

THE SECRET OF THE SPOON



BY ALEXI ALFIERI

THE SECRET OF THE SPOON

A MYSTERY DINNER THEATER SHOW
WRITTEN BY ALEXI ALFIERI

CAST

LARGE ROLES

MAMA PASTALUCCI (F)	<i>Mother, Manager of Mamma Mia's</i>
PAPA PASTALUCCI (M)	<i>Father, Accountant of Mamma Mia's</i>
VINNY FETTUCCINE PASTALUCCI (M)	<i>Oldest son and Head Chef</i>
MARIA CAPELLINI PASTALUCCI (F)	<i>Oldest daughter and Assistant Chef</i>

MEDIUM ROLES

ANGELIA ROTINI PASTALUCCI (F)	<i>Middle daughter and Pizza Chef</i>
SOPHIA TORTELLINI PASTALUCCI (F)	<i>Middle daughter and Pastry Chef</i>
LUCIA LINGUINE PASTALUCCI (F)	<i>Youngest daughter and Waitress</i>
EDDY SPAGHETTI PASTALUCCI (M)	<i>Youngest son and Waiter</i>

SMALL ROLES

BRANDY (F)	<i>Head Hostess</i>
CANDY (F)	<i>Hostess</i>
ANDY (M)	<i>Dishwasher</i>

SYNOPSIS

The Secret of the Spoon is a playful mystery dinner show set in an Italian restaurant called Mamma Mia's. The successful establishment is owned by a passionate and argumentative family, the Pastaluccis. Mama and Papa Pastalucci run the restaurant with the help of their six children: Vinny Fettuccine, Maria Capellini, Angelia Rotini, Sophia Tortellini, Lucia Linguine, and Eddy Spaghetti. Rounding out the restaurant staff are Brandy and Candy as hostesses and Andy the dishwasher. Unfortunately, Nonni, the feisty but beloved grandmother of the Pastalucci family, has just passed away. While grieving her loss in the middle of the restaurant kitchen, the family discovers that a very special spoon belonging to Nonni has gone missing. Believing this spoon to be the secret of the success of Mamma Mia's, the family members begin to accuse one another of stealing, hiding, or misplacing the spoon. Despite things heating up in the kitchen, they still manage to serve the audience a three course Italian meal. And thankfully by dessert, the secret of the spoon and its whereabouts have been revealed.

SETTING

The kitchen of Mamma Mia's Italian Restaurant

CAST

11 players
7 Female, 4 Male

PLAYING TIME

Approximately an hour and a half total,
including three short intermissions for serving dinner courses

ACT 1, NONNI'S FUNERAL: ENTIRE CAST

(Mama Pastalucci enters stage right with her children Vinny, Maria, Angelia, Sophia, Lucia, and Eddy all following behind her. Everyone is sobbing dramatically. Brandy and Candy both enter stage right a moment later with solemn faces and stand a little aside from the rest of the group stage right at a hostess stand. Andy remains in the dining area, setting the tables. As things quiet down, Mama Pastalucci crosses slowly past the casket set center stage and stands at the stage left end of it. She sets one hand on the casket and grips a handkerchief in her other hand.)

MAMA PASTALUCCI: *(Loudly and with great passion)* Mama! *(Looks upward with her hands together in prayer, shaking them a little in front of her heart)*

VINNY, MARIA, ANGELIA, SOPHIA, LUCIA, and EDDY: *(Loudly and tearful)* Nonni!

(Vinny, Maria, Angelia, Sophia, Lucia, and Eddy all join Mama Pastalucci in collapsing over the casket in grief, nudging each other a little roughly to make room. Brandy and Candy remain standing stage right, watching the Pastalucci family grieve. Andy continues to circulate among the tables, filling water glasses, etc.)

MAMA PASTALUCCI: I cannot believe she is gone! *(Cries dramatically)*

VINNY: *(Shaking his head sadly)* No one expected Nonni to die so young, Mama.

MAMA PASTALUCCI: Only 98 years old!

PASTALUCCI FAMILY: *(All look upward, gesture with hands, and exclaim loudly)* Mamma mia!

MAMA PASTALUCCI: Just yesterday she was standing here in the kitchen telling us we weren't serving the Pork Milanese with enough lemon... *(Shakes her head sadly in disbelief.)*

VINNY: *(Emotional)* And I remember she tasted my sauce and told me it needed more salt.

MARIA: *(Emotional)* Then she told me I'd rolled out the pasta too thin.

ANGELIA: *(Emotional)* She said my pizza crust was too tough.

SOPHIA: *(Emotional)* And that my cannolis were soggy.

LUCIA: *(Emotional)* She said my napkin folds in the dining room looked ridiculous.

EDDY: *(Emotional)* And every time she saw me, she hit me with her spoon.

MAMA PASTALUCCI: *(After a pause)* Oh, Nonni! We loved you so much!

(Mama Pastalucci, Vinny, Maria, Angelia, Sophia, Lucia, and Eddy all burst into tears once again. Brandy and Candy shake their heads sadly.)

MAMA PASTALUCCI: Well, I know this is a sad day for the Pastalucci family, but there is one thing we should be grateful for. Nonni had a peaceful death. After the restaurant closed last night, she had a big bowl of the minestrone. I served her a platter of green beans sautéed with pine nuts and a leg of lamb. Then she wanted a plate of the four-cheese lasagna with spaghetti and a meatloaf on the side. After that, she ate a large baguette with butter and then a dozen cannolis. *(Begins to sob again)* She was saying she might like a shot of espresso when she fell asleep and did not wake up.

(Mama Pastalucci, Vinny, Maria, Angelia, Sophia, Lucia, and Eddy all begin to cry softly again.)

MAMA PASTALUCCI: *(Getting herself together)* You children know your Nonni was the one who began this restaurant.

VINNY, MARIA, ANGELIA, SOPHIA, LUCIA, AND EDDY: Yes, Mama.

MAMA PASTALUCCI: And now Mamma Mia's is the finest family-owned Italian restaurant in town!

VINNY, MARIA, ANGELIA, SOPHIA, LUCIA, AND EDDY: Yes, Mama.

MAMA PASTALUCCI: Everyone loves our antipasto and our homemade pizzas and... *(loses her composure again)* ...Nonni's tiramisu!

VINNY, MARIA, ANGELIA, SOPHIA, LUCIA, and EDDY: Mamma mia! Nonni's tiramisu!

MAMA PASTALUCCI: You know her tiramisu has always been the secret to our success.

VINNY, MARIA, ANGELIA, SOPHIA, LUCIA, and EDDY: Yes, Mama.

MAMA PASTALUCCI: So, we need to honor Nonni. We need to say good-bye. We need to...

PAPA PASTALUCCI: *(Enters stage right, counting a pile of receipts and gesturing toward the casket casually)* We need to roll her out of the kitchen and begin the dinner service.

VINNY, MARIA, ANGELIA, SOPHIA, LUCIA, and EDDY: *(Step back and upstage from the casket, looking slightly shocked)* Papa!

PAPA PASTALUCCI: *(Waving at them with one hand dismissively)* Okay, okay. *(Steps over to stage right end of casket and runs one hand across the top of it and then slaps it firmly)* We can use the casket as an extra cutting board. Vinny, bring over the bread and the salami!

MAMA PASTALUCCI: *(Glares over at Vinny briefly)* You will do no such thing, Vinny! *(Looks accusingly at Papa Pastalucci across the casket)* What are you saying?! Such disrespect for Nonni. And now she is gone and cannot forgive you!

PAPA PASTALUCCI: *(Waves the comment away with his hand)* Eh.

MAMA PASTALUCCI: *(Angry and gesturing)* You're a man who never loved his mother-in-law!

PAPA PASTALUCCI: And she never loved me! I've been the accountant for Mamma Mia's Restaurant for twenty years, but Nonni was always trying to tell me how to run the business...how to keep track of the profits. And nothing she said ever made any sense!

MAMA PASTALUCCI: But you know if it weren't for Nonni's tiramisu, there would have been no profits to count!

PAPA PASTALUCCI: That is what you have always told me, but I am finally going to say something.

MAMA PASTALUCCI: *(Suspicious)* What do you want to say?

PAPA PASTALUCCI: Nonni's tiramisu? It was...*(pauses and makes a horizontal motion with one hand)*...okay.

(Entire rest of cast gasps in shock. Papa Pastalucci crosses in front of the line of his children and heads to his desk stage left. He begins looking at small piles of papers.)

MAMA PASTALUCCI: Enough of this crazy talk! It is time for you children to pay your last respects to Nonni. Vinny Fettucine, you are the eldest son. You should be the first.

VINNY: Yes, Mama. *(Steps toward the casket, takes his chef hat off his head, and holds it to his heart)* Nonni, I thank you for looking over my shoulder every day and making sure everything I made as head chef of Mamma Mia's was the very best. I will think of you every

time I chop the onions or mince the garlic or dice the carrots or...*(begins to tear up and looks heavenward)*...cut the dirty ends off the celery!

MAMA PASTALUCCI: That's a good boy, Vinny. Nonni would be proud of you. Maria Capellini, you are the eldest daughter. You should be next.

MARIA: Of course, Mama. *(Steps forward, moving Vinny out of the way roughly, and slaps hand on casket matter-of-factly)* Nonni, you always told me as a good assistant chef, I must know everything the head chef *thinks* he knows. *(Scowls over at Vinny and then turns back to the casket.)* You were right. You told me girls always make better cooks than boys. You were right. You told me Vinny puts too much mozzarella on the chicken parmesan. And you were right. *(Vinny scowls at Maria, starts to take a step toward her, but Mama Pastalucci puts a hand on his arm.)* You were right about everything, Nonni, and I will never forget you! *(Steps back with a fierce expression.)*

MAMA PASTALUCCI: Very good, Maria. Angelia Rotini, say good-bye to your Nonni.

ANGELIA: *(Steps forward calmly)* Good-bye, Nonni. *(Steps back and bows her head.)*

MAMA PASTALUCCI: *(With disapproval)* That is all you have to say, Angelia? That is all you have to say to your Nonni who loved you and taught you how to roll out a perfect pizza dough?

