

A Mural of Memories

A Sad Reality in Ten Minutes

by
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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
VINCETTI	A first generation Italian Immigrant	85	Male
MARCO	A business representative.	42	Male

TIME: June 2010

SETTING: East Austin TX

PLACE: A family-owned Italian restaurant.

A MURAL OF MEMORIES

A small family restaurant. A couple of tables and chairs stand about. A large mural painted on the wall shows the smiling faces of the friends and loved ones that were once long-time customers.

MARCO stands at a table. Laptop in front of him. VINCETTI cleans the restaurant throughout the play as he is the only employee here.

VINCETTI

One million?

MARCO

Yessir! One million!

VINCETTI

You lie!

MARCO

The boss approved it just yesterday. Look right here. Got the approval and everything.

VINCETTI

My goodness. I could buy a whole new business with that!

MARCO

Two if you buy in the right places! So no need to hold onto this one right?

VINCETTI

Right!

Marco packs his bag to leave.

MARCO

Perfect! Then I'll email you the documents. Just sign and send them by the end of the week!

As he is about to exit.

VINCETTI

No.

Abrupt stop.

MARCO

No?

VINCETTI
(With a smile)

No.

MARCO

I don't understand Mr. Vincetti. It's a million dollars. That's a lot of money.

VINCETTI

It is.

MARCO

So what's the problem?

VINCETTI

I figure you raise the amount every time you come here. Based on my count, seven more times and we'll be at two million.

MARCO

Will you sell then?

VINCETTI

Hmm...no.

MARCO
(With a sigh)

Why do you have to go getting my hopes up like that sir?

VINCETTI

I don't know. I guess I like to see you suffer. Just a little though!

MARCO

Mr. Vincetti, you are a cruel man, you know that?

VINCETTI

(With a laugh)

Oh! I am cruel? Your company came in buying up everything, driving up the prices, and shutting down all the businesses, but is me who is cruel?

MARCO

I didn't mean it like-

VINCETTI

Maybe we should talk about the individual sin here. How many people did you kick out of their homes Marco?

MARCO

I didn't kick anyone out of their home!

VINCETTI

Right. You didn't have to. You just wait til the bank takes care of them, then you swoop in and-.

MARCO

It's not me Mr. Vincetti! It's the company. I'm just doing my job.

VINCETTI

You know the Nazis were just doing their job. Didn't excuse them for what they did.

MARCO

That's funny coming from you!

Vincetti slams a towel and bucket onto a table. He stares daggers at Marco.

MARCO

Come on Mr. Vincetti. What I'm doing is nothing like what the Nazis did.

VINCETTI

Isn't it? It looks like displacement of people. Just a bit more subtle. Very Nazi-ish.

MARCO

They leave by choice.

VINCETTI

They leave because they can't stay here. When I was a boy, they left because they would be shot if they didn't. Now? They leave because they'll lose everything if they stay. Your bosses ensured that.

MARCO

You're being dramatic sir! This is just how business works. It's all legal. I'm making sure people get a good price to leave, and Worldwide Holdings gets some prime real estate. Everybody wins!

VINCETTI

Do you know how boring it is to live in a town when everyone is the same?

MARCO

This again?

VINCETTI

Back in 1940. I remember after all the Jews got shipped out. My dad and I went to eat. It was the same food we could have made at home...I remember thinking how much I would enjoy some Shakshuka right now. There was a restaurant owned by a wonderful Jewish family who made the best Shakshuka.

MARCO

I didn't know Shakshuka was a Jewish meal.

VINCETTI

Why?

MARCO

Just assumed it was Italian because it was on your menu.

VINCETTI

...I learned how to make it. It doesn't taste the same. I doubt it will ever taste the same.

MARCO

...Did they ever come back?

VINCETTI

No...I hope it's because they found their place somewhere else...Mateo came in the other day.

MARCO

Really? How's he doing?

VINCETTI

He looked exhausted. He wanted some help moving.

MARCO

He came to you for that?

VINCETTI

Mhmm. Angelo's helping him right now I think.

MARCO

Is he still mad at me? I told him-

VINCETTI

I know I know. It's the company! Not you. I know.

MARCO

I could have helped him if he reached out on my day off. I mean, I'm still family right? I'm still looking out for him. I managed to upsell his property to 150,000. He couldn't even get half of that on the market.

VINCETTI

Mhmm. I'm sure he appreciates it. He's still getting bought out of his home.

MARCO

It's not like he can't start up somewhere else.

VINCETTI

...You know, I think I'll miss his garden. It took him twenty years to grow it you know.

MARCO

It's a garden Mr. Vincetti. It's not important. Besides, he'd probably love to start a new one from scratch.

VINCETTI

By the time a new garden grows, he wouldn't be able to walk in it anymore. What is important to you? Huh!? It looks to me like you care for nothing but this company that you don't even own!

MARCO
(Forceful laugh)

I don't give a damn about the company.

VINCETTI

Then what do you care about Marco?

MARCO

My family.

VINCETTI

Are you sure? You sold out Mateo to...

MARCO

I gave him a good deal! If it wasn't me, it was going to be somebody else! Someone who doesn't care who would just go with the cheapest offer! He's got a wife-kids-grandkids to worry about! People who are actually alive and around. That home is just a home. It's a place to live. It can't love. It can't care. It's just there.

VINCETTI

But it can hold memories Marco.

MARCO

Oh. That's just ridiculous.

Agitated, Vincetti marches over to the mural and starts pointing out the faces.

VINCETTI

Look at these people! They were my friends Marco. I was the only Italian in the entire suburb. I thought people would hate me. But all these people...they were like family! José was my very first customer. He had a plate of spaghetti because it was the only dish he recognized. He left to North Texas just last year. And Santiago. He came in every day for three years! He went back home and I have not heard from him since. And that man right there? That is my papa. He came all the way here from Italy to congratulate me on opening night...that was the last time I saw him...so don't tell me a home is not family. That it holds no memories. This is home! And it holds so much more than just the people I live with!

A silence overtakes the restaurant. Marco moves to leave but can't.

MARCO

The prices are going up every year Mr. Vincetti.

VINCETTI

I know...

MARCO

You've been good to me and Mateo all these years. I don't want to see you left with nothing when the banks decide to collect. Please. Let me make the purchase. Let me leave you with something.

VINCETTI

I am old Marco. This is the only thing left of my home that I have when I decided to bring some of my home here...If you want to leave me with something, leave me with some good memories.

MARCO

I...I don't think I ever tried the Shakshuka. I know you said it's not as good as the original, but...

Vincetti moves over and places a hand on Marcos shoulder. He takes Marco's bag and leads him to a table. Putting him in a chair facing toward the mural.

VINCETTI

It's felt like a long time since I last had a customer. I hope you don't mind the wait. I've gotten slow in my age.

MARCO

Don't worry about it...I'll just tell my boss I spent all day haggling with you. He knows how hard-headed you are.

They share a laugh before Vincetti exits.

MARCO

I guess I'll see you next week old man.

Lights fade until the only thing left illuminated is the mural of smiling faces, staring at Marco as he waits.

END OF PLAY