

THE MAGIC OF COFFEE

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

7.35AM.

Outdated room. Outdated furniture. Small framed photographs of Italian streetscapes hang from white walls. But there's a warmth to it's simplicity.

Standing behind a counter is LEO (30). Italian descent, wearing a red bandana over his thick jet-black hair. He hands a coffee to bus driver, FELIX (60), solid, who acknowledges with a smile.

FELIX

Thanks Leo. See you tomorrow.

Felix grabs a bunch of sugar sticks from a counter box before heading out the door.

LEO

(Turning to the camera)

I'm Leo and welcome to my coffee shop. For me, coffee is another word for love. I'm so passionate about it.

Leo picks up a cloth and wipes down his counter.

LEO (CONT'D)

It's an integral part of our lives. I have this saying that I tell my customers - There's three vital ingredients for man to survive. Air. Water. And coffee. It's true.

Leo walks over to a nearby table and starts taking the chairs off, as he sets up for the morning crowd.

Leo looks up at the camera without breaking stride.

LEO (CONT'D)

Now I may not have the best table and chairs - and I may not have the best-looking coffee shop in town. And I won't try and compete with those big coffee franchises, because that's not coffee.

Leo stops.

LEO (CONT'D)

You know what I've got going for me? Let me tell you a story. I'll make it quick.

Leo continues taking chairs off the table.

LEO (CONT'D)

I went over to Africa many years ago - Ethiopia to be exact - to find the best coffee beans on the planet. Why Ethiopia? Well Ethiopia is the birthplace of coffee. I searched high and low until I stumbled across this poor family living on a farm, in no man's land.

Leo puts his foot up onto a chair as he continues.

LEO (CONT'D)

They were farming small amounts of coffee, and although they used prehistoric equipment, they truly believed in their product. I'll call him Thomas. Thomas showed me around his farm and I ended up staying for a couple of nights. Let me tell you - when the amoras of those beans floated into the end of my nose, I was immediately seduced. Wow!

Leo looks down and stares, thinking about that moment before snapping out of it. He walks back behind the counter and turns to the camera.

LEO (CONT'D)

And then he handed me an espresso. Oh my Lord. It was spiritual. It was orgasmic. It was an 'out-of-body' experience. On that farm in Ethiopia, I truly had the greatest coffee experience that very few have. It changed my life.

Suddenly the front door opens and in shuffles, JOEL (35), unshaven, tired eyes, wearing a cheap suit with a sloppy attempt at tying a tie.

JOEL

Morning.

Joel walks past the counter and over to his preferred table, pulling out his smart phone.

LEO

Morning Joel.

Leo starts making his coffee.

LEO (CONT'D)

(Talking to the camera)

That's Joel - 35. Works for a big bank as one of those tech nerds. Has a personality of an indoor plant. Dateless. Lives alone and Mummy still does his washing. But what really bothers me about Joel - he has no idea about coffee. For the last three years he's strolled in each morning and always ordered a cappuccino - along with a bucket load of sugar. Pfft!!

Leo places Joel's cup on a saucer and adds five sugar sticks. He carries it over to Joel's table.

JOEL

Thanks.

Joel doesn't even look at Leo as he fiddles around on his smart phone. Leo walks back to his counter and looks at the camera.

LEO

It's sad but Joel is a total coffee loser. Can you believe it? Five sugar sticks in his coffee. What a goose! I have the best coffee in town and he destroys it, five mornings a week.

The door opens up and in walks good-looking DONNA (35). She's dressed as a lawyer.

DONNA

Good morning Leo.

LEO

Hi Donna.

Donna confidently walks over and sits at a table near the window.

LEO (CONT'D)

That's Donna. Great body, great looks, great hair - she's hot! She's a workaholic lawyer in a powerful law firm. Married with a kid but word on the street is, she's banging one of the partners. Hey! It's none of my business. I must say, I'm a fan. She loves her coffee.

Leo starts making her coffee.

LEO (CONT'D)

Double shot espresso. Yeah baby!
That's her signature coffee which
is going to get my full attention.
Not to mention that great ass.

