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Children of the Corn

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CHILD OF THE CORN

Written by

Quetzali Lopez

INT. NIÑOS DEL MAIZ TAQUERIA - DAY

XIOMARA (15) wipes the front windows of the restaurant. A soft hum from the lights can be heard, along with the fuzzy sound of Spanish music on the speaker. As Xiomara scrubs with window, her eyes focus on something outside.

XIOMARA
What in the hell...

She sees brand new, flashy sign that reads "CHILDREN OF THE CORN - HOME OF THE MODERN TACO - NOW OPEN"

XIOMARA (CONT'D)
Son of a-

Her brother, ABEL (10), is sweeping the floor behind her.

ABEL
Hey! No swearing in front of the-
What the hell is that?!

He drops the broom and runs to the window.

XIOMARA
This is bad for business. Let's go over there tomorrow, I want to see what we're up against. Don't tell papa yet. He probably won't notice at first.

ABEL
We'll take them down from the inside!

XIOMARA
Maybe. But for now keep your mouth shut.

EXT. CHILDREN OF THE CORN ENTRANCE - DAY

Xiomara and Abel stand on the sidewalk looking up at the sign. The logo is a cartoon baby wrapped in a corn husk.

INT. CHILDREN OF THE CORN RESTAURANT - DAY

Xiomara and Abel step into the restaurant. The restaurant interior is very hipster. From behind the counter, the door bursts open and GREG (26) walks in.

GREG
 My first customers! Welcome! My
 name's Greg, I am your
 (fakes French accent)
 maître d'. Oui oui merci.

Xiomara and Abel just stare at him, obviously judging.

GREG (CONT'D)
 Hey, you two are the kids from
 across the street! Wow, nice to
 finally meet you! What's your name?

XIOMARA
 Xiomara.

GREG
 Zio-wha-wha? Sorry I am *not* going
 to be able to pronounce that. Do
 you have a nickname I can call you
 by?

(beat)

XIOMARA
 No.

GREG
 Welp. Okay, let's get you two
 started! Let me introduce to you
 our menu.

Once Greg turns around to walk behind the counter, Abel pokes
 Xiomara's shoulder. She leans down and he whispers

ABEL
 He's *white*! This'll be easy!

Xiomara shushes and elbows him.

GREG
 Alrighty! So our menu is divided
 into three parts. Deconstructed
 tacos, Upside down tacos, and my
 own invention of tacos that are
 vegan, gluten free, and keto
 simultaneously.

ABEL
 Isn't that just lettuce?

GREG
 Ha! Good one! Looking for a job?
 Maybe I should hire you!

(MORE)

GREG (CONT'D)
 Let's see, what are they paying
 over there right now? I bet I could
 top it!

ABEL
 Pay? XIOMARA
 We don't get paid.

GREG
 No pay? Don't tell me they've got
 you in some child-labor sweatshop!

XIOMARA
 It's a *family* business. There are
 no rules, but it's fine because
 it's for our family.

GREG
 I see. It's nice that you would do
 that for each other.

He gives a weak chuckle.

GREG (CONT'D)
 What can I get you guys started.

XIOMARA
 Um... ABEL
 Uh...

They stare up at the menu boards, but it is so brightly
 colored and full of yuppie jargon that they don't understand.

XIOMARA (CONT'D)
 We'll just have *dos tacos de carne
 asada con cebolla y cilantro-*

GREG
 Woah woah woah, English *por favor*.

Xiomara and Abel exchange a look.

ABEL
 You don't speak Spanish? You know
 you run a taco place right?

GREG
 Oh, I'm aware. But we do things
 here with a little twist!

Xiomara and Abel exchange another look.

XIOMARA
 We'll take two steak tacos with
 onion and cilantro.

ABEL
Right side up and constructed
please!

They sit in some wicker furniture surrounding a low wooden table. Soon Greg returns with a metal tray. Xiomara and Abel stare at it for a moment.

