

Marie and The Grand Concourse (A Musical Scene)

Characters:

Marie Healy, 9, loves tootsie rolls, the color red, and hitting her brothers.

Michael Healy, Sr., 40, Marie's dad. He is a pianist who lost his job and is in denial about his family's financial situation.

Claire Healy, 35, Marie's mom (she also has four boys). She struggles to keep her family together by working as a seamstress in her sister and brother-in-law's tailor shop.

Mr. Andrew Crosby, 50, Owner of Crosby's Corner Store. A widower who needs a woman.

Mrs. Sophia Giordano, 35, An alluring and flirtatious neighborhood woman.

We are in an Irish-Catholic/Roman-Catholic neighborhood in the Bronx. It's 1935, and the depression is going strong in America. Marie's family (and the neighborhood) was middle class when the depression hit, but now, everything feels rough around the edges. Everyone could use new shoes. At lights up, we are in Crosby's Corner Store on 175th and Grand Concourse. **Marie** stands outside the door, hand on the knob, and faces the audience.

Marie

On Mondays after school, my mother lets me buy five tootsie rolls for a nickel. One for each of us kids. I don't tell her that Mr. Crosby usually winks at me and gives me six and I save the last one. Then, when everyone's asleep... you know, when I can hear my hateful brothers breathing heavy and Dad is snoring... I unwrap the extra one and suck on it 'til it melts. I *never* chew it.

*She smiles and takes a deep breath in and out, then she enters the shop. She's stopped in her tracks, however, by the vision of **Mr. Crosby** and **Mrs. Giordano** dancing intimately to the radio. The two dancers don't hear Marie come in, and she can't take her eyes off them.*

Mrs. Giordano

Oh, Andrew!

Mr. Crosby

What?

Mrs. Giordano

You know how I can't resist this song...

Mr. Crosby (*making up words to the tune on the radio*)

I GOT LOST IN THE STARLIGHT, IN THE MOONLIGHT, SUCH A SWEET LIGHT.
HER LIGHT, DIVINE!
WOULD SHE BE MINE?

Mrs. Giordano

Oh!

Mr. Crosby

AND HER EYES, DEEP AS OCEANS, WORK LIKE POTIONS, GIVE ME NOTIONS...

Mrs. Giordano (*blushing*)

Oh!

Mr. Crosby

HER EYES SUBLIME! IS IT A CRIME...

TO WANT HER?

TO NEED HER SO?

TO SEE HER WHEREVER I GO?

MY GIRL! WITH BIG ITALIAN EYES.

MY GIRL! IT COMES AS NO SURPRISE ONE DAY,

SHE'LL HOLD MY HAND AND I'LL SAY,

"THAT'S MY GIRL."

Mrs. Giordano stops his singing with a kiss, and Marie turns away and faces the audience. Lights shift, but music continues; the dancers sway.

Marie

My daddy says that to me, "That's my girl." But it's not the same. It doesn't seem the same.

Look how Mr. Crosby... look how he's different... He's sweating and he's looking at her like...

And her bottom is moving back and forth. I can't do that with my bottom, sway it like that. (*She tries; fails*) And her chest is developed... (*She looks down at her chest and tries to jut it out.*) I

don't have that. And I'm a girl. But... he said Mrs. Giordano was his "girl"... But... she's a woman... It's like the other day when...

Music continues as off to one side, Mr. and Mrs. Healy enter. Mrs. Healy holds a letter. All throughout this scene, Mr. Healy dances too close to his wife, paws at her, and is generally a nuisance. She resists with stillness.

Mr. Healy (*dancing*)

Dance with me, Mrs. Healy.

Mrs. Healy (*indicating the letter*)

No. We need to talk about this.

Mr. Healy

God! Look at you. You're so beautiful.

Mrs. Healy

You're drunk.

Mr. Healy

No.

Mrs. Healy

You are. Listen: I got this letter from the butcher.

Mr. Healy

I paid him.

Mrs. Healy

Not according to this.

Mr. Healy

Well, it's obviously a misunderstanding, Sweetheart. I'll go down and talk to him right now. You want me to? Come here. Dance with me.

Mrs. Healy

You're not listening to me.

Mr. Healy (*dancing*)

Mrs. Healy (*still*)

THOUGH SHE TRIES TO OFFEND ME,
NOT BEFRIEND ME, SHE CAN SEND ME!
HER RUFFLED BROW!

MICHAEL, NOT RIGHT NOW!
PLEASE, JUST NOT RIGHT NOW!

I'M LOST! AND HOW!

I NEED YOUR HELP!

LISTEN AND HELP!

I DON'T WANT TO DANCE!

AND SHE SCOLDS! SHE UPSETS ME!
I REGRET, SEE? WON'T FORGET, GEE,
HER FACE IS COLD!

MICHAEL, CAN'T YOU SEE?

I DON'T THINK YOU SEE.

