

MOVEMENT

by Madeleine Dougherty

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Rita.....professional ballet dancer, long, straight hair usually pulled up in some way, dresses in swirly blouses and skirts mainly in browns and purples

Mick.....male dancer at a club, stylish medium length hair, in a shimmery, tight-fitting top, tight black jeans, and boots

Diane.....friend of Rita's, also a dancer, dresses in blue jeans and peasant tops, has big dangly earrings which she flips around along with her pageant-style hair, flirts as much as she breathes

Denny.....friend of Mick's, works as the bartender at the same club as Mick, is much bigger than Mick, hair cut very short, dresses in a black tanks, jeans, and boots, is gay, but not demonstratively

A Couple

Two Women

TIME: lunchtime, March 7th, Thursday

SETTING: Los Angeles, sunny cafe, decorated to look Spanish: flamenco dancers painted on the walls, flowers on each of the tables, in planters hanging from the ceiling, and in pots in the corners. Waiters flit around to all the customers entering and exiting from the stage right.

Customers enter from the stage left. There is a cashier in the back left corner.

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

Denny and Mick sit together at one table, Rita and Diane at another. Rita and Mick are sitting rather close, back to back. All of them have food and drinks.

DIANE

I can't believe he did that. What gives him the right to put me in with the chorus?

RITA

The fact that he is the director?

DIANE

Oh, yeah, use logic on me. That's a friendly thing to do. You're one of the principals, an actual fairy. You get to be on the program.

RITA

Falling breadcrumbs is not a part to aspire to.

DIANE

Oh, stop complaining.

RITA

That's what friends do.

(They glare at each other.)

MICK

So, what did Carl say about switching Bobby to my shift?

DENNY

Hasn't said anything, yet. Why are you so interested in the new boy?

MICK

I don't know. He's cute. He should at least have the chance to reap the benefits of being there from ten to twelve.

DENNY

And steal the heavy spenders from you?

MICK

(somewhat effeminately gesturing to himself)

I'm not selfish.

DENNY

(teasing)

Maybe you just want him close to you. You want to watch him strut around in that little uniform?

Or maybe you want him to watch you, dancing in your cage?

MICK

I am not gay!

(DENNY laughs. RITA and DIANE both glance over at the boys. They go
back to their meals.)

RITA

What were...Oh, yeah. No, I don't like her.

DIANE

Why not?

RITA

She doesn't respect the work, the training and practice it takes. She thinks she can get by on her
looks.

DIANE

I think she's pretty cool. Did you know that she takes classes in pole-dancing?

RITA

(passionate about the subject)

Proves my point. She shouldn't be in ballet. Dance isn't about sex.

(MICK turns around sharply.)

MICK

Excuse me?!

(RITA turns around. DIANE smiles. DENNY roles his eyes.)

RITA

Excuse you. Eavesdrop much?

MICK

Anyone who describes dance like that deserves to be called out.

RITA

And what do you know about creative movement?

MICK

I happen to be a professional dancer.

DIANE

(genuinely)

Really?

MICK

Yeah, I work at a club called “Marvelous.”

RITA

(smirks)

I’m guessing that it’s not any traditional kind of dance. You probably just have sex to music.

MICK

Sex is dancing. Unless you’ve been doing it wrong.

RITA

Dance is Art.

MICK

Sex is Art.

DIANE

Okay, enough. This is getting a little out of hand.

(MICK and RITA both turn to DIANE. They both take a breath. RITA glances at MICK and gives a small grin.)

RITA

You probably just love having all those pretty boys watch you “dance” on stage.

(MICK looks at RITA in disbelief.)

Oh, yeah, we heard the two of you earlier. The whole restaurant heard you.

MICK

(big exclamation)

I am not gay!

RITA

(smugly)

The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

DENNY

Oh, but she'll keep her word.

(MICK groans and holds his face in his hands. The others laugh.)

DIANE

Oh, but Rita, there is far more to this boy than the shallow, narcissistic dancer part of him. Just look at what he's eating.

