

GF

by Jack Rose

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EXT. ALESSANDRA'S PARENT'S HOUSE

We open on a big, steaming PLATTER OF SPAGHETTI AND MEATBALLS. Rather, spaghetti with meatballs, as the glutinous, intertwining noodles smother the meatballs. The pasta is the star of this show.

The camera pulls back to unveil our protagonist, RYAN (26), a nervous combination of Michael Cera and Jon Hamm, looking with great fear at the PLATTER through the window of a HOUSE. His girlfriend, ALESSANDRA (25), is just slightly more appealing than you'd expect Ryan's girlfriend to be.

ALESSANDRA (O.S.)

Ryan, c'mon, we're already late.

He walks to the

FRONT DOOR

of the HOUSE, an old-school mansion reminiscent of the Corleone family's house in The Godfather, where Alessandra is already standing. He quickly stops her from knocking.

RYAN

Are you sure they'll like me? Maybe I should let you guys have your family dinner.

ALESSANDRA

Relax. You've met my parents twice already, and Alex loves you. And I ate dinner at this same house with these same people every Sunday when I lived closer to home-believe me, we could use some new company.

RYAN

Whose car is that?

ALESSANDRA

My grandparents-

RYAN

What?!

ALESSANDRA

-who can't wait to meet you. They come to every Sunday dinner too!

(CONTINUED)

RYAN

Great, just two more people I'll have to explain my allergy to. I can't eat bread, I can't eat pizza, I can't eat pasta, and I'm dating the heir to the Barilla pasta fortune.

ALESSANDRA

Ryan, chill.

She rings the bell.

ALESSANDRA

We got lunch with my parents two weeks ago.

The door opens as Ryan gasps after her.

RYAN

All we had was salad!

FADE TO BLACK

TITLE CARD: GF

Over black, we hear the couple exchange pleasantries with Alessandra's little brother, ALEX.

FADE IN

INT. HOUSE - ENTRY HALL

The inside of the house feels like the National Pasta History Museum, if there was one. The walls are filled with old pictures, the bookcases with recipe books, and the floors covered in ornamental rugs.

Alex (little brother, 12), is scrawny, energetic, and moody. Alessandra's parents and family enter.

RYAN

Hi, Mr. and Mrs. Barilla.

MR. BARILLA

You can call me Richard.

MRS. BARILLA

Alessandra! Ryan, so good to see you.

(CONTINUED)

Mrs. Barilla (58), a homely woman who cares only for her children's good fortune, hugs Ryan. Mr. Barilla (64), a tall, proud man with the confidence of lifelong business success, shakes Ryan's hand and introduces him to the family: Grandma Rebecca and Grandpa Tony, Uncle Michael, and Alessandra's younger sisters Francesca and Julia.

RYAN

(stumbles over his words)
N-nice to, uh, meet you all.

MRS. BARILLA

(to Ryan)
How have you been? Ali tells us you just got a promotion! That's so great. We're so glad you could join us tonight. Ali said you went to the doctor-

ALESSANDRA

MOM! He can introduce himself during dinner. Let dad show him around first, and I'll catch you all up on me...

Ali and her mom exit into the center of the house and Ryan tries to follow, always staying a half step behind Alessandra, but he's stopped.

MR. BARILLA

Now, Ryan, I'll take you on a tour.

While the rest of the family follows Ali, he and Ryan go another way into

INT. HOUSE - LIBRARY

MR. BARILLA

How are ya, Ryan?

Ryan reaches his hand in his pocket, fiddling with something.

RYAN

You know, Mr. Barilla, I'm glad I get to talk to you alone-

MR. BARILLA

(proudly)
This room tells the story of the Barilla family's journey from Sicily to America. Here is a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MR. BARILLA (cont'd)
picture of my great-great
grandfather's pasta farm, where the
first box of Barilla Pasta was
made. It was spaghetti, of course.
On that wall you can see how the
boxes have evolved over nearly two
centuries of pasta making-who
knows, maybe you'll be at the
bicentennial in a few years.

Ryan starts over to the wall of pasta boxes, but is stopped.

MR. BARILLA
And here's the first Barilla
factory, established in Sicily in
1847. The portrait of my
great-great grandfather hung in his
office and has been in every family
house since. Now, here's the first
American factory...

Mr. Barilla's voice fades out as we enter Ryan's point of view. He looks around the library, beads of sweat forming on his forehead. His heart starts to beat as he scans the ancient boxes of pasta. He feels his stomach gurgle-from hunger or anticipation of inflaming his gluten intolerance? He feels around in his pocket again, watching Mr. Barilla ramble on and on. He walks over to the historical pasta boxes as we fade back into reality.

MR. BARILLA
...Ryan? Ryan, (laughs) I don't
think you'd want any of that, but
you're welcome to it! Hey, what's
your favorite food?

Ryan's eyes light up.

RYAN
Oh, um, uh, uh, I've been on kind
of a low-carb diet, y'know, with
summer coming up, the beach and
all...

MR. BARILLA
Okay... but what do you like to
eat?

RYAN
Whatever, I'm pretty easy. Ali and
I eat a lot of sushi, these days,
and of course she likes to cook
your old recipes.

(CONTINUED)

MR. BARILLA
She does? For you?

Mr. Barilla leads Ryan into

INT. HOUSE - MR. BARILLA'S OFFICE

RYAN
I wanted to ask you something about
Ali, actually-

MR. BARILLA
(cuts him off)
I'm glad you came tonight,
actually. I feel like I don't know
much about you, my wife always does
the talking. Ali doesn't say a bad
word, of course, and you two have
been together a long time.

