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with the smirking smile of the professional dancer or circus performer, forced under physical strain.

"Why is this?" Rodd inquired indignantly.

"For the audience at the opera. It is a disguise, a part of the trick. And the maestro, he not only go blind—oh, the poor maestro, may the good God cheer him!—but he cough and cough, and when the doctor examine him the doctor he say, 'Arizona quick to save the life!'

"Non! What is the life?" answer the maestro. 'I shall live long enough for the European debut and that is all I want!'

But we find a friend—the manager of the opera in New York. That big, terrible, knowing, good man, he say, 'All right. I arrange for the European debut.' And he get the maestro into a drawing-room on the train for Arizona, oh, so very cleave and kind!"

"Yes, and then?" said Rodd, guiding himself by the lights of Newark.

"Voila! Valerie and I, we make the debut at the opera in Paris; two girls before all those grand, bored, critical people. Oh, the audience! It can make you so happy when it is all smiles and rustles and handclaps, and so miserable when all the shirt fronts of the men out there in the silent darkness look like so many little tombstones over your own buried ambition. The singers have to wait and wait on the encores for me—the lucky one.

"Alas, for Valerie only just a little applause. Poor Valerie, standing so triste, with nobody speaking to her in the wings! Is it not a shame the bon Dieu has not given her the spark in the feet when she is so very worthy, when she work so much harder than I? And then I think of the maestro out in Arizona—the poor maestro! Everything I owe to him! But for him I still work in the bake-shop, is it not so?"

"But Valerie, she kissed me. She was not jealous—no! no! no! And when I ran from all the men who wanted to send me home in their carriages—just as the maestro had told me to do, for the sake of the bon Dieu and my art—and Valerie and I went back to our

room in the omnibus, just as we always had, that night she sobbed and sobbed.

"Oh," she say, 'it is not for myself. I do not like the dance. I would better like to keep a shop or anything! Non, it is not for myself—it is father's heartbreak when he knows I have failed!'

"I could not sleep thinking of the maestro. Since he become blind his pride was more and more in Valerie. in his Madame Felicite's child. When I read the papers and all the critics say of what they call my singing feet, I had the idea—yais, the grand idea!—Valerie should be me!

"Yais, the handclaps were all for Valerie! For once I was glad that the maestro no more have the eyes to see. I make the plan very carefully and a friend in Arizona who is in the secret read aloud all my notices and change my name to Valerie. You have understood? C'est joli, n'est-ce pas? And Valerie she have to help, though she say it is one lie. But is it a lie? Non! It is for the maestro and it make him happy till a traveler make some fool talk before our friend in Arizona could stop the stupid.

"The maestro grow suspicious, angry, and he come on in this weather—the poor maestro, with only a little piece of lung left, just enough so he can live in Arizona—yais, he come on all alone to find the truth! And the first we know was when he appear in Valerie's room at the hotel in New York. She is so good, so honest, she is not quick for—what you say?—for keeping up the story. And to-night in the last act, just for a minute, Valerie appears at the opera for the first time and the maestro will be there in the manager's box. He cannot see, but he will know by the applause if he has been fooled. Oh, that terrible monster the audience, it will say 'Another danseuse? So! So! Nothing unusual!'

"Is Valerie forty?" Rodd asked. He resented the spirit of youth and lightness taking on a mask.

"No, no! But New York does not know Valerie!" she answered quickly. "And New York it knows me, my face, which I change. But I cannot change my

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