

The Food Cart

Written by

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Based on my love for Chef films like "Burnt", "Chef"
& "Little Italy".

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Act I: Setting the Stage

Introduction to Emmanuele: Emmanuele, 20 years old, lives in Rome and dreams big despite his inexperience. He's stubborn, hardworking, and sensitive. The audience gets a glimpse of his mundane life, his obsession with food and creativity, and his passion for making something unique.

Marzia and Marzio: Marzia, his lifelong best friend and an aspiring hairstylist, supports him emotionally and practically. Her twin brother, Marzio, is socially awkward but incredibly resourceful, bringing a quirky and analytical perspective to the group.

The Spark: One day, Emmanuele stumbles upon a bustling street food scene. He feels inspired to start his own food cart, believing this is his calling. The first 10-15 minutes focus on his struggles to acquire a cart, manage permits, and figure out recipes. With Marzia and Marzio's help, he finally sets up the food cart, proud but slightly out of his depth.

Act II: Rising Action and Conflict

The Rival

Disaster Strikes: Things take a turn when a rival street food vendor sabotages Emmanuele's cart. During a busy shift, Emmanuele leaves briefly to resolve an unrelated issue, and the rival ruins his ingredients and equipment.

Recovery Attempt: Furious but undeterred, Emmanuele attempts to rebuild, but the damage results in poor sales. Financial strain begins to mount, leading to tensions between him and Marzia.

The Breaking Point

Money Problems: After a series of failed attempts to sustain the food cart, Emmanuele reluctantly closes shop and takes a boring, low-paying office job to pay off debts. His passion dims, and he starts avoiding everyone, including Marzia.

Marzia's Intervention: Three months later, Marzia visits Emmanuele's messy apartment. She confronts him about his behavior, reminding him of his determination and why he started the food cart in the first place. Emmanuele, moved by her words, decides to give the cart another shot.

Act III: Redemption and Resolution

The Comeback

A Second Chance: Emmanuele reopens the food cart with Marzia and Marzio's help. The team renovates the cart and promotes a special menu tailored for the day of a big soccer match in the city. Their excitement and dedication rekindle the bond between them.

Success on Match Day: Match day brings a bustling crowd. The food is a hit, and Emmanuele's cart flourishes like never before. Amid the chaos, Emmanuele and Marzia share a quiet, heartfelt moment. Marzia admits she's fallen for his relentless drive and passion, and they kiss. Marzio's awkward attempts to give them privacy add humor to the scene.

The Future

Voiceover and Montage: The film ends with Emmanuele narrating the success story of the cart. The trio now manages three thriving locations in Rome, each person playing to their strengths.

Wedding Bells: The final scene is Emmanuele and Marzia's wedding, with Marzio nervously delivering a speech and the camera panning to their food trucks outside the venue, a symbol of their shared success.

Tone and Style:

The film balances heartwarming moments with quirky humor, leaning into the charm of its underdog story. The micro-budget aesthetic adds to the authenticity of a scrappy, hard-earned victory for Emmanuele and his friends. It's a story of love, perseverance, and finding joy in one's passions.

OPENING MONTAGE

Classical nostalgic music (**Arrival by RØRE**) plays.

1. EXT. PIAZZA VENEZIA - DAY 1.

Cars and tourists crowd Piazza Venezia.

2. EXT. ROME STREET - DAY 2.

Crowd of football fans enter bus.

3. INT/EXT. BAR - DAY 3.

People drink at bar.

4. EXT. ROME STREET - DAY 4.

Sunlight fills the street. Man serves football fans from food cart.

EMMANUELE (V.O.)

Line

5. INT. HAIRDRESSOR SHOP - DAY 5.

Barber shop is full of WOMEN. MARZIA (20s) does someone's hair.

EMMANUELE (V.O.)

Line

6. INT. HOME - DAY 6.

Marzio (20s, geeky) plays piano.

EMMANUELE (V.O.)

Line

7. EXT. BACKYARD/BALCONY - DAY 7.

Men drink and watch a football game.

EMMANUELE (V.O.)

Line

END OF OPENING MONTAGE

8. INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

8.

Emmanuele is working in the restaurant. His mother is giving him orders. He waits a table. He goes into the kitchen, chaos with the chefs as they complain about the restaurant.

9. INT. UNIVERSITY - DAY

9.

Emmanuele falls asleep during class. He's woken by Marzia. She's concerned for him.

10. INT. HAIRDRESSOR SHOP - DAY

10.

Marzia finishes her shift and heads out.

11. INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

11.

Emanuele is about to wrap up his shift. The dishwasher storms out the restaurant.

Just as he's about to leave a new set of plates is set in the kitchen. He's frustrated.

EMMANUELE (V.O.)

Line.

Emmanuele is seen cutting, quickly, makes sandwiches and gives them out to his co-workers. They compliment him on his amazing sandwiches and how he ought to sell them one day for serious money.

12. INT. UNIVERSITY - DAY

12.

Class starts. Marzio & Marzia look around at his empty seat.

13. INT. HOME - DAY

13.

Emmaneuel wakes up and sees the time. Texts from Marzia & Marzio that he's missed school.

