

West Side Market

Corner of West 25th Street and Lorain Avenue

By Eric Coble

PETE:	The Heir to the Perogies
MOM:	The Mother of the Heir
DAD:	The Father of the Heir
Felicia & David	Trendy Shoppers
WOMAN:	Hungry Shopper

The **West Side Market** is the oldest operating indoor/outdoor market in Cleveland, Ohio, having begun operations in 1840. The current market building, finished in 1912 at a cost of nearly \$680,000, provides nearly 100 stalls for sellers and an 85-stall outdoor produce arcade that wraps around the side and rear of the main building. The building has a large clock tower, which was easily visible from most of the Ohio City neighborhood in the building's early days.

Many Clevelanders still do a large portion of their shopping at the Market. It attracts visitors from all parts of the United States, who tour the market and learn about its history. The market's tenants and sellers reflect the cultural diversity of the surrounding neighborhood and Cleveland as a whole. The current roster of tenants includes those of Irish, German, Slovene, Italian, Hungarian, Greek, Polish, Russian, and Middle Eastern descents, among others.

MUSIC: **POLISH ESTABLISH AND FADE**

SOUND: **ECHOEY EMPTY EARLY MORNING MARKET. MOM PREPARES FOODS BEHIND COUNTER.**

Pete: (FEETSTEPS) Hey, ma.

Mom: Look at what the dog dragged out.

Pete: Hey, I made it, didn't I? This is too early.

Mom: Smelling like a cat-house. Like the Flats. Dear God, my eyes are watering.

Pete: It's cologne. I put some on to spruce me up.

Mom: A bath spruces you up. That stuff kills insects.

Pete: All right.

Mom: I can smell you over the fish counter.

Pete: All right. Do you want me here or not?

Mom: I didn't call you. It was your father.

Pete Where is Pop?

Mom: Bringing the stuff into the Market from the car. The doors open any minute.

Pete: What stuff?

Mom: I noticed I didn't see you at church again.

Pete: Ma.

Mom: I can only tell the priest so many times that you have head lice.

Pete; You don't –

Mom: I think he's getting suspicious. So I told him you have painful, explosive diarrhea, and that quieted him down.

Pete: Jesus.

Mom: Language.

Pete: You don't gotta lie for me. I'll show up when I show up.

Mom: Maybe at our funeral.

Pete: I need some coffee.

Mom: I'll get you some.

Pete: I'll get some at Big City.

Mom: We got coffee here.

Pete: I like theirs.

Mom: They got all those flavors. It's like Baskin Robbins, it's too confusing.

Pete: I like the flavors.

Mom: We got two flavors here. "Dad made it." "Mom made it." Today, it's "Mom made it." Good and thick. Like spackle.

Pete: I'll be back.

Mom: Why don't you just go to Johnny Hot Dog while you're at it, and get a beer for breakfast?

Dad: Hellooo – Peter !

Pete: Hey, Pop.

Dad: (SNIFFLING) Whoooo, Dear God in Heaven, ios that you?

Mom: It's him.

Pete: It's my cologne.

Dad: (Fishing for cash) Here. Go buy some pork jowls over at Janosz's. Rub 'm around your neck. They'll get rid of the stench.

Pete: I don't want to get rid of the stench. I like it !

Dad: I knew a girl from Hrodna smelled like that, we all thought she was rotting from the inside. Turned out it was perfume. She was a hooker.

Mom: Is that the name of your cologne? "Rotting whore"?

Pete: I don't need this. I get out of bed crack of dawn and drive over here 'cause you asked me to —

Dad: How was traffic?

Pete" It's six a-m, Dad. Traffic's fine. Only human beings I saw were the crazy guy who's always on the Detroit bridge — let me give you a hand with that.

Dad: No, no. I can do it. I just wanted you to be here for the unveiling.

Pete: What. You're finally splurging for a new sign.

Mom. Your uncle got the Bruenmullers to paint that sign in exchange for him doing their dental work. Your uncle was so goddam good with a hammer....

Pete: Are you expanding: Pierogis and Keilbasa not good enough anymore? Youo guys doing cheesecake now too ?

MOM: Don't be stupid.

Dad; It's not expanding. It's updating.

Pete: How.

Dad: We are pummelling into the 21st century, my boy.

SFX: **(BUSINESS) Puts plate of pierogis on counter**

DAD: Here, “Try our new low-carb Pierogis!”

Pete: What?

MoM: Beautiful, isn’t it?

Dad: The doors are opening. Get out of the way, boy.

MUSIC: **ETHNIC MUSIC IN BKGD**

SFX: **CROWD IN BKGRND**

Pete: What the hell is a low-carb pieroght ?

Mom: Your father didn’t want to scare you, but our sales were slumping last year.

Dad: Not slumping. Just slipping. Slipping.

Mom: Slipping and slumping. We need to get these skinny people back to our counter.

Dad: But you can’t make a lo-carb pieroghi. It’s scientifically impossible !

Mom: I had my doubts, but papa convinced me.

Dad: I said, “If they can make a remote control T-V, I can make an Atkins pieroghi !”

MoM: And your father did. Here, try one.

Pete: How?

Dad: No more potato and stuffing. It’s all beef inside.

MoM: From Danny and Ella over there. It’s fresh.

Dad: And no pasta outside. It’s spelt.

Pete: It's not a pieroghi anymore, Dad. It's some kind of Frankenstein's Undead Ravioli.

MoM: That's why your father didn't let you make the sign.

Pete: (Takes a bite) Ugh. It tastes like paper.

Mom: Beefy paper.

Dad: Those have dried out. Here. Let me put more grease and butter on it –

Pete: Then it'll taste like buttery paper –

Mom: It's modern. It's not supposed to taste like food.

Pete: Do you think anyone's actually gonna want one of these things ?

Felicia: Oh David ! Look at all the pieroghi here !

David: Hi. Are those truly lo-carb pieroghis ?

Felicia: May we sample some?

Dad: Absolutely. Here are two for you and two for you ...

Mom: It's 12.8 net carbs and 56 calories per serving.

Felicia: We've been on Atkins for eight months now.

David: It's terrific to see the old world catch up with the new –

Felicia: (Takes a bite) MMM ! This is super !

David: It's so light ! Beefy and buttery !

Felicia: But so delicate. Like paper !

David: We'll take another order, please.

Dad: With pleasure.

Pete: No, this is wrong. The words “delicate” and “Pieroghi” should never be in the same sentence.

Mom: Shut your mouth, Peter.

Pete: I won't shut my mouth. Pieroghi are supposed to be heavy, dumpy solid little chunks of fat and carbs. They're little coal furnaces of calories to make it bearable to go out into the Polish January and the Cleveland February and milk the damn cows and chop the firewood and walk from the parking lot by the lake and they are not a fad or a gimmick, they're squat food for squat people and there is no such thing as an Atkins pieroghi !

BEAT

David: (Bag rustling) I really like the low carb.

Felicia: (Paying Dad) I think this covers it. Keep the change. We need to get our sun-dried tomatoes now.

David, didn't you say the hyponic tomatoes were over in that aisle?

Pete: (Calling after them) Make sure you get the low-carb tomatoes!

Mom: (SMACKS PETE'S HEAD) Shut your mouth.

Dad: You can't fight progress, Peter.

Pete: This isn't progress. This is Grandma Wyznewski spinning in her grave. When she got here in 1920 –

Dad: 1918.

Mom: 1917.

Dad: 18.

Mom: 17. It was the year after Riga, and she got here in '16.

Pete: When she got here, she had one dream – raise her family, keep 'em strong 'n sturdy and warm and she had the best damned Pieroghi

recipe in Cleveland to do it and our family's been sharing that recipe with the world for eighty-some years ...

Dad: 83 years.

Mom: 84.

Dad: 83.

Mom: 84. She started selling them at the corner of Prospect first. In 1036 .. Or so ...

Pete: And why do you think she moved to the West Side Market ? It called her here. It was waiting for her and for her sons to take over for her, and for you to take over from your brother, and me and Mary and Michael will take over from you and our kids will take over from us – the same bricks, the same windows, the same market – and the thread that holds it all together is the flour and the dough and the potato and the sauerkraut and the love.

Dad: I was with you up to the love part.

Mom: (Calls out) We still have "Classic Wysnewskis" over here ! We're just expanding to a new territory. Grandma had to leave the old world to see Cleveland. We have to leave some of the old calories to see lower body-fat consumers.

Pete: I'm telling you, this is the road to ruin.

WOMAN: (High heels steps) Oooo !! New pieroghis! I'll take two orders !

Felicia (Felicia and David return to the counter) May I have three more orders of the Atkins peiroghis to take home?

Pete: Oh, God.

Dad: Absolutely. Here 'ya go.

WOMAN (On ohone) Yeah. Gina. You gotta get down to the West Side Market.

Dad: We just inked a deal to serve them in all the fine restaurants in greater Cleveland. See here, here's a brochure.

WOMAN: (Into phone) There's new lo-carb pieroghis. It's a godsend.

Pete: This is blasphemy. You know that. You're calling down the wrath of God on the whole family.

Mom: Oh, a minute ago we couldn't find you in church, and now you're speaking for God.

Pete: Because we're talking about pieroghis, Ma!

Dad: (To customers) Would any of you be interested in our new organic soy kielbasa while you're here?

Pete: WHAT ??

David: My cousin's a vegetarian !

Woman: So's my boss.

Felicia: Why not ?

Pete: I'm dreaming. Tell me I'm dreaming.

Dad: It's the future, sweetheart. Change is always difficult.

Pete: This has gotta stop.

Woman: (Going off) Thank you !!

F and D: (Going off) We'll be back on Saturday !!

Pete: Move over, Dad. Get your pieroghis ! Good old fashioned old world stuffed pieroghis right here !!

Dad: Hey, hey, hey ! You know the rules. No selling by yelling.

Pete: Screw the rules. I'm not yelling for customers. I'm yelling for Grandma Wismewski !! **OLD STYLE PIEROGHIS HERE ! GET**

'EM WITH EXTRA POTATOS, RIGHT HERE !!

Dad: (Yelling out) New, low-carb Atkins pieroghis ! The latest and greatest, right here !!

Pete: (Yells) Carbs carbs carbs, get 'em while you still can !

Dad: (Yells) Most of the flavor – none of the carbs !!

Mom: Ah, my boys ...

MUSIC: UP AND OUT.

END

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