

Changing Patterns

by

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Cast of Characters

MARIO :

35

MARA :

32

Place

Brooklyn

Time

2PM

2.

Setting: An open loft space in a renovated industrial styled apartment.

At Rise: Mario sits in a chair across from Mara, who sits up in bed.

MARIO: What, you got legs, use 'em.

MARA: I'm just asking you to fill up my coffee.

MARIO: Yeah, so then I gotta walk and grab your mug, walk into the kitchen and then walk all the way back to where you are, and then walk back into the kitchen and then back again to where I was sittin', that fair?

MARA: Don't kill yourself, I'll get my own coffee.

MARIO: I make it for ya, don't I?

MARA: And it tastes like shit.

MARIO: Now you don't like my coffee?

MARA: Tastes burnt.

MARIO: I probably made it too strong.

MARA: It sucks.

MARIO: First you moan about it tasting like water, now you moan about it tasting burnt. Make up your mind.

MARA: How about nice and normal tasting coffee.

MARIO: Why you should make it.

MARA: You get up before me, just learn how to make decent coffee, is it so hard?

MARIO: We keep getting' these different brands and each kind of brand has its own taste. We gotta stick to one brand, so I can master the brew.

MARA: Yeah, master of the brew, that's who you are.

MARIO: Our customers love the way I make coffee. I wouldn't be makin' the money I make each day if I wasn't good at what I did.

MARA: First of all, Mary, Bill, Todd and Laurie, THEY make the coffee, you just buy the shit...the people who work for you, make the coffee, plus the machines, those machines you got, they're good, the best, which is what saves you. That's why your customers are happy.

MARIO: So, at least I get credit for something.

MARA: It's 2 PM and you're still in your underwear, when you gonna get dressed?

MARIO: I hear them workin' downstairs, they know how to open. I don't always have to run downstairs and show my face.

MARA: But you are the owner.

MARIO: Exactly.

MARA: You should always take account to what's going on in your shop.

MARIO: I trust those kids, they are good kids.

MARA: They are good kids but still, your presence should always be felt.

MARIO: I'm not feeling it today.

MARA: Why not?

MARIO: I don't know. I'm getting' tired.

MARA: You're thirty-five years old, you talk like an old man.

MARIO: I been in the coffee business since I was ten, you know that. My father would have killed me if I did something else with my life. Coffee, coffee, coffee. I'm startin' to look like a coffee bean.

MARA: The coffee shop you have downstairs is a gem. It's traditional, yet you've put your own modern flare into it. And you spent years putting it together, so you can do your own thing and feel independent and that's what you got. You live right above the coffee shop like you always dreamed you would, and now you're more miserable than I ever seen you. Why? Why can't you take pride in what you do and be happy with some results? I don't get you. It's never enough, it seems.
(beat) I noticed the change in you, I have. It's why you're still in your underwear midday. You've got the life, bud. You wake up, open up the shop, people come in and work for you, you don't have to lift a finger if you don't want, you can stay home all day each day, you can travel, you can do whatever the heck you want and yet, you sulk and perform your sad puppy dog face. Why is that? What's gotten into you, Mario? Why can't you feel some satisfaction?!

MARIO: I don't know, Mara. It's been this way for the past year.

MARA: What has?

MARIO: The routine of it all. Same shit, different day. It doesn't get me excited.

MARA: But it's your shop, you own this whole building, you just need to collect.

MARIO: But I don't want to just collect.

MARA: What do you want?

MARIO: I need to start something new, something that will make me excited to get up out of bed in the morning. I have no drive.

MARA: Slow down, cause you're saying things that mean no--

MARIO: --Why can't you hear what I'm sayin' to ya?

MARA: I hear you but you sound stupid.

MARIO: Stupid?

MARA: Yeah, stupid.

MARIO: Forget it, I'm not gonna talk to you about any of this. I'll figure it out by myself.

MARA: There's nothing to figure out. You create your own problems. Everything is fine and you can't handle it. You can't handle the simple fact that your life is actually good. You have no debt, you get along good with your family, you have me in your life, you have health and wealth and youth and I can go on and on, so get over your morbid bullshit already and start your day.

MARIO: And do what?

MARA: I don't know, go carry ten pound coffee bean bags around, work off your stress.

MARIO: Is that all I am?

MARA: Stop it.

MARIO: I'm some coffee grunt, right? Been carrying coffee bean bags since I was born.

MARA: So, what do you want?!

MARIO: I want a change!

MARA: What kind of change?!

MARIO: I don't know!

(pause.)

(KNOCK on the door)

(MARIO puts on his robe
and opens door halfway)

What's up, Laurie?

LAURIE: There's a strange man in the shop.

MARIO: What strange man?

LAURIE: He's just sitting at a table and won't leave. He won't order anything and he's just staring at everybody.

MARIO: Offer him a free coffee.

LAURIE: Are you sure?

MARIO: Does he look dangerous?

LAURIE: I dunno, think he's homeless.

MARIO: He's got long dark hair, right? And carrying a green military bag?

LAURIE: Yeah, I think so.

MARIO: That's Frank. He's harmless. Give him a coffee on the house. He won't bother you, trust me.

LAURIE: You sure?

MARIO: Yeah, he usually comes by on Sundays. He's fine. I'll be down in a few.

(MARIO closes door)

(to MARA) That's just Frank, poor bastard. Good guy, fought for our country and gets tossed in the street. Sad. I think drugs got 'em. Rough life he's had that guy.

MARA: Didn't you know his family or something?

MARIO: Yeah, he's harmless. I...I went to school with him...high school, I was friends with his brother Mickey who died. His brother Mickey was a boxer and he died in the ring, believe that? Caught a punch that hit 'em the wrong way and that was it, never woke up, died in the ring...they said it was something that burst in his brain from the pressure, the impact, I don't know...horrible. Anyway, that's his brother Frank, he went off to the war, came back and wasn't the same, but he's a good guy underneath it all. He's like having free security in the place whenever he's around.

MARA: You should go downstairs.

(MARIO gets dressed)

MARIO: Yeah, I should.

(pause.)

MARA: Mario, tell me the truth...are you really not happy?

MARIO: I'm happy, but sometimes I feel as though things are too good, too easy. I know that sounds stupid but really, when did life suddenly become simple?

MARA: It became simple after you spent twenty-five years busting your ass.

MARIO: ...You think this is all I can do?

MARA: No.

MARIO: I sometimes feel like this is it, you know, like this is all I am. I take pride in what I do, I'm not sayin' that, but I think that if I was able to succeed at somethin' else, like if I learned another craft or somethin', that I'd feel better about myself and feel like I'm not a one trick pony.

MARA: You read.

MARIO: Yeah.

MARA: You read and you grow your brain, right?

MARIO: I try.

MARA: So, name something else that interests you...

MARIO: ...Shit, I don't know.

MARA: Think about it.

MARIO: This whole internet thing is pretty good.

MARA: What about it?

MARIO: I don't know, maybe I can start something up on it. I actually had these thoughts but didn't wanna say anything to ya cause I didn't want to set you off.

MARA: Why would I get mad?

MARIO: Cause you're a pain in my ass, that's why.

MARA: So, maybe you can start something up on the side and feel good about yourself.

MARIO: Maybe. Maybe I'll sell coffee.

(THEY both laugh)

What the fuck else do I really know, let's be honest? Ha, ha. I could sell coffee and make a killing, maybe, who the hell knows? Maybe I'm just losing my mind.

MARA: Nah, it's natural to feel like you do. I get it.

MARIO: Let me go downstairs. We'll talk more about it later.

MARA: Stop putting so much pressure on yourself.

(MARA kisses MARIO)

MARIO: Yeah.

MARA: Hey, listen, while you're down there, I'll look into the whole coffee thing online, might not be a bad idea...

MARIO: Yeah, alright. Thanks Mara.

MARA: For what?

MARIO: For, you know, believing in all my potential.

(MARIO leaves)

END OF PLAY