

THE MAYOR OF ITALY

an original screenplay

by

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INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The Mancuso family sits down to dinner, to celebrate TINA coming home to visit from New York City. She's brought with her MIKE, her best friend, a struggling young actor she works with. Being a blonde-haired, blue-eyed Midwestern boy, Mike stands out in the crowd of Tina's heavily Italian family.

Compared to the hoopla that will be coming later in the week, this dinner is a small affair: Tina and Mike, her brother Roberto, her parents Ani and Anthony and Granma Mancuso.

Ani is explaining the plans for the upcoming reunion to everyone.

ANI

Saturday the uncles will go to pick up Uncle Giovanni and his family at the airport and bring them here. We'll have a small family celebration for Rita and Ronnie. We'll all go to Mass together on Sunday morning to celebrate with Father Joe and it's going to be an early Mass because we've got a lot of cooking to do, so I don't want to hear any complaining. The entire neighborhood is going to be eating with us on Sunday. Your cousin Paulie spoke with the town hall people or someone and got us clearance to close off the street, so we're going to put up tables all down the road.

ROBERTO

Me and Frankie picked up the Chinese lanterns.

TINA

(to Roberto)

Frankie and I.

Roberto shoots her a dirty look.

ANTHONY

Why do they call them Chinese lanterns? Why not Italian lanterns?

ANI

That's your problem to deal with, the decorations. I'm just cooking the food.

TINA

I'm assuming the rest of the neighborhood is also chipping in with the cooking.

ANI

What do you think they are, vultures? Of course they are. Althea is making cannolli, Mrs. Larenza is helping cook the pasta. Our job is the meat.

TINA

(to Mike)

It's going to be a festival of red sauce.

MIKE

This is the best sauce I ever tasted already.

Ani smiles at him.

ANI

You shouldn't say that, what will your mother think?

Mike and Tina both laugh.

MIKE

My mother makes sauce with ketchup.

TINA

Yeah, but her meatloaf is excellent.

ROBERTO

(to Tina)

You mean 'yes' not yeah.

Tina makes a face at Roberto in her turn.

ANI

(to Tina)

You met his mother?

Tina looks quickly at Ani, knowing what she is thinking.

TINA

Yes, I went to Mike's high school reunion with him last year, as a favor.

She is making light of it, trying to draw Ani away from the subject.

ANI

Oh, you're lucky you remember going to high school.

(to Mike)

I remember the day she came home, yelling at the top of her lungs about getting this job as the student producer. And we thought, 'Okay, she loves doing this, it'll be good for her.' Little did we know we'd never see her again.

Tina gets embarrassed, because she knows what's coming.

TINA

Ma-

Ani is not about to be interrupted.

ANI

She must've been in her junior year. I noticed one day she was taking a blanket and a pillow to school. So I asked her about it and she told me she was making a bed backstage so she would have someplace to sleep! Her father had to tell her that she was not sleeping anywhere but at home.

TINA

Mom, for the twenty-fourth time, I had no intention of sleeping at

(MORE)

TINA (CONT'D)

school overnight! I wanted to have something there so when I got a minute I could take a nap.

ANI

Well, you still were never home. Then you went off to college, and now you're home twice a year.

TINA

I was home three months ago. For a whole week.

ANI

What happened with that man you were seeing? Brian? Brad? Or am I not supposed to mention him in front of this one?

Mike is surprised.

MIKE

You went out with Brad?

TINA

Mom!

(to Mike)

Only once. Well, twice, but only because Erin bailed on the Sonia Dada concert.

(to her mother)

I wasn't "seeing" him. I only told you about him because you always get on my case about my love life.

ANI

If you hadn't been so picky, it might be you and not Rita having an engagement party.

Tina rolls her eyes.

TINA

I should've seen that coming. Dad?

ANTHONY

Enough, Ann, I think you embarrassed
your daughter enough for one night.

Ani subsides with a "well-I-never-meant-that" look.
Granma gets up and starts clearing the dishes.

TINA

(to Mike)

How about a little after-supper walk?

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS.

Mike and Tina are walking around the neighborhood.

MIKE

Don't hit me for asking, but are
dinners with your family always like
that?

Tina whacks him on the arm.

MIKE

Hey, I said no hitting!

TINA

Another fun filled evening of tension
at the Mancuso house.

They've reached her cousin Angelina's house, and Tina
goes up the front walkway.

TINA

Let's go in, see some normal people.

MIKE

You mean normal for your family?

Tina slaps his arm before ringing the doorbell.

MIKE

Again with the hitting!