

"The maestro's name is Signor Laponi, but we call him maestro because he is Italian, and he like that best. Alors, one day he is walking by when he sees me dance when the piano came along, so happy; yais, so happy I forget to deliver the rolls which some one do want in the very great hurry. He stop, he watch, he make the wild gesture, and he mount on his toes and he say: 'Do like me—can you?' Oh, I shall nevaire forget his look! It was like a man waiting to see if he had found a diamond or just a lump of coal. I do the step—it was good fun and so very easy!"

"Le Bon Dieu!" he cry, and he pick me up in his arms and demand where I belong, and I point to the bakeshop. He carried me in, and he cried, 'Whose child is this?'

"Nobodys!" said Madame, very angry to see me still with the rolls in my hand.

"Nobodys! Thank God! Then she is mine!" said the maestro; and he was so very grand.

"You're welcome to her!" said Madame. 'She is a good for nothing!'

"How the maestro laugh! He laugh like the child; he laugh like he was a wrinkled, wise old man of the mountain. Have you understood?"

"Good for nothing! The good God has put the spark of genius in her feet just as He put it into Beethoven's head. Good for nothing! She will dance in Paris, London, Berlin, St Petersburg, New York! Men shall besiege the ticket office to see her! I know! I will train her! This to pay you, Madame!"

"In his grand way he stand me on the counter right among the pastries. Ah, it was like the maestro—all life is art to him—to empty his pockets, to take off his sleevebuttons and his scarpin, and give them all to Madame, who was so astounded she could only breathe hard, with her hands on her hips. And he take me up again, and he pat my toes, and shake my ankles softly, and chuckle all to himself and carry me all the way to his room. It was all most surprising to me. Hein! I was so very surprised, being such a very little girl, I had not dropped the rolls. That was what you call a very happy coincidence, eh? For the maestro, who love the art so he forget everything else, had given away all his money and the rolls were all we had for supper!"

"But the maestro, so thin and dark-eyed and earnest, he did not eat any of the rolls. He look at my ankles and my toes and feel them and he ask me to dance again, and he was so very happy that it make me very glad."

"At last," he says, 'I shall train a great dancer!' You see, all his life he had live for that ambition, for the applause of the pupil he had trained."

She paused thoughtfully, taking in a breath of wonder. Trenton was a glow-worm illuminating the ghastly mantle of snow which passed by the frame of the wafer-thin gelatin window. The braces were like threads of spun glass, the

rods sparkling and the planes gleaming in their coats of frost under the Falcon's lamp.

"There was another little girl. She help me eat the rolls," Toinette went on. "The other little girl was Valerie, the maestro's daughter. Oh, wait till you see Valerie! She is good and honest, not just lucky, like me. Valerie's mother was dead. She had a beautiful name, Felicite, is it not? She was a dancer and her mother a dancer, but not the great dancer. Hein! You have understood? The great dancer, she walk on the roses and thousand-franc notes! Non!? Madame Felicite was the hundred-franc-a-week dancer, and the hope of those dear hearts of the maestro and Madame Felicite was that their Valerie should succeed where the mother and grandmother had failed. They would live to see all Europe applaud Valerie. But Madame Felicite she die so very poor, still hoping."

Toinette turned somber. The willow of her figure drooped, and the corners of her mouth sank under the grease paints which were gradually outlining a countenance far older than her own.

"And the maestro! His art and his real daughter and his daughter adopted—it was the fight in his heart. He would scold me and call me the lazy, undeserving one, and then pat my ankles. And once when Valerie had tried so hard and could not, he grew very angry and he shook me and say, wild-like, 'Why did you have that spark and not my Valerie?' And then he change to tears, and beg my forgiveness, and pat my toes, and say the bon Dieu was right in giving the spark to me. Have you understood?"

"He love us so much, he was so grand in his ideas, that he would not let us appear at all till we were the finished artistes. He come to America the better to make the money, and when we were ready we should go to Europe for the debut. Ah, he live on the sensation we would make one day. We were so very poor I would beg him to let me do the dance just for to boil the pot. 'Non!' he answered, so angry and proud. And—you will not tell?—all in secret I get the engagement in the vaudeville and I dance just well enough, not too well, so he shall not hear, and I get the poor girls to be his pupils and I pay for their teaching, and the maestro nevaire know. Oh, it was the good fun!"

"And the maestro he lost the sight of one eye and the other it go bad, and then one day he go blind. He cannot teach any more, and I find a friend to give us the little money I earn as a loan. You have understood? And how did I practice, remembering everything he tell me and so sorry when he have been so good to me that I have been such a mischief. He could only tell by listening to the steps, and sometimes when he thought it was Valerie dancing it would be me, and he would be very happy to think how Valerie had improved."

The make-up was finished with a last touch. She turned on Rodd the features of a woman of forty,



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