RYAN
Almost two years now, yeah. That's
actually what I wanted to talk to
you about, Mr. Barilla-

MR. BARILLA
Richard.

RYAN
-my father always taught me
to ask permission-

MRS. BARILLA (O.S.)
Dinner!

MR. BARILLA
Ah, finally! Okay, quick rest of
the tour and we'll eat. Great
family recipe tonight, Ryan, I'm
sure Ali hasn't made this one for
you yet. The meatballs come from my
grandmother, who opened the first
Barilla restaurant in New York
after they moved from Italy...

MONTAGE:

INT. HOUSE

Traditional Italian music plays as Mr. Barilla finishes the
tour. He goes down long hallways while Ryan struggles to
keep up. He points up the stairs, which Ryan starts to
climb, before continuing right on. He passes a

BATHROOM

which Ryan notes, before entering the

LIVING ROOM

Where a TV might be, above the fireplace hangs a PORTRAIT-of the original Barilla spaghetti.

END MONTAGE.

INT. HOUSE - DINING ROOM

Everyone's already seated when Ryan and Mr. Barilla finally enter. A SERVER is dropping bowls of Caesar Salad onto the place settings as the two latecomers sit.

MR. BARILLA

Can you get some croutons for mine?
Thanks.

The server exits to the kitchen and returns with croutons.

SERVER

(to Ryan)
Would you like any?

ALESSANDRA

(answering for him)
No, the rest of us are okay.

MR. BARILLA

So, Ali, when's the last time you had a home cooked meal like this?

ALESSANDRA

Ryan and I cook all the time! He mostly makes breakfast, but for dinner just last week I made mom's chicken.

MR. BARILLA

But not a dinner like THIS. We made it just for you. Spaghetti and meatballs were always your favorite growing up.

MRS. BARILLA

Or just spaghetti.

(CONTINUED)

MR. BARILLA

That's right. Ali used to eat pasta every meal of the day. She fit right in from the day she was born.

ALESSANDRA

We still eat pasta! Last month we tried glut-

RYAN

(cuts her off)

I'm sorry I have to use the bathroom. Could you excuse me?

MRS. BARILLA

Of course, Ryan, out the door to the right.

RYAN

I saw it on the tour.

Ryan rushes to

INT. HOUSE - BATHROOM

where he checks his pockets. He finds, among other things, the RING BOX he had been fiddling with earlier, but something's missing.

RYAN

(to himself)

Shit, Ali has my pills.

Defeated, he flushes the unused toilet.

INT. HOUSE - HALLWAY

As he leaves the bathroom and refills his pockets, Ryan sees Mr. Barilla in the hallway.

MR. BARILLA

I'm so rude. You said before you had something to ask me and I just totally ignored it. I didn't mean to rush you to dinner. What did you want to talk about?

RYAN

(in shock)

No no nothing, Mr. Barilla, it's okay. Nothing, just... Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

MR. BARILLA

Uh... Let's eat, then? And Ryan,
call me Richard.

INT. HOUSE - DINING ROOM

Ryan returns to his seat, where all the salad bowls have
been cleared, except Alex's, which is still full.

RYAN

(to Alex)

Hey, what, you're too good for
salad?

ALEX

No, I just hate parmesan. I don't
even know why they give this to me.

MRS. BARILLA

I'm sorry, Alex, you know you don't
have to eat it. We wanted Ryan to
try as many of our family recipes
as possible. Take it to the
kitchen.

As Alex opens the door to the kitchen, Ryan sees the server
filling plates with the main attraction. His stomach gurgles
again as he realizes he blew his one chance to go to the
bathroom. Alex comes skipping back with his plate.

ALEX

I'm gonna start now since you all
already ate salad.

The family collectively rolls their eyes as Ryan laughs
nervously. We're firmly inside Ryan's head now as he sees
the server come into the dining room with the first round of
plates. Grandma, Grandpa, and the two younger daughters are
served first. The girls both lean over and smell the
delicious aromas rising off their plates. Ryan looks back up
to see Mrs. Barilla and Alessandra served, before Mr.
Barilla tucks his napkin into his shirt as he gets his
plate.

Ryan gulps nervously as he has the last unfilled setting.
Sweat rolls down his forehead as the kitchen door opens in
slow motion. He grabs his fork and knife but readies himself
to dash if he has to. The camera stays low, at the table
with Ryan, as the server looms ever closer. He reaches
around Ryan and, in agonizing slow motion, drops a plate in
front of our tepid hero.

(CONTINUED)

Peering onto the plate, Ryan is shocked-he sees meatballs, but no spaghetti. Instead, he has penne, and that can mean only one thing.

Ryan is stunned, but slowly starts eating, gaining confidence with each bite. We follow the server back into the

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN

As he grabs garlic bread and other sides, we continue to explore the kitchen: Alex's uneaten salad followed by empty bowls, the still half-full platter of spaghetti and meatballs, the window we started on, and finally, just off the widow frame, a box of Barilla-brand gluten free penne pasta, Ryan's savior. It was just barely out of his view from outside the house.

We see the door swing back open and the server enter. Through the swinging door, we see Ryan stand up and look at Mr. Barilla.

RYAN

Actually, **Richard**, I would like to talk to you in the hall for a minute.

FADE TO BLACK

MR. BARILLA

(over black)

Sure!

ROLL CREDITS