

CHRISTMAS DINNER

2nd Draft

Written by

Micah Rose

4213 E. 113th Terrace
KCMO 64137
MicahRose@fullsail.edu
(816) 806-2960

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

MARCO, 26, clad in jeans, a flannel and spotless Chuck Taylors, pulls out his keys and opens up a mailbox with his name loosely taped to it. He grabs the three pieces of mail and pays extra attention to the snowflake envelope.

He closes the mailbox, picks up his vintage leather bag, walks to his door and fumbles with his keys.

INT. MARCO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Marco opens the door into the stark apartment. It looks as if the resident doesn't spend much time there, save for the coffee cup on the edge of the coffee table. Marco drops his bag by the door, clicks on a lamp and plops onto the couch.

He rips into the envelope and unfolds the letter. He leans back to read. After a few moments, Marco jolts upright and clutches the letter to his chest. Tears spill from his eyes.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Marco, dressed in jeans and a hoodie, lifts a vintage-looking duffle bag into the already packed trunk of his old Volkswagen Wagon. He leans on his car and pulls out his phone. Marco dials a number and holds the phone up to his ear. He closes his eyes and drops his head.

MARCO

Mom? Hey. Yeah. It's me. Look.

Thanks. Yes. I know. I know.

Marco jerks upright and paces around his car.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Yes. Mom. Mom. Ok. Stop. Ok. It's okay. I'm coming home for Christmas. Now. Yes.

(pause)

I'll be there in about 3 hours. I'm getting in my car now. Yes.

Marco pulls the phone away from his ear and slides it into his pocket. He jumps behind the wheel. The reflection on the glass catches his eye. A few snowflakes fall.

EXT. MICHELE'S HOME - NIGHT

Marco's car pulls into the driveway of a darkened ranch house. The screen door is slightly ajar.

Marco gets out and unloads a few bags. He takes his time as he walks to the front door. The porch light comes on. He speeds up and reaches the door just as the front door opens.

MICHELE, 50-ish, stands behind a screen door in a robe with disheveled hair.

MICHELE

Marco?

MARCO

Mom.

Michele pushes the screen door open and steps onto the stoop. Marco doesn't move.

MICHELE

Son.

Tears stream down Michele's face. She reaches for Marco and he takes the two steps towards her. They hug. She cries harder. Marco turns his head. The only sounds to be heard are her sobs. He pulls back and puts on a smile.

MARCO

I have a surprise for you!

MICHELE

It's just been so... Come in!

Marco follows Michele into the house.

INT. MICHELE'S HOME - GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

Lights flicker on and reveal a very dated living room. The house looks as though it was decorated in the early 1980s. Faded family pictures line the walls. Marco runs his finger along a family photo from a Christmas ten years past and picks it up. Michele stands in Marco's path.

MICHELE

You're home.

MARCO

I came back for you.

MICHELE

Sure you did.

MARCO

I came back for you, Mom.

Michele looks at her son's hands, arms, legs, and every facial feature. She wipes the tears from her eyes and steps closer to him. Marco looks down at the photo and back at her.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Let me grab the rest of my things.

Michele steps back. Marco sets down his bags and avoids his mother's gaze. She steps into the living room and sits on the worn couch. She waits. A door slams. Marco walks in, closes the front door then heads straight to the kitchen.

MICHELE

How was the drive?

MARCO (O.S.)

Not too bad. Traffic was light. I was surprised because, you know... Christmas.

Michele leans forward on the couch and looks at the pile of bags by the front door.

MICHELE

How long are you staying?

MARCO (O.S.)

As long as you need me. I have some flexibility.

Marco walks down the hallway that isn't long enough, back into the living room. He turns on the lamp closest to his mother. Michele squints. He plops down in the easy chair opposite her.

MICHELE

Five years has gone by so slowly.

MARCO

How are you?

MICHELE

Your father died.

MARCO

How are you holding up?

MICHELE

You wouldn't have come to the funeral, anyway.

MARCO

Mom. How are you?

MICHELE

You have a surprise for me?

Michele sits still and eyes her boy that is now a man.

MARCO

The surprise. Dinner.

MICHELE

It's late.

MARCO

It's 6:00.

MICHELE

I'm tired.

MARCO

Baked chicken with greens and
cornbread.

MICHELE

That was your father's favorite.

MARCO

Alright, Mom.

Marco jumps up and kisses his mom on the forehead then skips into the kitchen. Michele leans back and closes her eyes.

INT. MICHELE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Marco opens and shuts cabinets, grabs what he needs and moves on. He turns on the stove. He preps the chicken and pulls out the seasonings from the bags he brought in. He mixes the cornbread and scrapes the batter into a small pan.

MARCO

(to himself)

Nothing's changed.

Michele stands in the doorway.

MICHELE

It's only been five years.

Marco jumps.

MARCO

Mom!

MICHELE
Scared of your own mother?

MARCO
I didn't realize you were there.

