Dancing Star

The Story of Anna Pavlova

Gladys Malvern

IN this biography of Anna Pavlova Miss Malvern narrates the story of the great ballerina's life from the time when, as a child, Pavlova sees her first Ballet in the great Marinsky Theatre.

Next we read about Anna's admission to the Imperial Ballet School, and her progress in that august and strictly disciplined establishment, till she reaches the exalted position of *Prima Ballerina*.

The figures of well-known persons move across the pages of this book. Charles Chaplin, Diaghilev, King Christian of Denmark, Kaiser Wilhelm, Nijinsky, and many of those artists, musicians, choreographers and dancers whose contributions to their art have made Ballet what it is to-day.

THE DANCING STAR

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by

GLADYS MALVERN

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

A DREAM TO CHERISH

"Now, my little Niura," announced Madame Pavlova, "you and I are on our way to Fairyland!"

Anna's dark eyes looked up at her mother excitedly. Fairyland! Where was it?

The sleigh travelled swiftly, noiselessly over the newly fallen snow. Houses stood tall and angular against the mid-winter blackness of the sky. The world had suddenly become strange, new. The street lights made little yellow patches upon the untouched snow. People walked quickly; dark, mysterious, huddled against the brisk, biting wind. All at once St. Petersburg had become a different place —eery, beautiful.

Only Mamasha was the same. Dear Mamasha. A bit frightened at what was in store for her, Anna

leaned closer to her mother. It seemed odd that just an ordinary sleigh should be carrying them into Fairyland. When one is eight, one still rather believes in fairies, but never believes that one will actually ever go to Fairyland. And now, here they were, she and Mamasha, on their way to see the Sleeping Beauty and the Prince!

"Really Fairyland?" asked Anna, in a small, awed voice.

Mamasha—Little Mother—laughed. "Not really. It's a make-believe Fairyland—in a theatre."

Anna lapsed into silence. Except for the summers, she and Mamasha lived alone in a small, dark apartment in one of St. Petersburg's poorer sections. Every summer they went to a little house in the country. Anna had never been anywhere else.

There was never enough money. Anna knew how Mamasha had to scrimp and economise to eke out the bare necessities for the two of them; but somehow Mamasha always managed to have little fancy coloured eggs and toys at Easter, and always at Christmas there would be the little fir tree with its candles, a few toys, and perhaps some extra surprise, some extra treat; but never such a treat as this Christmas—there had never been *Fairyland* before!

Anna, whose pet name was Niura, knew her fairy stories almost by heart. Her favourite was *The Sleeping Beauty*. And now, in a little while, the Sleeping Beauty was to step out of the pages of a book and come to life!

A theatre. Mamasha had told her it was the Marinsky Theatre, but at that time the name meant

nothing to her. Anna's brow grew thoughtful. A theatre, then, was Fairyland? Yes, that was it, a theatre was a make-believe kingdom, a place where startling things happened, things different and apart from everyday existence. She had never been to a theatre before, and as the sleigh drew nearer, her heart beat faster and faster until she could hear it above the noise of the wind, above the sound of the sleigh bells, above the thud-thud of the horse's hoofs.

"Here we are," announced Mamasha at last, gaily.

Anna bounded out of the sleigh and stood staring about excitedly. A big, fine building, brightly lighted. Crowds. Gentlemen in high hats and flowing moustaches. Ladies with rich fur capes. What long trains the ladies had! How the jewels sparkled in their hair, on their fingers!

Though dressed in her best, Mamasha looked shabby beside those others. But she didn't seem to mind. Her eyes were as bright and excited as her daughter's as, hand in hand, they found their way to the cheaper seats.

"Where's Fairyland?" asked the child breathlessly.

"Wait. You'll see it, my little one. Down there—down there on the stage. Ssh! Here comes the orchestra. The music is by Tchaikovsky."

Anna's eyes fixed themselves upon the curtain. As she watched, the lights in the vast auditorium were dimmed, voices were hushed. Suddenly there was music, music such as she had never heard. Then the curtain rose.

Yes, yes, it was truly Fairyland! There, below her, was a golden palace. There was the Sleeping Beauty!

At first the child sat numbed, tense. Then chills began going up and down her spine. Her hands clenched. She could feel the nails piercing the flesh of her palms, but it didn't matter. Nothing mattered only this—only loveliness mattered. She was trembling, troubled, breathless—it was all so beautiful, so thrilling. Sometimes she felt she couldn't stand any more. Now and then a little cry of joy escaped her, and Mamasha said, "Ssh!"

When the old witch appeared in her rat-drawn chariot, Anna put her face in her hands. Then, almost before she knew it, she peeked out between her fingers, and there was a crowd of young girls, dancing.

When the curtain came down for the intermission, Anna could not applaud. She sat, her wonder-bright eyes riveted upon the stage. Mamasha's voice brought her back to her surroundings with a start. Mamasha was laughing.

"Would you like to dance like those girls?"

"Oh no!" cried Anna.

Mamasha raised her eyebrows in astonishment. "No?"

"No! Not like *them*! I want to dance like the Sleeping Beauty! And—and I *shall* dance like that, Mamasha!"

It was as if some magic wand had been waved over Anna Pavlova, changing her from a carefree child into a *force*, awakening her soul, giving her a new vision—a high, almost unbelievable vision. A little voice up in her head kept saying, "Dance . . . dance . . . dance. You must *dance*!"

But Mamasha didn't seem to hear the voice. Her

eyes were upon her daughter's hands. "Niura! Tch! Look at your hands! Why, you've cut into your palms with those nails of yours! Tch! Look, your hands are bleeding! Perhaps I shouldn't have brought you. I didn't know you'd feel like this about it."

She took the small hands and wiped them tenderly with her handkerchief. Madame Pavlova had the curious feeling that her daughter was not a child any more, not her little Niura, but a stranger, someone foreign and remote. Anna's face was paler than usual. Her eyes were fixed upon the stage again—impatient eyes, something tragic in them.

When the ballet was over, she no longer reached for Mamasha's hand, sometimes she even forgot that Mamasha was there at all. Not now did she pause to stare at the fine ladies, ablaze with jewels, holding up their long trains as they moved towards their sleighs.

She entered their own shabby rented sleigh gravely, sitting very stiff, unmindful of the streets, the increasing cold, the now-whirling snow. She was seeing *herself* as the Sleeping Beauty, trying to remember every movement, every mood, every beat of the music.

Arriving home, she went at once to tell the Virgin of this wonderful thing that had happened to her. As in most Russian homes, the Pavlovas had a small icon, a picture of the Virgin, before which always a little lamp burned. As far back as she could remember, Anna had loved the slender, girlish figure in the blue, flowing robes. She confided all her secrets to the Virgin, and always the Virgin was

there, waiting to hear them, smiling that serene and tender smile.

"I will be a great dancer," Anna explained, "and you'll help me, won't you? You'll look on while I dance, and you'll be glad?"

It seemed to the small girl that the Virgin smiled, and Anna went to bed feeling that she had received a blessing, that her beloved Virgin was approving, and that nothing would interfere.

Dance . . . dance . . . dance. It was like a beat in her brain, in her blood, in all the muscles of her thin little body. She could not sleep for hours. Dance . . . dance . . . dance. At last she fell asleep, and in dreams she saw herself seeming to float through space, dancing as light as thistledown.

"Dear Mamasha," she began next morning, "you'll help me learn to dance?"

Madame Pavlova's face was grave. Dance? This frail child? Dancing took strength, endurance. Her daughter was thin, painfully thin. All her life she had been sickly. There had been one disease after another: measles, scarlet fever, diphtheria.

"You *want* me to dance, don't you, Mamasha?"

"You? Dance?"

"You—want me to? You must, Mamasha!"

"Why, y-yes. Yes, of course."

"And, you'll take me to where I can learn? Please! Oh Mamasha, *please!*"

It was just a mood, thought Madame Pavlova. In a few days the child would forget about it. Children always got strange ideas, but these ideas were quickly forgotten. So she kissed her daughter and dismissed the thought from her mind.

Hours later she came upon Anna—dancing! Her dolls were forgotten. Madame Pavlova stopped, entranced. How could the child remember the steps, the postures? It was incredible! Unmindful of her mother, Anna kept on dancing. Sometimes she would rest a few seconds, then begin again.

"Anna! You must stop this! Play with your dolls. Go out in the sunlight!"

"No, Mamasha, no! I must dance! And I—I can't get it right!"

Day followed day, and she could talk of nothing else.

"I'll be a ballerina! I shall dance to the music of Tchaikovsky!" she declared.

Constantly she insisted that her mother take her to the place where she could learn to dance. Madame Pavlova began to realise the intensity of her daughter.

She told the child what little she knew about the Imperial Russian theatres, explaining that these theatres were not like any others in the world. They were under government control.

"If you join the school," she went on, "you'll have to live there. I'll be able to see you only on Sundays and for vacations. So that is what you'll have to do in order to be a dancer. And how about me? Think of me here all alone! You don't want to leave Mamasha?"

The small face went grave. Yes, it was a great sacrifice to go away from Mamasha. And what would Mamasha do without her? Mamasha had no one but Anna. Grandmother, yes; but grandmother lived at Ligovo.

"N-no," she said, after a lengthy pause, "no, I—I—don't, but—" the small chin took on firmness, "but if that's the only way to become a great dancer, then—then—well, then there's nothing else we can do!"

It didn't, thought Madame Pavlova, sound like a child of eight talking. These last weeks she had often felt that Anna was not a child any more.

"No, Niura," said Mamasha at last, "I can't—I can't let you go!"

Anna began to cry. Mamasha tried to soothe her, promised a new hat, a new doll, anything. Anna continued to cry. Then, still crying, she flung her arms about her mother's neck, kissed her, pleaded.

"You'll be so proud of me, Mamasha, when you see me dancing, when you see me in Fairyland! The stage—it *is* Fairyland!"

Madame Pavlova took her daughter in her arms. After all, she reasoned, was this not the sensible thing to do? Suppose something should happen to her? Then what would become of Anna? Besides, how could she continue to provide for a growing girl, give her advantages?

Her husband, who had been a minor government employee, had died when the child was two. There was a meagre pension. The ballet school was free, everything was furnished. If Anna did not go to the school, what would she do in the future? What would become of her? This way, at the school, the future was all taken care of. There were no risks. She had heard that the children, in addition to learning to dance, received a good education, and there was always plenty to eat. When they grew up,

they were assured of a livelihood. Yes, perhaps it was a good idea.

"There. Don't cry, little Niura. Yes, it's all right. We'll go and see about the school."

Tears disappeared as if by magic. Anna laughed, clapped her hands, kissed her mother.

"When? When?" she demanded.

"To-morrow."

"*To-morrow!*"

It seemed an eternity before to-morrow. How could she wait? How painfully the moments dragged! Suddenly an arresting thought made her cry out in alarm. Suppose there should be no to-morrow!

But there was.

Anna awoke early. Yes, the great day was really here. It wasn't a dream.

"Hurry, Mamasha, hurry!" she kept saying.

"There's time enough. Are you so eager to leave me, then? Be still. Sit down quietly, for goodness' sake!"

At last they were off.

"Will I be able to get into the school right away?" asked Anna.

"I don't know."

Mamasha was in no mood for talking. She moved so fast Anna had difficulty in keeping up with her. At last they reached the school. It was a great, impressive building, and there were many people coming and going. Mamasha's hold upon Anna's hand tightened. For a time they stood just looking about, not knowing which way to turn.

At last a man came and asked Mamasha what she

wanted. Haltingly, trying to be very calm, Mamasha Pavlova explained. "My daughter, Anna Pavlova. She wants to be a—a—ballet dancer."

The man glanced down at the thin, pale face of the child. It seemed to be all eyes, eyes that looked feverish. Anyone could see that a child like that had not the stamina to be a dancer. People were such fools, he thought. They came from all over Russia, bringing their children, begging to be admitted, the rich and the poor. And so few could even hope to be accepted!

"Well," he muttered, "sit down and wait."

They obeyed. The man walked away. As minutes passed, Anna's heart raced faster. Suppose the man had forgotten about them? Suppose, after all, they wouldn't let her join the school. How could she live if she didn't dance?

Mamasha sat very straight, her eyes staring ahead. Now she began an impatient tapping with the toe of her shoe.

At last the man came, motioned to them.

Almost at once they were ushered into an elaborate office. A man behind the desk regarded them with unfriendly eyes. Again Madame Pavlova explained her reason for being here. The man looked them over, his face expressionless.

"How old is the little girl?" he asked.

"She's eight—eight years."

"We don't admit children under ten," he said crisply, and became very busy with some papers on his desk. "Take her home. Bring her back on her tenth birthday."

Madame Pavlova thanked him, took Anna's hand.

It was with difficulty that the child kept back the tears. Two years. Two years to wait!

Mamasha was smiling as they reached the street. "Two years," she declared cheerily. "Anything can happen in two years. Who knows? In two years, perhaps, you'll forget all about this."

Forget? Forget? Could she forget to breathe?

"So we'll just go home—and wait," announced Mamasha. She walked slower now. There seemed no longer any hurry about anything.

Anna could not speak. She was fighting back the tears, fighting to keep her underlip from trembling. Two years. "Anything can happen in two years," Mamasha had said. Yes, but nothing would happen to keep her from dancing. Suddenly, all tears were gone. She only wanted to get home and start practising again.

Dance . . . dance . . . dance.

Yes, she would dance—and nothing would stop her, nothing—*nothing in all the world!*

CHAPTER TWO

FAITH IN THE DREAM

WHEN Anna Pavlova was born, at St. Petersburg in 1882, no one believed she could live. As soon as it was possible for the child to leave her mother, she was taken to the country and put in the care of her grandmother. Grandmother lived at Ligovo, a suburb of St. Petersburg. The doctors hoped that the country air would prove beneficial to this small sickly child.

Ligovo was a village. There were a few scattered houses, straggling, unpaved roads, a church. This was a sharp contrast to St. Petersburg, where streets were noisy and bustling, where there were smart shops, great palaces, schools, restaurants, theatres.

Ligovo is in the north of Russia. The surrounding countryside was melancholy, silent. A local

teacher taught Anna from the Bible, and she regularly attended church with her grandmother. They would trudge up the long, dusty road together in the sun or the wind or the rain or the snow, for nothing could keep Grandmother from the small, ramshackle church.

Sometimes when Anna was out gathering mushrooms in the autumn, or gathering snowdrops in early spring, she would wonder what it meant, that passage which the teacher so often read. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?"

Now that she was eight, and the idea of dancing had come to her, she thought about that verse more and more. At last she knew what that passage in Corinthians meant! Yes, within her body was a Holy Presence which would one day pour forth its glory through her, Anna Pavlova!

Often her mother and grandmother would look on as she practised, and she would hear them speak in hushed voices.

"It's remarkable how she does it!"

"That child's a born dancer!"

Then her mother would sigh—a deep, tragic sigh. "She hardly seems like a child any more. She seemed to grow up—all of a sudden—after I took her to the Marinsky. I'm losing my little Niura. The desire to dance grows stronger instead of less! One day it will take her away from us."

But they had other conversations, too, mostly about the mice.

The whole house was overrun with them. For weeks, each night, they carefully set traps, putting

them close to the mice holes, filling them with choice morsels of cheese; but the traps remained empty, useless.

"I can't understand it," Grandmother would say, worriedly. "Since when do mice turn up their noses at good, sharp cheese?"

"Yes, it's very strange. I don't know what we're going to do. What kind of mice are these? I thought mice were always hungry!"

"It certainly is a mystery. All these traps—and not a mouse will go near them! I never heard of such a thing!"

Then one day the mystery was cleared up. Grandmother came upon Anna *feeding* the mice!

"So," she cried sternly, "that's why we have no hungry mice around here! No *wonder* they won't go near the traps! Tch! Don't you know, you silly little thing, that your mother and I have been setting traps every night to catch these mice?"

Anna looked up, horrified. "But the mice are sweet, and they're tame! Why should you want to kill them?"

Grandmother tried to explain, but Anna was so fond of animals that she could not bear to think of the mice being killed. Nevertheless, the grownups had their way about ridding the house of this nuisance.

It worried Anna, too, that her mother had to struggle all the time against poverty. Little Mother's pretty face was always drawn into anxious lines. In winter she and her mother took long walks along the canal: Anna's much-mended woollen gloves on a string around her neck, her red flannel petticoat showing a little below her

dress, a bonnet which Mamasha had knitted drawn close around her ears. They would stand for a time watching the men load the barges; then, like other poor people, they would pick up armfuls of wood, all they could carry, and trudge home through the snow with it. Once they were home and had stuffed the wood into the fire, Mamasha would sit sewing, patching, lengthening hems and sleeves.

"You'll just have to get another year's wear out of this dress, Niura. My, I don't know what I'm going to do if you keep growing so fast!"

"Wait till I'm a dancer, Mamasha! You'll have a big, fine house, and all the wood you want, and a fire in every room, and a new dress every month!"

Madame Pavlova, who was a sincerely pious person, would cross herself quickly. "If it be God's will," she murmured. "Oh Niura, *don't* want this so terribly! They say there are never vacancies for more than eighteen new pupils a year at the Imperial schools, and hundreds of children from all over Russia are continuously seeking admittance!"

"What else will I learn at the school besides dancing?"

"Oh, all sorts of things. Music, fencing, languages. I suppose they'll even make you learn choreography, too."

"What's choreography?" asked the child.

Mamasha's brow wrinkled thoughtfully. "Choreography? Well, it's—it's—oh dear! Just what *is* choreography? Well, you know how it is when I plan to make a dress for you? I think where the seams will be and where the trimming will be? And what will be the colour and all that.

Anna nodded.

"Well, choreography is like that, only it's designing dances instead of dresses. The choreographer plans out a certain ballet, all the gestures and the movements and everything, and then he tells the dancers just what to do."

"A choreographer must be almost the greatest man in the world," decided Anna thoughtfully. "Isn't it wonderful, Mamasha? Isn't it simply wonderful?"

"What's wonderful?"

"Everything. Us. The world. Choreographers. Dancing. Living. All that's ahead of me. All that's waiting. All that's here and all that's coming."

Mamasha sighed. "No," she murmured, "it isn't right to ask too much, to expect too much. How can we know what is God's will?"

Anna laughed, ran to the other side of the room, brought forward a chair, placing it in the centre.

"This," she announced, "is the Marinsky Theatre. This chair is the box."

"The box for the Czar?"

"No, indeed. This is the box where *you* shall sit."

Mamasha looked startled. "*Me?* I'm to sit in a box?"

"Of course. You'll sit in a box with diamonds in your hair, and a dress that shows your shoulders. Come, Mamasha, sit here!"

Entering into the spirit of the game, Mamasha laughed, sat very elegantly on the edge of the chair, lifted her head very high, and began a movement with her hand as if she were holding a fan.

"Now, I—" announced the child, excitedly, "I'm a *prima ballerina!*"

"Oh," said Mamasha, as if this were nothing very unusual.

Anna ran to one side of the room. "I'm a prima ballerina!" She ran forward gracefully, struck a pose. "*Behold me!*"

Mamasha applauded. Anna bowed and flung kisses, kisses to the right of her, kisses to the left of her. Then they both began to laugh, and Anna flung herself into her mother's lap.

"It'll come true," she cried, "it'll all come true!"

The child was strangely happy now. She was hardly ever ill any more. Weeks passed swiftly. Anna practised her dancing, and gave increased interest to her school lessons, for Mamasha had discovered that in order to be admitted to the Imperial Ballet School each child had to pass not only a physical examination, but a rigid mental one as well.

Anna learned all she could about the Imperial schools and was never wearied of discussing them. One was at Moscow and one was at St. Petersburg. When you were accepted as a student at either of these schools you were under the care of the government. The Imperial Russian theatres, however, included vastly more than two schools. It was a far-reaching, efficient organisation, and there was none other like it in the world.

In St. Petersburg, in addition to the school, it included three imposing theatres and four troupes. Each theatre had its own *corps de ballet*, and each had its own orchestra of over a hundred musicians.

After being graduated from the school, there was never a moment's uncertainty about securing an engagement. A girl automatically entered the

corps de ballet. After that, her progress depended entirely upon her own talent. If she worked hard and showed promise, she was given small parts. After that, if she continued to improve, she progressed to second dancer, then *première danseuse*, then prima ballerina, then ballerina, and finally she might achieve the highest honour—*ballerina assoluta.*

They were well paid. Each salary continued every week throughout the year, even including the three-month vacation. When a dancer had danced for twenty years, she was allowed a benefit performance in addition to a generous pension for life.

After seeing *The Sleeping Beauty* as part of her Christmas celebration, Anna never saw another performance during her two years of waiting. There was never enough money for such frivolities. Every penny was needed for food and rent.

Each summer she and her mother moved to the country. For days prior to leaving St. Petersburg, all practising stopped, and Anna fluttered about the small apartment helping Mamasha pack bedding, buckets, boxes, the samovar, the pots and skillets, the dishes and the precious icon, so that they could all be loaded into a great open wagon and taken to the country.

It was so lovely in the country. The silence. The soothing scent of the fir trees through the quiet, brooding dusk. The house was incredibly tiny, so tiny that they had to spend most of their time on the veranda. Sitting there placidly through long, uninterrupted hours, her mother tried to teach Anna to sew, made her practice reading aloud, but these days Anna loved to get away from the house,

even away from Mamasha, and wander barefoot among the kindly fir trees, watching the butterflies as they danced. Oh, the lightness, the beauty of them! The way their colourful, iridescent wings fluttered so rapturously in the sunlight, as though they *loved* being alive! That was the way she would dance some day—effortless and free and joyous—like a butterfly.

Sometimes she sat on the ground, weaving a garland of wild flowers. Then she put it on her head and leaned back against the tree. Encircled on all sides by the deep stillness, she saw herself as the Sleeping Beauty, felt within herself the rhythm of Tchaikovsky's music. How easy it was, in imagination, to rise on her toes and go soaring through the air! Why could she never do it when she practised?

Each passing day brought her nearer and nearer the Imperial Ballet School . . . Now she was eight and a half. Now she was nine. Now she was nine and a half. And now, now at last—"Mamasha! *Mamasha!*"

"Goodness, Niura! What in the world is it? Why do you wake up and suddenly start yelling like that? What is it? Are you ill?"

"No! No! It's so wonderful! Oh Mamasha, isn't it wonderful?"

"What's wonderful? What are you talking about?"

"Why, I'm *ten*, Mamasha! *I'm ten years old to-day!*"

CHAPTER THREE

A NEW LIFE BEGINS

HER mother laughed. "Ten! What a big girl! Almost a young lady!"

"Now we can go back to the school! Now they'll take me!"

The smile faded from her mother's face. She stared at the eager child for a long time. Then she said, "Yes, yes. Well, I'll go to-day and see about it."

Anna watched as Mamasha put on her best dress, her best hat. Then she stood at the window watching as her mother walked down the street.

How long it was before Mamasha returned! Finally, there she was, turning the handle of the door.

"Well," cried Anna, "will they take me? Is it all right?"

"I don't know yet. I had to fill in an application. In a few days we'll be notified. It seems they have a certain day each year when they inspect applicants."

Anna heaved a deep, discouraged sigh.

"Don't set your hopes on it," said Mamasha, tiredly. "I was talking to one woman who was filling out an application, too. She said her little girl, and many others, prepare for their examination at the school by taking private dancing lessons from the dancers themselves. But we haven't any money to do that. So who knows? They probably won't take you."

Anna's eyes filled with quick tears. "They will! They must!"

"Perhaps, but don't depend upon it, Niura. Look, I'll make you a gingerbread man like at Christmas time!"

"Gingerbread man! I don't want a gingerbread man! I don't want anything in the world—but just to be a dancer!"

She ran to the Virgin. "Please," she begged, "please make them take me!"

Every day was an eternity. Even practising didn't make the time pass any quicker. Anna watched every mail for the notification. Every night she said to herself, "It will come to-morrow."

And one day it did.

Now Mamasha was very busy. She washed Anna's best stockings, and spent almost an hour polishing the child's worn, scuffed shoes, rubbing them with wax. Then the best dress had to be lengthened, and three new petticoats had to be stiffly starched. When at last Anna was dressed, feeling very elegant

and fresh and clean, Mamasha kept smoothing her hair, tugging at her dress.

"Don't forget to stand with your shoulders straight," Mamasha kept saying.

But when they were seated in the horse-drawn street car, she and Mamasha had little to say to each other. Anna's hands were icy. She kept them tight in her lap, so that Mamasha wouldn't see how they trembled.

As they approached the school, an ornate building of stone, Anna was surprised at its bigness. She hadn't remembered how huge a place it was.

A servant in uniform stood opening the doors of the carriages as they drove up. What a crowd of people there was! Hundreds of children, some beautifully dressed, others in rags. What a bustle there was, what babbling! They were all ushered into a large room on the first floor and told to wait. It was a lovely, luxurious room, with pictures of the royal family on the walls. A tall lady in dull black was walking about with an air of authority, and there were other ladies, very important, dressed all alike in blue.

Mamasha began talking to the woman beside her. At last Mamasha turned to Anna. "She says that one in black is the directress of the school, and the ones in blue are governesses. She says that during the first year you're on probation, and a child who doesn't show enough progress is dismissed. She says only the best ones are kept. Stand up straight, Niura. Don't look so frightened."

"The children," announced the directress at last, "will form in line, and march into the next room."

Anna turned to her mother. "Will I have to leave you?" she asked, in a small, quavery voice.

"Yes. Here, let me smooth your hair. Keep your shoulders straight."

Everything was very quiet now. The air was alive with tension. Hundreds of children, bright-eyed, expectant, formed a seemingly interminable line. The next room was even larger than the first. It was high-ceilinged, sparsely furnished. There were benches along the walls. At one end was a long row of chairs and tables for the examiners—men and women, looking very dignified, very stern, very important.

At intervals they would glance down at a long list in front of them, and a tall man would call out a name. A child would step forth from the line and move alone to the centre of the great room.

"Stand still," the man would say. Then, after a long time, "Very well, now walk the length of the room . . . Now run . . . now sit down."

When the child had obeyed, the teachers would discuss her in low voices. Was she awkward? Graceful? Poised? Notes would be made on paper. Then the teachers would walk around the child, examine her legs.

"Put your heels together . . . yes, hmm."

Sometimes they would feel the child's legs, then there would be more discussions, more notations.

There were questions. "Where were you born? When? Your name? Your mother's name? Your father's name? His business. . . ."

The first test took a long time. After it, many children were dismissed as ineligible.

"Now," came the deep voice of the tall man, "you who are left, form in line, two by two."

The children, still excited, obeyed. Now they were marched into a big, white room, and, after they had undressed, were given crisp white dressing-gowns. A group of doctors began thumping each little chest, listening to every rapidly beating heart through a stethoscope, making more notes. The examination was thorough. It took a long, long time. The children were tired now, sagging their weight from one leg to another. There were tests for vision, tests for hearing. And when it was all over, many of them were sent away, sobbing.

So few were left. The governesses, stern and uncommunicative, helped them to dress.

"Form into a line," came the order finally, "two by two."

"Where are we going now?" whispered a little girl who fell into line beside Anna.

"I don't know," Anna answered.

They soon found out. They were led into another large room; maids served them tea and sandwiches.

When the lunch was over, further examinations followed. Each child was made to sing a scale. Then there were tests in reading, writing, arithmetic.

Again there were eliminations.

Now there were only about twenty children left. They were permitted to return to the front room. Mamasha's face was white, tired. She was leaning back tiredly.

"Mamasha," asked Anna eagerly, "is it over now?"

"No, not yet. Oh dear, it's almost six o'clock!"

Outside, it was already dark. Anna's hands were

clammy with nervousness. In the other room the judges made little notes on paper, talking. Would the judges *never* stop their discussions? Why had she come? Better to have stayed away. Why should they admit her—with her shabby dress and her worn shoes? Oh, she had felt very spruce and grand and confident when she had started out, but now she looked about at the other children. What chance had she when these other girls were dressed so beautifully? No, she had lost. She knew it. Why wait? All her prayers had failed. All her practising was for nothing. Despair engulfed her—deep, tragic, unbearable.

"Stop fidgeting," whispered her mother.

"Form into lines, please, two and two," ordered the crisp voice of the directress.

"Mamasha, I——"

"Do as you are told. Hurry. Goodness, we will be here all *night*. Is there no end to this?"

"What's the use, Mamasha? They——"

"Ssh. They're going to read out the names now. Get into line!"

Feet heavy, heart leaden, shoulders sunken, Anna obeyed. When they entered the next room, the tall man with the beard arose, cleared his throat, straightened his shoulders, picked up a paper, adjusted his glasses.

How slow he was!

The huge room was silent; dead silence, tense, electric. You felt the silence in your body. Your scalp seemed to tingle with it. Anna stood miserably, her eyes on the floor, her hands restlessly toying with the belt of her dress.

"Luba Dorovsky."

"Tamara Fedarova."

"Stanislava Belinskaya."

"Olga Ksolova."

On . . . on . . . on. Down the list. And Anna's heart was breaking. "If I cannot dance," she thought, "I shall die."

"Anna Stravolsky."

"O dear God," prayed Anna Pavlova desperately, "just don't let me burst out crying here in front of everybody!"

"Anna Pavlova!" boomed the voice.

Her dark head jerked upward. Her great eyes were flooded with questioning. Was it true? Had she heard it?

She saw some other girls burst into tears and rush for their mothers. Then a governess came, smiled at her, thrust a little card into her hand. The card said that Anna Pavlova had passed the entrance examinations and would report at the school in one week. Yes, it was true, then. A dream had come true!

"Mamasha, they took me! It—it's all right, Mamasha!"

"Yes, I know. Here, put on your coat. Hundreds applied, but only eight or ten were chosen!"