(RITA puts her face in her hands.)

RITA

Please, don't.

DIANE

Hush.

MICK

What do you mean?

DIANE

You can tell a lot about a person from what they eat. Just look at me. I'm having a burger with a side salad and a Diet Coke.

MICK

So?

DENNY

Don't be rude.

(DIANE ignores them.)

DIANE

It's easy. What do you think the Diet Coke and salad say? They say that I am conscientious about my weight which is true given that I am a ballet dancer. But the burger says that I am not going to let the strictness of the dancing govern my entire life. It says that I am confident and strong enough to live as I please.

RITA

Or that you're gonna hork it up later.

DIANE

(she nods)

Or that. Now, Rita is having a Caesar salad with no croutons or dressing and water to drink. She is insane.

RITA

And a principle dancer in our company.

(DIANE wave her comment away.)

DIANE

Falling breadcrumbs.

(She stands and walks over to the boys table.)

Now, let's see about you two.

(She muses for a moment. In the back, a couple's conversation can be heard.)

MAN

How's the soup?

WOMAN

(sexily)

Spicy.

DIANE

Well, sexyboy, here--

MICK

Mick.

DIANE

Mick?

DENNY

And Denny.

(DIANE give him a once over. She gazes at DENNY flirtatiously.)

DIANE

(in a low, sultry voice)

A pleasure.

(DENNY smiles back.)

Well, Mick is having the salmon with a side of broccoli and a glass of red.

(She pick up the glass and smells the wine.)

A very nice choice.

(She puts the glass back down.)

This most definitely says that he is going to take every luxury he can afford. It also says that he thinks he deserves every luxury.

(She turns fully toward the audience and raises her finger in a “one moment” gesture. She uses it to accent her words.)

But don't let that fool you. He also got the salmon for the omega-3s, the broccoli for the vitamin C and K, and the red wine for the antioxidants.

(She turns back to MICK)

Why, you're just as health conscious as Rita.

(She takes a step or two toward DENNY, so she is centered between DENNY and MICK. MICK looks back at RITA. They share a long look and exchange

smiles. Both turn back to DIANE and DENNY. DIANE and DENNY begin affecting Southern accents.)

DIANE

And sweet Denny is having a big piece of lasagna and iced tea. He's just a good ol' mamma's boy, miles away, and lookin' to find a piece of home.

(DENNY leans back in his chair and grins.)

DENNY

Well, darlin'. Not quite. Now as much as I do love my mamma with all my heart,

(He drops the accent.)

She cant't cook worth shit. This here is my recipe along with several others I lent to my friend.

(He points back at where the kitchen is.)

Any time I don't have the time, I just come here.

(DIANE grins big.)

DIANE

You're just the perfect man.

DENNY

That I am.

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(They keep gazing into each other's eyes. DENNY stands and walks toward DIANE. DIANE takes a few steps back. MICK's eyes go wide and he begins to quietly, disbelievingly laugh. RITA looks at him in confusion, then watches the two, who stop directly between MICK and RITA. DENNY reaches up and gently tucks DIANE's hair behind her ear. DIANE dreamily closes her eyes. DENNY leans forward and...stops.)

DENNY

Oh, crap.

(He is looking at the watch on his wrist.)

I have to go.

(DIANE's eyes snap open and she grabs his wrist to see the watch.)

DIANE

Me, too.

(In a flurry of action, DIANE spins and grabs her purse. She finds some money and puts it onto the table. She kisses RITA on the forehead. DENNY does the same with his jacket and wallet, even kissing MICK on the forehead. They end up finishing each other's sentences while interrupting MICK and RITA's protests.)

DIANE

I completely forgot until just now.

DENNY

Otherwise, I would have mentioned--

DIANE

--that I have a date--

DENNY

--with my boyfriend.

DIANE

He wants to go to this play thing at the park--

DENNY

--near his apartment. Afterwards, dinner--

DIANE

--and dancing,--

DENNY

--then I'll see you at the club.

