

The One That I Want

a poem by Rose Jermusyk

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Characters

ROSIE, queer 30-year-old whose first queer experience took place in the 3rd Grade and was super-confusing/-convoluted

DANNY, the role Rosie was asked to play by Sandy when they were in the closet

PINK LADIES & T-BIRDS, parents and siblings of Rosie and Sandy

SANDY, Rosie's 3rd-grade crush and closeted (as in an actual closet) makeout partner who ultimately put the straight in frustrating

RIZZO, the role Rosie begged Sandy to let her play when they were in the closet

Musical Numbers

Act One

LOVE IS A MANY SPLENDORED THING? Rosie, Danny
GREASE IS THE WORD? Rosie
TELLMEMORETELLMEMORE Rosie, Pink Ladies, T-Birds, Sandy
LOOK AT ME Rizzo, Rosie
DEVOTED Rosie, Sandy

Act Two

GREASED LIGHTNING Danny, Rosie
STRANDED IN THE CLOSET Rosie
THERE ARE WORSE THINGS YOU COULD DO Rizzo, Rosie
YOU'RE NOT THE ONE THAT I WANT Rosie
WE GO TOGETHER? Danny, Rosie, Rizzo

Act One

Scene One

ROSIE: (*sung*) “Love is a many splendored thing”

(*spoken*) or so I’ve heard

every time

I have watched

as Danny and Sandy

frolicked on the beach.

But I never heard it play

when I played Danny

and you played Sandy

laying on the floor

of your closet

doing the kinds of things

that Danny wanted

and Sandy rejected.

But that’s another story;

this song

DANNY: is only the beginning.

ROSIE: The first thrill,
the first fling,
the first closeted thing.

Scene Two

ROSIE: Have you ever
read the lyrics to
(*sung*) “Grease is the word”?

(*spoken*) Spoiler:
the titular line
is the only thing
that makes zero sense.

The rest of the song
the speaker laments
they are the only one who can see
how easy it would be
to just friggin’ be together;
how all the grown-ups
think they’re love is just a phase;
how the accepted social conventions
are outdated as fuck.

Sound familiar, Sandy?

I can see us being together.
I know my sexuality isn’t a phase.
And all I ever talk about
is rewriting the goddamn story
to something true.

Why is grease the word?

Is it elbow grease?
The sheer force of my will
getting the gears in motion?

Tell me, Sandy,
and I will set in motion events
to tear this world apart
and build it anew;

and. if it should refuse
to be made anew:

tough noogies.

Scene Three

ROSIE: Some people
will always have Paris
while we
will always have your closet
during the school year
while our moms hung out.

Scratch that:
shouldn't give too many details;
shouldn't give away who you are
in case our moms,
our dads,
our many siblings
still talk
like so many prattling
Pink Ladies
and

T-Birds

nagging

PINK LADIES & T-BIRDS (*singing*): Tellmemoretellmemore!

ROSIE (*speaking in rhythm*): So they can tell us we're wrong.

PINK LADIES & T-BIRDS (*singing*): Tellmemoretellmemore!

ROSIE (*speaking in rhythm*): And I'd sing them this song

But

(*singing til end of stanza*)

You'd grow colder

Just like the end

And you'd tell them

SANDY (*singing*): We're only feh-eh-ends.

Scene Four

RIZZO (*singing*): Look at me

ROSIE (*speaking*): Wait,

no,

don't look at me:

See me.

See me coming apart,

playing a part,

playing along

in whatever wig you hand me

as long as I get my kicks

while I'm still young enough to get 'em;

while you're still pretending

not to know

any of what's going on here,

to be doe-eyed
and innocent.

Scene Five

ROSIE (*speaking*): She loves me.

She loves me not.

Forget her.

SANDY (*singing*): Don't let go-oh-oh.

Hold on til the end.

ROSIE: (*shifting from singing to speaking*) Hold on til she says the words,

hold on til she does the right thing

and leaves you truly hopeless

with no room left

to be devoted.

Act Two

Scene One

DANNY (*speaking in rhythm*): I am hydromanic,

all electric,

why I am greased lightning,

and you should cream

(*sung*) for my lightning!

ROSIE (*speaking*): Only

say my name,
I promise
you won't wear it out.

Scene Two

ROSIE: (*sung*) Stranded in the closet.

(*sung*) Branded
(*spoken*) a misfit.

I would sit and wonder,
But I think I know

(*singing*)

why-ee-eye-ee-eye-ee,
oh why,
you left me;

(*speaking*)

and, it must be
that my Pink Ladiness
was not instead
a Pink Slip
made to fit
into your Pink Ladiness;

that our Summer Lovin'
couldn't actually withstand
the bright light of your bedroom lamp
let alone the daylight
revealing
(*singing a hymn*) all that I am and all that I offer

(*spoken til end*) so that you
— rather than look me in the eye
and put your own revelation into words —
simply left it
in the closet
and locked the door behind you
with me on the other side
groping around in the dark for answers,

struggling to make sense
of what was felt
for you.

Scene Three

RIZZO (*singing throughout*): There are worse things you could do
Than admit a kiss or two.

ROSIE (*speaking*): Granted
a hickey from Jermusky* ain't no Hallmark card.

RIZZO: But there are worse things to go through.

ROSIE: For instance,

being asked to give such a hickey
after watching you
just a few hours earlier
get peer-pressured by the whole class
into kissing the boy
who lived about a block away from me;

being told to play Danny
and having to beg to play Rizzo;

being dropped like a bad habit
just as I was working up the nerve
to ask you to be my girlfriend;

having needs met
that I didn't even know I had
and then
not;

being asked by my sisters
about my first girl crush
and lying
to protect you;

watching you deny and run away
when I finally ask you why;

avoiding any refrain of

RIZZO: Mrs. Right!

ROSIE: by never acting

on any girl crush

(*sung*) because they look like you.

Scene Four

ROSIE (*singing*): You're not the one that I want,

not anymore you're not.

Ooh! Ooh! Ooh!

Sorry.

Scene Five

DANNY (*singing*): We go together
like puzzle pieces
punched into place.

ROSIE (*speaking*): Wait,
that's not the way it should be.

RIZZO (*singing*): Our names are signed,
but if it's roleplay
does it really count?

Change! Change!
Change who you are!

ROSIE (*speaking*): Wait, what?
Nonononono.
Oh, shit.

I think we're at the end of our story.
I think it's just me now.
There's nothing left to say
about you and me.

But I get an epilogue:
I don't want to ride off into the sunset
where "happily ever after"
is another name
for bored outta my gourd;

I want to live happily ever out there,
maybe go parking
with someone who moans my name
sweeter than anything
and accidentally finishes things
when the shake up is just getting started

and don't run from their mistakes
and sounds the alarm when I'm on a ferris wheel
and then whoops and hollers with me
when the alarm rings false
and sticks around
for my heart-shaped peanut butter sandwiches
no matter how many times I sing

(singing Chipmunk style)

Ooh ee ooh ah ah ting tang walla walla ting tang.
Ooh ee ooh ah ah ting tang walla walla ting tang!

(speaking)

Because on good days
I do that a lot.