The Corner Store

Michael Nakic

You know, your typical corner store: chips, beer, bread and lotto tickets. Once in a while you enter to buy something … usually the same things you don’t want to think about when you are shopping in those large stores, or maybe something you fail to organize in a perfect manner in this time consuming world.

Me? I’m bad with bread organization. I either eat it too fast or too slowly and I end up buying bread at the corner store. Luckily, it’s not that bad at all, so I don’t feel too bad about buying it. Actually, there are days when I enjoy eating their 675 gr. white, pre-sliced bread or the Italian version of it, which means that it has a bit more crust and a dusting of flour on top. Oh, and it’s whole grain.

Tonight was one of those nights. I was aiming for the white one. Sweet Lord - the perfect match for my Polish sausages and ketchup.

My corner store is managed by a Chinese couple. Younger people. They switch shifts to keep it running as it is. Both are fighting the language barrier and the pronunciation issues that are actually a result of different muscle usage in different languages that’s especially noticeable when switching between language groups. A very intense, silly barrier that makes people silent and insecure.

Yeah . . . you know . . . the usual – “Good evening” with the doorbells sounding, signaling that someone is entering.

"Good evening, how are you tonight?" I decided to ask, condemning myself to the "fine, how are you" continuation.

"Oh, me too, I’m trying my best - don’t we all?" I answered, thereby carrying the usual routine into the unknown.
A pause, the very important one that makes the feeling grow and the memory flow - and then a "Very hard," with uncommon eye contact and a smile.

A second was enough. "Here is your change, have a good night . . ."

“You too,” I replied.

I really needed that conversation . . .

Bread is important.

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