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Product Code A0817-SP

Garlic & Gasoline

A Short Play for Two Male Players

by

John Twomey

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CHARACTERS

2M

GARLIC - *a flamboyant man of about 30*

GASOLINE - *a rough-around-the-edges man of about 30*

SETTING

Sal's Pizzeria, a modest neighborhood establishment

Garlic & Gasoline

by John Twomey

SETTING: Sal's Pizzeria, a modest neighborhood establishment; the entrance is stage left. In front of the counter are several tables and chairs. Behind the counter is a pizza oven. A menu board and phone are on the wall.

AT RISE: GARLIC is folding cloth napkins at one of the tables. There is a pizza box on the counter, unseen to GARLIC.

GARLIC

(Singsong) Pizza. Pizza. I'm passionate about...pizza.

The PHONE RINGS. GARLIC reaches behind the counter to answer it. He continues folding the napkins.

GARLIC

Sal's Trattoria...yes, trattoria, a bit of a name change...I took your order, Mrs. Reilly...I'm his brother—

GARLIC stops folding the napkins.

GARLIC

He never mentioned a brother?...not surprised...your pie is on the way...it should be there momentarily...arrivederci.

GARLIC hangs up.

GARLIC

(Singsong) Pizza. Pizza. I'm passionate about—

As GARLIC is about to resume folding the napkins, he notices the pizza box on the counter. He pulls off the order slip.

GARLIC

(Calling) Jose. Jose!

GASOLINE enters through the front door. He is carrying a toolbox which he drops, startling GARLIC.

Where is Jose? GARLIC

Gone. GASOLINE

GASOLINE takes one of the napkins and holds it up.

What the hell is this? GASOLINE

Don't wipe your greasy— GARLIC

GASOLINE wipes his hands with the napkin.

Jose's gone? GARLIC

Home. GASOLINE

His shift isn't over. GARLIC

I told him to go. GASOLINE

Without consulting me? GARLIC

No delivery van, no delivery boy. GASOLINE

GASOLINE proceeds to the beverage case, grabs a beer, and takes a gulp.

You couldn't repair the van? GARLIC

Not tonight. GASOLINE

But my pie has to be delivered. GARLIC

GASOLINE

I need parts.

GARLIC

Pop wouldn't have let the van fall into disrepair.

GASOLINE

Don't bring Pop into this.

GARLIC

Pop would have made sure it was in working order.

GASOLINE

Don't tell me what Pop would have done.

GARLIC

Now what about my pie?

GASOLINE

No delivery van, no delivery.

GARLIC

Pop would have made someone deliver it anyway.

GASOLINE

You took the order. You deliver it.

GARLIC

You sent Jose home. You deliver it.

GASOLINE belches.

GARLIC

Mrs. Reilly is waiting.

GASOLINE

Oh, Mrs. Reilly. Did she want corned beef on the pie?

GARLIC

No.

GASOLINE

Next time she will.

GARLIC

And I'll be accommodating. Now why can't you be accommodating?

GASOLINE

Things sure were a lot better around here without you.

GARLIC

Better?

GARLIC resumes folding the napkins.

GASOLINE

Better.

GARLIC

And what are you referring to? The dirty tables? The unpaid vendors? The moldy cheese in the refrigerator?

GASOLINE

Why did I let you come back?

GARLIC

Let me come back?

GASOLINE

Yeah, let.

GARLIC

Pop divided between us 50-50 in his will. 50-50.

GASOLINE

(Mimicking) 50-50.

GARLIC

This place is just as much mine as it is yours.

GASOLINE

It's more mine than yours.

GARLIC

And where in the will did it say that?

GASOLINE

Pop and I ran this place for years without you.

GARLIC

Pop ran it.

GASOLINE

Years. That counts for something.

Not in the will. GARLIC

Pop's last year I practically ran the place myself. GASOLINE

The start of the decline. GARLIC

You weren't around until the end. GASOLINE

The will is the will. GARLIC

What were you thinking, Pop? Not only did you give him half, you made him executioner. GASOLINE

The word is executor. GARLIC

Oh, I'll executor you. GASOLINE

Pop made his intentions very clear in the will. GARLIC

He should have made you stay out of the way, like a silent partner. GASOLINE

There's nothing silent about me. GARLIC

Tell me about it. GASOLINE

Nothing. GARLIC

So you come back here to screw me up, just like you screwed up Luigi's. GASOLINE

I didn't screw up Luigi's. GARLIC

Luigi's closed. GASOLINE

GARLIC

Plenty of places close.

GASOLINE

You should have looked for another job.

GARLIC

I didn't want another job. I wanted a place I could call my own.

GASOLINE

This place is mine.

GARLIC

Not according to the will.