When later they were on the street car, neither of them could speak. It was settled, all settled at last.

Seemingly, during the few days that remained, Anna and her mother had little to say to each other. They never mentioned the school. To Anna it seemed now incredibly tragic that Little Mother should be left alone in this dingy flat—so terribly

alone. As for herself—suddenly, she could not imagine life away from Mamasha!

At last the day came. "You—you'll have Grandmother stay with you often?" asked Anna, fighting desperately against tears.

"Yes, yes. I shall be all right. You—just take care of yourself, my little Niura, and be a good girl, and never forget your prayers, and—and——"

"Yes. I'll always be thinking of you, Mamasha. And—and it won't be long, only seven years, and then we can be together for always. And, of course, there are visiting days when you can come to see me, and Christmas and—holidays."

Her mother caught her to her, holding her close, sobbing. Anna began to sob too. Seemingly, she had never loved her mother so much, never really appreciated how wonderful Mamasha was.

It was not of herself and her aloneness that the little mother was thinking. She was thinking that her little girl was about to venture into a new, strange world, a world so wide, so tempestuous, so different from their quiet, shabby little flat.

And what would the new world bring to her beloved? Would it be kind? Would it be harsh? Anna was so thin! Could she stand the discipline, the rigorous training?

It seemed ages ago now since they had gone that snowy winter night to the Marinsky Theatre to see Tchaikovsky's ballet in four acts, *The Sleeping Beauty*. She remembered she had said something about Fairyland.

And now, the Imperial Ballet School was attached to that very theatre. Perhaps some day she would

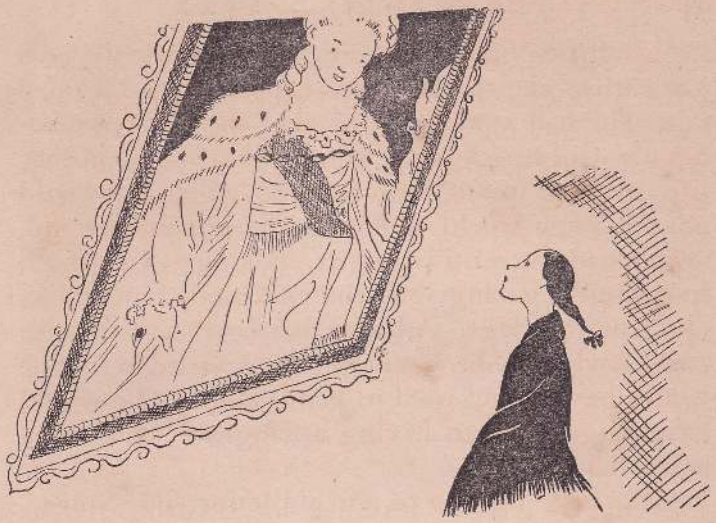
see her little Niura there on that great stage! This *was* rather like the fantastic happenings in a fairy tale. She had a premonition that she was renouncing her daughter, giving Anna up forever to another life, another world, a world into which she could not follow, a world which she did not understand.

She held Anna off from her, looking at the small, frail figure, gazing into the enormous, unchildish eyes, the thin legs. A ballet dancer—her daughter, Anna Pavlova! She would have to get used to it. She would have to get used to being alone. She would have to get used to having a daughter who was a ballet dancer.

"It's the beginning of a new life for you, Niura," she murmured.

Anna, her face tear-streaked, her long cotton stockings wrinkling a bit at the knees, looked like such a *little* girl, but her voice was firm, and it sounded, Madame Pavlova thought, like the voice of a grown woman.

"It's the only life I want," she said.



CHAPTER FOUR

SCHOOL

NOT now was Anna awakened in the morning by the soft voice of her mother. No longer could she suit her own whims as to when and how many hours she would practise.

Girls who were first-year students wore plain brown cashmere dresses. Anna, pale and dark, knew that the colour was unbecoming, but it didn't matter—nothing mattered but just to learn to dance. Even if your hair was curly, you were not permitted to wear it that way. It had to be brushed back, straight and tight from your forehead, braided in a single braid, and tied at the end with a black ribbon.

Promptly at eight there reverberated through the long corridors and spacious dormitories the tolling of a great bell. Anna's dormitory held fifty beds,

and scarcely had the echoes of the bell died away before fifty girls, eyes still heavy with sleep, rushed down the corridor to the washroom. After washing in cold water they formed a neat line and marched to the governesses, who were ready and waiting with combs and brushes. When their hair was combed, they returned to the dormitory and put on their dancing dresses, then they made their beds. When all beds were made, they fell into a single line and marched towards the door.

At the door sat another blue-robed governess, sober-faced, hawk-eyed. As they reached her, each girl stopped and curtsied.

Then, without being told, the girl turned all the way around. The governess looked the student over. If all was neat and tidy, she motioned the girl forward and turned her gaze to the next in line. If a governess was not liked, Anna soon learned that secretly she was called a "toad."

In winter, over the dancing dress, the girls wore a wide, dark woollen shawl with long fringe. During the second year the student received another dress, this time of blue serge with a tight waist and gathered skirt. There was a fichu of stiff white lawn which was worn crossed in front, a black apron, white cotton stockings, black slippers. The only change that was made was on Sundays, when a white apron was worn.

Every girl was given one new dress each year. The new one was worn on Sundays, the old one on week-days.

Once inspection was over, the line formed again, this time two by two. Religious training was con-

sidered highly important. The school had its own chapel, and into it now every pupil marched, girls and boys, juniors and seniors. The boys sat on one side, the girls on the other. After chapel, there was the line to be formed again—boys two by two, girls two by two—this time the march led to a great, wide hall where breakfast was served.

Here, also, boys and girls were separated. The girls had their own tables, the boys had theirs. Each table was presided over by a governess who kept a strict, all-seeing eye over table manners.

After breakfast, the inevitable line had to be formed, and the boys went to a large, airy room on the third floor, while the girls went to one like it on the second floor. This was a vast, sunny room with tall windows. It was furnished simply with a grand piano, numerous small sofas against the walls, floor-length mirrors. On its walls were paintings of Russian rulers.

That first day, Anna was nervous. Her thin hands were trembling and clammy. Already she had learned a few of the rules—that you were not supposed to talk to boys, and if you were caught at it you would be punished; and that the younger girls must show great respect for the seniors. But now she was going to dance. This was the greatest moment of her life. Suppose she did so badly that they sent her away? Most of the girls had been there longer than she. They were confident and laughing. She was strange, alone, wildly afraid. There was a terrible moment when she wanted to run away, back to Mamasha, back to the security of the familiar, shabby little flat.

Gazing frantically about, her eyes panic-stricken, her heart making a tumult, she chanced to look up at a portrait on the wall. It was a large painting of the Empress Catherine II, who had reigned from 1762 to 1796. The eyes of the portrait were looking straight at little, quivering, frightened Anna Pavlova, the eyes were kindly, smiling, encouraging; they seemed to be saying, "Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid, little girl." Anna relaxed now. She felt that the good Empress was helping her, somehow.

Always the first class consisted of younger children. They lined up before the teacher and he gave them five positions. "Now then," he spoke sternly, "we begin. So. In line, please."

"You! In line there! In line! What's your name?"

"M-my—name?"

"Yes, what is it?"

"It's Anna, sir. Anna Pavlova."

"Oh. So. Anna Pavlova. Well, when I say a line, I mean a straight line. Ah! *Now.* Watch me, all of you. This is the first position . . . this is the second position . . . You see? It's very easy. *Very easy. Now!* First position!"

Over and over it they went. Was *this* dancing? Heels together like this, toes straight out at the sides? What had this to do with dancing? Catching sight of herself in one of the long mirrors, Anna thought she looked funny.

"So. Now. Rest, young ladies! Second class!"

How easily these others took the positions! But this—this wasn't *dancing*! Oh, why had she ever left Mamasha?

"So. Rest, young ladies. First class again. In line,

please! Yes. Now then! First position! No! No! Heels together! Feet straight. Shoulders straight. Hold up your back! Head up! Yes—now then! See, watch me! See? When the heels are together, the feet must form a perfectly straight line. You—what's the matter with you? What did you say your name was?"

"Anna Pavlova. It *hurts*!"

"Of course it does! You wanted to be a dancer, didn't you? Then you must learn not to be afraid of pain! You must teach your body to obey you. You will learn to govern your body—every muscle, every nerve, every cell! The dancer's body never governs the dancer! The dancer learns to be *master* of the body! We teach our bodies not to talk back to us! So . . . again! First position!"

For weeks after that first day, Anna continued to be nervous whenever she entered the dancing room, but always her frightened eyes would seek for the eyes of the Empress, and always the Empress sustained her.

At last came the day when the lesson did not end with the five positions.

"Now then! In line, please! So. So. *Sur les pointes!* On your toes! No, try again! One, two—up! *Sur les pointes!* Ah, it's so easy! See, like this! Again, now! *Sur les pointes!*"

Watching the master, Anna's eyes were bright and eager. At first she could not stand even for a second on her toes. But when her own class had an interval of rest and the older girls took their places, Anna's eyes focused upon the instructor. It seemed the most wonderful thing in the world just to

balance oneself on the toes. Though she had tried very hard to accomplish this at home, she had never been able to do it. After watching the master with absorbed and breathless interest, she ran to one corner and worked by herself until the Maestro called her again.

"In line, please! Up! *Sur les pointes!*" over and over again. At long last she learned to balance herself, and finally she was able to take a few steps on her toes.

At noon, with the sharp ringing of the midday bell, the dancing lessons ended. Again the children formed into line and returned to the dining-room for lunch. After lunch, they were taken for a walk in the care of the governess. Even now, however, they did not leave the school. In the courtyard was a small garden, and round and round they walked sedately for twenty minutes.

In winter the girls wore black coats lined with red fox, high boots, and bonnets of black silk. Returning from their walk, lessons began again. This time in fencing, languages, reading, writing, arithmetic, music and—what Anna loved best—make-up. The students entered the make-up room, which had lights around each mirror like a real dressing room in the theatre, and little tables crowded with grease paint, rouge, brushes, powder.

At four o'clock another bell summoned them to dinner. After dinner they had a little interval of freedom, then more lessons. Sometimes some of the children were to appear in mob scenes at the theatre, sometimes there were pupils' performances. These occasions were times of jubilee, for the nightly

lessons ended, and rehearsals took their place. Supper was at eight, and by nine the younger ones were in bed.

In a surprisingly short time Anna began to feel completely at home in the school. Discipline was strict, but she thrived on it. Every spare moment when she could get by herself, she practised. The place fairly buzzed with energy, ambition. Everyone had a single idea—not just to dance, but to dance *beautifully*. Few of the girls ever achieved the exalted position of ballerina, but it was something even to look forward to being a member of the *corps de ballet* and, after that, small parts.

When Anna had been there only a short time, she was allowed to act in a children's performance which was given for the Emperor and Empress. The performance passed smoothly. Their Majesties were delighted with all this budding talent.

When it was over, the children clustered about the Emperor, Alexander III. Anna, dressed in her costume of a dryad, looked at him with awe. To her amazement, he caught up little Stanislava Belinskaya and kissed her. Anna, nervous, a bit hysterical with the excitement, began to cry.

Everyone tried to console her. "Don't cry, little girl!"

"What's the matter with that child?"

"Why is she crying?"

"Is she ill?"

"Speak up, Anna Pavlova! Tell us, why are you crying?"

"I—I want the Emperor to kiss *me*!" she sobbed.

The Grand Duke Vladimar took Anna in his arms.

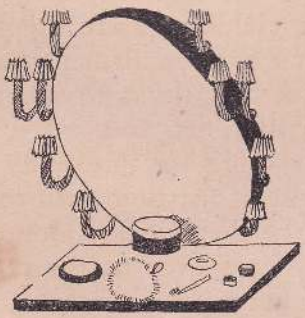
"There now, don't cry. I'll kiss you," he said laughingly.

"No! No! I want the *Emperor* to kiss me!"

The governess came and took her away. "Anna, aren't you ashamed? Behaving like that! The idea! Why, you're just a disgrace to the school!"

The child stopped crying instantly. A disgrace to the school! Would they send her away after this year was up? "O dear God," she prayed, "don't let them send me away!"

She would work harder, harder than ever. They must keep her! In the dormitory was an icon. She went up to it, knelt, crossed herself. "*Please* don't let them send me away!" she pleaded. "I'll be so very good. I'll work harder than ever! *Don't* let me be a disgrace to the school! And one day—maybe when I am *première danseuse*—— Oh, let me make them *proud* of Anna Pavlova!"



CHAPTER FIVE

WORK

THERE had been nights when Anna lay in her bed and sobbed very softly beneath the covers, sobbed with the ache of her legs, her body, but now her body was more yielding, more supple. Every day her steps on her toes grew firmer, more graceful.

Her feet were so built as to make toe dancing especially difficult; her toes were formed at a definite angle, the big toe unusually long, so that the entire weight of her body had to be supported by the muscles of that big toe alone. This meant that she had to work even harder than the others. She begrudged every minute that took her away from her practising, begrudged the time, even, on Fridays when they were all taken to a Russian bath. They had only one bath a week. The bathhouse was

in the grounds. It was always full of steam. There was a large stove in the middle, which bulged with red-hot coals. Attendants kept throwing water on the coals. When the pupils had sat in the steam for the required time, maids came with soap and water and scrubbed their bodies hard, so that their skin was red.

It was, as Mamasha had said, a new world. Names, heretofore unheard, were now spoken with reverence. The two principal ballerinas were Kschessinska and Preobrajensky. All the girls looked up to them, watched them, tried to imitate them. Then there was Legat, Guerdt, Rimski-Korsakov, Borodin, Drigo, Cecchetti, and Marius Petipa, who had been master of the Imperial Ballet School for over fifty years.

Cecchetti taught a senior class of girls in dancing. Pavel Guerdt taught an advanced class in pantomime. He looked very young, little more than a boy, although it was said he was over forty. Everyone in the school adored these two men. As for the aged Petipa, he was universally feared. Petipa was French, and he had never learned to speak good Russian. His word was law. Then there was Christian Johannsen; he was very old, too, almost ninety, but he still taught dancing. He was blind in one eye, and his voice was sharp, rasping.

"Here! Here! Go over that again," he'd shout. "Don't think I can't see when you make mistakes! I can see very well indeed! I can see better with this one eye than you can see with two! Again, young ladies! Again! *Sur les pointes!*"

And now, another name was being heard—

Diaghilev. Once when the girls were returning from a rehearsal, being herded from the big bus into the building under the watchful eye of the blue-robed governess, Anna noticed a tall, fleshy, arrogant-looking young man with a trim little moustache and a monocle in his eye, swaggering into the executive offices on the first floor. One of the older girls nudged her excitedly. "That's Sergei Diaghilev! Oh, isn't he *handsome*?"

"Who's Sergei Diaghilev?" asked Anna.

"He's a rich man, comes from a very important and aristocratic family. He's enormously interested in the ballet and the opera, but mostly he's interested in painters, they say!"

"Oh," said Anna, suddenly losing interest, "then he isn't a dancer!"

The girls laughed. "Listen to her! Wouldn't you think dancers were the *only* important people in the world?"

On visiting days, of course, there was always Mamasha, and sometimes Grandmother would come with her. But the visits were not satisfactory. They had to meet in the big reception room, and as all the other pupils' families were there on the same day the room was a confusion of many voices.

During vacations they still went to the little house in the country, and then, seated on the veranda, they could talk at ease. Anna, of course, could think of nothing but the school. She told her mother about the great wardrobe department where all the costumes were made, of the scenic department where men were painting new scenery all the time, of the

visits of the Emperor and Empress. Emperor Alexander had died, but the pupils loved the new Emperor even more, if possible, than they had loved his father.

Madame Pavlova was thrilled to think that her daughter had sat at the same table with the Empress.

"My," she gasped, "what a great day that must be when Their Majesties come!"

"But there's no formality at all! The Emperor sits at the boys' table. Her Majesty sits at the head of our table, and she chats just as if she were one of us."

"You mean you talk to the Empress just as you'd talk to me?" asked Madame Pavlova incredulously.

"Oh yes. We call the Empress 'Mamasha' and we call the Emperor 'Papasha' (Little Father)."

"Well!" exclaimed the older woman, "never did I think to see the day when my daughter would be sitting at the same table with the Empress!"

"This year we're having the great Pierrina Legnani to teach us the Italian style dancing. For over ten years she has been *prima ballerina assoluta*!"

"Is she pretty?"

"No, not pretty. She's short. She's robust. Oh, I wish I could get fatter! I asked the doctor how I could get fatter, and he says I may take cod-liver oil and perhaps that will do it. Legnani can make thirty-two pirouettes on her toes! All the girls are trying to do thirty-two turns, but nobody has ever been able to."

Anna was scarcely ever ill any more, and though she was still thin and frail-looking, she had amazing strength. Sometimes when she outlined her day's

activities at school, her mother would exclaim, "I don't see how you do it! You're sure you feel quite well, Niura?"

"Oh yes!"

"And you're happy?"

"Happy!"

The first year, Anna had told her mother all about her teacher, Oblakov. Now she never mentioned him. The second year she had been promoted to the class of Ekayerina Vasem, who had been a former ballerina, and Christian Johannsen. And she could talk of nothing but her new teacher, Sokolova, who had once been one of the greatest dancers of all.

"Oh Mamasha, you'd love her! She's very fat and jolly, and her legs are all swollen—and she keeps telling us never to marry. This is the way she talks, Mamasha." And Anna gave an imitation of the famous Eugenie Sokolova: "Remember, Anna Pavlova, whenever you give a performance, wear light-coloured stockings and lie all day with your feet up! Tch! Don't you know how to tie the knot of your dancing slipper yet? Tch! If you don't moisten the knot of your dancing slipper with spit, it will come undone! Yes, there's only one way to tie a shoe ribbon—moisten it with spit!"

Anna and her mother laughed at the clever imitation. Then Anna sobered. "Next year—oh, next year perhaps I shall be permitted to go into Guerdt's class—and Cecchetti's! Oh, I can hardly wait to study with Cecchetti!"

"And you say when your lessons are over, you girls go off practising by yourselves? Goodness, do you never get tired of dancing, Niura?"

"I get tired dancing, but I think I shall never get tired of dancing, Mamasha. Yesterday they let us watch the rehearsal of the *corps de ballet.* The *corps de ballet* at the theatre is two hundred dancers, Mamasha! When we finish our instruction, we become members of it. Then, after awhile, if we're good, we get small parts."

"I suppose you study the dancing of the stars?"

"Oh yes, as much as we can. We each choose one of the stars as a model and try to do as she does, but, Mamasha, this—lately it has occured to me—this isn't *right*!"

"Not right? Why, of course, it's right!"

"No," said Anna seriously. "I used to watch Kschessinska all the time. She's so sweet to me, sometimes she stops and talks and asks me how I'm getting on, but it's not right for me to copy anyone else. I shan't do that, not I. If you copy someone else, you can only be like him, but one ought to be—like one's *self*, I think!"

Her mother looked at her daughter with new interest. Anna was fourteen now, and growing fast. There was an inner growth, too, quite apart from the body. Now her opinions were becoming more decided, she seemed so sure of herself. She was so certain of everything.

At the end of August, Anna must return to school. As one of the older girls, wearing the blue dress, the younger girls, brown-robed, paid her homage. Now, with other pupils of her own age, she was taken to the theatre for Saturday matinees, given elocution lessons, permitted to attend the dress rehearsals of the operas. Although she did not sus-

pect it, her progress was being watched. The graduation of promising pupils was much anticipated by the stars and directors. Girls of her age were impatient to finish, to leave the school behind, to wear other clothes. They talked of nothing but the parts they would play some day and how extravagantly they would live when they became ballerinas.

When Anna returned to the country with Mamasha again, she could talk only of two names —Pavel Guerdt and Taglioni. She had read all she could about Taglioni, who had died in 1884, when Anna was only two years old.

"Oh, if only I could have seen her!" she sighed. "You know about Taglioni, Mamasha, of course?"

"N-no——"

"Well, she was taught dancing by her father. She worked hard, I think perhaps even harder than I. Sometimes after her daily lesson she'd drop to the floor in a faint, and while she was still unconscious, they'd undress her and dress her in her street clothes!"

Mamasha gasped. "I had no idea being a dancer was such a hard life! It all seems so easy as one watches from the auditorium. I've seen how young men stand outside the stage door, sometimes even in the snow, for hours. And why? Why? Just to catch a glimpse of a dancer as she hurries to her carriage. And what do they see of the dancer? Nothing but a figure all bundled up in furs!"

At fifteen Anna could look back and smile at the time she had cried because she had not been kissed by the Emperor. She knew, these days, that she was not going to be a disgrace to the school.

When she walked among the fir trees, she counted the months until she would be graduated. Success, she thought, would bring complete happiness. Yes, she would ask nothing more of life than this—success.

If only she could study under Cecchetti! She was beginning to notice a slight difficulty with her back. She knew that it marred her technique. It worried her. Her teachers had not noticed this slight fault, but she, who even then insisted upon perfection, worked secretly to overcome what was not apparent to anyone else. This fault was so slight that there were times when even Anna was unaware of it. More and more her body served her will. There were times lately when she scarcely thought of her body at all as she danced, scarcely even thought of the steps, and could give herself up wholly to the rapture of expression.

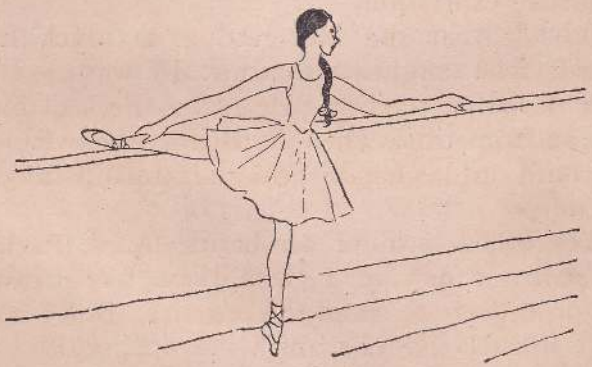
She felt that she was getting so much from Guerdt, who taught pantomime. He was less strict than the other teachers. He had a shock of blond hair, and sometimes when his patience was exhausted he would run his hands through it until it stood up on end.

"Let others achieve acrobatics, Anna Pavlova, these are not for you," he would say. "Your insteps are too delicate to stand the pressure. Don't try to make yourself like Legnani."

He gazed at her, this wisp of a girl with the sweet, oval face, her long hair brushed back from a beautifully modelled brow and falling in a braid down her back. His voice was kindly.

"You work harder than you need to. My poor

child, how thin you are! You must eat more. You must get some flesh on those bones. Well, let us get started. Now, that scene we began yesterday. You must *feel* what you're doing! Look, here's how I'd play it. . . ." And later, "Yes, that's better. Your facial expression is fair, quite fair, but you aren't *feeling* it enough. See, you're in love, ardently in love. *Feel* it! Suffer . . . love . . . *Feel!* . . . No! Again . . . Yes, that's good. That's right. So. Yes. That was *splendid*! *Bravo, ma bella Anna!* Now then, we'll go right back over it from the beginning—and make it *better*!"



CHAPTER SIX

OPPORTUNITY

"YOU'RE graduating this year, Anna Pavlova?" asked little Tamara Karsavina timidly.

"Yes. I hope so."

"You must be very happy!"

"I am."

"Are you still taking cod-liver oil?"

"Yes. I can hardly bear the sight of it! And it isn't doing me a bit of good. I haven't gained a pound!"

It was the first week of Lent, and during this week all dancing lessons ceased. The girls went to Communion and fasted that week, attending church twice every day. In the evenings they had to sit around reading the lives of the saints. No other books were permitted then for these seven days. Anna was un-

able to concentrate on the lives of the saints. In such a little while now she would be graduated. She was living in anticipation. On leaving, each pupil was presented with a hundred roubles. With this she was supposed to buy clothes. How wonderful it would be when she and Mamasha went shopping together! So long she had worn the school uniform. Now, soon, there would be street dresses, evening dresses, smart hats. Shopkeepers would be eager to give credit. She and Mamasha would have a little apartment of their own.

How often she had watched other girls on the day of their graduation! She would get up very early, and braid her hair, and put on the blue school dress with its fichu. Then she and the other girls of the graduating class would go to church, where thanks would be offered.

After this, there would be a hasty lunch. Then they would go to the dancing room and there, in the presence of relatives and teachers, they would be given diplomas. The priest would make a long speech, and then it would be over. There remained only to say good-bye to the directress, the governesses—yes, even the "toads." There would be tearful good-byes to the maids, the younger girls, good-bye to the music room, a little prayer of thanksgiving before the icon in the dormitory—and she would be free!

How long ago it seemed when she had stood there under the picture of Catherine II and struggled to master the first position—heels together, toes turned outward to form a perfectly straight line. How long ago it seemed when she had regarded some older

girl, some girl approaching graduation, with the exorbitant respect, the reverence, with which now the little Karsavina was watching *her*.

Nowadays, the new director of the Imperial theatres, Prince Serge Wolkonsky, a tall, thin, dignified figure, came often to watch her at her lessons. She had never seen the former director, Vsevolojsky. Scarcely any of the pupils had even laid an eye on him, but with Wolkonsky it was different. You felt his interest, and it was encouraging, it goaded her on to even greater efforts. He was often present, he seemed even to make a point of being there, during her lessons with Guerdt twice a week. He would watch as Guerdt acted a scene from a certain ballet, and sometimes he would smile a little as she tried to do as Guerdt did. Even the great and charming Kschessinska, rich and powerful, smiled at her with a new warmth, something close to camaraderie.

"You are doing well, Anna Pavlova," Kschessinska had said only yesterday. "I shall be present at your debut."

At last, at last, it was all actually happening just as it happened in anticipation. She and Mamasha were permitted to go shopping, feeling enormously rich and important with a hundred roubles to spend on clothes. And finally, there was Anna Pavlova, looking even younger than her seventeen years, receiving her diploma, listening to the speech of the priest, sobbing a little as she pressed the hands of the maids, and actually kissing the "toads."

It was all over now. She had changed from the blue uniform and was going home to a new apartment Mamasha had all ready and waiting. Seven

hard years of training were over. In a week or two she would be entering into service in the *corps de ballet.*

The maid, who helped her on with her new coat, spoke respectfully. "You are wanted in the office of the director."

"I?" asked Anna. "You are sure?"

"Yes. I was to tell you. You are to go there right away."

Wondering, Anna went towards the sanctum sanctorum. What did it mean? Had she done something wrong? This was unusual, unprecedented. As she entered the palatial office, Wolkonsky did not arise from behind the desk. He looked up from some papers, stroked his well-groomed beard. His eyes were kindly.

She made a little curtsey before him, but she was so filled with apprehension that she could not speak.

"You have done well, Anna Pavlova," he began in a low, cultured voice, "so well, indeed, that we have decided that on the first of June, here at the Marinsky, you are to make your debut in a small part of a ballet which will be chosen later. It may be that you will play Ines in *Les Saisons*, or Gulnare in *Le Corsaire*, or Sister Anne in *Barbe-bleu*——"

Anna stared at him breathlessly, her dark eyes aglow. "Y-you mean, I—I'm to—have a part? I'm not to enter the *corps de ballet*?"

"In your case, we have decided to make the exception!"

"Oh."

"That is all."

He returned to his papers. Confused, wordless,

she curtsied again and left the office. Never in her life had Anna Pavlova been so happy. She was to have a part! She would be earning seven hundred and twenty rubles a year! Life was moving swiftly. Success lay ahead—waiting. She had come to another turning point. At last she was a dancer! Dancers in Russia were among the truly important people of the realm, pampered, catered to, fêted, toasted.

Would Wolkonsky, she wondered, succeed in his effort to modify the extremely short ballet skirt? Was it true that Sergei Diaghilev was to have the production of the *Imperial Theatre's Year Book*? Was it a fact that he and Wolkonsky were quarrelling? And yet, how could that be when it was rumoured that Wolkonsky had put into Diaghilev's hands the production of the ballet *Sylvia*? Yes, she was living in a world of change. Life had never been so wonderful, so exciting.

From now on, on ballet nights, an Imperial carriage with a coachman would call for her, deliver her at the theatre, bring her home again afterwards. This service was accorded all the dancers. How proud her mother and grandmother would be!

As she and Mamasha were leaving the school, Madame Kschessinska drove up in her carriage. She gave Anna a gay smile, walked over to her, patted her on the shoulder.

"I congratulate you, Anna Pavlova, upon receiving a small part instead of beginning service as one of the two hundred members of the *corps de ballet*!"

"You—you have heard about it, Madame?"

"Of course. It has been discussed for some time.

Russia is hearing, these days, of new names in the ballet—Sedova, Trefilova, Fokine—and soon—ah, soon now it will be hearing another name, eh? Soon it will hear about—*Anna Pavlova!*"

The great ballerina laughed, drew her sable cape closer about her, and entered the building.

"Anna!" gasped Mamasha, "is it true? You are to have a part?"

"Yes, *yes*, it's true, Mamasha."

"But this—this is wonderful, unheard of! Are you—are you not—a—little frightened that it should happen so soon?"

"Frightened? No. Surprised—yes; but frightened not at all. I shall be a success!"

"How can you be so *sure* of success? Ah, Niura, you must not set your hopes too high, my dove!"

"And why not?"

"Because—dreams are seldom realised. One should learn to be content, to be satisfied. That is wisdom."

"Is it?" asked Anna.