ABEL (CONT'D)
Flour?

XIOMARA
Can we have corn tortillas?

GREG
Oof, sorry. No can do. We don't
carry corn, too many GMOs.

XIOMARA
But- It's- The sign-

GREG
Yeah... It's mostly for the movie
ref.

Abel picks up his taco and freezes. He makes eye contact with Xiomara and whispers,

ABEL
Xiomara, it's cold.

She picks up her taco and is stunned.

GREG
That's our method! We like the
ingredients to be as raw as
possible. It gives the eater a more
authentic experience.

Xiomara drops the taco back onto the tray and points at Abel.

XIOMARA
That's it. Don't eat that. We're
leaving. Grab some of the steak to
give to Dante.

GREG
Is that your dad?

XIOMARA
It's our dog.

GREG
Did I do something to offend you?

Abel looks to Xiomara. Xiomara takes a deep breath.

XIOMARA

What *didn't* you do? You take our name, you take our food, you *bastardize* it all, and now you expect me to happily eat it and tell you what a good job you're doing? No way, *guero!*

ABEL

Oh shit...

XIOMARA

I'm not going to let my father's business suffer because you want to play a game of pretend, where you *act* like you know culture, but in reality, you're probably just some daddy's boy throwing around inheritance money just to-

GREG

I haven't spoken to my father since I was 16.

Xiomara and Abel freeze and look at each other in panic. Greg collapses on the couch next to Xiomara.

GREG (CONT'D)

You're right. I have no right to be here. I thought this would help me prove myself, but-

Meat in hand, Abel stands up and mutters

ABEL

Imma head out.

Then hurries out the door as Xiomara whisper-yells

XIOMARA

Abel!

She cringes weeping man beside her.

GREG

I have nothing to offer. I dropped out school when I was 19, and since then I could never keep a steady life. My family practically *disowned* me! I thought if I could succeed in *something*, *anything...*then...

XIOMARA

Well you aren't going to find whatever it is you're looking for in a culture that isn't yours. My mother tells me "*Alguien que no conoce los ramas de su cultura, es un arbol sin raices.*" The food we make is our livelihood. It gives us our identity. This place...it takes that away from us.

GREG

You're a good daughter.

XIOMARA

I mean...I try to be. I literally owe them my life. They might not be too happy to hear that I bullied the local white guy...I'm sorry I was so mean.

Greg chuckles. They sit in silence for a moment.

GREG

I won't tell if you don't. And I'm truly sorry about the name. I really don't know Spanish.

XIOMARA

Well you have to know something. The Europeans have good food. What are you? French? Italian?

GREG

Irish.

Xiomara looks to the side and mutters,

XIOMARA

Dear God.

She turns back to Greg,

XIOMARA (CONT'D)

I know! Open a...potato...store?

GREG

That's not a *terrible* suggestion.

XIOMARA

Look, at the very least change the name. We've been children of the corn since *before* "Children of the Corn."

GREG

Done.

XIOMARA

And if you can't think of any ideas, go...ugh, what's that thing white people do? Backpacking? So you can figure your life out. And talk to your dad.

GREG

I can't believe I'm taking life advice from a teenager.

XIOMARA

Hey! This teenager has been doing manual labor since she was 8! I'm basically a wise old owl.

They laugh. Greg has calmed down now.

GREG

I'm sorry this restaurant could've hurt your family. They should be proud of their ruthless daughter fighting in their defense.

Xiomara smiles before standing.

XIOMARA

I have to get to work.

GREG

Yeah so do I.

Xiomara exits.

INT. NIÑOS DEL MAIZ TAQUERIA - DAY

Xiomara wipes down a table next to the window, she glances up to see a new sign reading "Lil Spud's French Fry Joint" and the new logo is a potato baby. Xiomara's father walks up from behind her.

FATHER

Looks like that *guerito* finally opened up. You think he'll be a threat?

XIOMARA

Nah. He's harmless.