AM I TOO BOLD

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

WE'RE DROWNING! HELP!
I DON'T NEED ROMANCE.

TO LOVE HER?
TO HOLD HER TIGHT?
TO KISS HER ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT?
MY GIRL! WITH HAZEL, IRISH EYES.

MICHAEL...
MICHAEL...
BILLS WE SHOULD PAY!

RULES TO OBEY!

MY GIRL! IT COMES AS NO SURPRISE
ONE DAY,
SHE'LL HOLD MY HAND AND I'LL SAY,

ONE DAY...
MY HAND...
GRABS THAT DOOR, AND I LEAVE...

“THAT’S MY...”

Mr. Healy stops, Marie takes over the last word. As Marie sings, Mrs. Healy holds out the letter for him to take. Mr. Healy, sobered, takes it and walks off. Mrs. Healy goes to her sewing table to calm down.

Marie (*facing the audience, a bit riled up*)

GIRL! OH!
MY MOTHER IS A WOMAN, BUT MY DAD WAS...
DID YOU HEAR? HE CALLED HER HIS GIRL.
MISS GIORDANO IS A WOMAN, AND I KNOW ‘CAUSE...
DID YOU SEE? THE WAY HER HIPS TWIRL?
SO, THEY’RE GIRLS AND WOMEN, I GUESS.
AM I A WOMAN, TOO?
I STILL HIT MY BROTHERS... UNLESS...
SHOULD I... ?

Mrs. Healy (*calling*)

Marie?

Marie

Yes, Mother?

Mrs. Healy

Come here, Sweetheart! Let’s do one last fitting.

Marie

Yes, Mother.

Marie runs over to her mother as Mrs. Healy pulls Marie’s first communion dress out of her sewing table drawer. Mrs. Healy slips the dress on over her head, gets pins out and starts to pin the bodice. Marie looks down at her chest.

Marie

Mother?

Mrs. Healy

Yes, Marie?

Marie

How come I’m so flat-chested?

Mrs. Healy

What?

Marie

It’s just... I don’t know... when I won’t be. So.

Mrs. Healy

Well, I don't know. It happens a little differently for each of us, I'm afraid.

Marie

What does? What happens?

Mrs. Healy

Well...

Marie

You're a woman, right? Not a girl? I want to be a woman.

Mrs. Healy stands and looks Marie.

Mrs. Healy

Don't say the word "woman," Marie. It's vulgar. Say "lady".

Marie

What's vul...?

Mrs. Healy

Oh, never mind! Look at yourself! You look so beautiful, Ladybug!

Marie (looking down at her dress, holding out the skirt)

Thank you, Mother.

Mrs. Healy

Come give me a hug. *(Marie does.)* Hey. Don't be so fast to grow up, okay?

Marie

But...

Mrs. Healy

Makes me feel old. And I'm already tired enough without being old and tired.

Mrs. Healy scoops Marie up in her arms and begins dancing with her.

Mrs. Healy

TAKE IT SLOW! BE A CHILD, SOFT AND MILD, SOMETIMES WILD.

JUST SPIN AND PLAY!

ENJOY TODAY!

WHEN YOU'RE OLD, DAYS JUST FLY, KID. EGGS TO FRY, KID. CLOTHES TO DRY, KID.

IT'S NOT ALL FUN! SO DON'T YOU RUN

TO GET THERE!

TO SEARCH AND FIND!

TO LEAVE YOUR OL' MOM BEHIND!

MY GIRL! WITH STARRY, SPARKLING EYES.

MY GIRL! IT COMES AS NO SURPRISE ONE DAY,

SHE'LL GROW UP TALL AND I'LL SAY,

"THAT'S MY GIRL."

I love you.

Marie

I love you, Mother.

(Mrs. Healy sets Marie down.)

Marie

But, I don't...

Mrs. Healy

Now, give me your dress back. I'll go sew it on the machine.

Marie

Okay.

Marie and Mrs. Healy take the dress off. Mrs. Healy leaves.

Marie (facing the audience again)

I shouldn't rush becoming a wom... lady... and they're girls. And I'm a girl... So...

Marie goes back to where she was standing at the top of the scene. Mrs. Giordano and Mr. Crosby come back to life, dancing to the tune again. Marie imitates Mrs. Giordano, and as she does so, she bumps into something in the store, knocking it over. Mrs. Giordano and Mr. Crosby jump apart and turn to see her.

Mr. Crosby

Hello, little Marie Healy. How are you today, Sweetheart?

Marie (holding up the nickel)

Fine, Mr. Crosby. Five tootsie rolls, please.

Mr. Crosby

Of course. Here you go! *Six* tootsie rolls. *(He winks.)*

Marie

Thank you, Mr. Crosby.

Mr. Crosby

Now you go home and enjoy those, okay? That's my girl.

Marie looks seriously at him and pauses. He winks again. She looks to Mrs. Giordano who also winks at her. She goes out, pocketing the tootsie rolls. Blackout.