GASOLINE

Why, Pop? Why?

GARLIC

Maybe Pop knew that I'd be an asset to this establishment.

GASOLINE

Asshole is more like it.

GARLIC

Maybe Pop thought you wouldn't make it on your own.

GASOLINE

Hey! What would you know? You weren't even around when Pop was alive.

GARLIC

I was around in spirit.

GASOLINE

You were never around.

GARLIC

Did you want me around?

GASOLINE

No.

GARLIC

So then why do you have to get so hostile about it?

GASOLINE

And I still don't.

GARLIC

Look around you. The place is floundering.

GASOLINE

The place is fine.

GARLIC

The place is floundering. The place is floundering without Pop.

GASOLINE

It's not floundering.

GARLIC

Then explain the slop in the kitchen.

GASOLINE

You're a neat freak.

GARLIC

Explain the books. We're barely breaking even.

GASOLINE

Everybody in the neighborhood is having a rough time.

GARLIC

You're floundering. And Pop knew you would flounder.

GASOLINE

Pop did not.

GARLIC

Then why did he leave me half?

The PHONE RINGS. GARLIC answers it.

GARLIC

Sal's Trattoria.

GASOLINE

Trattoria! I told you. It's pizzeria. What's with this trattoria shit? It's pizzeria. Sal's Pizzeria.

GASOLINE grabs the phone from GARLIC.

GASOLINE

Sal's Pizzeria!

GARLIC grabs the phone back.

Mrs. Reilly? GARLIC

GARLIC hangs up.

Mrs. Reilly's pie is cold. GARLIC

It's Sal's Pizzeria. GASOLINE

I'll have to heat it up. GARLIC

Always has been, always will be. GASOLINE

*GARLIC steps towards the oven with the box.
GASOLINE grabs the box, drops it to the floor,
and stomps on it.*

Understood? GASOLINE

Are you going to step on me next? GARLIC

Understood? GASOLINE

What's understood is that somebody has to make Mrs. Reilly a new pie. GARLIC

*GASOLINE blocks GARLIC from going behind
the counter.*

You're making a new nothing. GASOLINE

Mrs. Reilly is waiting. GARLIC

Nothing. GASOLINE

If only Pop could see this. GARLIC

Yeah, if only.

GASOLINE

GARLIC backs away from GASOLINE and returns to folding the napkins, this time in a very deliberate manner.

I want the new sign in front to say Sal's Trattoria.

GARLIC

It's staying Sal's Pizzeria.

GASOLINE

And I want it to have a little pizzazz, a little sophistication, not like that drab old thing we have now.

GARLIC

It's going to be just like the one now.

GASOLINE

A better sign will attract a better clientele.

GARLIC

But with brighter neon.

GASOLINE

I want to go more upscale.

GARLIC

And it's going to flash.

GASOLINE

Superior customers will go out of their way to patronize a superior establishment.

GARLIC

You mean snooty customers.

GASOLINE

Our customers' tastes run to the ordinary.

GARLIC

Ordinary is good.

GASOLINE

Customers can get ordinary anywhere.

GARLIC

GASOLINE

Pop never had a problem with ordinary.

GARLIC

I want to give them passion and pizzazz.

GASOLINE

Just stick to pizza.

GARLIC

Pizza with passion and pizzazz!

GASOLINE

You'll drive away all the regulars.

GARLIC

You mean the few that are left?

GASOLINE

You're driving everyone away.

GARLIC

We need new regulars. Better regulars.

GASOLINE

I like the old regulars.

GARLIC holds up a napkin to GASOLINE.

GARLIC

And we're going to use cloth napkins.

GASOLINE

I'm not washing napkins.

GARLIC

We'll get a service.

GASOLINE

Paper stays.

GARLIC

Paper is so pedestrian. And so are plastic utensils. They have to go.

GASOLINE

They're not going anywhere.

GARLIC

I've made tentative choices for plates and cutlery.

GASOLINE

No plates and no cutlery.

GARLIC

Pending your approval, of course.

GASOLINE

No.

GARLIC

Why must you fight me on every innovation I try to introduce?

GASOLINE

I don't like innovation.

GARLIC

The lack of innovation breeds stagnation.

GARLIC takes a menu from the counter.

GARLIC

Look at this menu.

GASOLINE

What about it?

GARLIC

It's the same as it was 25 years ago.

GASOLINE

So?

GARLIC

Twenty-five years ago! I want to tear up the menu and start from scratch.

GASOLINE

I'll tear you up.

GASOLINE takes the menu from GARLIC and tears it.

GARLIC

People will try something new.

GASLINE takes a slice from behind the counter and holds it up to GARLIC.

GASOLINE
Something new? Like this slice with green glop?