She had always thought her mother very wise, but now she could not believe that Mamasha was so wise, after all. No, surely—ah, surely, it was not wise to be satisfied! How, if one were satisfied, could one always go on, growing, achieving, working toward the goal of perfection? And why should one make oneself be satisfied with anything *less* than perfection? Did anyone think, for instance, that she, Anna Pavlova, would be satisfied with merely playing small parts? Oh yes, there were those who were satisfied to spend all their lives in the chorus—but not she! No, never. One day she would be even

greater than Kschessinska, than Preobrajensky, than Legnani. One day, perhaps, she might even be as great—as great as—*Taglioni!*

She had dreamed greatness, and she would go on with her dreams. Seemingly a voice, as old as the earth, spoke within her. Trust to your dreams, dream nobly. Hold fast to your dreams, dream *boldly*. Does it seem too good to be true, this dream of yours? It is God's promise. Trust to it and live for it and work towards it. This is wisdom! Work. Action. Action in the planet. Action in the atom. Send your dreams a-winging—up—up—up—until they partake of the glory of the sun! Keep your vision high. Keep your eye fixed upon beauty, upon brightness, upon achievement, upon perfection—for this is life—and this is God!

Older ones, she thought, like Grandmother and Mamasha, they had long since stopped dreaming, dreaming high and clear and true.

"I shall be a great dancer," she announced aloud.

"What? What did you say? I didn't hear you?"

"I said I shall be a great dancer."

"I know. I understand. That is your dream, your hope, your ideal. It's all very fine and very brave; but—there are things that may come up that will keep you from your goal. Once *I* was very sure, too. But things interfered. Things happened."

"I shall not *let* them happen!" declared Anna Pavlova.

No, spoke the voice within her—no, you must not, not ever. This desire for perfection has in it the glory of the Divine. The dream of greatness, the stimulating dream, the lofty aim, the shimmering

ideal—it will keep you always as wondrously alive as you are this minute, for it is beautiful and it is real.

Laugh at Mamasha, at all those who say it is foolish to dream. Laugh at them—or pity them.

Success. What was it? What was it, after all? Back in the years when she was very young—fifteen, sixteen—she used to walk among the fir trees and think how happy she would be when she was successful. But what was success? What was it, *really*?

All the way home she thought about it. Success, this thing called success—what was it, exactly? All people want it, she thought, and some want it achingly, desperately. Most people think it means money, acclaim, power. But does it? Does it mean only that?

Success. Why, it was only having people *love* the thing you do!

"Why are you so silent, Anna? What are you thinking of?" Mamasha interrupted Anna's thoughts.

"Success. I was thinking of success. I was thinking——"

"Yes?"

"That—that if people aren't *loving* the thing I do, then no matter how much money I have, or how many people bow down to me, I'm not a success—and, in my heart, I'll know it!"

CHAPTER SEVEN

PRIMA BALLERINA

JUNE FIRST, the night of her debut, so eagerly awaited, seemed literally to pounce upon Anna Pavlova. Suddenly it was here, and she felt completely unprepared, inadequate, terror-stricken. The splendid confidence which had animated her the day she was graduated from school had ebbed, and now it was gone. She groped for it, madly, passionately, but she could not find it.

For the past months her training had increased almost to fever point. The night was here, suddenly, too suddenly. Everyone would be out front, all the dancers, the teachers would be on hand to inspect, to criticise.

She kept remembering Sokolova's advice. "On the night of a performance you must spend the

whole day in bed, lying with your feet up, wearing white stockings."

Spend the day in bed? Impossible. Impossible to sit still, impossible to eat. Shuddering in an agony of stage fright, she knelt before the Virgin, but words would not come, thought was in chaos, terror tore at her. She tried to practise—and got everything wrong.

She could not go on! She couldn't *do* it! She'd send word that she was ill, dead—anything. All day it had rained, a dismal, cold, drizzly rain. Was it an omen?

When the Imperial carriage came, Mamasha watched her get into it, shaken, white-faced, her eyes abnormally large. The minute Anna was out of the house, Mamasha began to pray, but Anna's stage fright was contagious. Mamasha felt it, too.

All she could say was, "Oh please—please—*please!*"

In the solitude of the carriage, Anna sat trembling. She tried to remember the routine of the steps—and could not. Over and over it all she went, but what came first? What came second? In her dressing-room, her icy hands could scarcely hold the powder puff.

She could hear the musicians tuning up. Someone was laughing out in the hall. How could anyone laugh at a time like this? And the time was getting nearer, nearer! Suppose she stumbled? Mamasha and Grandmother would be out in front dressed in their best. Kschessinska. Guerdt. Petipa. Wolkonsky. Preobrajensky. Legnani. Diaghilev. Trefilova. Oblakov. Johannsen, and two newly made friends—Michel Fokine and Victor Dandré. If she failed, how could she ever look any of them

in the face again? If only the ground would open up and swallow her! If only she could faint, die, run—run somewhere—*hide*!

"First act! On stage! On stage, everybody!

As she left the dressing-room, Sergei Legat, the principal male dancer, spoke to her. She passed him by without hearing what he said, without even seeing him.

On stage, the others were grouped about the entrances. Tension was in the air, something you felt on all sides of you. Anna's hands were fussing nervously with the neck of her costume, with her hair. Walking to the rosin box which stood in the wings, she dug her slippers deep into the white, coarse powder, balanced herself on her toes, crossed herself quickly. Then she heard the cue for her entrance—and she forgot about all things, all people. She forgot about Anna Pavlova. Anna Pavlova had miraculously ceased to *be*. Now she was only the character she was playing.

As she danced, she could feel a power in her, a power emanating from her, a power that went out to those who watched. She knew that she held them, knew that she could make that multitude out there do what she willed—weep with her, suffer with her, rejoice with her.

Then, almost before she knew it, her small part was over. The curtain was coming down. She was Anna Pavlova again, and she had made her debut. A little dazed, she was taking bows with the others, and then, presently, there was Guerdt, seeming to have bobbed up from nowhere, kissing her.

"I did all right, Maestro?"

"I'm proud of you, Anna Pavlova!"

Later, at home, Mamasha and Grandmother could talk of nothing else until well into the night.

"Thank God it's over!" breathed Mamasha piously. "I couldn't believe that was my little Niura up there, doing everything so easily, so smoothly!"

"She's a born dancer," declared Grandmother knowingly. "I always said so. It won't be long before she's as famous as Kschessinska!"

"Oh no!" gasped Mamasha in a shocked voice, "surely she wouldn't aim *that* high!"

"Poor child. It's hard to realise that she's only seventeen!"

"Why do you say *poor* child? It seems to me she's very blessed."

"She's an idealist," said Grandmother. "She'll never know what *satisfaction* means!"

Anna's days were full. Fittings for costumes. Practising. Lessons with Petipa. And—dancing.

Dancing to the music of the great orchestra of one hundred and twenty members led by Leopold Auer, she felt herself transported into another world. These days there were invitations to dinners, parties. Rich men, cultured men, men of title came swarming about, sending her flowers, notes, begging for the privilege of meeting her.

She had never had a beau. In the old days at school when the girls and boys practised together, some of them would flirt and exchange notes, but this was strictly forbidden. The governess invariably found out about it, and both the girl and the boy were punished. Anna was always too engrossed in her work to think about boys.

Now, however, there was a certain young man about whom Anna was thinking a great deal. Victor Dandré was a mining engineer. She had met him at one of Diaghilev's parties. He was ten years older than she, twenty-seven, a friend and classmate of Diaghilev. Like Diaghilev, Dandré was devoted to the arts, especially the ballet. Unlike Diaghilev, who liked to keep people waiting for appointments, who usurped the centre of attention, who enjoyed talking about himself, Dandré was simple, unassuming, quiet. Anybody could go to Dandré for the loan of money, and it was said he never refused.

Anna did not want to think about love these days. Her career was sure. The success she had dreamed about was now almost perched upon her doorstep. But she found herself thinking more and more of Victor Dandré, who seemed to understand her better than anyone else, and upon whom she was coming to depend more and more. No, too much was happening to think about romance.

It was said Wolkonsky had asked Diaghilev to resign. Diaghilev was exerting all the influence he could. The whole of Theatre Street buzzed with the affair, which was finally referred to the Emperor himself.

The Emperor, who was an inveterate theatre-goer, had upheld Wolkonsky. Diaghilev had resigned. If one of the troupe broke the simplest regulation, he was fined; and now, Wolkonsky had dared fine the great Kschessinska herself! The entire art world was up in arms about it. Imagine, fining Kschessinska! Kschessinska was powerful. Though she was a charming, highly intelligent woman, she

knew how to fight for what she wanted, and she usually got it. What was going to happen *now*? Everyone loved Kschessinska, but everyone loved Wolkonsky too.

Then came the news that Wolkonsky was resigning. Kschessinska had won. Loving Wolkonsky, everyone was prejudiced against Teliakovsky, the new director of the Imperial theatres. Things were happening swiftly. Spring was coming, and promotions always took place in the spring. The name Anna Pavlova was beginning to rival even the brilliant names of Legnani, Preobrajensky, Sedova, Trefilova. In the streets, wherever Anna went, whispers followed.

"Look, see that little dark, quietly-dressed girl? That's Anna Pavlova, the dancer!"

Then came a day in late spring when the whisper changed. "Look, see that young lady in the chic blue hat with the feather? That's Anna Pavlova—*première danseuse*!"

Finally, at twenty, they were saying, "Look! Look, there she goes! She's lovely, isn't she? Who? Why, Anna Pavlova, of course—the *prima ballerina*!"

Prima ballerina at the Marinsky, one of the world's great theatres, a theatre which seated two thousand people! Its productions were as lavish as almost unlimited wealth could provide. On gala nights, the theatre seemed to blaze with jewels. The five tiers of boxes were filled to overflowing with royalty and foreign diplomats. Thunderous applause greeted Anna Pavlova when she appeared, flowers, adulation from the press, people catering to her.

"You are the most wonderful dancer in the world!" exclaimed Victor Dandré. "You are even greater than Taglioni, greater than Elssler, greater than Kschessinska, greater than any of them!"

Anna shook her head sadly. "No, Victor, no. It is not you, it is not the Czar, it is not Petipa, it is not the world that I must satisfy, I must satisfy *myself*! I wonder if I shall ever be able to do that? Once I thought that success would bring happiness. It doesn't."

One day when Anna was entering the school where she went to practise each morning, a boy of ten, rounding the corner, bumped into her with such force as to make her drop the book about Taglioni, which she was reading. Recognising her, the boy stood abashed, awkward, blushing, shy to speechlessness. She gazed down at him. He didn't look like the usual pupil. He was certainly not good looking. His body was thick. His hair was combed straight down over his forehead in a long fringe. His nose was heavy. His eyes were curiously slanted. He wore his school uniform of blue cheviot with its military cap and velvet collar carelessly. It seemed not to fit him quite right.

"You are new here, aren't you?" she asked kindly.

"Yes, Anna Pavlova. I have just been admitted."

"What is your name?"

"My name? It's Vaslav. Vaslav Nijinsky."

Remembering his manners, he picked up her book. She smiled at him, recalling her own trepidation that first day. "Come and watch me some time while I practise," she said and passed on.

Nijinsky stood looking after her. It didn't matter

now that the other boys teased him, made him a scapegoat, called him names. The prima ballerina, Anna Pavlova, had smiled at him!

Anna Pavlova continued her way to the practise-room, thinking of the work she was to do, and forgot about him. She was still slim, and her voice was high-pitched, gentle. She wore her hair short now; parted in the middle, it fell in curls about the pale, elfin face. She dressed well, but quietly, and bore herself with an air of confidence. More and more her art continued to absorb her. She had, above all things, an implicit faith in herself. She knew that she was destined one day to be famous, not only in Russia, but all over the world. She believed that this was God's will.

Often she and Michel Fokine would have long talks together, talks of their dreams, of their futures. He had been her first dancing partner. Fokine was two years older than she. As a child, he had been spared the poverty she had experienced. His father was a prosperous business man of St. Petersburg. Michel had made his debut in 1898. He dreamed of being a choreographer. Most of the members of the ballet were against him because he dared differ with Petipa—and to differ with Petipa about ballet—why, that was almost like sacrilege! He liked talking to Anna because she was a sympathetic, understanding listener. They had become good friends. Anna loved dancing with him. He was all temperament, fire, life.

One day they went together to see a cast of Taglioni's foot. For a time they stood silent, reverent as before a shrine.

"I wish I could have seen her," murmured Anna.

"I, too. They say she was very old when she died, and very, very poor."

"It must have been awful, being old and not being able to dance. I want to go on dancing as long as I live! Do you think there is dancing in heaven, Michel Fokine?"

"Of course! Perhaps she is still dancing somewhere. Who knows?"

"She danced everywhere," said Anna dreamily. "Some day, perhaps, I shall dance in other countries too."

"And some day I shall create great ballets!" His sensitive young face became suddenly alight. "I shall be a great choreographer, Anna Pavlova. You wait and see!"

"Yes, I'm sure of it, Michel Fokine, and the lovely ballets you will create shall live forever."

"My ballets will be different from any of these we do now. Oh, so different! Yes. I shall not blindly follow tradition. I have my own ideas. Most people here disagree with them, but that doesn't matter. Think of it, Anna Pavlova, year after year, always the same thing, always the same routines, the same rules. Why should the ballet be bound by tradition? I say unless we dare to *grow* we are stifled! We are of the new generation, you and I. We reverence all that is lovely, all that has come down to us from the old masters, but I say we must not stop there. I say we must not be bound! We, too, must create, create a new technique, new ideals, new heights!"

"Yes," she agreed feelingly, "you are right, my friend."

"For instance," he went on eagerly, "look. A dancer points one finger skywards—like this." He acted it out for her. "Then he touches his lips—like this. So. What is he saying? What does he mean?"

"He means," she answered smilingly, "that he's asking the lady to kiss him!"

"Exactly. Now, suppose I want to kiss a woman. Do you think I point my finger to heaven and then touch my lips? Of course not! It's absurd. It's unnatural. Then why should I have to do it in a ballet? There are many such gestures, traditional, fixed. And the curious part of it is, nobody but me seems to have the idea of ever changing them! And there are people who think I'm crazy because I dare to see *beyond* that which is settled."

"It won't always be so, Michel Fokine. Some day the whole world will understand and appreciate all your lofty dreams and your visions. Tell me, will you create a dance just for me one day?"

"Certainly!"

"It's rumoured that you're about to be appointed to teach classical ballet. Is it true, Michel Fokine?"

"Yes, it's true; but I'm not so much interested in teaching as I am in producing, creating. Are you coming to the debut of little Tamara Karsavina tomorrow night?"

"Yes, indeed. She's such a timid little thing, but I think one day the child will be a great dancer."

"The child! You're only twenty, Anna Pavlova. She's just a few years younger than you. But I *do* think she shows remarkable talent. She should. Her father was *premier danseur*."

"What thrills me more than anything is the success of that young artist, Rosenberg. All Russia's talking about his scenery!"

"Yes, he's wonderful. A year ago he was satisfied just to paint pretty pictures of society beauties, but now he's designing scenery and costumes, and everyone is excited about him. I admire him tremendously because he dares to be original! Only, of course, one doesn't speak of him as Rosenberg any more. He's changed his name, you know."

"Oh yes, yes, I've heard. I've forgotten at the moment—what *does* he call himself now?"

"He calls himself Leon Bakst!"

"Yes. Bakst. That's it."

"Oh, I almost forgot. *Here's* a piece of news! Have you heard? Cecchetti's resigning!"

Anna stared. "Cecchetti—resigning!"

Often she had seen the little man, but so far she had never met him. She was still working with the aged Petipa, and Petipa had much to give her, but in a few months she would finish with Petipa—and then she had hoped to begin with Cecchetti.

"Yes, he's going to Poland. We're planning to give him a great farewell—presents, flowers, speeches. Everybody loves him. He——" Fokine broke off at the expression on Anna's face. "Why, what's the matter? Are you ill?"

She was completely dejected. She needed Cecchetti.

When Dandré came that night, he found Anna in tears. "I need him," she moaned tragically. "You *know* I need him, Victor!"

"I've never deceived you, Anna. Great as you are, Cecchetti could have helped you. But perhaps he'll return. Poland is very unsettled just now. I don't imagine he and his wife and their three little boys will be very happy there. I'm sure he'll come back."

She gave him one of her quick, brilliant smiles. "You're always so comforting. I wonder what I'd ever do without you."

"Will you marry me?" he asked simply. "Will you marry me, Anna Pavlova?"

She stared at him, her eyes wide. "But, Victor, I've no *right* to think of marriage! What time have I for a home, a husband, children—all the things other women enjoy? No, that's not for me, my dear."

"I love you, not only as a woman, but as a genius. Your genius is sacred to me, Anna Pavlova. I ask only that you let me give up my profession, give up my life to you, to serving you, shielding you!"

Her dark, expressive eyes were soft as she smiled to him. "Dear Victor," she said gently, "I've no right to love you, no right to let you love me. My art must always come first. Sometimes I wish I could be different, but I can't."

"I wouldn't have you different," he insisted.

"You're always so kind, Victor, always so wise, always so calm. Me, I get excited about things, little things. I fly into tempers. I storm. But you, you're such a peaceful person. Ah, what kind of wife would I make for anyone? Always practising, always dancing!"

"I want you to dance, always to dance! I realise that is your life, but you need someone to take care

of you, watch over you. Let me be that one, Anna Pavlova! I've never loved anyone but you and I never shall."

She was thoughtful for a long time. People were always running to this man with their problems. Even her mother, when some questions arose, would ask, "What does Monsieur Dandré say?"

They were always seen together. People were whispering that they were engaged, that they were married. She could not imagine getting along without him. There was always Victor on hand to guide her, steady her, serve her.

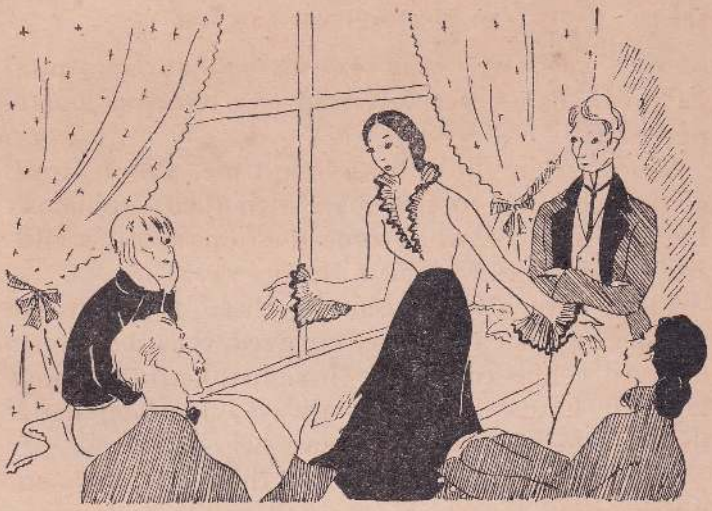
"You're twenty, Anna. I'm thirty. There's so much ahead for you! One day you'll be leaving Russia and travelling as you wish to do, as Taglioni did."

"That time's a long way off yet, Victor."

"You'll need someone to take care of you, someone to shield you from unpleasant things. *That*," he told her firmly, "will be my privilege!"

"No, Victor," she murmured, "I'm sorry, my dear, but—well, you see, I've decided that I shall never marry!"

Victor smiled—his slow, patient smile. "One day, perhaps, you'll change your mind," he answered.



CHAPTER EIGHT

REVOLT

THOUGH all doors were now open to Pavlova, she preferred the companionship of her own little circle of friends, people associated with the ballet, kindred souls, people of mutual aims, ideas. There was Victor Dandré, of course—wise, poised, well-groomed, quiet. There was Diaghilev, bombastic, egotistical, talking well—and much. There was the now much-heralded Leon Bakst, the well-known artist Benois, Fokine, and Tamara Karsavina. Sometimes Nicholas and Sergei Legat would join them, two brothers, the leading male dancers, and extremely popular with their co-workers. Of the two, Sergei was the most beloved. He was handsome, good-natured, always encouraging, always ready with a joke and a laugh.

When Johannsen, over ninety, died, they all shared their grief, their reminiscences. When Preobrajensky announced her benefit for early in January, they were all eager to help, and determined to attend in a body. The Russo-Japanese War had left them quite untouched. The theatre continued as usual, and little else concerned them. To them, living in their own exciting little world, Preobrajensky's benefit seemed even more important than that the war had ended. Small of stature, gentle, admired by everybody, Madame Preobrajensky had begun her spectacular career in the *corps de ballet*. It was her claim that she owed her artistry, her technique, to Cecchetti alone. No one deserved triumph more than she, no one worked harder to maintain it through the years. After being graduated from the school, after leaving the *corps de ballet*, her labours to achieve were almost superhuman. For years she practised all day, often she would dance in the evenings, and then, after the performance did she go home to bed? Did she go out to parties and receive the tributes all Russia wished to shower upon her? Not she. After the performance, her lessons with Cecchetti began, lessons which continued sometimes until dawn. To pay homage now to such an indomitable spirit was something which every worker in the ballet from the highest to the lowest was eager to do.

Meanwhile, throughout Russia, spread an insidious undercurrent of unrest. Gradually it permeated even the ballet. Everyone felt it, something in the air, something one saw smouldering in the eyes of people passing by on the street—rebellion, seething, hidden, growing stronger and stronger.

That year, 1905, Anna and her mother had moved into a real house. There were servants now; they had their own horses and carriage. Mamasha was surrounded with more luxury than her pious soul had ever dreamed of. She had nothing in the world to worry her now, except these meetings that were constantly going on, meetings in which there was no laughter, meetings in which Anna, Fokine, Diaghilev would make long speeches about self-government. It sounded downright traitorous to Mamasha, and it frightened her a little.

These meetings took place sometimes at Pavlova's house, sometimes at Dandré's apartment, sometimes at Diaghilev's or Fokine's.

Why should we of the theatre not govern ourselves? they demanded. They should demand this right, the right of autonomy. How? By a strike! Yes, yes, that is the only way—a strike. Only we must get more people to join us. We have a right to govern ourselves!

Anna and Fokine were deeply stirred. Karsavina was worried. "I don't think we should strike," she kept saying. "I don't think we should do this. I'm sure we'll all get into trouble. My mother says I shouldn't get mixed up in it." But she came to the meetings, nevertheless, because loyalty to her friends seemed to demand it.

The group continued to hold meetings, to plan, to make resolutions. Whole days would pass in discussion, earnest, vehement. Finally a resolution was agreed upon, drawn up. It demanded of the government higher salaries, freedom to govern their own activities in the theatre by the election of their own

leaders. A delegation was sent to members of the ballet to argue with them the benefits of signing.

"We must have Legat. Some of us must go to Sergei Legat and insist that he sign it. His name will carry a great weight," said Diaghilev.

"But he doesn't want to sign," put in Karsavina. "He doesn't think it's right."

"Oh," answered Diaghilev, "that's just because he doesn't understand. He probably thinks this has something to do with politics. It hasn't. We aren't interested in politics. No one could possibly accuse us of not being loyal to the Court!"

"Of course not!" agreed Anna. "Well, then, should we leave Sergei out of it?"

There was more talk. Finally it was decided that a group should be nominated to call on Legat and get his signature.

Next day the committee was enthusiastic. Legat had signed. "He didn't want to," they said, "but we kept at him and at last—well, we practically *made* him sign!"

In his calm, quiet way, Dandré advised against the whole thing. But all along Diaghilev had prodded the young conspirators to more open action. Perhaps the one man in all Russia whom Diaghilev most hated was Teliakovsky, Director of the Imperial schools. A strike, if it were successful, would mean Teliakovsky's defeat. There was nothing Diaghilev would have relished more.

Anna was impersonal. She had no grudge against Teliakovsky. She had no quarrel with anyone. But she was aroused to fever pitch by the idea that she was working, not only for herself and her fellow

artists, but for the liberation of thousands of artists who would come after them. She dramatised herself as a liberator of the ballet and went about making recruits, giving eloquent, impassioned speeches.

"My dear Anna," Dandré would say indulgently, "why do you work yourself up like this? It will accomplish nothing—and when it is all over, who knows, whether you, Karsavina, Fokine, will be permitted to return to the Imperial theatre? If not, then what? Be wise, Anna. Save yourself this pointless exertion."

"I don't care what happens to me," she answered hotly. "It isn't of myself I'm thinking. We should have freedom to express ourselves, freedom to express new ideas."

"True, but there is nothing to be gained by these methods. All of you have cause to be very grateful. Think what you have gained! Is there any place else in the world where things are made as easy for artists as they are under the Czar? In other countries dancers must pay for tuition. They must struggle to find employment. Here, all that is taken care of."

"That is a fact, Victor. Yes. Only—our art has become static. And in the end, that would be fatal. No. We must go on with this—we must!"

So she went on making speeches. "We must all stand together!" she cried tempestuously. "We want better pay, better working conditions. We want self-government, we want the right of fuller, freer expression! In order to accomplish this, let us all stand together! We must have solidarity if we are to win!"

Finally the morning came when they were to

present their petition. It was a chill, windy morning, and the streets were covered with sleet.

Anna, Fokine, Karsavina, a few others went to Theatre Street and presented their petition. An officer met them. He bowed respectfully. "Thank you. I regret that His Excellency is out of town.

"Oh!" gasped Anna, who had expected the affair to be settled at once. "Where is he?"

"He is in Moscow."

"And when will he return?"

"That I cannot say. I will see that he gets this upon his return."

Crestfallen, they filed out.

"What do we do now?" asked Karsavina, her lovely dark eyes wide and frightened.

"We'll go to my flat," said Fokine, "—and talk."

Though now there seemed nothing to talk about, they went, nevertheless. The streets were quiet, ominously quiet. The skies were leaden. It was almost as dark as dusk. For days there had been a strike, and no street cars were running.

Arriving at Fokine's flat, they sat, moody, troubled. The room was so dark that he tried to turn on the gas, but there was none.

"That's odd," he muttered, "all the gas in town has been turned off! We'll have to have candles."

In the candlelight faces were tense, ghastly. Dandré joined them. For the first time since she had known him, Anna noticed that he was strangely agitated.

"The railroads are stopped," he announced. "None of the telephones are working! There are detectives walking up and down outside!"

No one answered him. He had hardly seated himself when Bakst and Diaghilev arrived.

"The dramatic company of the Alexandrovsky is to strike to-night!" declared Diaghilev. "You people ought to go there and strike with them!"

"But—" cried Anna distractedly, "this is the night of Preobrajensky's benefit!"

Silence. Interminable. Heavy. Fokine ordered tea and sandwiches, but no one felt like eating.

"Will we be suspended—or not?" asked Karsavina, in a small voice.

No one answered her. No one knew.

The doorbell rang. Nerves were so taut that many of them jumped, and gasped. "Do you think you ought to answer it, Fokine?" asked Diaghilev. "It—it may be the police."

"No, it's a few members of the *corps de ballet.* I saw them from the window."

When the four men entered, Anna asked if there were any news.

"News!" they answered. "Everybody's deserting us. They're all scared. They're saying they'll repudiate the petition. They're claiming we forced them into signing."

"Oh!" gasped Anna. "How—how unfair! We did it for them as much as for ourselves."

"We shall probably be arrested at any minute," declared one of the newcomers sharply.

Karsavina gave a little strangled cry. Desperately now she wished she were home, wished she had obeyed her mother.

Diaghilev lit a cigarette with an unsteady hand.

Anna came and took a seat at Dandré's side, and

her little hand crept into his. If only she had taken Victor's advice!

"Why should they arrest us?" she asked. "We aren't revolutionists, except in an artistic sense."

The bell rang again. They all looked at one another. What now?

"I'll go myself," said Fokine, in a firm, low voice.

They waited, tensely, wretchedly, for his return. When he entered the room again, his face was ash-white, drawn with horror. "Sergei has killed himself!" he gasped, and fell on a couch, sobbing.

For a few moments they were all speechless, mute. Sergei Legat dead. It was incredible.

"Why?" asked Anna. "Why?"

"It's our fault. He felt himself a traitor because he signed that petition."

They were dazed, unmoving. At last, Diaghilev began to pace the floor restively. Karsavina began to sob softly. What, now, did it matter whether they had self-government or not, higher salaries or not? Except for the sobs of Fokine and Karsavina, the room was silent. Then of a sudden the silence was shattered. Outside pandemonium had broken loose. There were shots, cries, horses' hoofs. Dandré rushed to the window.

"The revolution!"

"Look, it's a great horde of workmen, led by the priest Gapon! They're making for the Winter Palace!"

"Do they want to harm the Czar?"

"No, I've heard they only want to present a petition?"

"But the Czar is not in town!"

Anna had started for the door. "Come back, Anna!" Dandré shouted. "Don't go out in the street!"

"No! no, I'm going! I've got to get home to Mamasha! She'll be worried, frightened!"

"Wait! I'll go with you!"

But neither Dandré's nor Anna's carriage waited as usual at the curb. The streets were filled with people. Some of them carried red flags. A woman gave a shrill scream. Others were shouting, laughing, sobbing. The bitter wind had increased. It tore, howling, through the crowded streets, adding to the hysteria. On each side of Anna were people with gleaming, angry eyes, men shaking their fists, muttering curses. A company of Cossacks came charging down the street on their way to the Winter Palace. Their splendid horses reared. The Cossacks, riding furiously, brandished their long whips this way and that, lashing out in all directions.

Just in time Dandré pushed Anna back against a building. The whips were lead-tipped, as dangerous as bullets. Anna's eyes were bright with agony. These people, these people in the street swarming about her, were they going to hurt the Czar, that kind, friendly little man who so loved the theatre, who applauded her when she danced? And the gentle Czarina with her sad, sweet smile?

A company of soldiers, some with drawn swords, others with rifles, were shouting, "Go back to your homes, you fools! You'll get hurt! Go back to your homes! You *must* go back!"

