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Garlic & Gasoline
by John Twomey

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.
GARLIC

Where is Jose?

GASOLINE

Gone.

GASOLINE takes one of the napkins and holds it up.

GASOLINE

What the hell is this?

GARLIC

Don’t wipe your greasy—

GASOLINE wipes his hands with the napkin.

GARLIC

Jose’s gone?

GASOLINE

Home.

GARLIC

His shift isn’t over.

GASOLINE

I told him to go.

GARLIC

Without consulting me?

GASOLINE

No delivery van, no delivery boy.

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

GARLIC

You couldn’t repair the van?

GASOLINE

Not tonight.

GARLIC

But my pie has to be delivered.
I need parts.

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

Don’t bring Pop into this.

Pop would have made sure it was in working order.

Don’t tell me what Pop would have done.

Now what about my pie?

No delivery van, no delivery.

Pop would have made someone deliver it anyway.

You took the order. You deliver it.

You sent Jose home. You deliver it.

Mrs. Reilly is waiting.

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

No.

Next time she will.

And I’ll be accommodating. Now why can’t you be accommodating?
I don’t accommodate.

Take it in your car.

My Camaro?

Or is that not running too?

Oh, my Camaro is running. My Camaro is running hot.

GARLIC picks up the pizza box.

And the pie is getting cold.

That pie isn’t going near my Camaro. It stinks of garlic.

Garlic brings flavor.

You use too much garlic.

Flavor. And passion.

Stinks.

(Singsong) Passion. Passion. I’m passionate about…pizza.

Enough!

GASOLINE grabs the pizza box and tosses it onto a table.

Can I help it if I love what we do?
GARLIC

What we do?

GASOLINE

Yes, we.

GARLIC

There’s no we.

GASOLINE steps behind the counter.

GARLIC

You smell like gasoline. Don’t get too close to the oven or we’ll go up in flames.

GASOLINE

Boom!

GASOLINE takes a slice.

GARLIC

That slice is from this afternoon.

GASOLINE

So?

GARLIC

It’s cold.

GASOLINE

I like it cold.

GARLIC

Can I heat it up for you?

GASOLINE

I want it cold!

GARLIC

There are fresher slices.

GASOLINE

This slice is fresh enough.

GASOLINE starts eating the slice.

GARLIC

We shouldn’t even be serving slices that old.
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.
GARLIC
Not in the will.

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

GARLIC
The start of the decline.

GASOLINE
You weren’t around until the end.

GARLIC
The will is the will.

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

GARLIC
The word is executor.

GASOLINE
Oh, I’ll executor you.

GARLIC
Pop made his intentions very clear in the will.

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

GARLIC
There’s nothing silent about me.

GASOLINE
Tell me about it.

GARLIC
Nothing.

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

GARLIC
I didn’t screw up Luigi’s.

GASOLINE
Luigi’s closed.
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.
Look around you. The place is floundering.

The place is fine.

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

It’s not floundering.

Then explain the slop in the kitchen.

You’re a neat freak.

Explain the books. We’re barely breaking even.

Everybody in the neighborhood is having a rough time.

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

Pop did not.

Then why did he leave me half?

*The PHONE RINGS. GARLIC answers it.*

Sal’s Trattoria.

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.*

Sal’s Pizzeria!

*GARLIC grabs the phone back.*
Mrs. Reilly?

*GARLIC* hangs up.

Mrs. Reilly’s pie is cold.

It’s Sal’s Pizzeria.

I’ll have to heat it up.

Always has been, always will be.

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

Understood?

Are you going to step on me next?

Understood?

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

*GASOLINE blocks* *GARLIC* *from going behind the counter.*

You’re making a new nothing.

Mrs. Reilly is waiting.

Nothing.

If only Pop could see this.
GASOLINE

Yeah, if only.

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

GARLIC

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

GASOLINE

It’s staying Sal’s Pizzeria.

GARLIC

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

GASOLINE

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

GARLIC

A better sign will attract a better clientele.

But with brighter neon.

GARLIC

I want to go more upscale.

GASOLINE

And it’s going to flash.

GARLIC

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

GASOLINE

You mean snooty customers.

GARLIC

Our customers’ tastes run to the ordinary.

Ordinary is good.

GARLIC

Customers can get ordinary anywhere.
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.

GASLINE
Something new? Like this slice with green glop?

GARLIC
That green glop is pesto.

GASLINE
It looks like pus.

GARLIC
People like pesto.

GASLINE
Tastes like pus too.

GASLINE takes another slice from behind the counter.

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

GARLIC
Greasy, oily mess.

GASLINE
Just like Pop made.

GARLIC
Pop never made oily pizza.

GASLINE
My pizza isn’t oily.

GARLIC
The oil is running down your arm.

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

GARLIC
Why can’t you even consider my innovations?

GASLINE 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.

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.

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

I wasn’t disloyal.

You thought you were better than all this.

I had ambitions.

Better than everyone else.

Aspirations.

Better than me, better than Pop.

I stand accused.

Then you found out that you weren’t better.

Maybe I overextended myself.

And you bamboozled Pop into leaving you half.

I didn’t bamboozle Pop.

So why did he leave you half?

I am his son.

You bamboozled Pop.
No. It wasn’t like that.

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

It wasn’t like that at all.

Then what was it like?

_GARLIC takes a beer out of the beverage case._

I don’t think you want to know.

Tell me.

_GARLIC opens the beer and sips it._

Pop asked me if I wanted to be left half.

He asked?

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

Told?

He demanded that I take half.

You pulled something.

He thought the business would go under otherwise.

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

Go right under.
You talked him into it.

Nobody could talk Pop into anything.

He wasn’t thinking straight.

Nobody. You know that.

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

Yeah. Nobody.

Like it or not, you need me.

I don’t need anybody.

You need me. And Pop knew it.

Pop knew no such thing.

Pop knew it. You need me.

*The PHONE RINGS.  *GARLIC* answers.*

Sal’s Trattoria.

Sal’s Pizzeria! It’s called Sal’s Pizzeria!

*GASOLINE* grabs the phone from *GARLIC* and hangs up.

That was Mrs. Reilly.
Sal’s Pizzeria.

Trattoria.

Pizzeria.

Now what about her pie?

GASOLINE picks up the damaged pizza box.

What about it?

GARLIC

It’s inedible.

GASOLINE takes a slice out of the box.

GASOLINE

Want to know something? You’re going to eat this.

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes