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## Two Cents

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TWO

# CENTS

Avila: Two Cents

I am working on a paper for my Literature class when my Mother comes in with a blank expression on her face.

“Mijo, did you hear what happened to your Grandma today?” she says.

Her story sparked a conversation that would impact my view of the world for the rest of my life.

I looked at her, confused because I did not know what happened. Now curious, I asked her what happened.

She tells me that my grandma and uncle went to a coffee shop earlier that day. While my Uncle went to the bathroom, my Grandma ordered a small coffee and sandwich. The total came was \$9.02. After ordering, my Grandma searched through her purse for the two cents. The cashier started yelling at her.

“Where’s the money?” the cashier screams.

My Grandma, who speaks broken English, struggled to explain that she was trying to find the exact change.

“If you don’t have any money, then why did you order?” the cashier continued, expressing frustration at the elderly Guatemalan woman.

The Caucasian gentleman next in line offered to pay the extra change. He showed his nickel and two pennies to cover the cost.

“No! If this illegal has no money for the order, then she doesn’t deserve it!” the cashier said fuming.

As a last resort, my Grandma tried to show the cashier that she had seven cents.

“I don’t serve spics who have no money!” the cashier yelled. She threw away the coffee and sandwich.

Feeling horrified and defeated, my Grandma found a table and started crying while she waited for my Uncle.

I was so angry to hear about this. My Grandma helped raise me. Every time I saw her, she was always so happy. She taught me the power of kindness and how it can get you far in life. She had raised four kids in a country full of violence and single-handedly found a way to get her whole family to the United States. She brought them all here so that they could live the “American Dream” together. When my family experiences turmoil, her bright smile, and laugh makes me happy.

A hateful woman decided to attack my Grandma and go to great lengths to break her spirit. The cashier would not serve those who are different. She was closed-minded and hurt my Grandma.

All of that for two cents.

I felt a pit in my stomach as I picture my Grandma crying in that coffee shop. I ask myself:

Why her?

Why didn’t anyone stand up for her? Why didn’t the man behind her do more to help? Why did everyone just let that fucking cashier get away with that obvious act of racism?

Once I calmed down, I asked my Mom what how they responded.

“Your Uncle asked for the manager but she was the manager. They argued but ended up leaving. That wasn’t the first time something like that has happened. It won’t be the last. I hope that you know this can happen to you one day. I just want you to be prepared.”

That was the final blow, the moment I realized the current state of our society.

Sam Avila