

The Invention of Mayonnaise

By

J.R. Cox

INT. COOP - EARLY MORNING

HENRI hums a French tune as he collects eggs from beneath the chickens and places them in a basket.

MONTAGE - MORNING

Henri walks through the Parisian streets with his basket full of eggs.

Henri knocks on a door of a shop.

A WOMAN answers and warmly greets him.

He exchanges eggs for a few coins.

His hand raps on a second door.

A MAN gives him a warm smile.

Henri gives him eggs.

He taps a window and waves.

He gets a few coins.

His basket holds fewer eggs.

In a store entry way a LITTLE GIRL gives him a hug and he gives her some eggs.

He gives away a few more eggs.

He gets a few more coins.

His basket has only two eggs left, but they are clearly the best.

He looks upon a shop wistfully.

The sign reads "Federica's Olives". Below, a sign flips around from "NO ENTRE" to "ENTRE"

INT. FEDERICA'S OLIVES - MORNING

Henri timidly pokes his head through the door.

He opens it wider and a bell rings startling him to jump inside.

FEDERICA (O.S.)

Bonjuer?

The Beautiful FEDERICA enters from the back. Henri swoons.

FEDERICA

Henri!

She steps out from behind the counter and smiles. She looks at the eggs in the basket with great joy. She reaches for the eggs and looks at them through the light.

FEDERICA

Perfecto.

Henri nearly falls over.

She reaches into her apron, searching for coins, but Henri shakes his head.

HENRI

No, no, no.

He smiles and waves her to take the eggs. Federica smiles again and leans in for a nice hug. Henri sighs with great contentment.

FEDERICA

Merci Henri.

She is about to return to the counter as another customer steps through the door.

FEDERICA

Pierre!

Federica dumps the eggs back in the basket rushes to PIERRE and gives him a hug too.

Henri defensively cuddles his basket.

Pierre traces his pencil mustache with one hand, as the other remains hidden behind his back.

He gently pushes her back and with a great flourish reveals his other hand.

PIERRE

Tahdah!

A steaming lump of bleu cheese festers in his hand.

Henri watches with disgust.

Federica claps with excitement.

Pierre smugly traces his mustache.

Federica grabs the cheese very carefully and rushes it to the back room.

Pierre looks at Henri with disdain. He strides over confidently, and, taking care to touch it as little as possible, picks up an egg and inspects it.

PIERRE

Ew.

Federica returns with some coins, and Pierre drops the egg to turn and meet her.

Henri struggles to catch it in his basket, but succeeds.

Federica tries to give Pierre some coins but he refuses.

She insists.

He still refuses.

Henri rolls his eyes.

She still insists.

Pierre concedes, and , taking the coins, places them in Henri's basket, and pats him on the head.

Henri is floored.

Federica swoons.

FEDERICA

Awww.

Henri tries to dig the money out of his basket, but it gets lost in the folds of cloth.

PIERRE

Federica! I jet tell vu, vu butee
 iz incomprabal. vu inspier mi. Me
 intenzion iz to manufac la prime,
 la moz fantastique, moz spectacular
 sus in je terer parvu. I juel
 combione la prime de Francai, Me
 Chez, et la prime de Italia, voi
 Olive Oil. All, por vu.

With much fanfare he grabs a bottle of her oil, and opens the door.

PIERRE

Adieu.

He exits.

In a surge of self esteem Henri puffs out his chest and grabs a bottle of oil, and opens the door in the same fashion as Pierre.

HENRI

Mi Asweiel.

Federica, frustrated, calls after him.

FEDERICA

Henri.

Henri sheepishly returns and pays her for the bottle.

Her frustration builds.

FEDERICA

Henri!

He returns and gives her the eggs. Then he exits.

FEDERICA

Mama mia.

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Henri looks around the barren room. He searches through cupboards, finally finding a bowl. He searches more and eventually comes upon a spoon.

He triumphantly puts the spoon in the bowl, and pours the entire bottle of oil on top.

He then looks around the kitchen again, contemplative. It is filled with images and iconography of eggs.

Chickens can be heard from the coop.

Suddenly, Henri's face lifts with inspiration.

HENRI

Ah Ha!

MONTAGE - AFTERNOON

Henri buys some fresh herbs from the Woman.

He mixes it in with the oil and tastes. He considers then exits.

Henri buys some Candy from the Man.

He smashes it up with a hammer and mixes it into the bowl. He tastes it and winces. He leaves.

Henri buys a large cut of pork from the Little Girl.

Henri stirs the bowl and lifts the spoon to his mouth.

The toilet flushes and Henri, pale, bursts out of the bathroom.

Henri cooks the pork.

He tries it again and screams in frustration.

He buys garlic.

He buys butter.

He buys bread.

He buys wine.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

He furiously mixes the overflowing bowl and tastes it. His face lights up, but transitions into anger.

He screams and throws the the spoon across the room and breaks down crying with the bowl.

an egg slowly rolls across the counter and taps the side of the bowl. Henri looks up.

He sees the egg, and looks at the end of the counter.

A chicken scratches at the surface, and pecks.

Henri looks back at the egg. His eyes slowly widen.

EXT. FEDERICA'S OLIVE SHOPPE - EVENING

Henri runs through the pouring rain to the door, just as Federica turns the sign in the window.

He knocks.

No answer.

He knocks.

Federica opens the door suspiciously.

FEDERICA

Henri?

Henri pathetically holds up some coins.

INT. FEDERICA'S OLIVES - EVENING

Federica ushers Henri inside berating him all the time.

She wanders into another room muttering about this foolish man.

He looks at her finest bottle of olive oil. He waddles over and checks the price. He drops it quickly.