The door opens up to notorious crime boss, VINCENT VALENTINO (60) and his large body guard, BUSTER CANTINA (37).

VINCENT

Good morning to my Leo.

LEO

Good morning gentlemen. I'll be
with you shortly.

The mobsters step through to their favorite table.

Leo finishes making Donna's coffee and walks it over to her.
He looks at the camera.

LEO (CONT'D)

Donna's my favorite customer. Yes,
she's smoking hot but she's more
than that. She's so intelligent, so
driven, so rich, and did I mention
she's so smoking hot? I think I
did. She knows what she wants and
she strives to get it. I just adore
her.

Leo puts the coffee down in front of Donna.

DONNA

Thank you Leo.

She gives Leo a warm smile before returning to her smart
phone. Leo looks at the camera and smiles.

He walks back to his counter and starts heating up a batch of
already prepared toasted ham cheese and tomato sandwiches.

LEO

And now I'm making coffee for the
mafia. Vincent is one of the most
powerful men in town. What he does
is none of my business. But he
knows his coffee. Vincent used to
buy his coffee a couple of blocks
down from this schmuck that ran a
funky coffee shop. The only problem
is, Vincent thought he was Italian.
You know - from the mother country.
When he found out he was from
India, he went bananas.

Leo finishes making the coffees. He takes them over to
Vincent and Buster.

LEO (CONT'D)
Your coffees gentlemen.

VINCENT
Thank you Leo.

Leo walks back to his coffee machine.

LEO
Vincent is a short black - Buster
is a long black. The thing is -
none of them mix it with poison.

Leo smiles as he grabs a cloth and starts to wipe down his machine.

LEO (CONT'D)
When I refer to poison, I'm talking
about milk and sugar. I've given
you the best coffee on the planet,
so why would you destroy it with
poison? It's like ordering a
Johnnie Walker Blue label and then
adding coke. What's the point? Once
the coke goes in, the quality goes
out.

The door opens up to GORDON HARPER (55), uptight, hard face, preppy dressed, including a bow tie.

LEO (CONT'D)
Good morning Mr. Harper.

Leo turns to the camera.

LEO (CONT'D)
I'm not allowed to call him Gordon.
It has to be Mr. Harper.

MR. HARPER
Good morning Leo.

Leo starts making his coffee as Mr. Harper reads an article on a half folded Financial Review.

LEO
Mr. Harper or Gordon Harper, is in
charge of Stella Capital - a
massive future funds company. His
building is across the road. He's a
strange man. Over the years I've
tried to get to know him, but he
keeps building that wall - brick by
brick - and what's with the bow
tie?

MR. HARPER

Leo. If you don't mind - I'll have my coffee with no milk today.

Leo stops in total disbelief.

LEO

Absolutely Mr. Harper.

(To the camera)

He's been coming in here for 10 years and ordering a coffee with poison. Why the change?

Leo notices in the corner of his eye, Donna and Mr. Harper looking at each other. Mr. Harper has a smug look on his face.

Leo looks back at the camera.

LEO (CONT'D)

I don't believe it. Is he banging Donna? What's he got that I haven't got? Okay! Let's put aside his ten million dollar salary and one million dollar annual bonuses. And let's also put aside his villa in the South of France, chalet in Whistler and his beach front property in Maui. What does Donna see in him?

Leo hands him a long black to go.

LEO (CONT'D)

There you go, Mr. Harper.

Mr. Harper hands him a ten dollar note.

MR. HARPER

Keep the change. Thank you.

LEO

Thank you very much Mr. Harper. You have a good day.

Mr. Harper takes one last look back at Donna before he leaves the shop.

The door doesn't close because homeless man, TODD (26), steps in. He's a dirty looking human being. Scruffy beard, long hair and ripped clothes. He takes a small and large bag off his shoulders and drops them at the doorway.

LEO (CONT'D)

Good morning Todd.

TODD

Hi Leo.

Leo starts making his coffee as he looks at the camera.