14. INT. HOME - BASEMENT - DAY

14.

Emanuele goes to his basement. A food cart like object sits there, covered. He grabs his football outfit from there.

15. INT. HOME - DAY

15.

Marzio gets changed in a football outfit. Marzia comes in from another room in a similar outfit. BEEPS.

EMMANUELE (V.O.)

Line

16. INT. CAR - DAY

16.

Emmanuele sits in his car, exhausted.

EMMANUELE (V.O.)

Line

17. EXT. ER PINTO - DAY

17.

Emmanuele, Marzio & Marzia walk in street. Foodcart is full of people. They have a conversation about the game. Marzio shows he's uninterested, Marzia shows her keen interest in the game and they both notice Emmanuele is not himself as he's not interested in the game. Emmanuele realizes he must do the food cart. He has a flashback of his late father doing the foodcart and him helping him out as a kid in the same area. He ditches the game and they follow, perplexed.

18. INT. HOME - DAY

18.

Emmanuele rushes to his basement.

19. INT. HOME - BASEMENT - DAY

19.

Emmanuele pulls the cover off the food cart, revealing a dusty food cart. There's a dusty photo of him and his father working on the food cart together in it. He says he must do this food cart. Perplexed and weirded out, they help him. Marzia gives him a romantic look.

20. INT. HOME - BASEMENT - NIGHT

20.

Emmanuele still works on the food cart.

21. INT. HOME - BASEMENT - DAY

21.

Emmanuele wakes up next to the food cart. He polishes the foodcart up and brings it out. His mother flips at him for missing work. He gets an ultimatum of going back to the restaurant or leaving the home. She tells him he's stubborn just like his father was. He snaps back. She tells him his father had the same look in his eyes, so full of hope until it broke him. Touched and hurt, Emmanuele leaves with the food cart.

22. EXT. MARZIA'S HOME - DAY

22.

Emmanuele arrives with the food cart to Marzio, Marzia & Jon (20s, stoner).

Upbeat music (**Tu Y Yo by Costaman**) plays. Emmanuele receives help from the twins to set up the cart with ingredients. Jon cracks funny jokes about Emmanuele's food cart and gives comedic relief as he does no work and smokes joints.

They add cool gadgets to the food cart.

23. EXT. ER PINTO - DAY

23.

Emmanuele and the twins sell at the food cart while Jon tries to call people over as a street salesman.

We see the struggles as it is Emmanuele's first time. He gets a flashback of his father teaching him to make the sandwiches and his sandwich skills come to show again with his fast cutting and assembling.

As Emmanuele serves happy clients he gets dirty looks from a business rival. The rival goes to Emmanuele and comments on his amateur looking food cart.

Several clients stack up filming Emmanuele's sandwich making skills.

24. INT. TWINS' HOME - DAY

24.

The 4 celebrate their earnings and Emmanuele pays them, Jon adds a comedic element.

25. EXT. ER PINTO - DAY

25.

Montage of many successful days as his food cart is full of customers. His mother walks by on her way to the market, pretending not to notice. As she passes, she overhears a customer talking: "This is the best sandwich in Rome. I come all the way across town for this.

She turns back for a moment, watching Emmanuele laughing and serving customers, his energy and passion shining. She hurries away before he sees her, her expression softening.

Purpose: This moment lets her see firsthand that Emmanuele is thriving and loved by the community, planting the seed for her reconciliation.

A rude customer makes remarks and Marzia handles the situation well with her charisma and de-escalates, and turns the not so happy customer to a happy one. Heartfelt music plays as he's touched by her dedication and impressive ability with customers.

26. INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

26.

Rival meets with police officer. He establishes that what the kid doing with his "stupid little food cart" is probably illegal and going to put him out of business and that he has people to pay a percentage to and so he can't afford to lose. He threatens the police officer, then warns him that they had an "agreement". He shows the officer the picture.

27. INT. HOME - DAY

27.

Emmanuele finally gets his first apartment with his newly found income. He sees his sandwich videos are trending on TikTok. The twins brainstorm ways to keep going viral. They open a social media page for the cart. Marzia then designs a creative marketing idea (e.g., catchy slogans, stylish packaging) that helps the business stand out.

28. INT. HOME - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

28.

The mother is watching TV, distracted. She sees a news clip or hears a neighbor talking about a young man selling amazing sandwiches in the area. She pauses, realizing they're talking about Emmanuele, but doesn't say anything.

She looks out the window toward the street, a small smile tugging at her lips before shaking her head and returning to her chores.

Purpose: This subtly shows her internal conflict—pride in her son but hesitation to express it due to her fears.

29. INT. HOME - NIGHT

29.

KNOCKS. The police warn that what he is doing is illegal. Emmanuele rages. Marzia kisses him impulsively. Romantic music plays. She then gives a speech letting him know how inspiring and special he is and that he has to get the job done and do what he has to do.

30. EXT. FOOD SUPPLIER - DAY

30.

A police officer threatens Emmanuele's food supplier to never sell to Emmanuele again.

31. INT. ER PINTO - DAY

31.

