

## Melon Mother

The sun shone bright through the kitchen windows. Then came a beep, followed by the sound of a car door. A woman slowly made her way into the home. A loud thump echoed from the dining table. The boy glanced over to see his mother setting hefty grocery bags down.

He walked over to the kitchen, wondering what his mother had brought home from the store to make for dinner. As she started taking out the items one by one, the last thing she pulled out was a square watermelon. The child's eyebrows furrowed as he turned to his mother and said, "A square watermelon? I don't get it."

His mother let out a slight smile and ignored his remark as she began to prepare dinner. The sun began to set, casting a beautiful orange glow, the perfect luminous light shining through the kitchen windows. The family gathered for dinner, sharing their meal together while the family dog begged for scraps under the table.

The mother turned to the boy and asked, "How's school? Do you have a favorite subject? What do you want to be when you're older?" The boy sifted his fork through his food, scratching his head before replying simply, "I don't know." His mother smiled again before continuing with her dinner.

By the time the dishes were empty, the sun had completely set and the moon now shone through the kitchen windows. The boy sat doing his homework at the dining table while his mother washed the dishes, bits of dinner still clinging to them. She took a dishrag hanging above the sink, dried her hands, and turned toward the square watermelon that had been sitting untouched on the table since noon.

The child looked up at her again, curiosity getting the better of him. “Seriously, what’s with the watermelon being square?!” he blurted. A flicker of frustration crept into his voice. “Why buy a square watermelon? What’s so special about it?”

The mother smiled softly as she began to cut the fruit , perfect triangles, each slice guided by her steady hand. The knife glided slowly through the hard rind, then cleanly through the juicy core. One by one, she arranged the bright red triangles on a white china plate. The boy reached for a piece, examined it closely, then took a bite.

“The square watermelon...” he murmured to himself. The family sat together at the table, sharing laughter and quiet conversation while enjoying the sweet fruit. Not much was said, but the mother smiled again as she watched her son.

Later that night, the boy returned to his room, thinking about dinner and the strange fruit. *It didn’t taste any different*, he thought. *It was just a normal watermelon. I still don’t get it.* The thoughts raced through his mind until frustration crept back in.

He walked back into the kitchen, where his mother was carefully wrapping the leftover half of the square watermelon to store in the fridge. “What’s with that thing?” he exclaimed. His mother looked over. “I don’t know what you mean.”

“The square watermelon!” he said, his voice rising. His mother’s calmness only made his frustration grow. She noticed his anger, sighed softly, and sat down beside him.

“Honey, it’s just a watermelon,” she said.

The boy rolled his eyes. “That’s not what I mean. Why’s it square? What’s the difference?”

Her smile returned, gentle, knowing. “There is no difference.”

The boy looked down. His frustration faded, replaced by confusion and a hint of sadness. His mother brushed her hand through his thick black hair.

“It’s the same as every other watermelon,” she said quietly. “Nothing to differentiate them, besides the shape.”

The boy began to feel silly. All this time, he’d expected the watermelon to taste different, to be special, maybe even magical. His mother sighed softly.

“You know,” she said, “I was like a square watermelon once.”

He looked up. “How?”

“Well,” she said, “just by people trying to shape me a certain way, or expecting me to become someone I’m not.”

The boy’s eyes fell again, guilt creeping in. His mother noticed. “No, sweetie, that’s okay,” she said gently. “Although people tried to shape me the way I wasn’t meant to be, I’ve realized I’m still just like every other watermelon.” She paused, smiling faintly. “There is no difference.”

The boy rested his head on his mother’s shoulder. A sense of relief filled him now that his confusion was gone.

“Is being a square watermelon bad?” he asked softly.

His mother chuckled. “No, hon. It just means you have to try a little harder to find who you really are, and not let people mold you into someone you don’t want to be.”

“I don’t want anyone to try and mold me into a square watermelon,” the boy said quietly.

“I never will,” his mother replied, holding her son close to her chest.

The square watermelon’s child.