DIANE

Here, lunch is on me.

DENNY

That should cover mine.

MICK

Hey!

(He gestures at the girls. DENNY turns to DIANE.)

DENNY

Which park you heading to?

DIANE

Linnie Canal.

MICK

You did hear him say boyfriend, right?

DIANE

Of course.

DENNY

Share a cab?

DIANE

That would be delightful.

(DENNY offers her his arm which she takes and they stroll offstage.)

Be good, you two.

(RITA and MICK look around in confusion and surprise. Their gazes meet.
MICK shrugs and smiles at RITA. She smiles uncertainly back. They both
turn back to their meals. They keep glancing back at each other. Another
conversation is overheard.)

WOMAN 1

Do you think they are ever going to get together?

WOMAN 2

No, the whole show revolves around their sexual tension. It will end with them having sex, but it
can't happen before then.

WOMAN 1

That makes sense. I mean, where can it really go after sex.

(curtain)

SCENE 2

The setting is the same, immediately after the first scene. The scene is meant to be played with as
much hesitation and awkwardness as possible. When in doubt, pause.

MICK

So...

RITA

Yeah. Are you finished?

MICK

Not quite. You?

RITA

Nope.

(Waiter takes away DIANE's plate.)

Would you like to dine with me? I mean, my friend kinda stole your friend, so join me?

MICK

If you're sure?

(MICK brings his stuff over to DIANE's old place. They eat.)

RITA

Please tell me off if this is rude, but are you gay?

MICK

(laughs)

Yeah, no. Working as a male dancer at Marvelous is not the most heterosexual job in the world.

But, yes, I am very much into girls. What about you?

RITA

Am I into girls?

MICK

Yeah. You're a ballet dancer. I have seen "Black Swan."

RITA

Oh, you poor, little thing. You haven't been basing your entire concept of women off of movies, have you?

MICK

Movies have been really helpful. They taught me that women can and will fake an orgasm. They taught me that women just want a man who will listen. And that women want a man who will know when to push and when to back off, leaving 'em for more.

RITA

Where did you learn all that from?

MICK

"When Harry Met Sally," "What Women Want," and a collection of other things.

RITA

Porn, you mean.

MICK

Pretty much. So, Diane's with her boyfriend. Denny's with his. What about you?

RITA

I'm single.

MICK

And into guys?

RITA

Yes.

MICK

Ah.

RITA

Ah? What "ah"?

MICK

Nothing. Just...good to know.

(RITA looks at him suspiciously.)

So, what's the next big performance for your company?

RITA

"Sleeping Beauty"

MICK

Oh, right. Falling Breadcrumbs.

RITA

How do you know that?

MICK

Don't tell Denny or else he'll pull even more "You're gay" crap, but I learned to dance at a ballet company originally.

RITA

And you "pooh-poohed" me about it earlier. Hypocrite.

MICK

I know, I know. I was only there for a few years, if that makes a difference.

RITA

It doesn't. So, why did you leave ballet?

MICK

My family moved. But dance stuck with me. I tried all different types. Eventually, I just went for what felt good. Passion, spice, fever. Every night it's like that.

RITA

What do you do? I mean, do you strip or something?

MICK

No, it's not that kind of club. It's a dance club with a bazillion people in a mob, a DJ, and strobe lights. There are platforms and cages where we, the professionals, dance, keeping the party going.

RITA

You dance in a cage. I couldn't do that.

MICK

Well, at least you're admitting that it actually is dance, now.

(RITA looks away.)

You know, I think you could do it.

RITA

No, I like the rules and precision of ballet. People think that it's stuck up, and it is. It has a right to be after all the work it takes to build up the talent. I like to push myself to do it perfectly, beautifully.

(MICK gazes at RITA admiringly, noticing something he didn't see before.)

MICK

What are you doing for the rest of the day?

RITA

Why?

MICK

Because I want to take you out.

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(MICK stand and puts some cash on the table. He offers RITA his hand. She takes it and they playfully run out of the restaurant.)

(curtain)