The crowd surged forward with a roar. Dandré pulled Anna into a doorway. She leaned against

him, spent, trembling. There were shots. Outside the doorway people fell, writhing to the ground. Others were shoving, striking out in all directions with clubs and guns. Women were trampled on, crushed, in their mad rush to get away from the shooting.

"Victor, this is revolution! I never dreamed anything could be so terrible."

"Stay here. I'll try to find a carriage."

He forced his way to the curb, but there were no carriages to be seen, only a horde of dishevelled, disorganised humans, surging, screaming. Dandré, his hat gone, his coat torn, came back to the doorway.

"No chance for a carriage. We'll have to do it on foot. Wait here awhile."

They waited, she clinging to him. How strong he was, how dependable!

"You're all right, Anna?"

"Yes. Yes, I'm all right."

"Come on, then. It's safer now. The crowd has passed."

She moved beside him, holding up her skirts high to prevent them from trailing in the blood of the pavements. Behind them, fainter now, was the murderous hissing of the Cossack's whips. Now and then Pavlova, with her escort, had to step over the inert, mangled bodies of men and women. Dandré kept steering her down side streets. When finally they arrived at her house, Mamasha flung open the door.

"Niura! Oh, thank heaven, you're safe! I've been almost crazy with worry. I tried to phone Fokine's, but I could get no answer. The telephones——"

"Yes, yes," said Dandré soothingly, "the worst is over now. The rioting is ended."

Anna sank, huddled into a convenient chair. "Those old people, those children!" she shuddered. "How can I ever dance again?"

Mamasha, trembling, said, "I'll order some tea," and left the room.

Anna raised her head, reached her hand fondly towards Dandré. "Thank you," she said feelingly. "Oh, thank you—for everything!"

"I'm glad I was there to be of help. I hope I shall always be there when you need me, Anna."

"You—you will go to Preobrajensky's benefit to-night as we planned?"

"Yes. No matter what happens."

"I shall go too."

"What a day this has been!"

"Yes. A nightmare."

"Did you present your petition to Teliakovsky?"

"No, he was away in Moscow. Do you suppose we *shall* be arrested, Victor?"

"I don't know, my dear. I think not."

The streets were quiet that night as Anna and Victor set out for the theatre. The city seemed empty. Would Preobrajensky *give* her performance? She had chosen to present her masterpiece, *Les Caprices du Paillon*, and knowing the courage of the woman, Anna was sure there would be a performance.

Though soldiers were everywhere, there was scarcely a civilian to be seen. The gas had been turned on again, but the shades of the houses were drawn. Arriving at the theatre, they found the

lobby lighted but empty. Inside the great Marinsky, which held two thousand people, there was a deep, sinister hush. The entire house had been sold out, but not a hundred people had had the courage to leave their homes.

Fokine, Karsavina, Benois, Bakst, Diaghilev, Pavlova, and Dandré sat together in a box. Never had Preobrajensky danced so well as she did that night. The few that were there applauded until their hands were raw.

During the intermission before the last act, word came that the riot had broken out again. "The mob's on its way here! They've already broken into the Alexandrovsky and the performance has been stopped!"

The few people in the theatre quickly departed. The little group of friends looked inquiringly at one another.

"What does Preobrajensky say?" asked Fokine. "Will she go on with the performance?"

Dandré went backstage to find out. When he returned, he was smiling.

"There's discipline for you!" he announced. "The outside doors have been locked! The show goes on!"

"Then we'll stay?" asked Karsavina.

"I shall!" declared Anna.

"So will we!" answered the rest—and they filed back into the now empty theatre.

The last act went smoothly. When it was over, they all agreed that they would not go backstage for the customary congratulations. It was necessary that they, as well as the dancers, should seek the security of their homes as speedily as possible.

During the next week placards appeared everywhere:

BEWARE OF CHOLERA PLAGUE!
DRINK NO UNBOILED WATER!
EAT NO UNCOOKED FRUIT!

People were falling dead in the streets. "It's the plague!" someone would shout, and everybody would scamper away as far as possible from the inert bodies. Night and day the city rang with the noise of ambulances.

No longer were the artists of Russia pleading for solidarity. Rebellion, as far as they were concerned, was ended. For Anna and her fellow conspirators each day passed in suspense. They fully expected to be arrested any moment.

When the danger of the plague was over, people had a new topic of conversation. One heard it in clubs, in the corridors of the school, in the wardrobe and dressing-rooms.

"Have you heard? They say Tamara Karsavina, Anna Pavlova, Michel Fokine are to be suspended for their part in the strike."

"Have you heard? Anna Pavlova, Michel Fokine and Tamara Karsavina will never be permitted to dance in Russia again."

One saw Anna everywhere now. In the restaurants, the theatres, at parties. When Guerdt celebrated his forty years' jubilee, she was present, her head up proudly, asking no sympathy.

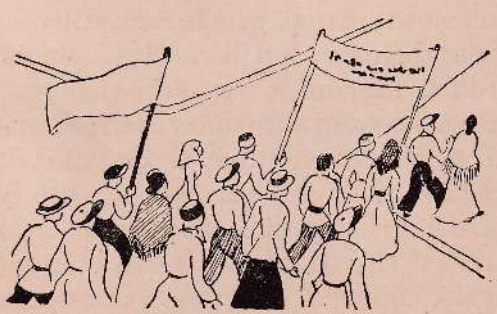
In October the Duma was created. Pavlova, Karsavina, Fokine, the other delegates, were called

before Teliakovsky. The ukase which created the Duma, he announced, meant pardon for strikers. His voice was kind, almost fatherly.

"Had it not been for the Czar's granting amnesty to all strikers," he said, "it would have been very bad for each of you! You attempted to strike. This is insubordination. But I believe you were all sadly misguided children. You have received a free education, free dancing instruction from the greatest masters of the world. You are well provided for to the end of your lives. How do you repay these benefits? Well, from now on let there be no more antagonism. Resume your work. We'll try to forget what has happened."

"All the same," muttered one of the men as they left the place, "he'll make us pay for it!"

But the prediction was unfounded. Teliakovsky was ready to forget and forgive. Karsavina forged ahead as freely as before. Fokine, that year, was given his dreamed-of chance as choreographer, and within the next two years Anna Pavlova had climbed to the exalted peak of ballerina, a title held by only three others besides herself.



CHAPTER NINE

BIRTH OF THE SWAN

AFTER her reinstatement, Anna Pavlova quietly married the faithful and persistent Dandré. Her life now was beautifully set. She had a smart home, her own carriage, servants. All Russia was at her feet. Seemingly, the world had nothing more to offer her.

When Pavlova danced, people sat spellbound, unable to take their eyes off her. Her technique was considered flawless, but it was more than technique. It was the very soul of the dancer, herself, that wove its mystic enchantment over those who watched. She danced as much with her hands as with her feet. Her hands in every slight gesture were lovely, lyrical. Curtain call after curtain call followed every ballet in which she appeared. Flowers were so numerous

that her dressing-room could not contain them, and they filled the corridors.

It was after the strike that Fokine's great chance came. The pupils were to give a performance and this had been entrusted to him. Hour after hour he and Anna discussed it.

"It will be different," he declared earnestly, "from anything ever seen in Russia—or anywhere else! Oh, it's not that I don't realise how truly wonderful are the methods of Marius Petipa, it's not that I don't respect him and look up to him, but——"

They both knew the story of the great Petipa. He was a Frenchman, born in Marseille on March 11, 1822. His mother had been a tragedienne, his father a dancer. Petipa's career had been a long and honoured one. In 1840 he made his debut at the Comédie Française. In 1846 he was dancing with the magnificent Fanny Elsser at the Paris Opéra. And now, since 1847 he had been associated with the Imperial Ballet School at St. Petersburg.

"He's eighty-three," Fokine continued. "As far back as 1856, years before either you or I were born, he produced his first ballet. Four years after that, he was made *maître de ballet.* Since then he has over sixty ballets of his own composition. That's a marvellous record. I like Petipa, personally. For over fifty years—think of it—for over fifty years he has controlled the Russian ballet, and controlled it with an iron hand! But now he's old, Anna Pavlova, old and set in his ways, his methods. I want to free the ballet—and I shall! Look, take the *pas de deux.* Does the *danseur* ever stand anywhere but at the back of the *danseues*, holding her waist, and gazing at her

spine? Why? Why should it be like that? We are given five positions. Every step must be a combination of those same five positions. Back straight. Heels front. Toes outward. Well, I say it's not right. Why limit beauty to merely five positions? Beauty is limitless! I say every *cell* of a dancer's body should express! You'll come to the rehearsal to-morrow and see my production of *Acis and Galatea*? Then you'll see a concrete example of what I'm striving for!"

"Why, of course I'll come, Michel Fokine. And who will be in it? Are there any outstanding pupils?"

"Yes, there's a boy, just fifteen. He shows remarkable promise—a young Pole by the name Nijinsky."

"Nijinsky? Oh yes. He comes often and watches Karsavina and me practising at the bar. We give him candies. He always seems so sombre. Well, Michel Fokine, I can hardly wait to see your rehearsal!"

"There is one thing I can be sure of," he told her with a slow, boyish smile, "and that is of your frankness."

"Victor says I sometimes hurt people's feelings with my frankness," she admitted. "Victor is the kindest soul in all the world. I'm always losing my temper, but I've never yet seen Victor angry. Well, I shall try not to hurt your feelings, Michel Fokine, but—I shall have to be honest."

"Yes," he answered, "I shall expect that."

When next day she left the hall with Fokine, he asked, eager as a boy. "Well? You like it, Anna Pavlova?"

"I loved it, Michel Fokine!" she answered feelingly.

Fokine laughed excitedly. "Wait till Petipa sees it! *He* won't approve!"

"No," she agreed, "I'm afraid not."

"He'll say I've broken all the sacred rules. He'll be angry as the devil! Of course, Diaghilev will be delighted. He's always clamouring for something new. But Petipa! When I think what *he's* going to say!"

"Yes, and his opinion sways so many people. Well, you have great courage, Michel Fokine. That's what I like about you. You have your own convictions, you believe in them—and you are not afraid to put them to the test!"

They walked in silence for some time. Under the shade of her lacy parasol, Anna's head was lowered thoughtfully.

"I'd like you to compose a dance for me," she said at last, "as soon as possible."

"You believe in me *that* much?"

"Yes, I believe in you, Michel Fokine. Well? Will you?"

"Nothing would please me better, but I shall have to think about it a long time first. Do you know how I create? Well, I get by myself. I get quiet. I put aside completely all outer distractions. Then before I do a thing, before I call a rehearsal, I work everything out in my mind. I keep at it. I keep trying to *see* it. I visualise every move, every turn, every gesture. Then when it's established in my mind, when it's clear, when it's planted in my brain, then—and not until then do I call a rehearsal!"

"Yes, but you have to have something to inspire you first!"

"Oh, of course. And who knows where to look for inspiration? One finds it everywhere, anywhere. A poem. A picture. A piece of music. Inspiration is always about us, it's always right where we *are*, if we only knew it, if we only realised it. Why, right here, right now, there is inspiration. Only it just needs something to turn it *on*! Now, about this ballet—or perhaps this *divertissement* I'm going to do for you——"

"Yes? Yes?"

"It must be something exactly suited to you, something ethereal, something distinctive, dainty. Wait . . . wait. Stand still a moment. Let me look at you."

There, in the late afternoon sunlight, he gazed at her impersonally, as if he had never seen her before; the long, frail throat, the graceful arms, the magnificent dark eyes. She was dressed in the latest Parisian mode. Her lace parasol had a long handle with a hand-painted knob. Her hat was an extraordinarily large white straw with pink flowers about the crown. Her dress, which fit snugly at the hips, was long and flaring at the bottom. She was holding the skirt up with her right hand, so that one glimpsed only the long pointed toe of a white kid slipper. The sleeves were the new leg-of-mutton style, full at the top, narrow at the wrist. Words like "immaculate," "spirituelle," poured through his active brain.

She submitted to his gaze with utter unself-consciousness. "Well?" she asked, at last.

"You remind me of"—he spoke slowly—"of—a beautiful white bird. Yes, some kind of white bird."

She laughed softly.

"No," he insisted earnestly, "I mean it. A beautiful white bird. This dance, it is to be more than a dance, it is to be a symbol, a symbol of something fragile and lovely; a symbol of something—something sad and sweet; a symbol of life—and pain—and death. Something—yes, something tragic, I think."

They walked on in silence for some blocks. The summer sun was low, a red-gold ball upon the horizon. Fokine's head was bent forward meditatively. Anna felt, unresentfully, his aloofness from her, from the world.

"Do you recall the music of Saint-Saëns' *La Vie des Animaux*?" he asked at length.

"Yes."

"I don't know why that keeps coming into my head—your dance—I wonder——"

The sun had gone when at last they reached a lake. In the pensive afterglow, Anna paused to watch the swans.

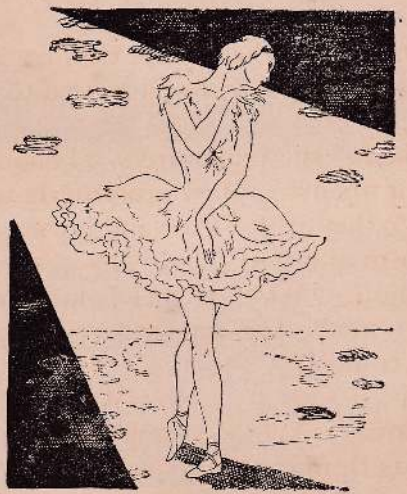
"I love them," she murmured. "I should love to have some of my own. How graceful, how tranquil, how majestic they are! Victor and I often come here to watch them and feed them. He—" she turned to her companion. "Why, Michel Fokine, you're not listening to me!" She laughed. "You look like you're in a trance!"

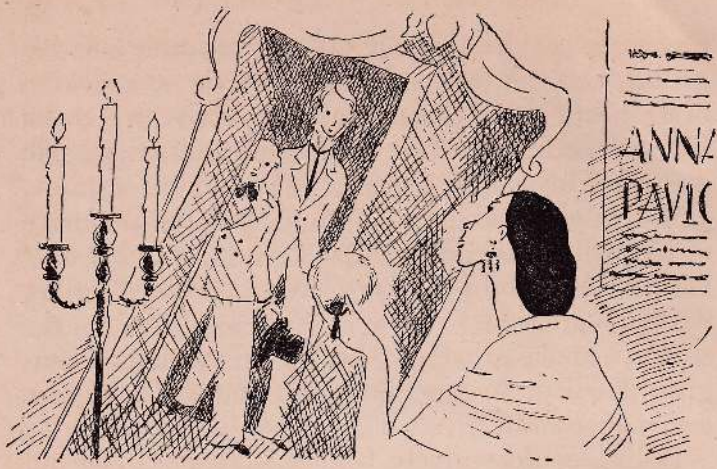
"Eh? Oh . . . yes . . . No. What did you say, Anna Pavlova? Those swans—white, graceful, lovely. I was thinking of your dance."

She laughed. "My dance? But what in the world has my dance to do with a swan?"

"Why, that's it, don't you see?" His voice was

low, agitated. "That's it! The dance—of the swan. *Le Cygne.* I can see you, Anna Pavlova. Already it's forming in my mind. You will wear white—all white. Your dark hair will be framed in small, snow-white feathers. The stage will be flooded in a soft, dim, greenish-blue light—misty, eerie—waning, ebbing—like the light of life—and there will be this ethereal white figure, soaring, suffering, living, dying—the swan. The swan! The dance of the swan. Yes, I am beginning to see it. It will be immortal, Anna Pavlova. Yes, it will speak of immortality—of life, love, death, beauty, pathos, drama —*The Dance of the Swan!*"





CHAPTER TEN

THE GREAT CECCHETTI

WHEN the first performance of Fokine's new ballet *Acis and Galatea* was finished, Fokine saw Petipa moving towards him. It was a tense moment, not only for Fokine, but for all who watched. An old master, stabilised in the fixed tempo of yesterday; a young man, trying his hand at choreography for the first time, his soul tuned to the tempo of to-morrow. Petipa had seen his method abolished to-night. He had stood face to face with a different order. Looking at him, no one could tell what the verdict of this, the greatest choreographer in the world, would be. His wrinkled face was stern.

The crowd that was rushing to congratulate Fokine stood aside for the old man. What would the great Petipa say? Anna's nerves were taut.

Knowing Fokine, genuinely appreciative of his genius, she wanted to shield him. She saw Fokine brace himself for the storm of invective which he felt was coming. There were those, he knew, like Anna Pavlova and Dandré, Bakst and Diaghilev, who formed their own opinions, but the majority of his world, ruled by Petipa so long, convinced of Petipa's infallibility, would accept Petipa's verdict without question.

Petipa spoke gravely. "Let me be the first to congratulate you, my boy. Some day you will be a great *maître de ballet*!"

Fokine could scarcely believe his ears. The old man had turned and walked away. There was a babble of voices now, people crowded around Michel to shake his hand, kiss him. Fokine heard it all through a kind of daze. Well, he kept thinking, it's over. It's over. I've worked hard. I'm tired—tired. The great Petipa himself has congratulated me. I wish all these people would go home and let me rest.

But even after he had managed to get free from his admirers, Fokine could not rest. He was eager to begin on *Le Cygne* for Pavlova. Early next day he was at work on it. The dying swan. Slowly it evolved, taking shape and form and rhythm within his fertile mind.

It was to be the most famous dance of all Pavlova's repertoire. As long as she lived, wherever she went, people had heard of it, clamoured for it. Once having seen Pavlova dance *The Swan*, no one could forget it. The small, dainty figure in white, floating through the blue-grey mist, the struggle between

life and death. To those who watched, breathless, enthralled, it was more than a dance, more than a theatrical performance—it was an experience. It was to them, as it had been to Fokine who conceived it, a *symbol.*

The work of Fokine did not stop with the triumph of *The Swan.* He was achieving more prestige for his ballets now than he had achieved for his dancing. Success followed success. When he produced *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the young dancer, Nijinsky, still a student, was one of the elves. The same year Fokine produced *The Vine* in which he, and Pavlova, and Karsavina took the leading parts.

"Michel," said Dandré, meeting him on the street one day, "before Anna goes to Moscow, I'm giving a benefit for the Society for the Protection of Small Children. I wish you'd compose a ballet for it."

"I shall. There's nothing I'd like better. Give me a little time, Victor, and you shall have your ballet."

And he was as good as his word. Out of that inspired mind of Fokine came the ballet *Eunice*, in which Karsavina and Pavlova took the leading parts.

Lovable, simple though he was outside the theatre, at rehearsals Fokine's entire nature changed. He was tense, irritable. He would burst into tempers, throw chairs about, pace up and down. His usually soft, well-modulated voice would ring out, "This execution—it's careless! It's messy! I won't have it! I won't have it! Are you calling yourselves *dancers*? Are you dancing with a body made of lead? That *pas d'action*—it's putrid! *Putrid!*"

Later that year his fame was further established

with the productions of *The Animated Gobelins* and *The Egyptian Nights*, which was later called *Cleopatra*; but for once his good friend Pavlova was not there to congratulate him at the curtain's fall. She was away, dancing in Moscow.

Riding on the train beside her, Dandré was pleasantly excited. He had heard something which as yet Anna did not know. Cecchetti was in Moscow. It was now five years since Dandré had seen the great teacher. Leaving Warsaw, Cecchetti had gone to Turin, but he loved Russia, and at last he had returned, setting himself up in an independent school of dancing.

As soon as possible after Anna and he were settled at their hotel, Dandré rushed off through the winding streets of Moscow in search of Cecchetti. He found the maestro, a little stouter, a little balder, but agile as ever and not a day older.

"Dandré!" exclaimed Cecchetti, "I'm glad to see you! I haven't seen or heard from you since the night they gave me that gala farewell at St. Petersburg. Sit down. How are you? Smoke? I smoke too much. One cigarette after the other. The doctor says it is not good for me, so I intend to stop. How are you? You are looking well. What are you doing in Moscow?"

"I've come to ask a favour of you, Maestro."

"So?"

"I want you to come with me to-night to see a—a young dancer."

"Oh? Who?"

"Pavlova. Anna Pavlova."

"Pavlova? Oh yes. I remember. Very lovely. I

used to see her around the Marinsky. I hear she's a ballerina now. Been working with Petipa, I understand."

"Yes, but Petipa's thinking of retiring. Will you come with me to-night?"

"Of course. Of course I'll come, my boy. Gladly."

It was with difficulty that Dandré refrained from telling Anna that Cecchetti was in the theatre that night. All during the evening Dandré sat beside the maestro, studying his face, but there was no way to tell what Cecchetti was thinking.

When the performance was over, the old man was silent.

"Well?" asked Dandré, "what is your opinion?"

"Ah, what talent—what talent!"

"Yes?"

"She's a genius. She's superb. She has a marvellous future, but——"

"But? But what?"

"It's too bad—too bad she has some technical flaws. Not serious, but——"

"Come back with me and meet her!"

"Oh, you know her, do you?"

"She's my wife!"

"What? Anna Pavlova is—Madame Dandré?"

"You'll come backstage?"

"Of course."

Anna was seated before her dressing-table when she heard Dandré's knock and called, "Come in."

The long mirror was directly opposite the door. She looked into it, smiling. Then, behind her husband, she saw a fat little man with a bald head, and the smile vanished. She rose, humble.

"Maestro!" she murmured.

Dandré laughed. "Sit down, Maestro. Yes, it's really he, Anna!"

The little man took a chair facing Anna. Dandré leaned against the wall, smoking a cigarette.

"You—you saw me dance?" asked Anna, after a slight pause. "You were out front to-night?"

"Yes, it was excellent—excellent!"

"Ah! You—mean that? You really mean it, Maestro?"

"No," smiled Dandré, "he's only being polite. He says you have certain faults, Anna."

"Faults. Yes." She leaned towards Cecchetti earnestly. "I have faults. I know. What are they?"

She was eager, so very eager that he was loath to hurt her. He shrugged. "Oh—it's nothing very—"

"No! I want the truth, Maestro. I insist upon the truth. It means so much to me. It means more than anything—more than anything in the world. Tell me the truth!"

"Well, then, for one thing, your hands, my dear. You have a habit of pressing your hands against your ballet skirt, and then——"

"Yes?"

"Your back."

"Ah, you noticed that! You, alone, have noticed that. Well? Would it take me long to correct these flaws?"

"Three years, I think."

Her huge eyes were fixed upon him, imploring, meek. "You'll teach me? Will you? Will you teach me for three years? Just me?"

"Impossible, my child! How can I? I am estab-

lished here in Moscow, while you must return to St. Petersburg."

"You must teach me! I want you to teach me, me alone, just me, nobody else!"

"*What?*"

"I mean it!"

"But I can't! I have explained——"

"I'll pay you—anything! I'll pay you whatever you are making here! I'll pay you every cent I earn if you want it! Only come with me, help me! I need you, Maestro! How can I be satisfied with imperfection? I'll work, harder than ever! I'll do anything—anything you say!"

"No, it is impossible."

"Why? Why? Ah, if you only know how it hurts me to know that there are these flaws! And you can correct them! You must! I never wanted anything so much in my life. I was broken-hearted when you left St. Petersburg. Victor will tell you. Do you think I'm afraid to work?"

In the end he yielded. Consequently, for the next three years, Anna Pavlova, one of the most famous dancers in Russia, was a pupil of Cecchetti. To correct the habit of pressing her hands against her ballet skirt, he made her practise every day in knickerbockers and a little jacket.

"How you work, Anna Pavlova!" he exclaimed. "How hard you struggle to master these minor mechanical defects! They could be readily overlooked, my child, because you are a genius. What am I doing for you? What, after all? What is most important you already have—and that is the great soul which God has given you!"

She came to love the stout little man with the humorous smile, the strong chin, the prominent nose. His bald head with its fringe of snow-white hair was shining and immaculate, his grey-blue eyes were alert and twinkly. He carried himself very straight and walked with a youthful, springy step. He entered the practice room smiling, buoyant. "Ah, you are here already! No matter how early I come, you are before me. Well, to work!"

He used no piano, but he would sit there, whistling the music, beating out the rhythm with a short, white stick. Sometimes he would become a veritable torrent of rage. He would hurl his little stick to the far end of the room and pace up and down, muttering. Anna herself had a lightning-quick temper, but when confronted with the irruption of Cecchetti's rage, she would stand very still, chastened, meek, waiting until the maestro's anger had spent itself. Then, not saying a word, she would walk to the far end of the room, pick up the stick, present it to him with a curtsey and a smile. Often he would be so incensed that he would break the stick, and after the lesson Anna would send Victor posthaste throughout the town, hunting for a stick just like it. After a few such experiences, the wise and philosophical Victor purchased these sticks in great quantities, for Cecchetti could not teach without his stick.

"*Now* then," he would scowl, when the stick was put in his hand again, "now we will *see* if it goes better. So . . . So."

The whistling would begin.

When the strenuous lesson was over, they would sit together resting, all difficulty forgotten.

As far back as the Sixties, Cecchetti had been dancing. There was nothing Anna enjoyed more than to listen to his seemingly inexhaustible store of reminiscences.

"When Taglioni came to Russia, Anna, did you know she rehearsed in the Imperial School before her first performance? She knew no Russian. Naturally, all the pupils crowded around to watch her. She was no longer young. They saw only a small, wrinkled woman practising at the bar. When her practising was finished, they said in Russian, 'Oh you funny little thing!' 'Oh what a freak you are!' and 'Why, you're nothing but a hag!' Yes. And she, bless her, thinking they were complimenting her, kept smiling and nodding and saying, 'Ah, thank you, thank you, *mes enfantes*!' Ah, but that night—that night when she danced! She was like a fairy, so light, so weightless, so lovely. Then they felt ashamed and sorry."

"If only I could have seen her!" sighed Anna. "Is it true, Maestro, that you were born in the dressing-room of the Tordinona Theatre in Rome?"

"Yes, is true. I do not recall the event, but they tell me it was on June 21, 1850. That is a long time ago—yes? In that day there were great dancers, too—Maria Taglioni, Fanny Elssler, Carlotta Grisi—ah, I will never forget her as she danced *Giselle*! And my mother, you must have heard of my mother. *She* was a lovely dancer, too—a prima ballerina, Serafina Casagli."

"And your father? Wasn't he a *maître de ballet*?"

"Yes. My father had danced with Taglioni."

The first time Anna heard that, she sat up sharply, her eyes alight, all weariness forgotten. "Your father danced with *Taglioni*?"

"Yes. As for me, I was first engaged at the Marinsky as primo ballerino; then they made me *maître de ballet*, and then professor at the Imperial School. Ah, Russia is so dear to me! More dear, even, than Italy, my own country. When I was in Warsaw, Anna Pavlova—ah, I was so homesick for Russia! I——"

"Tell me about Taglioni!" she insisted.

"So. You're no more interested in poor Cecchetti, eh? Well, you know as a child she was very ugly? Yes. She was never what one would call pretty. Her jaw was too pronounced, her nose was too long. Elssler, now, ah, *she* was beautiful, enchanting! Tall, lithe, very white skin, lots of brown hair—*très, très belle!* She——"

"Go on about Taglioni!"

"Taglioni—yes. Well, let me see. She was more—how shall I say it?—more spiritual than Elssler. When she danced, she gave the effect of extreme lightness, weightlessness—you know? She was eighteen when she made her debut in Vienna. My father used to tell me how he had watched her father give Taglioni lessons. Taglioni *père* never knew what to do with Maria's arms!"

"Her arms?"

"Yes. He was always moaning that they were too long. And they *were* long. Many of the postures which are given to you younger dancers to-day, and which have become traditional, were given to Taglioni because her father was always trying to

make her arms look shorter! My own father would tell me how he used to rave. 'Your arms, Maria! O good Lord! What am I going to do with those awful arms of yours? Lift them! Drop them! Hold them in back of you!' He was a hard task-master, and harder on his daughter than on anyone else, but he was a great teacher. Did you ever hear the story of Taglioni's marriage, Anna?"

"No, tell me, Maestro!"

Cecchetti chuckled. "Well, in 1832 Taglioni married the Count de Voisins, and the very next day they were separated. No one ever knew why. They never even saw each other again until twenty years afterwards."

"How did they meet?"

"Well, it was a large dinner party given by the Duke de Morny. Everybody was seated at the table when Voisins arrived. He took his seat and looked around; then he said, 'Who is that she-professor seated beside Morny?' 'Why, that's your wife!' was the answer. Funny, eh?"

Anna laughed. "Yes? And then? What happened then?"

"Then the great Taglioni, seated far away at the other end of the table, said to the duke, 'Monsieur le Duc, why have you invited me to dine with such deplorable people?' Well, when the dinner was over, Voisins went to Morny and asked permission to meet Taglioni. So Morny went to Taglioni and asked if he could present Voisins. Can you imagine? Taglioni just nodded. When Morny brought Voisins to be presented, Taglioni smiled and said, 'I fancy, Monsieur, that I had the honour of being presented

to you in 1832'—that was the date of their marriage, you see! Is good, eh?" He chuckled.

More and more Anna came to look forward to these rest periods, for Cecchetti loved nothing better than to talk of days that were gone.

"When I was a baby, I travelled with my parents all over Italy, and when I was five we went to America. In those days the greatest dancers in the world were not Russian, but Italian."

"America," she murmured dreamily. "I wonder if I shall ever go there? It seems a long way off. It must be a great country, Maestro, and very large. They say people there don't think much about art, they say people in America think only about money."

"Well, I was too young to notice. Do you know, when I was very young I wanted to be a soldier? Yes, it is true. I remember the day in 1860—I was only ten, but I remember it quite clearly—I saw Garibaldi! Yes, he, Napoleon the Third and Victor Emmanuel rode abreast, and behind them were soldiers of Italy. Garibaldi was a big, strong man with a pockmarked face and enormous feet. There was a sight I shall never, never forget!"

