

the beginning of

**SPAGHETTI OVERTURE** (from **ROMANTIC FOOLS**)

a short comedy by Rich Orloff

(**ROMANTIC FOOLS**, a comic revue for one man and one woman, is published and licensed by Playscripts, Inc. [www.playscripts.com](http://www.playscripts.com))

A restaurant, or at least a sense of one. At least a table and two chairs. The table has a large tablecloth which cascades over the sides of the table and touches the ground. On the table is silverware for two, perhaps two glasses of water, and one *very* large plate of spaghetti in tomato sauce.

The man and the woman are seated at the table. The man wears a white shirt and properly pressed pants. He's anxious and watches with great intensity as the woman take her first bite of spaghetti. Immediately:

MAN

So – how's the spaghetti?

WOMAN

(with a mouthful)

I haven't swallowed yet.

She swallows.

MAN

So how is it?

WOMAN

Good.

MAN

Whew.

WOMAN

I always like the restaurants you choose, Andrew.

MAN

I know, Lori, but –

WOMAN

The spaghetti is excellent.

MAN

You sure?

WOMAN

If I were the spaghetti's mother, I'd be proud.

MAN

I'm glad you like it.

WOMAN

If I don't finish, please don't take it personally.

MAN

I told you the portions were large here.

WOMAN

Large? This could feed Utah.

She takes another bite. He watches studiously.

WOMAN (cont'd)

That bite was good, too.

MAN

Great.

WOMAN

I'm not going to have to give you feedback on each bite, am I?

MAN

No, no –

WOMAN

You know, I'd feel a lot less self-conscious if you ordered some dinner, too.

MAN

I'm sorry, that late lunch –

WOMAN

What's with you tonight?

MAN

Nothing.

WOMAN

I've never seen you like this.

MAN

(his downstage leg starting to shake)

I'm fine.

WOMAN

You're always so calm and in control. I brag to all my friends, "It's such a relief to finally find a man who's really calm and, and –" Andrew, one of your legs is shaking.

MAN

(stopping his leg)

Oh, I'm, I'm... That better?

It starts again. He puts a hand on it.

WOMAN

Andrew, would you like to "shake a leg"?

MAN

(laughs way too heartily, then:)

Eat more spaghetti.

He focuses on the woman taking her next bite.

WOMAN

It's still good.

MAN

Glad to hear it.

WOMAN

You really know the chef?

MAN

Yep. Seth and I once had a summer job together washing dishes.

WOMAN

Well, Seth sure knows his spaghetti.

MAN

You haven't tasted anything *crunchy*, have you?

WOMAN

Like what?

MAN

Nothing.

WOMAN

I think I'm full.

MAN

Have a few more bites.

WOMAN

No, I had a big lunch, t—

MAN

Three more bites.

WOMAN

I'm full.

MAN

*I love you, damn it! Keep eating!!!*

WOMAN

Are you okay?

He glances at the spaghetti. She takes one more bite.

MAN

You're never going to finish this,  
are you?

WOMAN

(mouth full)

I'm trying my —

MAN

Will you marry me?

WOMAN

What?

MAN

Will you marry me?

WOMAN

I... I..... I don't know what to say.

MAN

Here's a possibility: "Yes."

WOMAN

Andrew —

MAN

There's also "You bet I will."

WOMAN

Andrew –

MAN

And the classic, “This is the moment  
I’ve always dreamt of.”

WOMAN

I do love you, Andrew.

MAN

Oh, shit.

WOMAN

I’m not saying “No, never” and, and,  
I do love you, Andrew.

MAN

That sentence doesn’t improve with repetition.

WOMAN

Look, you’re a very solid person, with a solid life,  
and a closet filled with, with solid shirts.

MAN

You want me to buy some plaids?

WOMAN

It’s just, in all our time together, everything’s  
been so smooth and easy so far –

MAN

So?

WOMAN

We just – we just haven’t been tested yet.

MAN

Tested?

WOMAN

Gone through hard times, worked through conflicts.  
I, I, I don’t know how far you’d go for me.

MAN

I’d go the distance for you.

WOMAN

You think you would, but who knows? Everything is so neat and orderly in your life. As neat and orderly as your well-pressed, solid shirts. Being married to me will *not* be neat and orderly, and I'm not sure you'll be able to handle it.

MAN

I see.

WOMAN

I do love you, Andrew.

MAN

Now it sounds like a condolence card.