

Becoming an Artist

By ReadWorks

Mario and his brother Jose owned an art store in San Francisco, which they were very proud of. They sold the best paints, the best sketch pads, the best stationery, and the best easels. Artists from all over the world came to their store to buy their supplies. Whether they were world-famous artists, or art students, they knew that Mario and Jose sold the best art products for the best prices. Not only that, but Mario and Jose were very helpful and kind people. They helped their customers find whatever they needed. It didn't matter if you didn't know exactly what you wanted: Mario or Jose would walk with you through the store, point out all the different art supplies you could think of, and help you figure out what would be useful to you.

One day a young man came into their store. He had messy brown hair, a long beard, and tiny, beady eyes. He seemed to be searching for something.

"Can I help you?" Mario asked the man.

"I'm not sure. I don't know. You see, I... well, I actually don't have... The thing is, I'd like to buy some... But maybe I should just... I think I'll come back another time." The man spoke so quickly that he stumbled over his words, and then left almost immediately.

Mario looked at Jose. "Was it something I said?" he asked his business partner.

"No," Jose replied. "I don't think that man was ready to become an artist yet."

Mario and Jose forgot about the man and went back to their other customers, making sure that they had enough of their special watercolor paints, their oil paints, and their extra sharp charcoal pencils. You never knew what artists might need for their work!

A week later, the man was back. Mario stayed at the cash register and let Jose try this time.

"Hello, you're back," Jose said with a smile on his face, to make the man feel welcome. "Please feel free to look around our store, and let me know if you have any questions."

Jose let the man walk around on his own, so that he wouldn't feel nervous. Mario and Jose stayed by the cash register, but kept an eye on the man as he went up and down each aisle of the store. Fifteen minutes later, the man came to the front of the store with a sketch pad and some charcoal pencils.

"I'd like to buy these, but I don't have any money. I'm sorry, I don't know what to do."

"That's no problem," Mario said. "Since it's your first time here, consider these two items a gift. It's always scary to start out as an artist. We wish you luck!"

The man looked up at Mario and Jose and smiled. "Thank you so much for your kindness," he said. "I won't forget this."

Two years later, an enormous package was delivered to Mario and Jose's store. What could it be? They hadn't ordered anything this large. They opened it, and inside was a beautiful painting of their store! The entrance, Mario and Jose inside it, the sculpture outside the store. Attached to the painting was a note, which read: "You helped me start my journey as an artist. Please accept this payment as thanks!"

Mario and Jose looked up the artist's name, and sure enough, it was the man who had come into their store without being able to pay for supplies. He was now a successful artist, living in Italy, and selling his work all over the world!

Mario and Jose framed the painting and proudly put it at the front of their store.