has to sit down on the stool to steady himself.

That's when he notices that Ruby left her shoulder bag.

One of the pins on the outside is of a cartoon stack of dynamite.

The other, a Bob-omb from Super Mario Bros.

The Sharpie drawings on the strap spell out "Tick tick tick..."

His hand still shaking, he goes to open the zipper.

In final moment of realization, Laird's eyes go wide a split second before...

OVER BLACK:
BOOM!