Michele walks over to the refrigerator and opens it. She looks in and then at Marco.

MICHELE
Dr. Pepper?

MARCO
Always.

She walks over to the cabinet and grabs a glass.

MARCO (CONT'D)
I don't mind the can.

Michele pops the tab and pours the soda into the glass. Marco slides the chicken into the oven. He looks up to see his mother staring at him.

MICHELE
Come. Sit.

She pats the chair opposite her at the small table in the corner. Marco looks around and sets the timer on the microwave. He walks over to his mother and sits opposite her.

MARCO
You didn't have to get me a glass.

He takes a sip of the soda.

MICHELE
You're welcome. What's happening with your art?

MARCO
It's going well. There's a gallery in SoHo that wants to do a showing in February.

MICHELE
That's nice, dear.
(beat)
Why did you come?

MARCO
I told you.

Marco takes another sip of his soda.

MARCO (CONT'D)
I came for you.

MICHELE
Hmmm...

MARCO
I read the letter.

Marco studies the lines and creases on his mother's face.

MICHELE
It was past time.

Marco avoids her gaze. Michele shifts in her chair. She stands.

MARCO
Where are you going?

MICHELE
I'm tired.

Marco looks at her sad eyes.

MARCO
But you haven't eaten. Can you stay
awake 30 more minutes?

Michele shuffles to the doorway and turns around.

MICHELE
Honey, I'm exhausted. We can
continue the reunion in the
morning.

Marco stands.

MARCO
I came all this way to cook for
you.

MICHELE
You came all this way to feel
better about yourself.

Michele steps to Marco.

MICHELE (CONT'D)
That supposed to make me feel
guilty?

MARCO
No. No. That's not how I meant it.

MICHELE
Well, how did you mean it, boy?

MARCO
I meant that...
Mom. Please sit down. I'm sorry.

Marco gestures toward the chair. Michele doesn't move.

MICHELE
You meant what?

MARCO
I just meant that I want you to be
happy. I thought a good dinner and
some conversation would make it
easier to...

Michele blinks away tears. Marco stops.

MICHELE
Sit.

Marco sits.

MICHELE (CONT'D)
Did you know that I spent my nights
pleading with your father to make
up with you?

Marco looks away.

MICHELE (CONT'D)
I begged the both of you to make
up, before it was too late. You
never returned my calls. You and
your father.

Michele sways on her feet, stumbles. Marco rises to help her.

MARCO
Here.

Michele sits. She crosses her arms and shuts her eyes.

MICHELE
Just like him.

Tears start down her face, again.

Marco gets up and checks the chicken. He walks to the sink,
glances over at Michele and washes the greens. Michele
doesn't open her eyes.

MICHELE (CONT'D)
It was for your own good.

Marco preps the pan and drops the greens in.

MARCO
It was?

He sets the pan on the stove and makes sure the fire is at the right level. He takes more time than is needed to check.

MICHELE
Your father loved you.

MARCO
Had a funny way of showing it.

MICHELE
Your grades took a backseat to partying.

MARCO
Everybody parties in college, mom.

MICHELE
You had to learn how to be responsible.

Marco sits across from his mother. She leans forward.

MICHELE (CONT'D)
He loved you.

MARCO
He tried.

Marco looks away and shifts in his chair.

Michele stands up.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Don't go.

MICHELE
I have something for you.

MARCO
Mom. I'm sorry. I just... I wanted to make you dinner.

Michele walks over to a cabinet and reaches in. She finds what she is looking for and pulls out two envelopes.

MICHELE
These are for you.

She sets the letters down in front of Marco and leans against the counter. He looks at the letters as if they're poisoned.

MICHELE (CONT'D)
Boy, open them!

The letters are addressed to him.

MARCO
What are these?

MICHELE
Your father wasn't as stubborn as I thought. I found these among his things after he died.

MARCO
He...

Michele walks over to the doorway and leans against it.

MICHELE
I'm going to bed. Your room is the same as you left it.

He runs his hand gently over the envelopes.

MARCO
Dinner is nearly ready.

MICHELE
There are containers in the bottom drawer.

Michele walks out.

MARCO
Stay?

Michele pauses for a moment and makes her way up the stairs. Each STEP echoes through the house. The bedroom door shuts.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Merry Christmas.

Marco picks up a letter and notices the handwriting. He traces his name with his finger and opens it.

FATHER (V.O.)
Dear Marco. I am sorry for not writing to you sooner. I love you.
(MORE)

FATHER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I know you are mad that we took
away the monthly allowance we
promised. You have to focus more on
school. If you're able, please come
home. We can work this out. Your
father.

Marco's eyes well. He grabs the other letter and opens it.

FATHER (V.O.)
Marco, you are our only son. We
love you. This has gotten out of
hand. Two years is too long. I love
you and I want you to come home.
Please return your mother's calls.
Always, Your Dad.

His tears cause the ink to run.

The microwave timer BEEPS.

THE END