"Tell me about the night you made your debut."

Cecchetti laughed. "That was funny! That was *another* time I shall never forget, the night I made my debut at the La Scala! The Franco-Prussian War had just ended, and all Italy was celebrating that night. The huge house was packed. Well, I was very young and I was very ambitious—and I was very *scared*! I was so nervous my knees shook together. We were putting on *La Dea del Walhalla*, and I was taking the part of a fire fiend. Of course, I was anxious to

make a hit. I wanted to do something spectacular, sensational. You see, my entrance was supposed to be diabolical. Well, I had what seemed a wonderful idea. I wouldn't enter in the usual way—ah, no, not Cecchetti! I'd leap out of a cavern and land gracefully on the stage—as if I were catapulted out of Hell, you know? Oh yes, it was to be a grand entrance!"

"And was it?"

"Wait! To help me make this high jump more effective, I had thought that off stage in the wings there would be a pair of wires to pull me up; then at the cue I'd let go of them, and that would give me a marvellous entrance. Yes. Well, as I said, I was nervous, terribly nervous. I was so nervous, in fact, that I released my hold on the wires too soon and fell with a thud on to the stage!"

Anna laughed. "Poor Cecchetti! Poor Maestro!"

"And that isn't all," he went on. "No, that isn't all. The scene continued, and we came to the point where I had to flit around the entire stage. They used candles in those days, you know, and the prompter had candles in his box. Well, still anxious to make good, I ran too close to the footlights, got my foot in the wax of the candles, and fell flat on my face for the second time! What a night! How I suffered! How I wished I had been a soldier instead of a dancer!"

Anna laughed until the tears ran down her cheeks.

"But that," he said seriously, "that wanting to be a soldier, it was only momentary. A dancer—a real, born dancer—has a single hobby, a single aim, and that is to dance! That was the case with me. Nothing

else ever interested me. A real dancer never counts the cost, never counts the toil, the years of preparation. In all my life, and it has been a long one, there has been just one love—*dancing*!" He sighed. Then he smiled. "Will I ever forget the trouble with the ballet skirts!"

"Trouble with the ballet skirts? When? How? I didn't know there was ever any trouble about ballet skirts!"

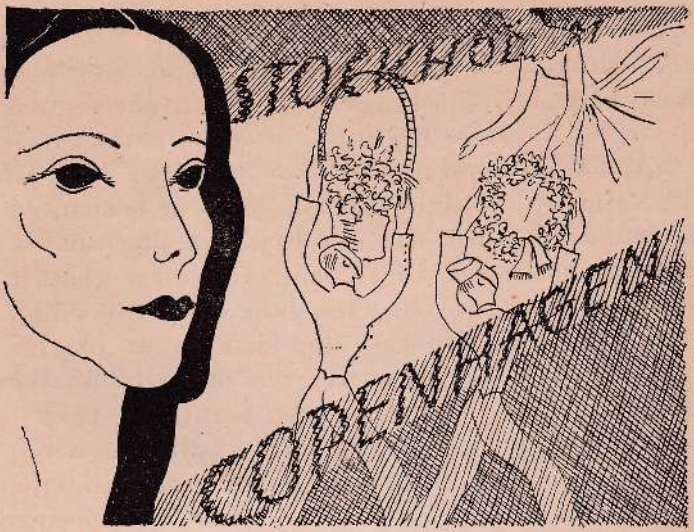
"Yes. It was—oh, around 1887. I had just come to St. Petersburg. Well, at that time the ballerinas all wore ankle length skirts. That was the case in Russia, but in Italy the style had already changed to the extremely short skirts as you wear them now. When Virginia Zucchi arrived in Russia to dance at the Imperial Opera House, she was used to wearing the short skirts, and when they brought her a long one, she told them to take it away, she simply couldn't and wouldn't dance in it. What a rumpus! What a furor this caused! People were shocked, outraged. What, change the length of the ballet skirt? *Never!* But Zucchi insisted. They argued. They pleaded. She stormed. She pouted. She wept. They brought the officials. No, positively, the Imperial ballet was under the control of the Imperial government, the skirts were government regulations, and they could not be changed. So Zucchi didn't say another word. The officials went away, congratulating themselves that they had won, and that that was the end of the matter. But was it? Oh no. The night of the performance, the wardrobe women brought her costumes to her dressing-room. When they had left and she was alone, what did she do?

She calmly took a pair of scissors and cut those skirts way above the knees to the length she wanted them!"

"And what happened?"

"Nothing. Nothing at all. She so enchanted everyone with her dancing that the short ballet skirt was allowed to remain, and after that it became a custom. Ah, in those days, my child, things were not so easy for dancers as in this modern day! In my time, the majority of the dancers had to make their own costumes. How I remember my mother and sister—sewing, sewing, sewing, every spare moment! And even my wife, in *her* young days. Did I ever tell you how I happened to be engaged for the Imperial theatres? No? Well, my brother and I brought a troupe of Italian dancers here. Petipa and General Sevolsky, who was then director of the Marinsky, were out in front during the performance. After the performance they came backstage and asked me how I'd like to dance under the Imperial management. I think I accepted because I loved the country so much. Did I ever tell you about——" Cecchetti's delightful reminiscences continued.

Meanwhile, Anna returned to St. Petersburg to learn that the town was talking about a new dancer, a new kind of dance. Fokine was enthusiastic. Almost as soon as Anna and Dandré arrived, he rushed to her home. "You must see her, Anna Pavlova! She's wonderful! It's different from anything you ever imagined! She dances in bare feet and Greek draperies. She *loathes* the ballet! You'll like her immensely. Her name is *Isadora Duncan*!"



CHAPTER ELEVEN

CHALLENGE TO A SWAN

"You Russian dancers," declared Isadora, in her decided, emphatic way, "are so wonderfully hospitable! Why, would you believe it, in some countries when I danced, they actually threw tacks on the stage? I think none of you realise how well off you are here. No country on earth treasures its dancers as Russia does."

They made, thought Cecchetti, a pleasing group. There was Dandré, world-wise and distinguished in his well-tailored evening clothes; Isadora Duncan, vital, animated, in Greek robes and sandals; Pavlova, dainty and chic in an ivory satin evening gown, unwearied after her performance. Isadora was four years older than Anna, and she looked it. Her body was rounder, more mature; for Anna, at twenty-

four, had the body of a girl of eighteen, small breasted, slim hipped.

The large, brilliantly lighted room made a pleasing background for the two women, and Cecchetti, whose artistic soul found deep appreciation in the picture they made, was scarcely paying attention to what Isadora was saying.

"Mademoiselle Duncan is talking to you, Maestro," said Dandré smilingly.

Cecchetti started. "Eh? What? A thousand pardons!"

"I was saying," repeated Isadora, "that you must be very proud of Pavlova."

"It is true," he nodded.

"And I think great credit is due you for having taught her."

He shrugged. "No, Mademoiselle, you are mistaken. It is not *I* who teach her. Anna Pavlova is guided by something inherent, you would call it soul; I call it—*genius*!"

Anna laughed, and patted his hand affectionately. "While we're waiting for the other guests, tell us something about yourself, Isadora," she said.

There was nothing Isadora liked better than to tell people about herself, her ideas, her art.

"What would you like to know?" she asked, with frank eagerness.

"Everything. Have you been dancing long?"

"All my life; but first I went on the stage in 1890. Oh, we were terribly poor! You've no idea how poor we were. As a child in San Francisco, I can't seem to remember anything except the continual struggle against poverty. My mother was a music

teacher, but she hardly made enough to keep us alive. Sometimes we couldn't pay the rent and we'd be put out. There were five of us—my sister Elizabeth, my mother, my two brothers. My parents were divorced when I was a baby. I never went to school after I was ten. They couldn't make me. I hated it. I think one of the most terrible experiences of my life was the time my mother and I left San Francisco for Chicago with only twenty-five dollars to our name! I was absolutely determined upon a dancing career and——"

They were interrupted by Alexandre Benois, who had lately returned from Versailles. He and Isadora had already met at another of Pavlova's parties, and immediately after greetings were over, Anna said, "Sit down, Alexandre, and keep quiet. Isadora's telling us the story of her life!"

"Yes," answered Isadora quickly, "where was I?"

"In Chicago with your mother," answered Dandré.

"Oh yes. Well, I couldn't get any work no matter how hard I tried, and finally we were turned out of our lodgings without a single cent! Mind you, without a single *cent*! The only thing I had of any value was a lace collar, a very fine, hand-made lace collar. So I sold it for ten dollars, and after we'd found another room, we had to live on tomatoes. I give you my word, we had nothing but tomatoes for a whole week! It was ghastly. But I was undaunted. I just *wouldn't* give up. And then I landed a job. I was rich—I got fifty dollars for one week!"

"Only one week?" smiled Benois.

"Exactly. You see, I quit after a week. Then after that we starved—yes, literally *starved*—until I

got my first job with Augustin Daly. I'll never forget it. We were living in New York then, on One Hundred and Eightieth Street, and during rehearsals—would you believe it?—I walked every day from One Hundred and Eightieth Street to the theatre on Twenty-ninth Street because I didn't have the carfare! Well, finally I began to realise that America didn't appreciate me. After my engagement with Daly closed, I'd been dancing now and then at the homes of multi-millionaires, so I went to these people I'd danced for and I asked them to give me money to get to London. I got fifty dollars from one, fifty dollars from another, but at last I managed to raise three hundred dollars. So my sister Elizabeth, my brother Raymond, Mother, and I came to London on a cattle boat. But I couldn't get any work in London either, and finally we were put out of our room and we slept in the parks for three whole days!"

"What an experience!" cried Anna. "I had no idea dancers in other countries had such a dreadful time!"

"Oh, it was awful!" went on Isadora. "Well, after that, after we'd spent three nights sleeping on park benches, I managed to get a little work now and then, but England didn't really appreciate me either. My sister Elizabeth went back to America, and finally Raymond, Mother, and I went to Paris. Ah, Paris! We loved it. We hardly knew where the next meal was coming from—but Raymond and I went every day to the Louvre, and then we'd forget about being hungry. But I was learning a great deal, a very great deal. I think the most important thing

I was learning was to meditate on my solar plexus!"

Anna leaned forward earnestly, her dark eyes puzzled. "Your—solar plexus?" she asked.

"May I ask," put in Cecchetti, "what your solar plexus has to do with dancing, Mademoiselle?"

Isadora looked shocked. "Why, everything!" she affirmed. "With you, you ballet dancers, you believe that every bodily movement starts with the spine; but that's false, that's all wrong. It's not the spine at all, it's the solar plexus that counts! You see, expression is spiritual, and the solar plexus is a spiritual centre. Before I begin to dance, I think about nothing else but my solar plexus—and after awhile I feel it! It becomes like a mighty fountain of light inside me, it suffuses me, it wells up through my whole being. My soul speaks to me as I dance, and I listen to it and obey it. There's a force in the solar plexus that must be aroused, awakened. It's a vitalising force. It's beautiful, wonderful!"

"How interesting!" said Benois.

"Oh, I realise," continued Isadora quickly, "that this is a new idea, absolutely original; but then, you see, in my way I'm a pioneer. I come from pioneer stock. My grandfather and grandmother were pioneers. In Forty-nine they crossed the plains in a covered wagon. You Russian dancers, you don't know what it means to pioneer. You have your paths all mapped out for you. You blindly follow tradition."

"Not so much as they used to," said Benois. "For instance, the ballet you saw Pavlova, Fokine, and Karsavina dance the other night, the ballet called *Eunice*, that's something in the new style, something

by *another* genius, *another* soul who isn't afraid to pioneer, Fokine. Of course, it isn't quite the departure one finds in *your* charming dances, Mademoiselle, but——"

"I mean not only dancing, but the whole system, the customs, the way you're promoted from position to position. Now, for instance, Anna, Fokine tells me that on her retirement you're to succeed Preobrajensky as *ballerina assoluta*!"

"It hasn't been definitely decided yet," answered Anna quietly. "If it happens, it will be a very great honour."

"And you dancers never leave the ballet? Never think of branching out for yourselves?"

"That would be little short of madness, Isadora! It's against all precedent, all tradition. Why should we leave? Each month I give, for instance, only six performances, and after I've danced for twenty years, I shall have my benefit performance, my pension, and, if I like, I can continue dancing or I can retire. If I, or any of us, should continue dancing after the pension starts, we get the pension as well as our salary. It would be absurd to leave!"

"It's an amazing system!" declared Isadora.

There was a pause.

The two great dancers admired each other sincerely. Isadora was always present when Anna danced, and Anna had gone to see Isadora dance at every possible opportunity.

Isadora began talking of her own experiences again. She told them how she had danced in the drawing-rooms of Paris, and how, in her own shabby studio, there was often no coal. She talked of the

holiness of the body. She told them how she had vowed to give herself and all her energy to the people, the underdog, the downtrodden.

With the entrance of Diaghilev, Isadora met her match. Diaghilev, too, liked to talk, and to talk about Diaghilev. He had just returned from Paris after a profitable exhibition of Russian paintings which he had managed. Now he was enthusiastic about a series of Russian concerts which he planned to present in Paris later in the season.

"Of course, I shall take Chaliapin," he announced. "We Russians have a great art. Why shouldn't we show it to the world? Why should we keep it all here at home?"

They heartily agreed with him, but then, Diaghilev was accustomed to having people agree with him. He was well educated, distinguished, arrogant. Even his worst enemies had to admit that he was an inspired organiser, enormously clever, and a genuine connoisseur of Russian painting. Both he and Benois had commanded the attention of artistic circles in Russia with the publication of the now defunct magazine, *Mir Iskoustva* (*World of Art*). Diaghilev's importance had increased when he was selected by the director of the Imperial theatres to publish the *Year Book*. He was a man of position and authority, and when he spoke people listened.

"Is there a window open anywhere?" he asked worriedly. "I thought I felt a draught. I can't stand draughts." He turned to Isadora. "In England, you know, it's terrible. They're positively obsessed with the thought of fresh air. It's dangerous, it's really dangerous!"

No one disagreed with him. They all knew his curious fear of catching cold, his innumerable superstitions.

"You, Mademoiselle Duncan," he said, changing the subject with an abruptness that was characteristic of him, "have given us all something to think about, you with your bare feet and your Greek draperies. Yes, even Petipa, I'll wager, and he's close to ninety! I have never understood why we Russians must stick to the old routines."

"Nor I," agreed Isadora with alacrity. "Dancing isn't a matter of routine. Dancing should be purely inspirational, *above* the humdrum. One should be free to express the *soul*! The dance should be so lovely that the beholder seems to see not a human being, not a material body, but the soul of a blossoming flower!"

"Exactly!" Diaghilev nodded emphatically. "You are right. I agree with Fokine that we need something new. As far as the Russian classical ballet is concerned, its traditions have grown positively *creaky*! I'm not speaking of Pavlova. There isn't a greater ballerina in all the world than Pavlova; and I'm not speaking of Fokine, and as for old Cecchetti" —he waved a plump hand towards Cecchetti— "Cecchetti is the master of us all!"

He sat there, his thick, sensual lips smiling. He was a handsome man, tall, well built, straight of shoulder, with a white streak cutting through the middle of his dark hair. He was ten years older than Anna. In his boyhood, living in the country on the large estates of his parents, he had been surrounded by every luxury. His father, who also had been

keenly interested in art, was an army officer. His mother had died when he was born, and his stepmother had brought him up as her own son. During his stay at May College in St. Petersburg, Diaghilev and Benois had begun their long friendship. Diaghilev had studied law with Dandré at the university. These, with Bakst, were perhaps closest to him.

"We were talking about my life," said Isadora, bringing attention to herself again. "I was saying —I mean, I was about to say that I danced from the very minute I could stand. I taught myself. I've danced all my life. Some day I intend to open a dancing school for the children of the poor. That's one of my dreams. I shall teach them the beauty of the body. I shall teach them the glory of the soul!"

While Isadora was talking, Mamasha came in, looking older now, thinner, very much awed by all the illustrious folk with whom her famous Niura was associating. She took her seat quietly in a corner and began to knit. As she knitted, she stared at Daghilev. His poise always impressed her, but she did not approve of his way of dressing—"dudish," she called it. She always said that he wore the overcoat with the wide nutria collar because his head was too large for his body, and the collar made his head look smaller. His eyes were shrewd, penetrating. He wore a monocle attached to a silk cord. Mamasha was always expecting it to fall out of his eye, but it never did. His nostrils were wide, and he wore a thin, well-groomed moustache. His hands were fat, fat and flabby. Mamasha never felt at ease with him, but she listened to him, absorbed and fascinated.

It was obvious that he was not interested in

Isadora's life. He was interested in his scheme for Russian concerts in Paris. He began to talk of it lengthily.

"And later," he declared, "perhaps I shall even bring an entire Russian opera to Paris—that is, if the concerts make money."

"An entire production, you mean?" asked Isadora. "Scenery, costumes, chorus, and all? That will be quite an undertaking, Monsieur."

He smiled composedly. "There is nothing I cannot do, Mademoiselle," he admitted.

"Yes," nodded Isadora, "I feel that way too. Especially before I dance."

Bakst came in, and everyone greeted him warmly, for he was a great favourite. He took a seat near Anna and lit a cigarette.

"Whom do you plan to take with you for your first concert season in Paris, Sergei?" he asked.

"Chaliapin, of course; Hofmann, Rachmaninov, Glazunov, Rimski-Korsakov, Moussorgsky. I shall have Rimski-Korsakov and Rachmaninov conduct their own works."

"Has Rimski-Korsakov agreed?" asked Dandré. "He hates that sort of thing."

"No, he hasn't agreed. He says he's too ill, says the travelling's too much for him, but I fancy I shall be able to persuade him before I'm through. That's just an excuse, of course."

Bakst, seated beside Anna, took out tablet and pencil and began making sketches of Isadora, Diaghilev, Cecchetti.

"I understand you're antagonistic to the ballet, Mademoiselle," Bakst said.

Isadora's fine eyes glowed. "I most certainly am, Monsieur! I think it's false, preposterous, silly. In my opinion, it's no more art than—than—well, it just isn't *art*!"

"I don't agree with you," answered Dandré.

"Nor I," put in Benois.

Excitedly, Isadora began arguing to prove her point. In the midst of this, Fokine entered, dapper and boyish in well-cut evening clothes.

"Come in, Michel," greeted Anna warmly. "Isadora's just trying to convince us that the ballet is not art!"

"Oh," Isadora insisted earnestly, "I'm not talking about *you*, Anna! I don't mean you. You're an exception. You're lovely. You're ethereal. Kschessinska, too, is marvellous, but——"

As she talked Bakst went on sketching, Mamasha went on knitting. Cecchetti, in a far corner, was dozing.

"In a way, Isadora's right," put in Fokine. "To me, she's a symbol, a symbol of liberation. Things with us have always been—well, cut and dried. And they're supposed to go on like that forever. And to dare disagree with the established custom—ah, that's nothing short of heresy! We're taught from the time we begin to hold the back always straight as a stick. Why? Why? Is it natural? And why must the *pointes* be the chief interest of a ballet? Oh, I admit there are times when they should be—like when Anna, in *Le Cygne*, expresses flying and floating; but why do most dancers use their *pointes*? Just to show off how strong their toes are! It's absurd, ridiculous. The shoes are stuffed with cork

and wool, anyhow. And look at the second position —the feet apart—like this! It's ugly. Say what you like, we each possess an inner self, and that self is beauty. Every single posture should express, should reveal that self."

"Are you contending, Michel Fokine," asked Dandré, "that a dancer should ignore classical ballet technique?"

"No, of course not. I don't mean that at all. A dancer must know his technique. Think of the centuries of effort, of thought, of genius, of experience that have gone into it!"

He talked well. His was an intelligent, distinguished face with a prominent nose, a firm mouth, a cleft chin.

"Yes," answered Diaghilev, "and it's a fact that outside Russia the ballet is nothing. What does Paris care about ballet nowadays? Or America? It's deplorable. The world needs more Pavlovas. Like Taglioni, Pavlova doesn't dance, she floats. I think she could walk over a cornfield without even bending an ear!"

"Will you dance for us later?" asked Benois.

"Oh no!" cried Isadora. "You really shouldn't suggest such a thing! Why, she's just finished a performance! She must be completely exhausted."

Anna laughed. "I'd love to dance for you!" she said.

Isadora sighed. Her eyes followed Anna's graceful figure as she left the room. "You Russians! You're all so wonderful, so kind—especially to me, a foreigner. Almost the first day I arrived in St. Petersburg Kschessinska called on me—a little thing,

loaded down with diamonds and sables and pearls. She invited me to come and see her dance, and that night a lovely carriage called for me. It was just packed with soft furs to wrap myself in. And waiting for me in the box were flowers, candies. It was wonderful. And just a few days later, Pavlova called. She looked so lovely! She was utterly different from Kschessinska. She was dressed simply and she wore no jewellery at all except ear-rings. She asked me to see her that night in *Giselle*. And after the show she invited me to dinner here, and I met you all.

"We had dinner here that night, remember? And we talked and talked. It was five o'clock in the morning when we left. Pavlova said to me, 'Do you want to see me practise?' I said, 'Yes, of course.' So she told me to come to the practise room at eight-thirty that same morning! Can you imagine? She doesn't get to bed until after five—and at eight-thirty I'm to come and see her practise! I was absolutely worn out, but I went, thinking surely she wouldn't be there. But she was. There she was in her white tulle dress, already practising at the bar. She kept it up hour after hour. I never saw anything like it. I never believed such a thing was possible. For three solid hours I sat there watching Pavlova. She's amazing. She's indomitable. She never stopped, never let up. I think she must be made of iron. Well, at twelve o'clock, we had luncheon. Pavlova sat there, as white as her dress, and just pecked at things. Me, I was ravenous, of course. *Then* what happened? Did she, poor thing, go home and rest? Not she! She drove me back to my hotel and then she went off to a rehearsal!"

She turned to Cecchetti. "Is it that that makes her great, Maestro? Is it that untiring, ceaseless effort?"

Cecchetti shrugged, smiled. "One cannot explain genius," he said.

As she left her friends to give the order for supper, Anna's mind reverted to the proposition made yesterday by Monsieur Edouard Fazer. He proposed taking a small Russian troupe of eight men and twelve girls on a trip to Riga, Helsingfors, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Prague, and Berlin. Should she go? Both Cecchetti and Victor thought so.

The trip would begin in May, and the company would include Egorova, Adolph Bolm, and herself as prima ballerina. Of course, there was no question of permanently leaving the Marinsky. They would return after this short tour, and take up their work in Russia again.

But so many people, including Diaghilev, advised against it. "The tour will be a failure," everyone said. "Neither the Germans nor the Swedes will appreciate Russian ballet!"

Still, she had never been outside Russia. And had she not always said that she would travel, like Taglioni?

The familiar voices of her friends reached her. Bakst, low and laughing. Isadora, volatile, decisive. Diaghilev, authoritative, dictatorial.

"I have dreamed of having a school for so long," Isadora was saying, "and at last I've decided. I shall open it in Berlin. I shall teach children what beauty means. They will learn how to concentrate on their solar plexus——"

Friends. It was good to have friends. Anna

Pavlova, in that moment, had a swift premonition that these were among the few real friends that she would ever make. She had a premonition, too, that she was going to leave them, leave Russia and Mamasha, and the queer little shabby house in the country where they went in the summers.

Leave all that, and not just for the few weeks of this proposed tour, but leave it—forever.

"But this is silly!" she told herself sternly.

Why should she feel that the time was coming when she would say farewell to all the familiar scenes of her life, to the dear, friendly, loquacious folk who made up her world? How utterly foolish this was! Why, the tour was to be a short one. She would return, and that would be the end of it. But why go at all when she had everything here that she wanted? Here she was loved. Suppose, after all, they should not like her in Germany, in Sweden? Suppose Anna Pavlova returned to Russia—a failure outside her own country?

"Are you afraid to risk it, Anna Pavlova?" she asked herself scornfully. "Are you afraid? Why, this is not a tour, this is a—a—*challenge*! Very well, I accept it. My mind is made up. I will go."

When she returned to her guests, her head was high, her usually pale cheeks were flushed, and she was smiling.

"How radiant you look, Anna Pavlova!" exclaimed Benois.

"I *feel* radiant, Alexandre Benois. I have just accepted a challenge!"

"A challenge?" asked Isadora excitedly. "Who dared challenge Pavlova?"

"*Pavlova*," Anna answered gaily.

"I don't understand."

"I'm going to accept Monsieur Fazer's offer and go with the troupe to Germany, Copenhagen, Stockholm."

"Ah," said Diaghilev, "you'll be sorry, Anna Pavlova. They have absolutely no appreciation of the ballet there. They don't understand it. It's not part of their culture. Be wise, stay here where you belong."

"*That*," responded Anna quietly, "is the challenge! Besides, when I was very young, just making my debut, I thought I'd travel—oh, perhaps not extensively, but to other countries as Taglioni did."

"Stay here," said Bakst gently, "where we all love you. Why should you go away?"

"Yes, why?" asked Diaghilev.

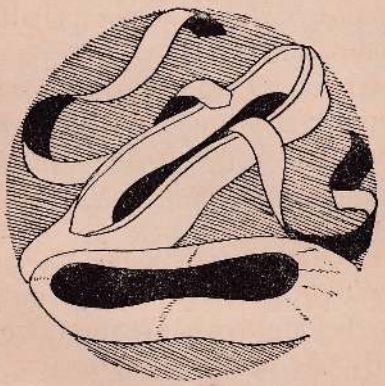
"I don't know," answered Anna meekly, "except that it's a *challenge*. I *must* accept a challenge; that's a kind of code of mine."

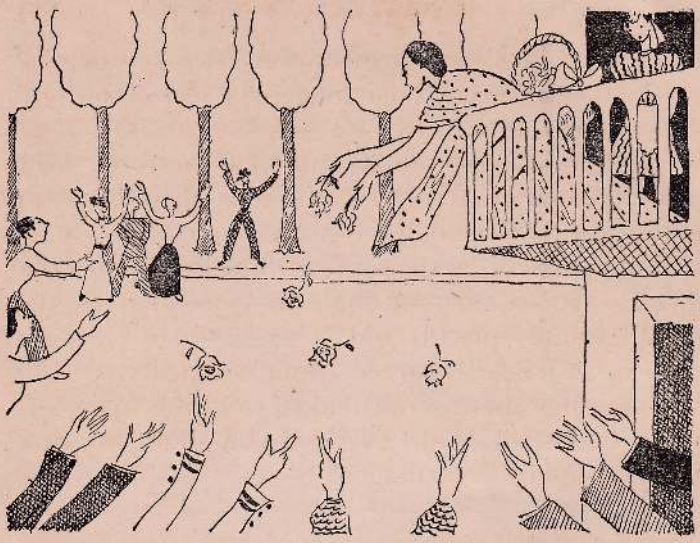
"And when you return to Russia, I shall be gone," sighed Isadora. "I wonder if I shall ever see you again, Anna Pavlova. You're one of the few women I really like. I wonder where and when and *if* we shall meet again."

"That's the trouble with people like us," answered Anna, "our lives don't belong to ourselves. Our friends don't belong to us. We meet, we clasp hands, we part. It's one of the penalties we pay. Sometimes I think I should like to have no ambition at all. Sometimes I think I should like just to have a little home in the country somewhere—and children, lots of children. But that, too, must be denied."

"And why?" asked Bakst, looking from one to the other, his dark eyes alight. "We work ourselves to the bone. We work harder than any slaves *ever* did. We work day and night. We sweat and worry and strive. Our bodies are constantly at a tension ordinary people cannot comprehend. Why do we go through all this? Why can't we be content merely to *be*? Fifty, a hundred years from now, who will ever have heard of Bakst, Diaghilev, Duncan, Pavlova, Fokine, Cecchetti?"

"Ah," said Dandré, in his quiet, friendly way, "that is where you are wrong, my friend. As long as there is art, as long as there is dancing in the world, *those six names will be remembered*!"





CHAPTER TWELVE

THE TURNING POINT

RIGA, with its winding streets, its old-fashioned Gothic houses, was like not another country, but another world, to Anna Pavlova. Though the troupe remained only long enough to present two ballets, they had a great ovation. Helsingfors lay ahead of them, then Stockholm, Copenhagen, Prague, Berlin.

"You know," Cecchetti said one day, as they were driving through the streets of Helsingfors, "I miss Victor Dandré. I like your husband, Anna. He's a man of honour, of high principles, a man one can depend on."

She laughed. "I've certainly come to depend upon Victor for everything. I'm a very fortunate, very happy woman, Maestro. Victor couldn't get

away from St. Petersburg for these first few weeks, but he'll join me in Copenhagen. I feel absolutely lost without him. He'll be so glad to know how kind Riga has been to us, and Helsingfors. You know, people tried to tell me that there was no appreciation of the ballet outside Russia!"

"I hope it will be the same in Stockholm, but the Swedes are so unemotional, so—so—what is the word I want?—placid, cold!"

"Yes, so I hear," agreed Anna worriedly.

"Speaking about Copenhagen reminds me——" began Cecchetti, "did I ever tell you about my first engagement in Copenhagen?"

"No."

"Ah, that was unforgettable. I was a very young man, and my mother and sister and I were booked for an engagement in Copenhagen. We had already played Christiania, and when we got on the train they told us we'd have to change at a place called Sala. It was bitterly cold, I remember, snowing hard. We reached Sala, got out of our train, sat down comfortably on the other train. All at once an official came along, jerked open the compartment door and said something. Of course, we didn't know what he was saying. But I wanted to be polite, so I shook my head. I never *shall* know what the man said, but anyhow, the next thing we knew he bounded into the compartment, grabbed our suitcases, and carried them out to the platform!"