LEO

This is Todd. He's a homeless man that lives in a back lane around the corner. He's a good man who's down on his luck. Look I won't bullshit to you - there is a mental issue there but I think he's harmless. And guess what? He always pays for his coffee. I give it to him half price because he doesn't put poison in it.

TODD

You been busy?

LEO

In the last 5 minutes it has. But it's only early days. What about you?

Todd gives out a chuckle.

LEO (CONT'D)

(To the camera)

If you can't pull the chain of a homeless man, who can you do it to?

Leo finishes making Todd's coffee and hands it to him. Todd gives him a handful of quarters.

TODD

Thanks Leo. It's all there.

LEO

Thanks buddy.

Todd takes a sip before he turns, picks up the large bag and walks out.

DONNA O/S

Leo. Can I please get another coffee?

Leo turns and sees Donna now dressed as Wonder Woman.

LEO

Coming up Donna.

Leo finishes heating up the toasted sandwiches. He plates them up and walks over to the mobsters. Vincent is now dressed like King Arthur, including a crown. Buster is dressed as Superman.

LEO (CONT'D)

Enjoy gentlemen.

Leo walks back to the counter and starts making Donna's coffee. He looks at the camera.

LEO (CONT'D)

Nobody has the same quality of coffee that I have. In fact, I'm the only customer that Thomas from Ethiopia deals with. I do pay him a little more, but it's worth it. You could say he works for me. Remember, he's only on a small farm, but he's reliable and I always pay on time. I truly believe the coffee he grows is something special - something magical.

Leo walks over to Donna and puts her new coffee in front of her. He picks up the empty.

DONNA

Thanks Leo.

LEO

No problem.

Leo turns but Donna stops him.

DONNA

Leo. Can you get me a long black as well?

LEO

Absolutely Donna. You're truly getting your coffee fix today.

DONNA

Oh no. It's not for me.

The door opens up and in walks Mr. Harper, now dressed only in a baby's diaper and bow tie. Leo walks over to greet him.

LEO

Mr. Harper -

MR. HARPER

- Leo. Can you make me another -

DONNA

- I've already ordered.

LEO

Coming up.

Mr. Harper joins Donna at the table. Leo walks back to his counter.

LEO (CONT'D)
(To the camera)
Well. That confirms it. Donna and
Mr. Harper. Who would have thought?
I still think I'm a far better
catch.

Joel joins Leo at the counter.

LEO (CONT'D)
All finished Joel?

JOEL
Yep!

Joel hands him a five dollar note. Leo gives him change. Joel
exits.

LEO
Poor Joel. He will never get to
experience that magic coffee
feeling. I feel like banging his
head against the wall to knock some
sense into him. What's the point?
You can't change somebody if they
don't want to change.

Todd walks back into the shop, now dressed as Elvis.

LEO (CONT'D)
Todd. What brings you back?

TODD
I forgot my other bag.

Todd spins around.

TODD (CONT'D)
(Impersonating Elvis)
By the way Leo. Great coffee. God
bless you. Todd has now left the
building.

LEO
See you tomorrow Todd.

Todd picks up his bag and walks out.

Leo wipes down the counter. He looks up at the camera.

LEO (CONT'D)
I had a coffee over an hour ago but
now my body is craving for another.

He starts making it. Suddenly Leo turns into a very old man.

We see an old photo on the wall of a thirty year old Leo. He
finishes making the coffee and takes a long sip.

OLD LEO

Bellissimo! I'm 80 years old and I've never got tired of my one true love - coffee! It makes me feel young. It makes me feel alive. I could be anyone or anything I want to be. I know I haven't got a lot of years left, but as long as I'm breathing and as long as I've got my marbles, I'll still continue to drink my special brew, which I think is something special.

Old Leo turns back into Leo. He smiles.

LEO

I know what you're thinking. Every coffee shop owner says he has the best coffee in town - I get it!

Leo stops what he's doing and looks seriously into the camera.

LEO (CONT'D)

You'll just have to come and visit me.

Leo turns around and takes a sip of coffee. He puts down his cup, picks up a rag and wipes down his coffee machine.

FADE OUT