GARLIC
That green glop is pesto.

GASOLINE
It looks like pus.

GARLIC
People like pesto.

GASOLINE
Tastes like pus too.

GASOLINE takes another slice from behind the counter.

GASOLINE
This is what people want. Real pizza with gooey cheese and a charred crust.

GARLIC
Greasy, oily mess.

GASOLINE
Just like Pop made.

GARLIC
Pop never made oily pizza.

GASOLINE
My pizza isn't oily.

GARLIC
The oil is running down your arm.

GASOLINE wipes his arm with a cloth napkin and throws it at GARLIC.

GARLIC
Why can't you even consider my innovations?

GASOLINE takes another beer.

GASOLINE

Pop would never make these changes.

GARLIC

Pop is dead.

GASOLINE

Don't you ever say that!

GASOLINE opens the beer and turns away.

GARLIC

I miss Pop too, you know.

GASOLINE

If you miss Pop why did you walk out in the first place?

GARLIC

I had my reasons.

GASOLINE

What reasons?

GARLIC

I wasn't being fulfilled.

GASOLINE

You mean Pop ignored all your stupid ideas.

GARLIC

Constructive suggestions.

GASOLINE

Like mini pizzas? Why order a regular pie at full price when you can order a small one with any topping you want and pay half the price?

GARLIC

Personal pizzas have caught on since then.

GASOLINE

Maybe. What about Chinese calzones?

GARLIC

The concept was good.

GASOLINE

Which one made you puke? The Moo Shoo Madness or the Chop Suey Supreme?

GARLIC

At least I was trying. And what thanks did I get?

GASOLINE

You wanted everything your way.

GARLIC

Maybe my way was the better way.

GASOLINE

You wanted to take over the pizza making, told Pop you could make it better.

GARLIC

I was just trying to be helpful.

GASOLINE

Nobody told Pop how to make pizza. Nobody.

GARLIC

He could have been more open-minded about it.

GASOLINE

Nobody. Pop didn't let me make pies until I was 25.

GARLIC

Answer the phone and serve slices. That's all Pop let me do.

GASOLINE

That's all he let anyone do.

GARLIC

I was made to feel unwanted.

GASOLINE

You know who felt unwanted? Pop.

GARLIC

I know I angered him.

GASOLINE

You betrayed him.

GARLIC

I just wanted acceptance.

GASOLINE

A sucker punch. Right in the stomach

I never meant to hurt him.
GARLIC

Loyalty. Blood. They meant nothing to you. Well they meant something to Pop.
GASOLINE

I wasn't disloyal.
GARLIC

You thought you were better than all this.
GASOLINE

I had ambitions.
GARLIC

Better than everyone else.
GASOLINE

Aspirations.
GARLIC

Better than me, better than Pop.
GASOLINE

I stand accused.
GARLIC

Then you found out that you weren't better.
GASOLINE

Maybe I overextended myself.
GARLIC

And you bamboozled Pop into leaving you half.
GASOLINE

I didn't bamboozle Pop.
GARLIC

So why did he leave you half?
GASOLINE

I am his son.
GARLIC

You bamboozled Pop.
GASOLINE

GARLIC

No. It wasn't like that.

GASOLINE

I give you credit. That wasn't an easy thing to do.

GARLIC

It wasn't like that at all.

GASOLINE

Then what was it like?

GARLIC takes a beer out of the beverage case.

GARLIC

I don't think you want to know.

GASOLINE

Tell me.

GARLIC opens the beer and sips it.

GARLIC

Pop asked me if I wanted to be left half.

GASOLINE

He asked?

GARLIC

No, let me be more accurate. Pop told me he wanted to leave me half.

GASOLINE

Told?

GARLIC

He demanded that I take half.

GASOLINE

You pulled something.

GARLIC

He thought the business would go under otherwise.

GASOLINE

You bamboozled him. He had all those tubes sticking out of him.

GARLIC

Go right under.

You talked him into it. GASOLINE

Nobody could talk Pop into anything. GARLIC

He wasn't thinking straight. GASOLINE

Nobody. You know that. GARLIC

GARLIC takes a beer out of the beverage case and opens it for GASOLINE.

Yeah. Nobody. GASOLINE

Like it or not, you need me. GARLIC

I don't need anybody. GASOLINE

You need me. And Pop knew it. GARLIC

Pop knew no such thing. GASOLINE

Pop knew it. You need me. GARLIC

The PHONE RINGS. GARLIC answers.

Sal's Trattoria. GARLIC

Sal's Pizzeria! It's called Sal's Pizzeria! GASOLINE

GASOLINE grabs the phone from GARLIC and hangs up.

That was Mrs. Reilly. GARLIC