"What did you do?"

"Do? What could we do but follow the suitcases? And the minute we were outside, the man gave a whistle and off went the train. I tried to tell them

we wanted to go to Copenhagen. I ran around saying that to everybody. I said it in every language I knew—Russian, Italian, German, French. At last I found someone who spoke French. He said the train we wanted had just gone—*and it was the very train we had been on!* It is true. And it turned out there wasn't another train that day. I kept saying we *had* to get to Copenhagen, we had to, we had an engagement there! Well, it developed that there was a freight train due presently, and we could ride on that. So we did. It was unheated. I'll never forget how cold it was on that freight train and how my poor sister's teeth chattered. It was the first and last time I ever rode in a freight train!"

"A fine way," laughed Anna, "for the Cecchettis, the great Italian dancers, to arrive!"

In Stockholm, after her usual three hours of practice, Anna and Cecchetti went on a visit to the palace. Everything interested her, delighted her. She enjoyed particularly a large salon filled with glass cases of ancient trophies and mementos. How much loveliness there was in the world! Pavlova was happy as she left the palace and walked through the clean, sunlit streets, the fat little man walking briskly beside her. She was increasingly grateful to him. The difficulty with her back was being overcome.

"To-day," she remarked, "I feel a deep, inner sense of satisfaction with life, with the world, with myself. But I keep wondering, Maestro, what will my future hold? I feel as if I were just on the threshold of something, some revelation, some solution to all

questions. Yet I keep asking myself, what will my future hold? Twenty years of dancing and then retirement on a comfortable pension, and teaching, perhaps, like Sokolova? I can't imagine not dancing. I can't imagine being old—old and misshapen. No, I can't imagine it. I'm sure it won't happen to me."

He gave her a smile that was fond and paternal. "So, you have decided, eh? You have decided you will never stop dancing and you will never get old. You—so young. Such a child. Not twenty-five yet and talking about getting old. It is a long time yet before you should begin to contemplate such a thing. When you're my age, when you're fifty-seven, then is plenty of time to begin to *think* about maybe getting old—*some day!* But you have already achieved great things. When you return to Russia, you'll be made *ballerina assoluta.* In a whole generation only two or three women ever attain that great honour. Tell me, Anna Pavlova, when you were at school, taking fencing lessons and dancing lessons and becoming an acceptable pianist, did you ever *dare* dream so high?"

"Yes," she answered, "I dared. How can one achieve anything unless one dares to dream? Well, they say the house is sold out for a week in advance. They say the King himself is coming to-night. That doesn't seem as if Stockholm isn't interested in ballet!"

"It is one thing to be interested, to be curious," he answered, "and another thing to *understand* it."

Anna was silent. She was thinking that all the new ballet slippers which had arrived that morning

were perfect; and this was nothing short of a miracle. She ordered her slippers from Niccolini Romeo of Milan. Most of the other dancers ordered from the same maker. It was a small, dingy, much-littered shop on an obscure side street, but Romeo made every stitch by hand. Though Anna was forever writing the man long, angry, excited letters, even drawing diagrams, invariably when a box arrived she would only be able to make use of a few pairs.

It was always an event when the huge box, sometimes containing a hundred pairs, was delivered to her dressing-room. She tried each pair on, tossed them aside, reached for another. In a few moments the floor would be littered with new ballet slippers, and in the midst of them would be Anna, gesticulating, ejaculating, angry, often in tears.

"That Romeo! That Romeo! Oh, what a letter I'll write him *this* time! What's the matter with the man? This is terrible! What am I going to do?"

Then at last would be one pair exactly right. Instantly she was all laughter, holding them up with the delight of a child, putting them on again, dancing about. Sometimes she tried other makers, but always, hopefully, she returned to Romeo, the maker in Milan.

Yes, she thought, it was a good world, especially now that almost all the slippers in the last shipment had been correct. Her practice hours to-day had gone unusually well. Cecchetti was pleased with her. Not once had he tossed his stick across the room. She must work harder than ever now. Her art must continue to grow, to expand. She could

recognise no limit to beauty, to expression. Never must she let herself relax, never! She was destined for greatness. Nothing could stop her.

When this tour was over, she would return to the Marinsky. Yes, they would welcome her back. Must her art begin and end with Russia? It was a question she often asked herself lately.

Always before a performance Anna was nervous, but she had never been more so than on that opening night in Stockholm.

The King sat in the box, a very old man, his eyes focused upon the dainty, girlish figure which seemed hardly to touch the stage. When the performance was over, the audience kept calling her back.

"*Brava! Brava! Pavlova! Brava!*" rang from every corner of the vast auditorium.

She took bows with Bolm, with Egorova, with the entire company, alone. The applause continued. When she rushed off into the wings, Cecchetti was there. He caught her in his arms and kissed her. His eyes were filled with tears of joy. "You have touched the peaks to-night!" he exclaimed.

At last it was over. Her carriage, waiting at the curb, was piled with flowers. There had been more than the carriage could hold, and she had sent loads of flowers to the hospitals. As she left the stage door, a great, silent throng greeted her. Used though she was to crowds, to being stared at, it always embarrassed her. But these people were different from the usual crowd. They were no longer cheering. They were silent, awed, reverent. They made a little lane for her, but no one said anything, there wasn't even a murmur.

They had unhitched the horses from the carriage, and the crowd silently pulled it along the streets to her hotel. Others walked beside the carriage, staring at her—old women, old men, young girls, men in evening clothes and top hats, men in smart uniforms, men in business suits, men in rags. Their strange *silence* had something uncanny, something dynamic in it. It was a tribute, of course; but not to *her*, Anna decided. No, not alone to her, but to the others, to the little troupe which had worked so hard and so brilliantly.

Yes, that was it. They were merely paying this tribute to her because in their eyes she represented the company.

Arriving at the hotel, she hurried to her suite. It had been a long, exciting day and she was tired. But outside the crowd lingered.

"Why don't they go home?" she asked concernedly. "Why do they wait like that?"

"They are waiting to see you, Anna Pavlova," answered the chambermaid, obviously a peasant.

"To see me? But—they just *saw* me!"

"They want to thank you. They want to tell you —somehow—what you brought to them to-night."

"I?"

"Yes, you. You alone."

Anna stood shaken, incredulous. As she waited, the crowd began to sing, to call for her.

Cold? The Swedes—*cold*?

The small, feminine figure, with the maid beside her, stepped out on the balcony. Transfixed, she gazed down upon that sea of strange, upturned, eager faces. Their cries grew louder.

"Pavlova! Pavlova!"

"What can I do," she thought, "to show them how grateful I am?" Suddenly she remembered an enormous basket of lilies and roses that had been presented to her over the footlights.

"Quick!" she cried, "bring me the tall basket of flowers!"

The maid left hurriedly and returned almost at once with a basket which stood nearly as high as Anna herself. Anna began tossing flowers upon the crowd below. She watched the hands uplifted in eagerness to catch her roses. She heard the laughter, the cheers.

Puzzled, confused, she turned to the maid. "What —what have I done that they should wait like this, just to see me? Most of these are working people, delivery boys, clerks, sewing women. They're tired. They've had a hard day. They'll have to get up early to-morrow. Some of these people are old. Why are they here? What have I *done* that they should feel like this?"

The answer to that question was to mark the turning point of Anna Pavlova's life, to present a glorious new goal which never left her. Later, years later, when she looked back upon this night and realised how this girl's words had motivated her entire career, she thought how odd it was that she never knew the girl's name, never saw her again, never even remembered her face; yet the words were to remain with her, to live forever in her consciousness, to accompany her on strange voyages, to echo through her mind when she was weary, when she was ill, when she was depressed.

The answer came quietly. "It's because, for a few hours, you've made them forget that they're poor and old and tired. You've made them forget their humdrum lives, their pains, their fears, their worries. Why are they here, Madame? Why are they here? *It is because you have brought joy into these people's lives!*"

She had brought joy into these people's lives!

Anna's eyes, now abnormally bright, looked into the sky, into the silent stars, into eternity.

She, Anna Pavlova, had brought joy into these people's lives!

A swift, incoherent, humble little prayer went up in gratitude to God. Standing there on the balcony that night, Anna Pavlova made within herself a solemn, secret vow.

Now she knew what she would do after this tour was finished. Now it was all settled. Now she knew. Now she was sure. Russia? Yes, she would return, but not for long. She would never be *ballerina assoluta*. The state pension? It meant nothing.

She would go all over the world, all over the whole wide world, into little towns and big towns. She would never stop. No, nothing would stop her. Dancing . . . dancing . . . dancing. All over the world, into its corners, its hidden places; into its ugly places, into its beautiful places—wherever there were *people* she would go.

And always, always she would live for this, she would dedicate herself to this one thing. *To bring joy into people's lives!*

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

NEW FIELDS TO CONQUER

THE morning after she had made her momentous decision, Anna Pavlova was invited to meet the King. Dressing for her appointment, she was frankly thrilled. When at last the luxurious court carriage stopped before the hotel, and she, looking little and feminine and radiantly young, stepped into it, she felt like a veritable princess. Riding through the streets, she saw people staring at the carriage, then at her. There were nudges, whispers, "It's Anna Pavlova, the great dancer! She's going to meet the King!"

Yes, Anna Pavlova was going to meet the King. He was not the last king she was to meet, nor was he the first, for Nicholas of Russia had often congratulated her upon her performances. She

wondered, however, about King Oscar. Nicholas was kindly, simple, paternal. Would Oscar be stern, forbidding, surrounded by great pomp and ceremony? Would he be sitting on his throne, perhaps? Would he wear state robes and a crown? Should she kneel? Should she kiss his hand? Why hadn't she thought to find out about these important things?

She forgot these questions when she stepped from the carriage and was shown into the same lofty salon which she had visited only yesterday as a tourist. The lovely, long room with its highly polished floor and ornate candelabra was empty and silent. Oh, the beautiful, beautiful things it held, things from all over the world! The glass cabinets with their priceless *objets d'art* made her forget entirely why she was here.

Enthralled at the treasures which lay enclosed before her eager eyes, she went slowly from cabinet to cabinet. Time passed unnoticed. Suddenly she turned, and there, at the far end of the room, standing alone, watching her with a smile, was an old, old man.

"Your Majesty!" she gasped.

In his simple, fatherly way, he put her at ease at once, and now they were walking from cabinet to cabinet, chattering like old friends. He, too, loved these things. He told her how, also, he had loved her dancing. But he had not sent for her just to converse, just to see the great Pavlova in person. He had sent for her to bestow upon her the Swedish Order of Merit. Before she left, she told him how last night had been the turning point of her life.

Henceforth, she said, she was going to dance for the joy of people all over the world. Yes, she was going to say farewell to the Czar's ballet, to all the scenes of her childhood—forever.

"Never before last night had I ever thought of my dancing like that—as something that could make people forget, for an hour or two, such things as pain and worry and fear and age. You see, ever since I was a little girl, I've thought that when I danced beautifully, I was doing the will of God. And perhaps that, too, is the will of God—that His children should forget pain and worry and age and fear."

When she left, he walked to the door with her and shook hands.

The remainder of the trip was one continued triumph. When she returned to Russia, everyone had already heard of it. Her co-workers clustered eagerly about her, wanting to know the customs of the different countries, wanting to know what the Swedish King had said, wanting to see her medal. It was then she told them of her decision to leave Russia.

For a moment there was a deep hush. Then suddenly everyone started to talk at once.

"Why, it—it's impossible!"

"Are you mad, Anna Pavlova? Why, this is against all tradition!"

"Why, you are to be made *ballerina assoluta*."

"How about your pension? Why should you give that up?"

"This is absurd. Here you have security. How do you know what waits for you beyond Russia?

Here people understand you, appreciate you, love you."

"And the risks? Have you considered the terrible risks? And the responsibilities? And the discomfort?"

"Where will the money come from? Who will subsidise you?"

"I shall never ask anyone to subsidise me," she answered firmly. "My tours will be financed by myself."

"But how?"

"One must have faith," she answered.

In a few days it was all over Russia that Anna Pavlova intended to leave, intended to sever her connection with the Imperial theatres.

"She must be mad," was the general verdict.

"Leaving! Just when she was to be promoted to *ballerina assoluta.* Whoever heard of such a thing? Throwing all that over!"

"What a shame. She is sadly misguided. She will bitterly regret it."

"Yes, and she'll be only too glad to come back. You'll see. You'll see. She's making a terrible mistake. Poor Anna Pavlova!"

The news reached the ears of the Czar. "Is it true," he asked, "that you are leaving us, Anna Pavlova?"

"Yes, Little Father. I feel that I must."

He smiled, that characteristic, wistful smile. "I'm sorry, very sorry. You are needed here. I hope you'll come back to us."

It was in 1908 that Anna Pavlova made her second tour, this time with her own Russian troupe, to Leipzig, Dresden, Prague, Helsingfors, Vienna,

Copenhagen, Berlin, back to Stockholm; but now there were no informal chats at the palace, for the man whom she had thought of as a friend was dead. The venerable, kindly King Oscar II was no more.

This second tour was a continued success, greater, even, than the first. Returning to Russia, Anna and her husband had luncheon one day with Diaghilev. He, too, had experienced that heady thing called Victory.

"Paris," he announced, "went mad about the concerts. They swarmed to the opera. Chaliapin is made. The world will hear of him from now on. We gave the entire setting of *Boris Godounov*. My backers are so happy about the success that they've agreed to finance an entire season of Russian opera in Paris."

They were sitting in one of St. Petersburg's largest restaurants. For a time Anna turned from Diaghilev to stare moodily out the window at the softly falling snow.

"Yes," went on Diaghilev enthusiastically, "a special committee has been formed in Paris. The Grand Duke is the president and the rest are society women. We intend to arrange a London season also. I tell you, it was marvellous, the ovations, the—the press notices, the——"

"I was thinking, Sergei Diaghilev," said Anna, "you've shown Paris Russian painting, Russian music. Now, why not show Paris the Russian Ballet?"

"Yes," agreed Dandré heartily, "it's an excellent idea! Why not, Sergei?"

Diaghilev shrugged and gave them a supercilious

smile, as though they were a pair of foolish children. "You don't know Paris, my friends. I do. Why, the very suggestion is absurd! I could never do that—no, never!"

"Why?" asked Anna.

"Well, for one thing the French as a whole don't know anything about the ballet."

"You said as much about the Swedes and the Germans, but see what happened on my tours! The houses were crowded to capacity every night. Victor will tell you."

"I know, I heard; but what does Paris care about what happens in Berlin or Copenhagen or Stockholm? Paris considers itself the artistic arbiter of the world. As for ballet, they've simply lost interest in it. Besides, in France, the women dancers all take the parts of men. Such a thing as a man ballet dancer is simply unheard of there. Take Nijinsky, for example. Since he made his debut we here in Russia realise his greatness. But would Paris? Never! Never! And how could I possibly present the Russian ballet in Paris without a *premier danseur*? It's impossible."

Anna and Dandré began to argue with him.

"No, no, you can't convince me," asserted Diaghilev. "Paris is unique. I know Paris like I know my own hand. I know what will make money there and what won't. Music? Yes. Paintings? Yes. Ballet—*no*!"

Though both Anna and Victor appreciated the fact that Diaghilev was an excellent business man and shrewd in money matters, they continued to insist that in this instance he was mistaken.

"Well," agreed Diaghilev at last, "I'm returning to Paris to-morrow. I'll see the Grand Duke and the committee, and I'll suggest your idea, but I'm sure it won't do any good."

So they took leave of him.

A few days later Anna received a telegram:

COMMITTEE APPROVES OF BALLET, BUT INSISTS THAT YOU APPEAR IN IT. RETURNING IMMEDIATELY.

SERGEI DIAGHILEV.

Returning to St. Petersburg, Diaghilev was one of the busiest men in Russia. He had innumerable interviews with government officials before he could even begin to organise his company. It was no easy task to get permission to transport the Russian Ballet out of Russia. Diaghilev cleverly appealed to the patriotism of these men.

"It's propaganda," he declared in his most autocratic manner. "It's good propaganda to take the Ballet to Paris."

In answer to the question as to who would head the company, he reeled off a list of important names. Pavlova, of course, and Nijinsky, Karsavina, Trefilova, Baldini, Rubinstein, Mordkin, Bolm. The choreographer would be Fokine. Scenery and costumes by Bakst and Benois.

At last Diaghilev received the official sanction. He would now be permitted to take the Russian Ballet into western Europe.

"I've already decided," announced Diaghilev, enthusiastically to Fokine. "I'll take the Châtelet. I'll make it one of the most attractive theatres in

Paris! I'll have the whole stage made larger, and and I'll have a new floor put in. I'll have real tapestries in the foyer and the corridors. And lights —new lighting. Techerepnin will conduct the orchestra. I want all the costumes and all the props sent on as soon as possible. We'll give blasé Paris something to talk about. You'll all have to work. Lord, how you'll have to work to get ready. We'll all work together."

"Yes," agreed Fokine, his slender body tense, "I can hardly wait to get started. None of us mind work, we're used to it."

"I give you a free hand, Michel. The success or non-success will depend largely upon you. You know how to stimulate these people to give their best. Thousands of pounds are being invested in this. If we fail——"

"We won't," declared Fokine, "we can't."

"We'll invite all the great names of Paris to the opening night," went on Diaghilev. "Geraldine Farrar will come, and Lina Cavalieri and Jean de Reszke—and if Isadora Duncan's in Paris, she must come too. Ah, what a clever idea this was of mine, to bring the Ballet to Paris! I wonder why I didn't think of it sooner? Well, no matter. And what a company we'll have! Pavlova, Fokine, Nijinsky, Baldini, Karsavina, Bolm, Rubinstein, Mordkin—in all the world there are no greater dancers."

Everyone concerned was immensely excited about the project. Every day Anna, Dandré, Fokine, and Bakst met to discuss the venture either at Fokine's, Anna's, or Diaghilev's. The repertoire must be decided upon first.

After Benois returned from Versailles in 1907, Teliakovsky had assigned to him the entire production of *Le Pavillon d'Armide.* Benois had written the scenario, and chosen Nicholas Techerepnin, a pupil of Rimski-Korsakov, as the composer. Fokine had been the choreographer. This ballet had made such a hit that now it was one of the first to be decided upon. Then, of course, there was *Les Sylphides,* which had been designed by Fokine for a charity performance, and *Cleopatra* must be included, and the dances from *Prince Igor.*

Diaghilev, now an impresario, kept looking at Fokine and crying, "Give me something new! Give me something *new*!"

And Fokine would answer heatedly, "I will! I will! Only now there isn't time! We're to open this summer!"

Anna was not sure that she ought to accept Diaghilev's offer, generous though it was. Already she had signed contracts to appear in Berlin and Vienna at the identical time when Diaghilev proposed to open the ballet in Paris. However, at Diaghilev's insistence, she finally agreed to cut short her engagements in the other cities.

The company would open at the Châtelet. It was an old theatre, very run-down, but Diaghilev hurried back to Paris to superintend renovations. The theatre must be practically rebuilt to accommodate the large Russian troupe.

Rehearsals were incessant—and these were the only known occasions that Diaghilev arrived anywhere on time. The company rehearsed day and night. They slept most of the time curled up in the

dressing-rooms or in the boxes. Food was brought in from neighbouring restaurants. The theatre, still being made over, was filled not only with dancers, but with workmen. There was hammering from the balcony, the stage. Fokine, working at fever pitch, paced back and forth, shouting, "This noise! This noise! Stop this noise!"

"We *can't* stop it," Diaghilev would shout back at him in a frenzy, "the theatre's got to be finished!"

"This noise! I tell you, Sergei Diaghilev, I can't stand this *noise*! I can't think! I can't hear the music! I can't stand this noise!"

But he did stand it. And from the opening night, Diaghilev's Russian Ballet was a sensation.

"I'll continue to produce ballets!" Diaghilev cried. "Nothing but ballets from now on. Already I'm making my plans for our next Paris season. Fokine will continue in charge of production, of course. For scenery and costumes we'll have Bakst, Benois, Roerich, Golovin. As for music, Stravinsky, Rimski-Korsakov, Borodin, Techerepnin. Our second season will be even greater than the first."

"We'll have *new* ballets next year," affirmed Fokine. "Do you remember, Sergei, that composition you and I and Benois heard at a concert last week? It's by a new composer, very modern. I've an idea that man could compose music for ballets. Why not write to him? Tell him to come and see me and I'll explain what I want. His name was Stravinsky, wasn't it?

"Yes. Igor Stravinsky. Well, I will write to him. Yes, we'll have a whole new programme for next season. Greater than ever!"

Meanwhile a vague dissatisfaction had settled upon Pavlova. She enjoyed working with Fokine. She liked Diaghilev, understood him, thought him unsurpassed as an organiser, but she realised that her own personality would be submerged if she continued under his direction.

"I think," she told Dandré, "I think now we go to England."

And they did.

Her three years of training with Cecchetti were finished. The trouble with her back had been entirely overcome. No longer did she need to practise in knickerbockers. It was not easy to part with the amiable little man to whom she was increasingly grateful.

"Is it good-bye then, Maestro?" she asked pensively "Is it always to be good-bye to those I love?"

"It is what you have chosen, Anna Pavlova; and it does not really matter to you—only dancing matters."

"And what will you do now?"

"Diaghilev wishes me to remain here to teach Nijinsky and Karsavina."

"I see. Well, it's really good-bye then, Maestro."

"You have new fields to conquer, Anna Pavlova, and never doubt but what you will conquer them. Paris is still talking about your debut in *Les Sylphides*. I think no one will forget that production in a hurry. You were like a cloud floating against the glowing dark-green shadows. Ah, I was proud of you that night, Anna Pavlova. I shall always be proud of you."

"Thank you, Maestro," she answered feelingly.

"Since the fifteenth century there have been

ballets, but I think there was never a more exquisite ballerina. You are right to leave Diaghilev. The man has greatness in him, but he is undoubtedly a dictator. His dancers, do they dance for themselves? Do they dance for the delight of the audience? No! They dance for Diaghilev! Always for Diaghilev! But you—you must dance for yourself."

"And," she answered, wistfully, "to bring joy into people's lives."

Almost at once after taking rooms at the Hyde Park Hotel, Anna sauntered forth through the unfamiliar London streets in search of an agent. She knew scarcely any English, and she was not cognisant of theatrical procedure in this strange country, but she knew that here in England one must have at least at first, a reputable agent. Well, there were agents in London, and surely every one of them had heard of the famous Pavlova. Naturally, she had only to announce her name and they would receive her with open arms.

Accordingly, it was with the utmost confidence that Anna entered the office of an agent. He looked her over coldly, critically—yes, young, attractive, simply but tastefully dressed, very distinguished, speaking broken English.

"Hmm. Hmm. You say your name is——"

"Anna Pavlova."

No flicker of interest crossed the bland English face. "Russian, what?"

"Yes."

"Hmm. Er—I say, what do you do, Miss Pavlova? Do you act? Dance? Sing? What?"

"I dance," she answered simply.

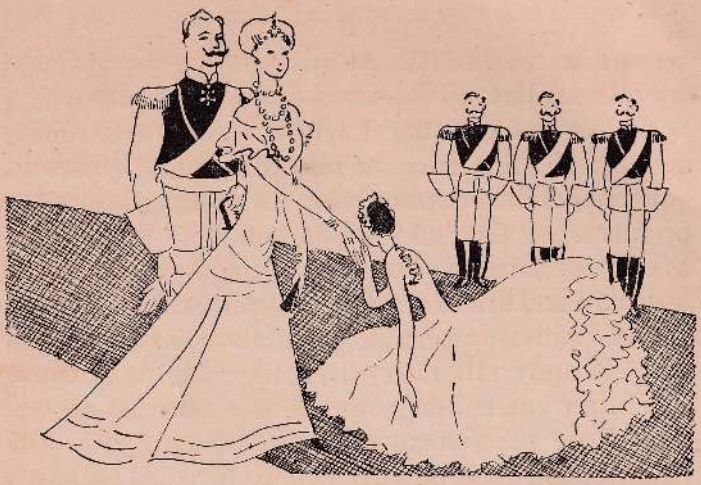
"Hmm. Yes. Well—bring your tights to-morrow and I'll see what you can do."

Stunned, perplexed, Anna left the office. Was it possible that she was unknown here, that no one—no one in all England had heard of Anna Pavlova? What was she to do *now*?

Then her well-shaped head with its tightly coiffed dark hair went up gamely. This—why, what was it? What was it, after all? It was nothing more than another challenge!

"Bring your tights," indeed!

But how was she to get a proper showing in England? Try as she would, she could think of no way. Would she be forced to return to the Russian Ballet? Or would she, after all, be compelled to return to Diaghilev? Or—would she "bring her tights?"



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE WARNING

BUT the "Pavlova luck" had not deserted Anna. It was shortly after her interview with the agent that she had received a visit from Lady Longborough. Anna knew little English, but Dandré, who was an accomplished linguist, was on hand to do the interpreting. Lady Longborough explained that friends had written her, athrill with Pavlova's artistry. His Majesty had heard about it and was curious. Would Madame Pavlova dance for Their Majesties? Lady Longborough herself would give the party on her estate, St. Dunstan's, Regent Park. There would be a specially constructed stage. It would be the smartest social event of the season, and all the members of the Court would be present.

Immediately after arrangements had been settled,

Dandré wired Mikhail Mordkin, who was in Paris with Diaghilev, to join them as Anna's partner.

And so it was that Pavlova made her London debut, dancing before the most critical, aristocratic, and important personages of the realm. When her performance had ended, she was told that Their Majesties were waiting to meet her. She and Mordkin had finished the programme with a Russian dance. Anna wore a Russian dress of rich, stiff brocade, and a tall, heavy headpiece. In this costume, becoming but cumbersome, it was not easy to descend from the improvised stage. Seeing her difficulty, Edward VII himself stepped forward gallantly to assist her to the ground.

All ceremony was abolished. The King disliked it, anyhow, and cheerfully dispensed with pomp whenever possible. His queen, Alexandra, was reserved and dignified, but none the less gracious, and the three stood for a long time, laughing, talking. Next day all London heard about Anna Pavlova. Alfred Butt called upon her promptly with a generous contract in his pocket.

"You will dance at the Palace, Madame?" he asked. "In vaudeville? Variety, as we call it here?"

"Vaudeville? Variety? What is this vaudeville?"

Dandré explained, and Anna signed the contract.

Her success was phenomenal. Crowds were so great around the stage door at every performance that the police had to be called in order to permit Pavlova to reach her car.

"How patient they are, these people!" she murmured. "Their patience always surprises me. I can't help *worrying* about them!"

Dandré laughed fondly. "Will you never get used to crowds, Anna?"

"I think I never shall. Oh, I know I *look* very composed and nonchalant, but I always feel embarrassed when I walk through a waiting crowd. Sometimes I'm glad when we have a matinee for just that reason, because on matinee days I rest in my dressing-room between performances, and so I don't have to face those peering, waiting eyes!"

For her first engagement at the Palace, Pavlova and her partner gave *Le Cygne*, *Valse Caprice*, *L'Automne Bacchanal*. One evening word came backstage that Alfonso, King of Spain, was in the box. "No one in the audience knows about it," said her informant. "He enjoys nothing better than going about incognito."

But Anna had scarcely opened her eyes next morning before a great basket of orchids was delivered. It bore the card of Alfonso of Spain.

Pavlova loved London as much as London loved Pavlova. In 1910 she began her second triumphant London season. At this time she had a longing for a home, a real home of her own, a place tranquil and lovely that would always be waiting for her when she returned, exhausted from her wanderings. Every spare moment during weeks, even months, Anna and Dandré went hunting for this home. At last they found "Ivy House" at Hampstead, which had belonged to Joseph Turner, the famous English painter.

For years it had remained tenantless. The house itself was badly run-down, the wide grounds weed-grown, neglected. But in the garden, as Anna

entered, innumerable birds were singing. She stopped spellbound, listening delightedly.

"The birds!" she whispered. "There must be hundreds of them. Listen, Victor, listen, it's the sweetest sound in the world."

"Yes, the birds are attracted to this place because there are so many berry bushes."

"And the berry bushes shall remain because the birds love them. Oh, I *do* hope the birds will never leave after *we* come to live here, too!"

"You mean you've already decided upon this place?"

"I love it," she announced, her eyes already glowing with the joy of possession.

"But, Anna, good heavens, my dear! See how much fixing over it will take! The inside will practically have to be rebuilt."

"It is the house I want," she answered. "I shall be very proud to live in a house that once belonged to an *artist*! Yes, Victor, this—this is—*home*!"

With characteristic impetuosity, she could not wait to begin renovating. There must, of course, be a studio—a big, beautiful, sunlit studio—the entire house would revolve around it. Then there must be gardens, many gardens, wide and spacious. There would be a conservatory and an aviary. She designed a lake with stone steps running down to it, a stone walk bordering it, a fountain in the centre, and there would, of course, be swans, her very own swans.

The house drew her, held her enchanted. Day by day, she watched it emerge from a dilapidated, unkempt dwelling into something stately, serene and

beautiful. The gardens, her very own gardens, were her particular delight, but even more than these she loved her swans. At first there were only two. The male was named Jack, and Jack was frankly bad-tempered. Jack was Dandré's chief concern.

"Anna," he would say, "*please* keep away from him! I tell you, these birds are dangerous. I once had a friend who had a valuable hunting dog. The dog's leg was broken by the blow of a swan's wing. You *must* be careful, Anna. And look what Jack did to the gardener the other day—knocked him down. Anna, *please* be careful!"

But Anna was not afraid of Jack. She would spend hours by the lake, feeding her swans, talking to them. Gradually they came to know her, and finally Jack would permit her to fondle him. When she called, he would come to her, as obedient as a dog. After a while it was delightful to see Anna tease him, push him, laugh at him, talk to him as if he were human, rub her face against Jack's smooth beak. After a year or two, there were pigeons, a flamingo, a peacock. The peacock, Anna declared, was a glutton. Scarcely would she and Dandré seat themselves for luncheon, which was served on pleasant days before the French windows, when the peacock would appear, strutting in front of them, spreading his tail, demanding attention, begging for food.

In due time the conservatory, the aviary, were built. From every strange country she visited, after this, Pavlova collected birds, and when she was at home she fed them herself. The pigeons knew her. They would come to her whenever she entered the

garden, circling about her, perching on her arms.

Next to the birds, she was enamoured of gardening. Dressed in overalls, early in the morning, she would be digging away, planting, transplanting, and having long, earnest talks with the gardener.

She had always loved the country, but never with the deep appreciation which she felt now. There were times, these days, when the bustle of the city, the excitement of the theatre, left her wearied and dejected.

Proudly she brought her mother and grandmother from Russia to see her palatial new home. She wanted them to remain with her in England, but, unable to speak English, they grew homesick for Russia.

"How proud you are of your first new home!" Grandmother exclaimed. "Like a child with a new toy. And Victor tells me you planned it all yourself, even laid out the gardens."

The ivy-clad house stood high on a lush, green terrace. There were wide porches, ancient trees. Anna lived quietly, very quietly. Only between performances could she enjoy Ivy House, and there was never any time to do much entertaining.

As she had decreed, the large old house circled about the dancing studio, a huge room with handrails, a floorlength mirror, a grand piano. Except for a few sketches by Bakst, and an almost lifesize portrait of Taglioni, the walls were bare. Taglioni's picture held the place of honour, like a shrine. Inside the frame was one of Pavlova's most highly prized possessions—a bit of satin ribbon from one of Taglioni's dancing slippers.

Already Anna Pavlova had travelled from one end of England to the other, small towns as well as large. When she was away from Ivy House, she never ceased to be concerned about it. How was the garden doing? How were her precious birds? How was Jack behaving? On her travels she would sit for hours, just looking at pictures of the place, thinking longingly of the quietness of it, the ineffable peace.

At this time as a hobby, she took up photography and modelling in clay, mostly little statuettes in dancing poses. Her fame was increasing, her troupe was growing larger each season. She had engaged Ivan Clustine as her ballet master. Almost every day bore witness to a furious quarrel between these two, who were really fond of each other. Clustine, vain, hot-tempered, was always resigning—and coming back.

These days Anna Pavlova was catered to by everyone. No matter how her company strove to please her, she was rarely satisfied. "We must do *better*!" she kept saying. "We must do *better*, my doves!"

Charming though Pavlova was away from the theatre, at rehearsals she was a veritable martinet. All laughter was gone now. This was a serious business. No half measures could be tolerated. Expenses were enormous. Salaries to pay . . . scenery, costumes, transportation. There were constant financial risks, ceaseless responsibilities.

By 1910 Pavlova had visited every great city of Europe except those of Spain and Portugal. She had even made a hurried trip to New York, opening at the Metropolitan for thirty days. After this brief engagement, she scurried back to England for an-

other London season. America had been kind, the press had been enthusiastic. The usual crowds about the stage door made it difficult to leave the theatre.

"We shall come back," she told Dandré wistfully, as they stood together on the ship's deck, eyes upon the receding skyline of Manhattan.

After the return to London this time, Novikov took the place of Mordkin as Pavlova's dancing partner.

In the autumn of 1913 they were in Germany, dancing at the old Brunswick Theatre. The house was crowded, aglow with jewels. The Kaiser and Kaiserin were in the box.

When the first curtain descended, there was not a sound, not so much as a whisper from the audience. Astonished, Pavlova and Novikov stared at each other. Then, without a word, Anna walked to her dressing-room. Why this silence? Why? What was the matter? She had been in Germany before, and the public had been most enthusiastic, applause had been deafening. And now—utter silence.

"What's the matter?" she kept saying. "What's the matter? Am I not dancing well, Victor? I felt that I was. What is it? What's the trouble?"

"You were never lovelier, my dear,"

"Then what is it?" she queried childishly. "Don't they like me? They liked me when I was here *before.* How curious, how—how utterly astonishing to—to have a curtain come down and—and not even a *ripple.*"

"I can't understand it. They have strange customs here in Germany. These people are used to constant domination. I remember a story I heard once about

an orchestra leader who came to Germany from some other country. I forget which it was at the moment, but, anyway, this fellow was told that he must raise his baton the *second* the royal party entered the theatre, not a moment before or a moment after, but on the *second*. Well, he waited, and Their Majesties were late. Finally he began to wipe his glasses, and it was just at that instant that the Kaiser entered. So it took this man exactly twenty seconds to get his glasses back on his nose and his handkerchief back in his pocket—and because of those *twenty seconds* he was never allowed to conduct an orchestra in Germany again! So perhaps this silence has something to do with some other such custom. Don't worry about it, my dear."

But Anna *did* worry.

When the curtain came down on the second act, there was dead silence. Anna felt there was something uncanny about it. Her nerves were now completely on edge. Such an experience was entirely unknown to her. She went around asking her company what the matter was. No one knew.

At length a stagehand heard her queries. "I beg Madame's pardon," he said, "but there is nothing the matter. Everyone is enchanted."

"Then why don't they make some move, some sound?" she asked, distractedly. "Why don't they applaud? One would think I was dancing before a lot of dead people!"

"Has Madame not seen the Kaiser and Kaiserin in the box?"

"Yes. Well? What has that to do with it?"

"Everything, Madame. No one in the audience

dares applaud—until the Kaiser does. And he hardly ever applauds anyone, no matter how good they are."

She stared incredulously, but the man was serious. But even Wilhelm could not resist *The Swan.* After the second act, after Pavlova in her white costume had fluttered to the ground, Wilhelm stood up in his box and applauded. Now the house went mad. Suddenly the applause was thunderous. Flowers covered the stage. There was curtain call after curtain fall. Pavlova was herself again, assured, smiling. She danced to bring joy to people, and she had done so. This was their way of telling her that they loved what she had given. All was well. She laughed, bowed. Seemingly they could not get enough of her.

Finally, exhausted but happy, she went to her dressing-room. At her door stood a member of the court, very straight and sober, in full uniform, a monocle in his eye. He clicked his heels together, bowed low from the waist, and announced that Kaiser Wilhelm was waiting to see her in the foyer.

Quickly Anna dabbed some powder on her nose and followed the man through the auditorium, which was silent now, and empty. She was no longer excited about meeting royalty. She thought of the kindly little Czar, the fatherliness of King Oscar, the good-natured, hail-fellow-well-met air of Edward of England.

But in the lobby the Kaiser and Kaiserin stood side by side, very stiff, the Court lined up meticulously behind them, their faces set and expressionless. When Pavlova approached, the Kaiser told her in a cold, formal voice that she was a great dancer,

that he had deeply enjoyed the performance, that he hoped she would come often to Germany. The Kaiserin said nothing. She only smiled, a wintry smile, and extended her hand encased in a long, immaculate white kid glove.

At first secretly amused at all this ceremony, Anna stooped to kiss the outstretched hand. Then she drew back with a little cry. She had left the imprint of her rouged lips on the Kaiserin's white glove. A shiver passed over her. The spot looked like blood! It was an omen she felt, a bad omen.

Seeing Anna's confusion, the Kaiserin continued to smile that stiff, set smile, and rolled up her glove. The Kaiser turned about sharply. His suite, which had been standing like wooden creatures, turned with mechanical precision and followed him. Anna was alone in the lobby, a small, white-clad, frightened figure, her dark eyes bleak with sudden terror.

What did her premonitions mean? War? Slowly, with sagging shoulders, she left the lobby and returned to her dressing-room. It was already crowded with people who had come to pay her tribute—well-dressed, carefree, laughing people.

Upon reaching Berlin, Anna learned that Fokine had broken with Diaghilev. "Join me here in Berlin," she wired at once.

When he came, she told him that she wanted him to produce some new ballets for her. Fokine, at thirty-three, still had the lithe, strong figure of a boy. For hours they sat together, talking happily about days that were gone.

"Could you ever imagine yourself being anything but a dancer, Michel?" she asked.

"Never. And yet, I'm sure I shouldn't have been one if it hadn't been for my mother. My parents had a summer home on the Krestovsky Ostrov, and my brothers and my sister and I used to go out in the fields and play that we were ballet dancers in the theatre. My mother used to watch us, and it was she who decided that I had talent; but my father wouldn't hear of my being a dancer. My mother argued and argued, and finally he agreed. Karsavina's father was my first teacher. Then, later, there was Guerdt. Remember Guerdt, Anna?"

"What a marvellous teacher he was. And Johannsen. Remember Johannsen, Michel? I can see him now. And Petipa——"

They spoke lengthily of old friends. Bakst, Benois, Isadora Duncan, who had opened her school in Berlin but was now travelling in Russia. They spoke of Karsavina, who was still with Diaghilev; of Diaghilev himself, who was thinking now of sending his troupe to South America. Fokine had quarrelled with Diaghilev and with Nijinsky.

"I simply couldn't get along with Nijinsky any more," he declared. "For a long time now I've worked with that company, and I've worked hard. I was fond of them. The night I resigned, we were putting on *Daphnis and Chloë*. It made me sad to leave, it wasn't easy to say good-bye. Some of them wanted to present me with a great vase of flowers, a sort of ceremony on the stage, in appreciation of what I'd done for them, you know? But Nijinsky wouldn't hear of it. He raged. He stormed. Well, the final curtain came down, and the audience began calling for me. I was in evening clothes. Nijinsky,

of course, still had on his Daphnis costume. So we bowed and bowed and smiled at each other, and when it was over, I walked straight out of the theatre, completely dejected. I hadn't even said good-bye to anyone. I was too sad. I couldn't. But when I got to my hotel, what do you think? There they were, almost the entire company, some with their make-up only half off, waiting for me, and they gave me the vase, after all!"

"You miss them, Michel Fokine?" she asked tenderly.

"Yes, terribly. You see, I'd trained them. I'd worked with them. Until your wire came, I somehow didn't want to work, I didn't even want to dance; but now I'll forget all that. Now I don't feel disheartened any more. Seeing you takes me back to other days, days at the school. Remember how proud we felt when we were chosen to appear in a play that needed some children?"

"And do you remember, Michel, that big bus they used to drive us in from the school to the theatre?"

"And do you remember, Anna, how everyone was against me when I first began to produce? Ah, it's good to see you again, Anna Pavlova. Well, now, about these ballets you want. I've always had the idea that there was wonderful ballet material in Rimski-Korsakov's *Le Coq d'Or*."

She considered this for some time.

"No," she answered, "no, Michel. I think it's wiser to dispense with anything even hinting of politics right now."

"Good heavens, why?"

"Well, it—it's a feeling I have."

"A feeling?"

"A feeling that Europe is on the brink of some terrible catastrophe."

"Nonsense."

"Heaven knows, I hope so. But all the same, you'll have to think of something else."

Their discussions continued. He made suggestions. She discarded them. At last they agreed on two ballets. Walking through the art gallery one day, Fokine was inspired by Botticelli's paintings. He arranged the dance to Liszt's *Les Preludes*, after which it was named. Pavlova danced it with Novikov. Lermontov's poem, "The Three Palms," was the inspiration which prompted Fokine to create *The Seven Daughters of the Mountain King*.

No sooner were these two ballets produced than Fokine hurried back to St. Petersburg. Later Anna learned that Diaghilev sought him out there, patched up their quarrel, and finally prevailed upon him to return to the company.

Leaving Germany, Anna too returned to Russia for a short visit with Mamasha and Grandmother. Here, as in Germany, everyone seemed happy. There was not even a whisper of war. She spent some days quietly at Ligovo, where she had been so happy as a child. It was changed now. The country was becoming more populous. For the first time, Anna was almost glad to leave Ligovo.

In March she returned to London for a short dancing season. Hearing that Cecchetti had severed his connection with Diaghilev, she wired him to join her there. He came post-haste.

Cecchetti was sixty-three now, as agile, as hearty as ever. His eyes were keen and bright as he stared at her, seeking for changes that the years had made. Physically, try as he would, he could find no change. At thirty-one, Anna's complexion was still almost petal-like in smoothness, and her body remained the body of a young girl. But yet there were changes in her. Now she was a woman of the world, accustomed to adulation, accustomed to authority. She had grown used to being obeyed. She carried herself with an increased air of self-confidence.

"I'm going on an American tour," she explained. "This time we shall not only play New York, but we'll travel from one end of America to the other. I want you to revive for me a short ballet. You'll remember it, it's quite charming—*La Flute Enchantée* (*The Magic Flute*)."

"How in the world can I do that, Anna Pavlova? How can I revive a ballet for you when you're flitting about America?"

"Maestro," she smiled. "You'll come with me."

"I?"

"Why not? You'll play the part of the Marquis. Of course, you can't refuse, Maestro. And why should you? Why shouldn't you come to America?"

"We-ell, I haven't been there since I was five. There were slaves in America then—and showboats. How well I remember the showboats. And I remember in Louisville how the rats used to swarm the streets at night. It's true. *Huge* rats, Anna—*that* long! I suppose it will be very different there now. Well, yes, yes, if you really want me, my child, I'll go with you."

"Ah, good! I can hardly wait to get started rehearsing the new ballet. We sail in December."

Cecchetti's surmise was correct. America had changed since 1855. When the train would pull into a station, Cecchetti, short, fat, carrying two immense suitcases, would be waiting at the door impatiently. No sooner had the train stopped than he would leap to the ground, old as he was, and walk directly to the first policeman he saw. To him Cecchetti spoke the one English sentence he had learned, "Please, where is the nearest Italian restaurant?"

The little man had one great, abiding fear—he was always afraid he would miss the train.

"One day the train will go," he declared, "and you will all be on it, and poor Cecchetti will be left in a strange town!"

The company could never understand why he chose the hotels he did. Usually, the worst hotels were close to the station, and these were the only hotels where Cecchetti ever stayed.

"Ah," he would sigh dismally, "how can I sleep with the noise of the trains going by all night?"

"But Maestro," exclaimed Anna laughingly, "why do you always live in those dreadful hotels near the railway tracks? Surely you're not happy, you *can't* be comfortable in such cheap, dingy places!"

He gazed at her tragically, shaking his bald head. "No, I am not comfortable—but anything is better than missing the train! Ah, poor Cecchetti! All I see of America is railway depots, theatres, policemen, hotels and—*trains*!"

No matter how early the members of the company

arrived at the station, there was Cecchetti, already waiting, a suitcase on each side of him, his watch in his hand.

"I've been here an hour," he would say. "I wasn't sure that my watch was right."

There was one morning, however, when Cecchetti was not at the station. They waited for him, watched for him, and their faces grew strained with anxiety. Where was Cecchetti?

"Something must have happened to him!" cried Anna.

The special train for the Pavlova company pulled in, but Dandré frantically arranged with the conductor to hold it.

"We can't leave without Cecchetti!" Anna exclaimed. "He must be dead! Maybe killed in one of those dreadful hotels. What shall we do?"

Meanwhile, at a station across town, Cecchetti was pacing the platform, moment by moment getting more anxious. As usual, he had arrived half an hour ahead of time. He kept looking at his watch. It was past time for the train to leave, and not a sign of the company. Why, there wasn't even a *train*! Had he made a mistake in the time? Had he read the call board wrong last night? Had they all gone and left him? What did one do in a case like this? He couldn't keep walking up and down this platform forever. If only he could speak English he could phone Anna's hotel. His face grew red. A policeman stood by, watching him curiously.

Then suddenly his face broke into a broad grin. Dandré! Dandré was running towards him, breathlessly, his usually kind eyes flashing.

"Maestro! Cecchetti! Oh, where the devil have you been? Why are you here? Hurry! Hurry! We're holding the train!"

"Where *is* everybody, Victor? I've been here long over an hour! Where's the company? Where's the *train*?"

"Where's the train? It's at the other station, of course, and the company's on it. The *other* station! Hurry, man!"

"I'm hurrying! Ah, these suitcases! I'm hurrying! Can't you see how Cecchetti's hurrying? Thank God you didn't go without me!"

They jumped into a taxi, travelled at breakneck speed through the streets, and finally arrived at the right station. Yes, there was the train, and there was the company all on it, a familiar face peering excitedly from each window.

"Here he is! Here's Cecchetti! He's all right!"

Anna was standing on the platform, her hands clasped tensely. At sight of Cecchetti she let out a little cry.

"Maestro! Victor was right, you *were* at the other station. Well, we can go now. Everything's all right. My big family is complete."

Everywhere she went dancing studios begged her either to come to visit them or to permit them to bring their best pupils to dance before her. They expected her praise. The approbation of Pavlova, most noted dancer in the world, would add greatly to their prestige. Hopefully, in city after city, dancing teachers besieged her. They would not have done so had they been warned beforehand of her extreme frankness. To have their pupils dance

before Pavlova! What excitement there was in the dance studios, what preparations. Students, mothers, fathers, brothers, all wanting to be present, all wanting to look their best, all hoping to be singled out, to be spoken to, perhaps even engaged to join her company!

Then they saw her—girlish, slim and graceful. Long afterwards they talked among themselves of how *girlish*, how young she looked. Beside her, dignified, distinguished, Dandré looked almost old enough to be her father. His body was becoming a bit heavier now. His hair was greying rapidly.

For a moment there would be a deep silence. Then Pavlova would sit in the chair prepared for her, the dancing teacher gave the signal, the dance began. When she had watched for a short time, Pavlova rose, her face white with rage, her eyes flashing.

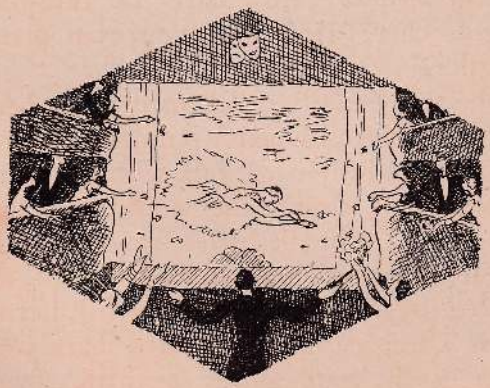
"Stop this! I can't stay to see the rest of it! There's no talent here at all, but what is absolutely unforgivable is the *method*! How dare you call yourself a dancing teacher? How dare you even presume to teach ballet?"

But she was equally quick to praise when praise was merited. Often when a pupil showed promise, she would take him aside, talk to him, advise him.

"You see, my dear," she would say, her voice caressingly soft, "in the ballet you have before you the music, design, colour and movement, all these are welded together into one beautiful, harmonious whole by a master hand. Always share your individuality with your audience fully, generously. When the part you are playing is sad, allow yourself to weep, and be expansive in your joy when

you're playing a part that requires happiness. Never —oh, never make a secret of your emotions when you're playing before an audience! On the stage you must be able to manage your personality in such a way as to transmit every single emotion *clearly* to the onlooker."

However, only to Dandré could she speak of her secret conviction about dancing. Dancing was a kind of prayer. It was expressive of that holiness, that ineffable *beauty*, that was God, it was the expression of Spirit. She still regarded her body as something sacred, a divine intrument. Sometimes in hotel rooms, after a difficult performance, Dandré would see her open her Bible. "Know ye not," she would read aloud, "that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost? Therefore glorify *God* in your body and in your spirit—which *are* God's!"



CHAPTER FIFTEEN

A PREMONITION COMES TRUE

At Baltimore Anna as usual had preceeded the company to the theatre and was practising alone on the stage when Cecchetti walked in and stood looking about. After watching him for a time in amused silence, she asked, "What are you looking at, Maestro?"

"Yes," he answered, "it's the same. The same theatre."

"What? You mean to say that you played this theatre when you were five years old?"

"Not I, but my parents. Did I ever tell you about that, Anna? No? Well, while the performance was on, I was always backstage, of course, because I was too young to be left alone in the hotel. This particular night Ronsani was dancing. I never watched

the dancing much. No, what I was interested in was the board with the big levers that controlled the lights. Ah, that board! To me, it was fascinating, marvellous! There was gaslight in those days, and for hours I would stare, enchanted, at that board. I wished I could ask the man who worked it to let me please pull one of those magical levers. Well, as I said, Ronsani was dancing. In this dance, night was supposed to come on, and the lights at a certain cue had to be lowered. Of course, the man was always there at the board to pull the levers at the right time—but there came a night when he wasn't there!"

"Oh!" gasped Anna.

"Yes. Well, the house was packed. The cue came —and no darkness. From my place in the wings, I could hear Ronsani whispering frantically in Italian, 'Lights! Lights!' He danced a few bars, and then again he whispered, '*The lights! The lights! Dim the lights!*' "

"How dreadful!"

"Yes. Ah, I thought, at last my chance. At last I can move those magical levers. So I rushed over and pulled one as hard as I could."

"Bravo! Bravo, Maestro! How precocious you were! You, a child of five, had saved the performance!"

"Saved the performance, indeed!" laughed Cecchetti. "I plunged the stage and the entire audience in total darkness. There was a veritable riot. The curtain had to come down. You can imagine the bedlam. It was awful!"

"I suppose you were punished?"

"Severely," he answered solemnly. "And this is the very theatre where that happened. Only don't worry, Anna Pavlova, now the board holds no attraction for me whatsoever." He sighed. "That was a long time ago. Adelini Patti was singing in America then, and Rachel was playing in New York to almost empty houses."

In Baltimore, as in the East, the West, great crowds waited for Pavlova. She could not escape them; crowds around her car, crowds waiting outside the hotels, crowds at the stage doors. Often, these days, a deep nostalgia settled upon her for the quiet of Ivy House, where there were no crowds.

In Los Angeles she was taken ill with an infected throat. Leaving Salt Lake City for the West Coast, the special train was forced to remain inactive for three days and three nights. Floods had washed out the bridges ahead. When they finally arrived in Los Angeles, Dandré had to carry Anna from the train to the car. She had a high fever, she could not talk, she could scarcely breathe.

A doctor was called. "You have a very bad throat," he announced. "You have a high fever. The performance will have to be called off. It is impossible for you to dance in this condition."

"It is—a tradition of the theatre, Monsieur le docteur, that—the show *must* go on!" she answered, weakly.

"I can't help that. As your doctor, I forbid you to dance."

"All the same," she answered, "I will dance. Never yet have I disappointed an audience."

People of Los Angeles did not know as they

watched that lithesome, laughing figure float about the stage that there was a doctor in the wings every night. The moment Anna left the stage he was at her side, giving her an injection which enabled her to finish each act. Her co-workers, touching her flesh in the dance, felt the heat of it, the dryness, saw the too-bright eyes, heard the laboured, desperate attempts to breathe, but they alone knew. Out front, the keenest critics were pronouncing Pavlova's performance flawless.

She had not entirely recovered when they left Los Angeles for San Francisco.

"Anna, my dear," begged Dandré, "let's cancel the San Francisco engagement. You're not yet well, and besides, the floods are still raging. I've been advised not to make the trip. I'm telling you this, Anna, although I know you won't hear of it."

"But we have a *contract*, Victor. We *must* fulfil it."

"Yes," he sighed, "I knew you'd feel that way. Well, all we can do then is hope for the best."

It was an overnight trip to San Francisco. The entire company had heard of the danger. Once on the train, no one undressed. No one wanted to go to bed. Usually there were talkative little groups formed; the women sewing, knitting, the men playing cards. But now there was none of that.

They sat, very stiff and silent, staring ahead. Perhaps at any moment death might come. The water was almost up to the windows of the coaches. The night was dark, moonless, starless. Suddenly the train stopped. Taut nerves snapped. People started praying, weeping.

In the midst of this, Anna and Dandré left their state-room and walked the length of the car.

"No, no," she kept saying, "please, we must keep very calm. It's nothing, really nothing. Victor will tell you."

"Yes," said Victor, "we're stopped to make sure the bridge ahead is safe, that's all."

"Don't cry," Anna kept pleading, "we will reach San Francisco, you'll see, my doves. We must get to San Francisco. You see, we have a *contract* to fulfil."

Yes, a contract to fulfil. She could not imagine anything interfering with that. But back in their stateroom, her hand sought Victor's.

"Victor," she said, "I'm not always easy to get along with, and I'm not always very nice to you, but—but—I love you—*so* much!" Scarcely were the words out of her mouth when the train started again. Love was forgotten. She began to laugh. "There! There, you see! The bridge is safe, and we are safe! A contract *must* be fulfilled. For heaven's sake, go tell the people to go to bed and get some sleep."

Later, when Victor had fulfilled his errand, he went to the club car for a last smoke. "Well," Victor said to the conductor, "it looks as if we'll reach San Francisco after all."

But the conductor did not smile. "You can thank your lucky stars for that," he said feelingly. "The bridge back there—the minute our last coach left it, *th' dang thing collapsed!* Whew! That was as close a shave as I ever hope to have!"

When the season in America finally ended, Dandré fondly looked forward to a period of rest at Ivy

House, but scarcely were they on the boat for Europe when Anna began mapping out another Continental tour which would begin immediately after a short visit to Russia in order to see Mamasha and Grandmother.

Meanwhile, Cecchetti was receiving cables. THE MINUTE YOU LEAVE BOAT—read the first—COME TO ME IN PARIS. SERGEI DIAGHILEV.

Cecchetti cabled back one word: IMPOSSIBLE.

Next day came another cable: YOU MUST COME. I AM AWAITING YOU. SERGEI DIAGHILEV.

Cecchetti took the message to Anna. "This is the second I've had from him. Do you suppose he's sick? Sergei is so terribly afraid of being ill, afraid of draughts, afraid to ride in open carriages. I think the man must be seriously ill. What else could it be? Why doesn't he explain?"

"What will you tell him?" she asked.

"I've already written it out." He showed her a slip of paper.

She read: SORRY, CANNOT, HAVE CONTRACT WITH MADAME PAVLOVA.

"That," decided Cecchetti, "ought to end it!"

But it didn't. The boat docked in Germany. Immediately on their arrival, Cecchetti was handed another wire.

BEG MADAME PAVLOVA TO LET YOU GO AT ONCE. NEED YOU. IMPERATIVE. SERGEI DIAGHILEV.

Again he brought the message to Anna. "It sounds serious," he declared. "The man is either dying or he's in some terrible trouble!"

"What will you do about it, Maestro?"

He made her a gallant bow. "You and I have a contract, Anna Pavlova. I have no intention of breaking it. A contract is a contract."

Anna was thoughtfully silent for some time. "No," she said at last, "no, perhaps you'd better go. Diaghilev must be in some very great trouble. I'll release you, Maestro. Let me know after you get there if I can help in any way."

So the two old friends parted again, Cecchetti bound for Paris, Anna for Russia. The day after her arrival came Cecchetti's wire:

NOTHING SERIOUS. DIAGHILEV WELL. SENT FOR ME TO TEACH LEONIDE MASSINE, WHO IS TO REPLACE NIJINSKY.

She brought Mamasha back with her to Ivy House that spring, and the two of them would sit under the quiet trees, sipping great quantities of tea, Russian style, with lemon. These intervals of rest, however, were few. Anna was preparing for another tour. Most of her days were spent in the studio, practising. There were constant interruptions, incessant goings and comings, endless planning, arranging, discussing. Clustine was there every day. Then there was Kuzma, the wardrobe man, who had been with her since she first opened at the Palace. One end of the studio had been turned into a sewing room; sewing machines, long cutting tables littered with tarlatan—which Anna always imported from America—chiffon, beads, spangles, brocades, bolts and bolts of satin. In the midst of

discussing the costumes, the principals would arrive for rehearsals. Rehearsals would scarcely get under way before scene painters would arrive to talk about new scenery; dancers would come, unknown, unbidden, seeking to find work; then there would be newspaper reporters, transportation agents, wigmakers. Finally Dandré would succeed in getting them all out of the way and rehearsal would begin again.

Anna's three maids, Dunia, Natasha, Manya, would stand clustered together in the doorway looking on.

"Poor Anna Pavlova!" Dunia always exclaimed. "She'll be completely worn out before the season even begins!"

"Yes," answered Manya crabbedly, "wouldn't you think she'd take care of herself? Look at her. Just look at her. How she works! You'd think she was a young novice, just starting on her career."

Everybody and anybody who happened to be present at luncheon time stayed. Anna would sit at the head of the table in her practice costume, very quiet, eating little, while the talk eddied about her. In the afternoon, rehearsal again; and finally at dusk everyone would be gone, the house would be quiet, and Anna with a shawl about her practice tunic would stroll down to the lake with Mamasha to look at the swans.

"Niura," asked Mamasha earnestly, "in all this travelling, all this dreadful activity and bustle, you do not forget your prayers?"

"No, never, Little Mother," Anna answered promptly. "Wherever there is a Russian church,

Victor and I attend it. I have a little holy icon. It goes with me wherever I go. I put it up in my stateroom on the boats. I even place it in my berth on the trains."

Mamasha was satisfied. "And do you still make the sign of the Cross before every entrance on the stage?"

"Always!"

Mamasha sighed. "I often think," she said, "that God Himself must be watching over you, Niura. When you're so far away from me, I love to think that. It gives me great comfort. So many things could happen—dangers, accidents; but they never do. You are divinely protected, and divinely guided, Niura, I'm sure of it!"

Mamasha had *need* of her faith during the years that were to come, for when she left this time for Russia neither of them realised that it would be a long, long while before they met again.

It was always difficult for Anna to leave Ivy House, and now it seemed more difficult than ever. When everything was packed, and the car waiting, Anna, dressed in her travelling clothes, invariably went from one room to the other, taking one last look, saying good-bye. The studio, the aviary, the conservatory, the dining-room, the kitchen. While Dandré stood, the car door open, a watch in his hand, Anna took time to bid adieu to the garden, the birds, to Jack and Mrs. Jack. And always before leaving the house, she sat down in a chair near the door and prayed, as all good Russians did in those days, blessing her beloved home and putting it in the hands of her Heavenly Father.