ANGELIA: *(Shrugs)* Nonni always said, "Life should be like a good pizza pie—simple."

MAMA PASTALUCCI: *(Scowls briefly and then softens expression)* That is true, Angelia. Grazie. You are good to remind us of Nonni's wise words. *(Tears up again and waves handkerchief at Lucia)* Lucia Linguine, it is your turn.

LUCIA: Okay, Mama. *(Steps forward hesitantly and looks down at the casket nervously.)* Nonni, I have always tried to be a good waitress for our restaurant. But I know I forget to wipe the table in the corner, and sometimes I spill the wine. And you always saw everything, Nonni. You heard everything. *(Looks around nervously, leans over the coffin, and stage whispers in a suspicious voice)* I think you are not gone, Nonni. You will see if I drop a plate of pasta tonight or forget someone's bread. Nonni, I know you must be a ghost now, haunting me, and I...

MAMA PASTALUCCI: *(Interrupts firmly)* What do you mean, Lucia? Nonni is at peace now. She's watching over us and the restaurant, but she is not haunting anyone. Now, let your brother pay his respects. *(Lucia looks around nervously and steps back.)* Eddy Spaghetti, it is time for you to honor your Nonni.

EDDY: Alright, Mama. *(Steps forward lazily and puts one hand on the coffin thoughtfully)* So, Nonni, I remember you were yelling at me yesterday saying I was a lazy, good-for-nothing waiter. And I know there were customers who said I forgot to take their order, and then they complained about not having any water...or a menu...or any silverware. But Nonni, I just want to say... *(Speaking as if Nonni is alive in front of him and in a defensive tone)* Well, me and Gino—we were out late, you know? We went down to Richie's place, and we played some cards and we lost track of the time. You know how it is, Nonni. I didn't get to sleep 'til late. Then I had to come to work, and it is not my fault any of the customers were upset because...

MAMA PASTALUCCI: *(Interrupts firmly)* That's good, Eddy. That's good. I am sure Nonni hears all your excuses, even in heaven.

(Eddy throws up his hand nonchalantly, not looking worried, and steps back.)

MAMA PASTALUCCI: Sophia Tortellini, it is finally your turn.

SOPHIA: *(Steps forward, lays both hands on the casket, and cries out.)* Oh, Nonni! *(Bends her head down and is quiet for a long pause.)* Nonni! *(Pauses again.)* Nonni! *(Pauses once again while the rest of cast looks at one another quizzically and then over at Mama Pastalucci.)*

MAMA PASTALUCCI: *(Gently)* Sophia? What do you want to say to Nonni?

SOPHIA: *(Suddenly talking very fast)* Oh, Nonni, you taught me so much! If it weren't for you, I would know nothing as a pastry chef! Nothing! I wouldn't know a semifreddo from a gelato! A torta from a crostata! I wouldn't know how to skin a hazelnut or even...*(searches for the words and slams a fist down on the coffin)* how to crush an amaretto cookie! What will I do without you, Nonni? How could you leave me like this? And now I can't find...I can't find... *(Collapses into tears over casket)*

MAMA PASTALUCCI: Sophia?

SOPHIA: *(Lifts her head up with a deeply upset expression)* Oh, Mama, I didn't want to tell you!

MAMA PASTALUCCI: Tell me what?

SOPHIA: I can't find Nonni's spoon!

ENTIRE CAST (except for Papa Pastalucci): *(Gasp together in shock)* Mamma mia!

MAMA PASTALUCCI: Nonni's special wooden spoon?

SOPHIA: *(Wails)* Yes!

MAMA PASTALUCCI: The spoon she used to make her tiramisu?

SOPHIA: *(Wails louder)* Yes!

MAMA PASTALUCCI: The spoon that holds the secret to the success of Mamma Mia's Italian family restaurant?

SOPHIA: *(Wails even louder)* Yes!

ENTIRE CAST (except for Papa Pastalucci): *(With alarm)* Mamma mia!

PAPA PASTALUCCI: Eh. *(Makes a dismissive hand gesture and continues to count receipts at his desk.)*

VINNY: You're sure it is gone, Sophia?

MARIA: How could Nonni's spoon have just disappeared?

ANGELIA: Where could it be?

LUCIA: Isn't it just in the kitchen somewhere?

EDDY: *(Shrugs shoulders)* Can't we just use another spoon?

MAMA PASTALUCCI: *(Gesturing at Eddy)* Of course not, Eddy! That was not just any spoon. I've told you the story many times. When Nonni was just a young girl, she came over on the boat from Italy carrying that wooden spoon in her underpants.

(The Pastalucci children all nod knowingly as if they've heard the story many times before. Brandy and Candy look at one another with surprised, slightly disgusted expressions.)

BRANDY: *(Stage whisper to Candy)* In her underpants?

MAMA PASTALUCCI: *(Continues matter-of-factly)* Nonni's dream of this restaurant came true because of that spoon. It is why Mamma Mia's is the best restaurant in town! It is the reason Nonni's tiramisu was the sweetest, creamiest, most delicious dessert the world has ever known!

To Be Continued...this is a 10-page sample of the playscript