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Mama Marie's

A Short Comedy for Four Characters

By J.C. Svec

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Small Bites

by J.C. Svec

Cast of Characters

ANTONIA; *the C.E.O. apparent of “Mama Marie’s”, manufacturer of Italian foods*

BONNIE BELLE; *a young applicant*

ALLIE; *the C.E.O. of “Mama Marie’s”*

MALE NURSE; *assisting to remove Antonia from her position*

Setting

The Present. The office of Mama Marie’s CEO.

Mama Marie's

By J.C. Svec

SETTING: The office of Mama Marie's CEO. Only a phone and a Newton's Cradle sit on a table under a looming, corporate logo of the Italian food conglomerate. A fluorescent letter "X" is on the floor as far from her desk as possible.

AT RISE: A woman, ANTONIA, dressed in a matching, velour work-out suit, stares at the toy as she alternately bounces one then two steel balls against each other. ANTONIA does this for several minutes.

ANTONIA

(Yells off) Come. Next. Let's go.

A younger woman, BONNIE BELLE, enters the room. She is dressed in a stylish, but conservative suit. She cautiously enters the room. ANTONIA ignores BONNIE as she stands across the room from the desk. BONNIE finally works up the nerve to approach the desk. She extends her arm for a handshake. ANTONIA throws her hand up and stops BONNIE short of the desk.)

ANTONIA, *Continued*

On the "X".

BONNIE

(Confused) What?

BONNIE nervously searches the room and even examines herself for an "X".

ANTONIA

The "X" the "X". Over there, for 'crying out loud'. Over there on the floor.

ANTONIA points to an opposite corner of the room, where an orange letter "X" is drawn on the floor. BONNIE spots the letter.

BONNIE

Ah, the “X”. I see it now. Sorry.

BONNIE scurries and stands on the orange letter.

BONNIE, *Continued*

I’d like to thank you for the—

ANTONIA

Did I say you could speak?

BONNIE

Uh, no, I, uh... sorry.

ANTONIA

Uh... no... oh.... wah, wah, wah.

ANTONIA returns to the steel balls.

ANTONIA, *Continued*

(Condescending) You’re all alike. Your kind has been parading in and out of this office, in front of generations of family members for decades and it’s always the same attempt to prove you know more about our business than we do.

BONNIE begins to defend herself but is halted by a raise of ANTONIA’S hand. ANTONIA steps out from behind the table and moves freely around the room.

ANTONIA, *Continued*

Do you know how long Mama Marie’s has been in business? Do you?

ANTONIA refuses to allow BONNIE a word.

ANTONIA, *Continued*

Let me tell you. Since the days of your mother’s mother’s grandmother, that’s how long. Do you know how long Mama Marie’s intends to be in business? Do you?

ANTONIA again refuses to allow BONNIE a word.

ANTONIA, *Continued*

Let me tell you. Until we, you and me, are the grandmothers in the answer the person in charge of this company will give an upstart like you generations from today. *(Pause)* What’s your name?

BONNIE opens her mouth to answer but is stopped before she utters a sound.

ANTONIA, Continued

Don't answer that question. You know why I don't want you to answer that question? Because I don't need to know your name. I don't want to know your name. I have a secretary and two assistants who know your name for me. If I need them to. You're probably saying to yourself, how dare this person speak to me this way? You're probably asking yourself, who does this so-and-so think she is? Well, I'll tell you who I am. I'm the CEO of the largest, yes, the largest - not one of the largest- the largest, and oldest, not one of the oldest, but the oldest, manufacturers of Italian foods in the world. You're now probably thinking, she's too young to be a CEO, aren't you? *(Raises her voice)* Aren't you? Don't deny it. Yes, I'm young, and so what I say to you. Let me tell you something, younger lady than me, I've earned my place behind that desk. I didn't wheel some chair from another office and plop myself down in it and say, 'I'm in charge.' I earned sitting in that chair. That chair that all my relatives before me sat in. I know what's going through that pea sized brain of yours. You're thinking, how? How did she do it? How did she get into that chair? You're thinking, will I ever sit in that chair? That's what you're thinking, isn't it? Don't answer me. Let me answer. You'll be lucky if you ever sit in any chair, let alone that one. Oh, I'm sure you think you're the exception. 'If anyone can do, I can do it.' Well, little lady, if you think you can, and you think you will, and you won't, you'd better be good at one thing. Want to know what that one thing is? Want to know the one word secret to the success of that chair? Do you?

BONNIE barely opens her mouth to answer but is quickly stopped.

ANTONIA, Continued

Innovation. That's right, innovation. Mama Marie's is all about innovation. Fresh vegetables and meats sold from a horse drawn cart on the cobblestone streets of old New York. Jarred, then canned products and packaged goods that stocked the shelves in a converted bakery in Little Italy. Then frozen foods and dinners, microwaveable meals, fast food franchises, and independently owned stores. Low calorie, fat free, sodium free, sugar free, gluten free, and dairy free. Low cholesterol, no carbs and whole wheat. We emphasize foods that are natural, chemical free and organic. If you've got an allergy, we've got a food. In original, home style, restaurant, pizzeria and 'a taste of Sicily' varieties. Mama Marie's is recognized as a leader in restaurants, deli's, supermarkets and food courts. Mama Marie's, an innovator in both fresh and prepared foods. But go ahead, continue to stand there and believe you have an idea that we haven't already thought of. We've probably discarded more ideas in one week than you've come up with in your entire young, pathetic life. Dare to dream, kid, dare to dream. That corporate logo, a logo recognized around the world, a logo that has traveled to the moon and every space station that's flown the stars and stripes and the sickle and hammer. That's right, Mama Marie's, the official food of two, two, space programs. You couldn't wear my chef's hat and apron for one day and survive. How dare you? What gives you the right to march in here thinking you've got the next brilliant idea that will catapult you into that seat? You smug, arrogant so-and-so. Tell me, Top Chef or Iron Chef or whatever you consider yourself. What's the next untapped market, Chef Boy-ar-dee? What is it? Speak up, why don't you?

BONNIE remains still, half in fear and half in disbelief. ANTONIA makes her way back to the Newton's Cradle.

ANTONIA, *Continued*

Just what I thought. All preen and fluff. You stick out your chest and chirp but you never take flight. If there's no action on your part, there can be no equal and opposite reaction on my part.

ANTONIA sends the steel balls clacking against each other. She stares at a stunned BONNIE. A woman, ALLIE, enters the room. She is dressed in a military style outfit, but not a uniform.

ALLIE

(To ANTONIA) Ah, there you are. (Calls off) She's in here.

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes