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La Corusca, Senora Crispin, his Argentine mother, age 42.
Agnes, their American guest and dancing pupil, age 22.
Mrs. Vincent Widener, a woman journalist, age 35.
Period: Present. Place: Providencia, a city on the Pacific coast.

SCENE III
The Blazing Disruption.
(Continued From Last Week.)

Crispin: You talk of a precipice, of an abyss of torment, of striking me to the heart! It perplexes me! But, senorita, that you should leave me to heart-hunger in a desert of fevered repining and barren loneliness, with naught but the desolate prospect of never seeing you again—never having my love requited—what could more hopelessly wound me than that? And wouldn't love be less than all-enduring—less than faithful—ah! if it ever hesitated to follow its object, even over a precipice to share an abyss to torment?

Agnes: How you drive me to despair, senor, simply to despair! I have no other alternative but to disclose the whole wretched truth! And I will! I will tell you everything!
Crispin: Ah! then, there's really yet another secret—another hidden circumstance of your life, which you've never mentioned to me! Doesn't this secret, too, in some way—concern the Whitesides? or do I err?

Agnes: Only have pity, senor! I know you were reared largely in the Argentine Republic, by a native mother and an American father, who belonged to the old order of Abolitionists. Your mind has been trained to humanitarian ideals, and the principle of human brotherhood made the very foundation of your religious faith. But even though it hasn't been so with my unhappy father, nor with me—oh, senor, don't judge me overharshly—nor be too severely prejudiced against me!

Crispin: Must I again assure you that to me, senorita, you're ever the worthiest of all womankind—the most irreproachable?

Agnes: Senor Crispin, you don't know how grievously I've deceived you!

Crispin: How now! Deceived me— you?

Agnes: Oh! 'tis so humiliating, so abasing to the very soul, to be thus compelled to confess one's self, good God! how it lumps and sticks in the throat! just a plain impostor!

Crispin: Impostor! Senorita, one can hardly believe you mean precisely—impostor!

Agnes: An actual impostor—senor, a double-named impostor! But 'twas wholly for my little brother's dear sake! Had we only been able to procure the service of another pair of dancers really competent to perform la Malaguena, or had you and La Corusca not refused to come to Shadow City, then I wouldn't have been persuaded to rely in part on my own attainments as an amateur dancer—persuaded and driven to the one desperate recourse of gaining admission to this school by bold-faced imposture—in order to obtain instruction in la Malaguena from the senora herself!

Crispin: I'm to understand—really. In fact, you aren't Senorita Agnes Gorland?

Agnes: Gracious heavens! only consider, senor! Precious little Godfrey, on the evening of the panic—the panic that with such sudden violence interrupted the enchantment of it all! precious brother Godfrey was watching as you and La Corusca executed El Torero y la Malaguena! Such spellbound interest, that innocent baby soul bewitched by the color and movement of that dance, oh! truly, there was such a radiance of enthusiasm on his countenance as I know my dying hour will summon up to memory! Afterwards, when he lay at home critically ill, he'd cry out incessantly in moments of delirium for la Malaguena, senor, for simply la Malaguena! and when one asked him even in his right mind, what he desired, he'd nearly always answer he longed most of all, yes, most of all, to see El Torero la Malaguena! Oh, if you but knew how pitiful it was, how it made the heart bleed within one, senor, just to hear him!

Crispin: But you, you, senorita, you?
Agnes: To me, senor, to me, Godfrey's pathetic implorations became a soul-torture. I felt as though I were relentlessly pursued and persecuted—by the sepulchral wailings of some resurrected and distraught spirit, that had been robbed of a consecrated charm and, without that charm, could find no rest. Whenever I'd kneel in prayer—his delirious—my baby brother's whimpering cries, would interrupt my invocations to God to spare him to us and hasten—

Crispin: But I ask you—am I asking about yourself? You are, senorita?

Agnes: My word, senor! and nothing could conjure the faintest smile from him, no, senor, until that day of our parting, when Mrs. Widener had tried and tried and finally succeeded in persuading me to come here, and when I had flung myself across his bed, caught him close in my arms—pressed my lips against his gaunt cheek—then whispered, "I'm going to La Corusca and Crispin, Godfrey, love, going to La Corusca's! and when I come back, you shall see la Malaguena, my sweetest sweet, from beginning to end, El Torero y la Malaguena!" 'Twas then he—in just a glimmer, he smiled! Bless me God! he smiled!

Crispin: I say, wasn't I under a wrong impression after all? Terry Whiteside's daughter—she's no mere little child!

Agnes: True, senor; you and the senora have been throwing dust into your own eyes. Gorland was my mother's maiden name; I am really Agnes Whiteside—that tormented creature, Representative Whiteside's only daughter!

Crispin: You, senorita! Whiteside's daughter, you! Not some woman from whom I've had no reason to expect anything—save down right antagonism; no, but you! Of all God-conceived ramifications of life, of all the numberless daughters on the face of this earth—Oh, the thing does surpass all human understanding! Why, senorita! why do the fates play such tricks on a man?

Agnes: But my darling brother, Senor Crispin, yearned so much—shrieked forth all the time for only la Malaguena! the complete whole of El Torero y la Malaguena! Oh! I've always felt myself more a mother than a sister to him; and I say any mother could have been persuaded to do for her child even as much as I've done for him!

Crispin: I only ask was ever a man more miserably unfortunate than I am?

Agnes: Gracious God! I've disclosed nothing but the plain truth! Yes, yes, yes, senor! how thunderous is the crash of its supernal might! In the hopeless conflict with truth, I'm lost, undone, lost! Attempt to suppress it; oh! pitiless, insuperable, stronger even than love, it bolts forth in blazing disruption, spreading broadcast desolation, like the awful lightnings!

Crispin: Our lives are blasted asunder! Abruptly a dividing, a tremendous chasm has opened up between you and me! and it turns me—

Agnes: But you, senor, were very curious to know what had moved me this evening—what capricious impulse—to go roaming in the misty spray and squally wind, alone out there on the ocean shore. You now well may understand—I was impelled by a dreadful sense of coming ill!

Crispin: And what a dreadful foreboding! Holy host of heaven! great agonies are tearing my heart! The walls, it seems, are closing in to crush me! I can't endure—endure—

Agnes: 'Twas the same, senor, that sympathetic pressure of elements within me which drove me out into the stormy weather to mourn with the foaming, heaving sea.

Crispin: Ah me, senorita, senorita, the sea! only its bosom is vast enough to contain my grief! I want, only want to think! Oh! this overcomes—overcomes me! Yes, but I also shall go out into the open—out to the sea—the perpetually lamenting sea—with my despair!

Agnes: Oh! out to the mother of the sorrow of the ages—out to her who is all made of human tears? No! For mercy, senor, listen! Senor, Senor Crispin!

END SCENE THREE.

ACT III

I have read, in the marvelous heart of man,
That strange and mystic scroll,
That an army of phantoms vast and wan
Beleaguer the human soul.

Encamped beside life's rushing stream,
In fancy's misty light,
Gigantic shapes and shadows gleam
Portentous through the night.
—Longfellow.

SCENE I

A Convulsion of High Society

Scene—the same, an half an hour later; night. From the dancing room, the doors of which are flung wide, an intense white illumination floods into the hall. The wind still is heard in sudden, fitful wailings outside.

Mrs. Widener is discovered standing beside the table, carelessly examining piece by piece the sheet music thereon, and humming to herself. She is of plump, towering frame, and possesses—along with finely chiseled features that impress one with an overbearing intellectuality—the masterful,

energetic air of a business woman.
Enter Crispin, hastily proceeding towards the study at the back.

Mrs. Widener: Why Mr. Crispin! What a becoming costume! Oh, I wonder, has the dancer really turned teacher?

Crispin: Good evening, Miss—Mrs.—Madame, I believe you are—?

Mrs. Widener: Oh, you don't recognize me, sir? Well, to think of that!

Crispin: Ha, now! this is a happiness, I assure you! I've again the honor to meet Mrs. Widener from Shadow City—haven't I?

Mrs. Widener: Yes, Dr. Vincent Widener's wife. How did you like the Sunday feature I made of the interview, Mr. Crispin, on your home life and your mother's, which you gave me at the Goldborough hotel?

Crispin: It was splendid, but with one fault. You somehow forgot to mention Anthony.

Mrs. Widener: Anthony? Was Anthony your late lamented father's name?

Crispin: No, I was speaking of Anthony Bell, who was killed just before the panic.

Mrs. Widener: Really, I'm afraid I'd clean forgotten him.

Crispin: But may I ask, madame, why you've come flying thus to Providencia?

Mrs. Widener: I'm come here to execute a commission for my paper, The Verity—to investigate one of the most monstrous scandals that has occurred for a very considerable while—and put into a special article the truth concerning it. Of course, I refer—to Cynthia Lilburn—her elopement with that Brazilian chap, Rogerio Nobrega, the comparatively penniless leader of the orchestra aboard her grandfather's private yacht.

Crispin: Hasn't the public ceased

to wonder at that? It's more than a week, madame, since it happened.

Mrs. Widener: Why, Mr. Crispin, the episode has utterly confounded our highest society, and stirred the lower orders into a veritable ferment of excitement.

Crispin: Yes, Senorita Lilburn is undeniably indebted to society at large for the celebrity of her remarkable beauty—of her radiant etherealness, the great gray outburst of dawn in her eyes, the shimmering fairy-gold of her hair, her wit, heavenly inspired with all the transcendence that marks the intercourse of stars; nevertheless I don't understand why society should fancy it has any direct claim whatever upon the several million dollars of her personal fortune, or any inalienable right of control over her conduct. But, indeed, I, too, envy Senor Nobrega. How dreadless and marvelous is that soul which inseparably has embraced his own in a common destiny!

Mrs. Widener: Dreadless, yes; yet surely, the fortune-hunting miscreant must've employed black arts upon Cynthia Lilburn.

Crispin: Regarding that I'm ignorant.

Mrs. Widener: But, Mr. Crispin, probably you can state positively whether this Nobrega is—er—in truth—er—one-fourth Negro?

Crispin: Madame, I can state for a certainty the Negro population of Brazil is become amalgamated in large part by free intermarriage with the white peoples of the country. Senor Rogerio Nobrega is a native of Bahia, and his complexion decidedly swarthy.

Mrs. Widener: Free intermarriage! Free intermarriage! Oh! that's the reason why that child has run off to Brazil with the smudge-faced vagabond—she who is the granddaughter

of the lieutenant governor of this state! What an escapade—as deplorable as it's astonishing! Oh, the pity! the greatest pity is the governor failed in his attempt to shoot the mongrel through the heart! Mr. Crispin, the woman who was the crowning glory of the most brilliant social functions seduced by a contemptible—nigger, Nigger!

Crispin: Senor Nobrega, madame, was previously in my employ for five years as violinist and composer. And how can he be contemptible, madame, when Senorita Lilburn has placed him upon the sublime elevation of her soul?

Mrs. Widener: Forgive me! How rashly I speak to a famous member of the Association for the Abolition of Race Oppression! Why, perhaps, Mr. Crispin, the dusky Mr. Nobrega also is a member of that American Association?

Crispin: Madame, I do sincerely regret that you journeyed so far to interview me on the subject of Senor Nobrega, because circumstances—

Mrs. Widener: Sir, I had no intention to interview you on any subject whatever! My visit, Mr. Crispin, you owe to the necessity which constrains me to seek a young lady from Shadow City, temporarily residing at this school.

Crispin: From Shadow City? I presume the lady is Senorita White—I mean—

Mrs. Widener: I don't remember whether her name is White, or Gorland. The servant has taken my card to Miss Gorland.

Agnes: Oh, Mrs. Widener!
Crispin: Madame, if you please, my mother's gone out at present; I think I'm needed at the telephone.

(END SCENE I.)

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