In a line he sees the progression of lower qualities extending down the shelf from that bottle. He checks the price of the second best and winces.

He continues down the line until his face nearly droops off. Finally on the last bottle, he fearfully checks the price tag. Devastation washes over him.

He recounts his money, and checks the price again. He can't afford even the worst of her olive oils.

As he nears tears, Federica returns with a towel.

She plops it on his head and dries his hair with a curt but caring motion.

She notices him looking at the bottles.

She grabs one off the shelf and offers it to him.

He looks at her with disbelief. She reluctantly shoves it toward him.

Excitedly he gives her a kiss on the cheek and rushes out the door.

EXT. MARKET - NOON

Pierre steps out in front of a cloaked sales table as the market space fills with people. He softly clears his throat. No one notices.

He loudly clears his throat. No one notices.

He pounds loudly on the wooden table next to him, and finally everyone turns.

PIERRE

Madamuzelles et Gendlemon! Gazer le care. Toda, I propot le taste wiz flavair! Benu zis sharet, pilo creme de Francais fromage. Amor awaits voi toungue.

Henri, drenched in sweat pulls a cart up the road nearing the market.

PIERRE

N'est sus! C'est Magnifique. C'est Spectacular! C'est...Fondue!

The crowd stares silently, unimpressed. One BRAVE SOUL steps from the crowd, confident and suspicious. He grabs a piece of toast and brings it to his lips.

He turns back to the crowd with a totally different look. His eyes are wide, and he holds the toast aloft.

BRAVE SOUL

Is BON!

The crowd cheers and rushes the bench, exposing Henri and his little cart set up in the back.

He holds up a finger as if to attract some attention.

A PORTLY MAN walks through the bustling area, and sees the commotion. He stops by Henri's cart.

PORTLY MAN

Qua a le comocion?

HENRI

(unexcited)

Fondue.

PORTLY MAN

Is bon?

Henri shrugs.

The portly man references Henri's cart. There is bread and a mysterious jar.

PORTLY MAN

Qua vu?

Henri can hardly believe he got a bite and stutters the word.

HENRI

Mayonnaise.

The man slaps a coin on the cart, spreads some mayonnaise on a chunk of the bread, and bites.

PORTLY MAN

Oh ho ho. Bon. Menay bon.

HENRI

Merci.

PORTLY MAN

Qua du nes le recipe.

Henri pushes out the empty jar of olive oil and a couple eggs.

HENRI

Prime de la Italia et prime de la
Francai.

Finally Federica arrives, strolling through the market with a basket for goods.

Henri sees her and tries to wave, but just then Pierre bursts from the crowd and accosts her with a piece of Fondued toast.

PIERRE

Federica!

She tries a bite and is immediately taken with it. Pierre leads her back to his kiosk.

Henri's heart sinks.

EXT. MARKET - LATER

The line in front of Pierre's has diminished to a dozen. Federica laughs at something Pierre says.

Henri leans on his cart, defeated still, about half of his loaf gone.

The Portly Man finally gets to the front of Pierre's line.
He pays and eagerly takes a bite of the toast. He shrugs.

PORTLY MAN

Bon.

Pierre is incredulous.

PIERRE

Bon? Bon? Magnifique, Spectacular,
non bon!

The Portly man shakes his head.

PORTLY MAN

Bon. Mayonnaise, fantastique.

Pierre's eyes nearly pop out of his head from anger.

PIERRE

Mayonnaise?

The Portly Man points to Henri's table where he still leans
despondent.

PORTLY MAN

Prime de la Italia pue prime de la
Francai.

Federica leans over to see what the man points to, and she
notices Henri for the first time. The sight makes her cock
her head in thought.

Livid, Pierre's lips tighten.

PIERRE

Qua?

PORTLY MAN

Qua du nes la recipe?

Pierre blinks at the unexpected question.

PIERRE

Recipe?

PORTLY MAN

Oui.

PIERRE

Weill, uh, lus me si, uh, le creme
por du fraincis fromage, et belle

PIERRE
vino por champaigne, et garlic su
por la terre uh, por Normandy, le
biesel lemon zest-

FEDERICA
Tre olive oil.

The Portly man condescendingly shakes his head.

PORTLY MAN
No.

FEDERICA
Oui. Somo parle Pierre.

Pierre avoids her gaze.

FEDERICA
Pierre?

Pierre smiles weakly and throws his hands up.

Federica is genuinely hurt, and marches off.

She passes right by Henri, but they are both too absorbed in sadness to notice each other.

Pierre watches, shocked, and the Portly Man watches, bemused as he chews the toast.

EXT. MARKET - DUSK

The sun sinks to the rooftops.

Henri drags his cart through the streets of Paris, exhausted and sad.

He looks up and sees Federica sitting on a stoop despondently.

Concern replaces the saddens in his eyes, and he slowly carts his way to her.

HENRI
(quietly)
Federica?

Noticing him for the first time, she looks up.

FEDERICA
Oh. Bonjour Henri.

She sighs.

Henri looks around and finally inspiration hits him again.

He digs in his cart, and finds the last bit of mayonnaise.

He turns and gives it to her.

She clearly doesn't want it, but the earnest look on Henri's face warms her heart.

She grabs it with an unwilling smile and tastes. The flavor raises her spirits a bit.

FEDERICA
Is Bon.

Henri smiles. He turns to dig in his cart again, and produces the empty bottle she gave him.

She finally realizes and smiles widely. She jumps into his arms and gives him a big kiss.

She leans back to look at him. His eyes beam over a dumb smile.

They laugh and embrace.

FADE OUT