Upbeat music plays. Emmanuele sets the permission slip on the truck with a smile. His rival looks at him with an angry look. Emmanuele makes many sales.

Emmanuele's success declines as his rival blatantly sets a discount on his prices with a passive aggressive message towards Emmanuele's food cart.

A customer compares the rival's food to Emmanuele's, potentially sparking more animosity.

32. EXT. FOOD SUPPLIER - DAY 32.

Emmanuele goes to his food supplier who now with a black eye refuses to sell to Emmanuele. Emmanuele runs into his rival. They get into a physical altercation that is then separated.

33. INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT 33.

Emmanuele goes to the restaurant to get ingredients, to which his mother tells him to leave and never come back.

34. INT. ER PINTO - DAY 34.

Emmanuele sets his very disgusting new low quality ingredients in the truck. He then threatens his rival. Customers are not enjoying the food. He has an unsuccessful day.

35. INT. ER PINTO - NIGHT 35.

The food cart is empty. Emmanuele, Marzia, and Marzio count the day's earnings.

It's clear the rival is stealing customers. The money isn't enough to restock properly.

36. EXT. ROME STREET - DAY 36.

A local health inspector, tipped off by the rival, fines Emmanuele for an expired permit.

37. INT. TWINS' HOME - NIGHT 37.

Emmanuele argues with Marzia and Marzio. Marzia tries to calm him, but Emmanuele snaps, claiming no one understands the pressure. He storms out.

38. INT. HOME - DAY 38.

Emmanuele faces his mother. She tells him he needs a steady job to pay bills. He reluctantly agrees to quit the cart and return to the restaurant.

39. EXT. ROME STREET - DAY 39.
Emmanuele pushes the food cart home. A few regular customers wave at him, confused.
40. INT. HOME - NIGHT 40.
Emmanuele sits alone in his room, eating a plain sandwich. His work uniform hangs on the chair.
41. INT. HAIRDRESSER SHOP - DAY 41.
Marzia looks worried as she styles a client's hair. She checks her phone, but Emmanuele hasn't replied to her texts.
42. INT. HOME - DAY 42.
Marzia knocks on Emmanuele's door. He opens it, disheveled and unkempt. She confronts him, demanding to know why he's shut her out.
43. INT. HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY 43.
Marzia and Emmanuele talk. Emmanuele admits he feels like a failure. Marzia tells him he's more alive when running the food cart. She reminds him of his father's legacy and his passion for food.
44. INT. TWINS' HOME - DAY 44.
Marzia and Marzio drag Emmanuele into the living room. They lay out new plans for the food cart. Marzio shows sketches of gadgets he's been working on.
45. EXT. ROME STREET - DAY 45.
The trio works on upgrading the cart. Marzia paints the cart with bright colors. Marzio installs gadgets. They rehearse Emmanuele's pitch.
46. INT. HOME - NIGHT 46.
Emmanuele cooks late into the night, experimenting with new recipes. He carefully arranges sandwiches on plates, envisioning success.

47. INT. ER PINTO - DAY

47.

The upgraded food cart is parked at a bustling street corner. Emmanuele serves customers while Marzia and Marzio work in sync. Customers film his impressive sandwich-making skills on their phones.

48. EXT. ROME STREET - DAY

48.

A customer posts a video of Emmanuele's sandwich artistry online. The video gains traction with captions like "Rome's Sandwich King."

49. INT. HOME - NIGHT

49.

Emmanuele, Marzia, and Marzio celebrate the video going viral. Notifications on their phones blow up with sponsorship offers. They toast to their success.

50. MONTAGE:

50.

- Emmanuele signs a deal with a local sponsor to expand his business.
- New food carts are painted in the same bright colors, with Marzia and Marzio overseeing operations.
- Crowds line up at different locations, all serving Emmanuele's unique sandwiches.
- Emmanuele is interviewed on local TV, nervous but proud.

51. EXT. ER PINTO - DAY

51.

At the original food cart, Emmanuele and Marzia share a quiet moment. She tells him how proud she is, and he confesses he couldn't have done it without her. They share a kiss. Marzio awkwardly interrupts to hand them new receipts.

52. INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

52.

Emmanuele enters with flowers. His mother is at the counter, looking tired. "You remind me so much of him. Your father... he always believed in that cart. He'd work until his hands bled, saying it was for us, for our future. And when it failed, it broke him. It took his life. I thought I was protecting you by keeping you away from that life."

Emmanuele kneels beside her.

Emmanuele:

"It's not the same, I'm doing this because it makes me feel alive. Like I'm carrying a piece of him with me."

She then gives him the mothers' approval he was dying for.

53. EXT. ER PINTO - NIGHT

53.

Emmanuele hosts a small gathering at the original cart to honor his father. He gives a heartfelt speech about his father's legacy and how he inspired his passion for food. His mother adds a touching story about his father's first food cart, bringing everyone to tears.

54. INT. CHURCH - DAY

54.

Emmanuele and Marzia get married. The ceremony is filled with laughter and emotional moments, with Marzio giving an awkward but endearing speech.

CREDITS ROLL - CREDITS MONTAGE:

- Old photos and videos of Emmanuele and his father working together on a food cart.