"Anna! Anna!" Dandré would call. "We're late! Hurry!"

She would rise from the chair and move towards him, her face tear-streaked. Whenever she left this sanctuary, she cried. Dandré would try to soothe her.

"Nothing's going to happen to it," he'd say. "We'll be back. It'll be here waiting for us!"

Germany—and Anna, strongly intuitive, felt something strange, a tenseness in the air about her. She had the uneasy feeling that she was being watched, watched in another way than as a dancer.

One evening, as she was in a restaurant with Victor, a waiter came, bowing punctiliously, holding out to her a beautiful gold and silver chatelaine bag.

"So sorry," he explained, "but in removing the dishes, I accidentally took Madame's bag. So sorry."

The bag was exactly like one that Anna owned, and she reached for it, opened it, saw that it did not contain the things she usually carried.

"No," she answered, "the bag does not belong to me," and gave it back to the waiter.

He bowed and left. She turned to Victor, her eyes worried. "That's odd," she murmured.

"Odd? Why? It seems to me a natural mistake."

"No. It's—odd. The bag was like mine, but my bag is gone!"

"Shall I complain to the management?"

"No, better not. Better not say anything about it. Victor, doesn't it seem to you that that waiter is watching us in a peculiar sort of way?"

"No, I hadn't noticed. Seems a good waiter to me. You're imagining things, Anna."

"Yes. Perhaps. All the same—let's not wait for dessert. Let's go."

Leaving the restaurant, they stepped into a cab. "Victor," she declared, "there's another cab following us!"

"Oh nonsense, my dear," he answered.

The company had engagements in Hanover and Berlin, but this time the Kaiser's box was empty. Anna and Victor were on the train to London when war was declared.

War! It had come.

A deluge of terror seized her. War. She remembered the red smear on the Kaiserin's white glove.

"It will be a long war, Victor," she muttered miserably, "a long, terrible war!"

"We must be very calm," Dandré answered. "We're Russian subjects. It's likely that we'll be detained."

Detained? She had not thought of that. What would it mean? Arrest? Detention camps? Why should they detain her? What had she done but bring joy into their lives?

The train was full of Russians hurrying homewards.

"Do you think we'll be detained?"

"Do you think it'll be too late to get through?"

"Victor"—Anna was like a child, pleading for reassurances—"Victor, do you think they'll let us through?"

"If they do," he replied, his mouth drawn in a tight, firm line, "I'll be very much surprised. They are thorough, these Germans. They'll take no chances."

Dandré's words were prophetic. At the border the Russians were ordered to leave the train. For a long time they stood there, trapped, wondering, confused. They were so close to freedom. There before them was a little creek, a bridge. On the other side of that bridge was liberty.

"Don't get excited," someone was saying. "These German officers are very strict."

"I'll appeal to the Russian Embassy!" exclaimed another voice.

"You can't," declared another, bitterly, "it's all shuttered up."

After what seemed a dismal eternity, a German officer bowed before Madame and Monsieur Dandré. He spoke respectfully. He was deeply sorry, he said, but their luggage must be detained and searched. Madame would be so good as to make no trouble? But of course it would be impossible for her to leave Germany at this time. She would find herself admirably established at one of the hotels in Berlin, but, naturally every Russian would be under constant guard, and if she were wise, she would make no attempt to escape.

She had a quick flash-back of memory—the bag, the waiter.

"Victor," she whispered, "that episode in the restaurant, you remember? That *was* significant. It was some kind of trap they hoped I'd walk into! Thank heaven I didn't claim the bag as mine. They —they suspect me of being a—a *spy*!"

"They'll have to prove it," he answered. "And they'll never be able to do so."

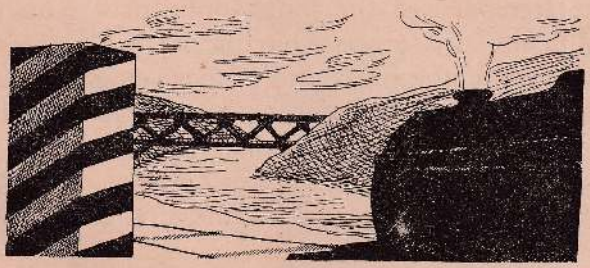
"I've known it was coming, this war," she mur-

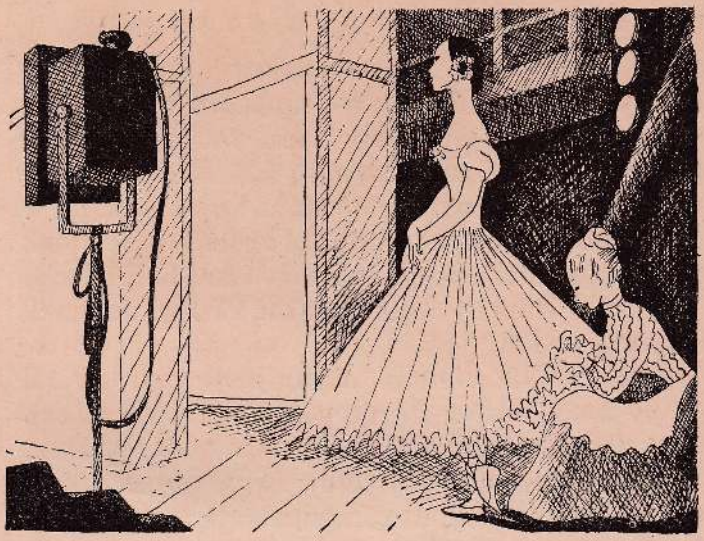
mured tragically. "I see so clearly now. Every Russian in Germany was being watched. That waiter wasn't a real waiter, he was an employee of the German government. It's all clear now, Victor, it's all so terribly clear!"

He put his arm protectingly about her. "Don't think about it, dear," he answered soothingly.

"I can't help but think about it. What a marvellous escape I've had! Don't you see? They were hoping to convict me of being a Russian spy. It would have been good propaganda for Germany. That bag *was* mine. The waiter took it away purposely and put something in it—some papers, something incriminating. Suppose I had accepted the bag without looking inside it?"

She was trembling, clinging to him, her eyes wide with horror, her thin face livid. For a little time Victor could think of nothing to say to comfort her. At last he spoke, low and feelingly. "Your mother in her simple way believes that you are protected and guided by a divine Providence, my dear. I have often smiled when I heard her say that, but who knows? Perhaps—perhaps she is right."





CHAPTER SIXTEEN

BEHIND THE SCENES

THOUGH Pavlova and her husband were treated with the utmost consideration, the enforced inactivity, the uncertainty, the constant surveillance, was maddening. Perhaps as a refuge from thoughts of present danger, her mind kept wandering back to the past.

She remembered the long confidences which as a child she was always having with the Blessed Virgin; remembered the huge Easter eggs with toys inside them, and the tiny Christmas trees with their small candles and the tinsel that was kept from year to year. She remembered the drive she and Little Mother had taken to the Marinsky as part of the Christmas celebration, remembered the lighted shop windows casting golden patches upon the

freshly fallen snow. She saw herself in Ligovo, bareheaded, barefooted, in a worn, faded cotton dress wandering among the fir trees. She remembered the first time she had played in Stockholm and how on the balcony, looking down at a crowd of clerks and workmen, she had glimpsed a glorious new goal. She kept remembering, too, how the Little Mother had said, "I love to think that God Himself is watching over you."

And truly, it seemed so, for in few days Anna Pavlova and Victor Dandré were permitted to continue their journey, but without one single piece of luggage. Every trunk, every single piece of stage "props," all scenery, costumes, even personal apparel had been confiscated.

War. Suddenly the world was at war. No, not quite all the world, for America was at peace. America. It was Anna's opinion that American audiences were more demonstrative than the English. "Americans are so appreciative of beauty," she affirmed, "and so enthusiastic. American culture has attained a very high standard." Yes, she would go there, back to America.

Again she said farewell to Ivy House, going from room to room as was her custom, saying her prayer just before leaving. This time the prayer was lengthier, for now she knew that it would be many years before she again saw this lovely old house surrounded by its high brick wall. In September the Pavlova troupe sailed for America, booked for a winter season in New York.

American press agents made the most of her detention in Germany. They printed a story claiming

that she had been held a prisoner in Russia in 1911; they broadcast the fact that she owned a sable coat worth £1500; that she weighed only seven stone eight lbs. They wrote about her love for pets, her favourite recipes, and one of them went so far as to affirm that she carried an alligator with her wherever she went. They wanted to know what she thought of American women, what she thought of the tango and the fox-trot. They called her "The Silent Bernhardt," "The Queen of the Dance," "The Peerless Pavlova," and they wrote that her feet were insured for £20,000 and that she loathed cats.

All this was displeasing to Pavlova. She scarcely ever read criticism in the newspapers. Press notices meant nothing to her. Never did she seek to attract attention to herself. Steadfastly she refused to lend herself to any of their suggested publicity stunts. In a way, she did not care whether her audience approved of her or not. She wanted to give joy to others with her dancing, but the essential thing was to feel that inner satisfaction, that completeness, that fulfilment within her own soul.

She was busy these days giving benefits for the Red Cross, and weaving a carpet for her church in Russia. This carpet was designed by herself. It used the Greek crosses as a motif, and the colour ideas were inspired by Bakst. It was to be sixty-five feet long and five feet wide. She did it in sections. She worked on it in hotels, dressing rooms, trains.

Instead of giving the usual Christmas gifts that year to the company, she gave the money to the Red Cross. And this too was capitalised by the ever-active press agents. Everything Pavlova did and

thought was news. It was news that she was the most photographed woman in the entire world. It was news that she spent £15,000 a year on photographs alone and gave away ten thousand photographs annually. It was news that, like most Russians, she enjoyed a game of cards, and preferred tragic plays.

There was even one ambitious press agent who begged her to let herself be kidnapped!

"Victor," she asked plaintively, "why must it be like this? Why must they say I was once held in Russia by the secret police as security for my nobleman sweetheart? Do Americans come to see me because of this story of the nobleman sweetheart or because they like my dancing? I'm an artist. I don't need that kind of publicity, and I don't want it."

"But you like America," answered Dandré in his suave, cultured voice.

"Of course. And I think American women are chic and beautiful, but why must the American people be led to believe that I'm making my carpet because it soothes my nerves? And what does it matter if a cat does or doesn't make me sneeze and gives me gooseflesh?"

"My dear," he explained soothingly, "people everywhere are interested in you. They want to know how you think and eat and dress and feel and live. When you give out an interview that you think no woman should wear high collars or 'rats' or false hair, there are countless women here in America who cease doing those things. You advise against French heels, against padding and lacing, and people read all that and talk about you."

"But I'm a *dancer*, Victor. I want them to talk about my dancing."

He smiled. "It seems that is exactly what all America *is* doing—talking about Pavlova. I wish I could shield you from press agents more than I do, but that's impossible. When a woman is acknowledged to be the greatest dancer in the world, she must expect intrusions on her privacy. Well, here's something that will make you smile again."

"A letter. A letter from Mamasha!" She reached for it with the eagerness of a small child.

Mamasha wrote that she and Grandmother were quite safe, knitting busily for the soldiers. She said that before war was declared, Russia was in a state of ferment, with strikes everywhere, but now the country was united in a common cause. Mobilising was moving forward rapidly. Every day in the large square before the Marinsky, troops of soldiers drilled. The theatres, however, were all open, and Fokine was at the Marinsky again, producing greater ballets than ever.

From the caretaker at Ivy House came news that Jack was well and the garden was thriving. In the midst of New York, Pavlova longed achingly for Ivy House, for the cheery singing of the birds, for her own tranquil garden, but the journey overseas was hazardous, especially when the whole Atlantic Ocean, it seemed, was infested with U-boats.

While one heard talk of the war on all sides, America was nonetheless confident that *she* would remain out of it. Yet day by day, despite the fact that America called herself neutral, a stronger and stronger pro-Allies feeling was arising.

For Pavlova it had been a successful season in New York. People had been kind, appreciative, wanting to know her, to entertain her, to be seen with her, yet the only people Anna ever had time really to know were those who comprised her company. Here she was a veritable queen, ruling with a firm, autocratic hand. At first she had chosen all Russian dancers, but now the troupe consisted of all nationalities. In addition to the dancers, there was a musical director, a stage manager, an electrician, three stagehands, a wig man, Kuzma, the wardrobe man, five wardrobe mistresses, a librarian, and, of course, Dandré—who was her husband, her business manager, her secretary, her guardian, her father-confessor, her adviser. But Pavlova was commander in chief. Her decisions were final. Her word was law. The shy, frightened child who had entered the Imperial Ballet School twenty-two years ago, had given place to a resolute, determined woman, a woman carrying a great load of responsibility on her lovely shoulders, a woman whose nerves were forever stretched to breaking point; a strangely contradictory creature, one moment playful, laughing, the next moment raging, fuming, the next moment sobbing in sudden, incomprehensible despair—and the next moment a taskmaster, dominant and forceful.

If one of the members of her company wanted to make Pavlova angry, all he had to do was to appear to shirk his work or to speak negligently of it. This, to her, was unforgivable; this—why, this was nothing short of *sacrilege*! Her dark eyes would snap with fire. She would hurl forth a quick, wither-

ing retort. To her, an artist—whether he be a dancer, a painter, an actor, a writer—had one responsibility, only one—and that was not alone to give forth generously, joyously of his talent, but to give the best, always the *highest* that was in him.

But her company loved her to the point of adoration, for if she could scold and rage and force them to work unceasingly, she could also be kind, ineffably kind, and sweet and tender. When one of them was sick, she was always on hand with some remedy, some comforting word. At Christmas, whether they were on a train, a boat, or in an hotel, there was always a tree hung with gifts which she, herself, had somehow found time to choose. No one was ever forgotten.

The Russians in the company adhered to the Russian custom and addressed her simply as "Anna Pavlova." Those who were not Russian always spoke to her as "Madame."

There are dancers, actors, singers who, after years of performing, lose that singular agitation which they experienced as novices. Not so Pavlova.

"You ought to be over stage fright by now, Anna," Dandré would laugh, entering her dressing-room before a performance to find her shaken, wild-eyed.

"No! No! No! Every time I go on for a performance I go through this. I'm in agony before every show. Instead of subsiding with time, it gets worse and worse."

The company was always intensely interested in the size of the audience. Was it a good house to-night? Was there standing room only? But the size of the

audience made no difference to Pavlova. Whether it be large or small, she continued to live true to her code—to give the best that was in her.

Time after time when a performance had ended, Dandré came into her room to find her in tears.

"Anna, Anna, for heaven's sake, what's the matter? What has happened? Are you ill?"

"I could have done better to-night, Victor," she moaned.

Sometimes he would answer off-handedly, "Oh well, it wasn't a good house, anyway."

"But that doesn't *matter*. Can't you see, that doesn't matter!"

Usually he consoled her. "No. No. You were exquisite to-night. You were never more elusive, more dream-like. You were a flame, Anna, you were like a flame to-night. And look how many curtain calls there were. Look at all the flowers. You held them enchanted, my dear."

"No, I danced badly. I felt it. Oh, it's terrible to feel like this, Victor. Terrible! If I only could give the whole performance over again."

"I tell you, you're quite wrong, Anna. You were never lovelier. Everyone was delighted."

She had great confidence in her husband, and his words soothed her. She dried her tears, turned to remove her make-up.

"All the same," she answered brokenly, "I know when I've done my best, and I know when I haven't —and all the flowers and all the curtain calls and all the pretty speeches in the world can't change the feeling in my heart."

In Russia a ballerina danced only six performances

a month. Now Pavlova danced sometimes two performances a day, and at the end of the season she was completely exhausted.

Every day, especially if they were en route, there was a rehearsal. Sometimes the stage was small, sometimes it was large. Whatever it might be, she and the others had to become accustomed to it before the curtain went up. How tired they were sometimes! Often they spent only one night in each town, yet even for that one night the rehearsal could not be interfered with.

Always before a rehearsal Anna herself carefully inspected every inch of the stage. A notch, a hole, an irregularity might mean a sprained ankle, an even more serious accident. Pavlova never danced on a cloth if she could possibly help it. Before the performance the stage was carefully swept. Then it had to be precisely watered. This watering process must be done with utmost care. A stage too wet or a stage too dry meant difficulty. Just before the rise of the curtain it was sprinkled with rosin.

Only once did Anna neglect her practising and forego the inspection of the stage. That was in St. Louis at the Odéon Theatre. During a performance of Rubinstein's *Valse Caprice*, she pulled a ligament in her leg and instantly dropped to the floor in a dead faint.

"This," she said later, "is a lesson to me, a lesson I shall never, never forget. I hadn't inspected the stage, and I hadn't practised, therefore I wasn't able to maintain my usual muscular control. And what happens? Three weeks of idleness. Three whole weeks in which I can't do a thing but just keep

quiet! It's unbearable! But it's the most valuable lesson I've ever had—and one of the most costly. Victor, my dove, reach me my carpet, please."

In three weeks the tour was resumed, and Pavlova's leg was as strong as ever. But after this, the moment she left the train she hurried to the theatre without even going to the hotel to rest or to eat. She had paid dearly for her lesson, but she had learned it. She was looking tired these days, and little things began to irritate her. It had been a long, hard season. Months of constant strain, constant bustle; of packing and unpacking, of trains, boats, strange hotels, strange dressing-rooms, strange faces.

Only a few weeks more and there would be a little time for idleness. Now there remained only a two-week contract in Havana under a guarantee of £15,000 as the opening attraction for the new National Theatre, and then on to Panama. For a long time Dandré had been pleading with her to take a rest.

"I think you're right, Victor," she admitted at last. "I think I *shall* take a rest. After Panama, we'll go to California, and for a while there'll be no trains to catch, no problems, no responsibilities."

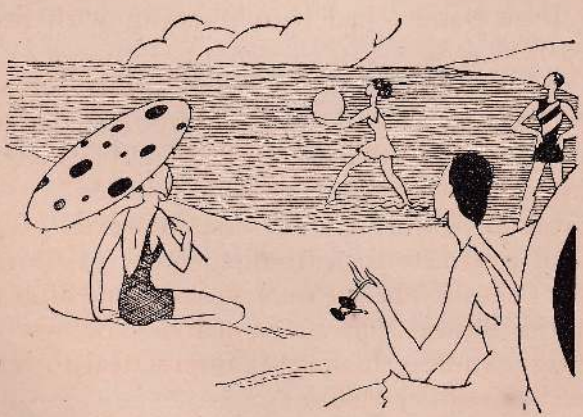
It was to be only a short rest, however, because she had contracts for an engagement in Chicago, for the Century Theatre in New York, and after that with the Boston Opera Company. The war was seemingly endless, making it impractical to return to her beloved Ivy House.

It amazed her sometimes to contemplate the swiftly changing world about her. Why, St. Petersburg was no longer called St. Petersburg!

And in Europe people were not concerned with dancing these days, they were concerned with destruction. Mamasha wrote of the terrible privations the Russians were undergoing, and of the increasing ferment among the people.

Yes, it would be good to rest for a while in the kindly California sun. It would be good to lie at ease on the warm sand and try to forget, if one could, this surging, vengeful, half-mad world with its thought of bloodshed instead of beauty, its ugliness instead of loveliness, its pain instead of peace.

Pavlova could not know that in California two important experiences were waiting. One brought keen disappointment, the other brought the almost forgotten joy of stimulating, congenial friendships.



CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

THE tasteful, beautifully regulated home of Mary Pickford, "America's Sweetheart," reminded Pavlova of Ivy House. Evening after evening the five friends would get together, either at Mary and Doug's or at Charlie's; sometimes the attractive group would sit before Chaplin's great fireplace chatting pleasantly until early morning. There were evenings when Mary would run off their latest pictures in her own projection room.

Anna, who had had no time for movies and knew little about them, was interested in photography. She always carried a camera wherever she went, and collected hundreds of photographs, but now this new art—motion pictures—delighted her. How great were its possibilities for good, for beauty. Dandré

bought her a motion-picture camera, and she went about gaily snapping everything and everybody.

She had never fully realised before what a gigantic force the movies were. Why, if a movie were successful, it went all over the world, and twenty million people were seeing it in a single day!

Anna loved to sit quietly while Mary, Doug, and Charlie talked of other days, days when studios were in lofts or livery stables.

"In those days," Mary laughed, "an actor was practically disgraced if he worked in a moving picture! And now—well, often a production costs over two million dollars!"

In the afternoons, when her new friends were busy at the studios, Anna could spend a little time at her modelling. Often Dandré and Chaplin would enter the room to find her in overalls, a plain white shirt open at the slender throat, low-heeled black slippers on her famous feet, her hair neat as always, modelling away at her little dancing figures. Though she never had time to take lessons in sculpture, the small feminine figures were almost alive with the joy of action—arms outstretched gleefully, lithe bodies bending, swaying, expressing the rapture and exultation of the dance.

This absorbing hobby was interrupted by an offer from the Universal Film Company. At first Anna was inclined to reject the offer, but Dandré pointed out that this was a way to preserve something of her artistry, her genius, after she had gone, after the dance of the Swan was ended. Accordingly, she read the script and approved of it. Mary helped her with her make-up. Work began in earnest.

Rest? Pavlova had come to California to rest? Now she had to get up early in the morning, motor to the studio, dance under merciless glaring lights, wait around hours upon hours for retakes. It was all so new to her, so strange. A camera instead of an audience, a director yelling at her through a megaphone.

Everything possible for Pavlova's comfort was done at the studio, and work on *The Dumb Girl of Portici* went forward with speed. When Anna saw the rushes, she was horrified. Dandré, Doug tried to comfort her. Camera technique had not yet reached the smoothness and accuracy which a few years later it was to achieve. Pavlova's movements in the dance were too lightning-swift for the lens to catch. Often the pictured action was blurred, jumpy. Pavlova insisted that they begin all over again.

Day after day she was in conference with Mary, Doug, and Charlie, humble as a child, seeking to absorb all that they knew, all they could tell her. When the second attempt was half finished, she thought the film definitely bad, but now there was no time for more retakes even had the Universal Film Company been willing.

Again she must say good-bye to friends who were incredibly dear.

"I'll never forget the first day you drove up to the house, Anna," said Mary, her eyes bright with laughter. "Poor Doug! There he stood, waiting to welcome you—and declaring all the time that he would frighten you away. He *did* look like a ruffian, didn't he, with that three-day growth of beard?"

Anna laughed. "And almost before I stepped out of the car he was explaining that he couldn't use a razor because he had cut his hand badly in a picture. He *did* look funny—so embarrassed, so uncomfortable!"

Perhaps that evening wherein Anna had had the most fun was the night when she had hired an entire Italian restaurant and given a party in honour of her three new friends. Heretofore she had never seen Chaplin, the comedian. She had known only a dreamy, courteous gentleman who had a wide knowledge of music and who played the violin with his left hand. The highlight of the evening came when, draped in table cloths, he gave an imitation of Pavlova in her swan dance. It had been clever. It had been spontaneous. It had been uproariously funny, and Anna, who had a fine sense of humour, had proven that she could "take it." No one had laughed more than she.

"And now," she sighed, "all this must end. We're like—like a book Victor once read to me about ships passing in the night, signalling each other in passing, and then going on. We of the theatre are like that, like ships passing each other in the night."

She had received £10,000 for making *The Dumb Girl of Portici*, and she could not remain to finish it because of a contract to open in Chicago prior to going to New York. But this fact left the film company undaunted.

"Don't worry about it a minute, Madame," they told her. "We'll send the cast and the director to Chicago, and we'll do as much as possible there. Then after we've taken your scenes, we'll finish the

picture here in Hollywood. It's perfectly simple."

"But—how about the studio? How can you take pictures in Chicago when you haven't a studio there?

"Don't worry about it, we'll have a special stage built in Chicago."

"America," she said later to Doug, "is really a wonderful country, and Americans are wonderful people. Think of all the expense, think of all the trouble they're going to. And now I must go, and I shall take with me a very grateful heart for the help you three have given me. I *still* think *The Dumb Girl of Portici* is not a satisfactory picture. Oh, I know, the company is satisfied, but I'm not. I feel very sad, sad that I couldn't have made a better picture, sad to say good-bye to three good friends."

Friends. How few she had made! She was worried about Cecchetti these days. It was impossible for him to return to Russia. In an effort to befriend him, Anna cabled him to join her in America. He wrote that he and his wife were joining Diaghilev's troupe, but that they were living under constant dread, for all three of their sons were in service.

When Pavlova left the Southwest, she brought some birds she intended eventually to add to her collection at Ivy House, and Poppy, a Boston terrier, which she had bought in Los Angeles. After the engagements in Chicago and New York had ended, her contract with the Boston Opera Company began. Here she found yet another friend—Mary Garden. Sometimes after the show these two famous women, whom everyone delighted to honour, would go off by themselves. They would find a cheap lunchroom where no one would be apt to recognise them,

and there they would sit, happy as children out of school, munching hot dogs and hamburgers, and talking—about art.

In the middle of the second season it was suddenly announced that the Boston Opera Company would be no more. They had been playing to losses. There were no funds to carry on. The tour would be abandoned.

In their suite at the hotel, Anna faced her husband worriedly. "It's a shame," she cried. "I like these people. They've been kind to me. Oh, I don't mean I'm sorry for the principals—Mary Garden, Zenatello, Maria Guy, Ferrari-Fontana, Tamaki Miura—no, they're famous. They will get along. It's the others I'm thinking of. The chorus, the wardrobe women, the orchestra—what will they do? It's the middle of the season. How will they find work? Some of them have children, whole families to support. I can't bear to think of it, Victor!"

"Yes," he agreed, "it's very sad. I feel as badly about it as you, but there's nothing *we* can do."

"Nothing? But there *is* something, Victor."

"Yes? What?"

"I have money, money I've saved. I can finance the entire company until the end of the season."

"Anna—no! It would take every cent we both have."

"I want to do it," she answered quietly. "I want very *much* to do it."

"But the risk, my dear——"

"I know. I've thought of that, too. But—Victor, I want to do this thing!"

"Why, it's quixotic, Anna, it's foolish. You have

money, yes, but you've worked hard for it, you've earned it. Why should you throw it away? Your expenses are enormous. The upkeep of Ivy House, the support of your mother and grandmother, your charities——"

"I know. I know. But—but I have been working with these people for a season and a half. I like them. Besides, I myself have no contracts waiting. Why shouldn't I do this if I want to?"

He said no more. She could always win him over to her way of thinking.

Next day a sad-eyed company were called together on the stage. Their sighs turned to smiles when they learned that, after all, the company was to continue. Madame Pavlova had assumed full responsibility, she had volunteered to finance the tour for the remainder of the season.

By spring, however, when the company closed, Anna had cause to regret that she had not taken Victor's advice. She had lost money week after week. Now it was spring, the company had completed its tour, and Pavlova, at thirty-four years old, was almost destitute.

For the first time in her life she saw nothing ahead. She had no money, even to finance her own idleness, no money to hold her troupe together, no money to transport them anywhere. It was an unaccustomed feeling. She had worked hard and lost every dollar she had made. This was 1916. What now? The war, it seemed, would never end. She could not return to Europe. She was determined not to sell Ivy House. She wanted to take her company to South America, but now there was no

money even to take them as far as Cuba. They were foreigners, looking to her for sustenance, strangers in a strange land, dependent upon her alone to guide them, sustain them.

Before her icon, Anna had prayed, but nothing had happened. Even Victor, shrewd and capable, did not know where to turn in this crisis. Everyone loved and respected him, and no one more than Anna herself. He was always at hand, counselling her like a father, waiting on her like a servant, protecting her like a vigilant guardian angel. It was he who took in box-office receipts and paid all bills. It was he who paid salaries, settled arguments helped arrange the itinerary.

When things were going smoothly and Anna was happy, *he* was happy. When Anna was unhappy, he would soothe and encourage, but now, for once, he could not do that. Now for the first time in Pavlova's career, there were no prospects—and there was no money. She had never been extravagant. Her tastes were always simple—simple food, simple clothes, simple amusements.

"This," she declared, with a whimsical half smile, "is a new experience, Victor. It frightens me. I pitied the chorus members, the wardrobe women of the company—and now it's probable that there isn't one of them who hasn't more money than we."

"There are people who would be glad to subsidise your South American tour, Anna. Why not let me go to them and——"

"No, I've never asked that, and I never shall. I prefer to risk my own money. I don't like being accountable to anyone. I——"

She broke off at the ringing of the phone bell. Dandré answered it.

"Yes," she heard him say, "show him up."

"Who is it, Victor? Is it Chaplin? Is he in New York?"

"No, it's another Charles. It's Charles Dillingham, an important producer in New York."

When Dillingham had stated his proposition and left, there was a contract on the table for Pavlova's consideration.

"I suppose," Dandré asked bleakly, "you'll sign it?"

She raised her lovely hands in a gesture of resignation. "What else can I do? It will save my company. It will give them work for the next six months."

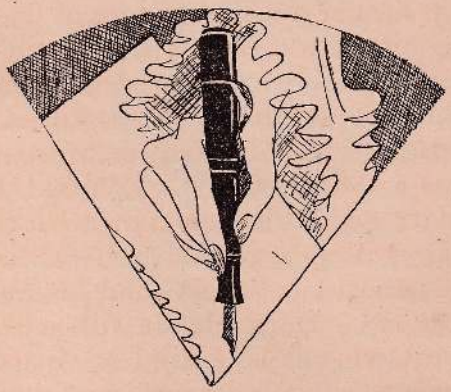
"Work!" echoed Dandré. "And *what* work!"

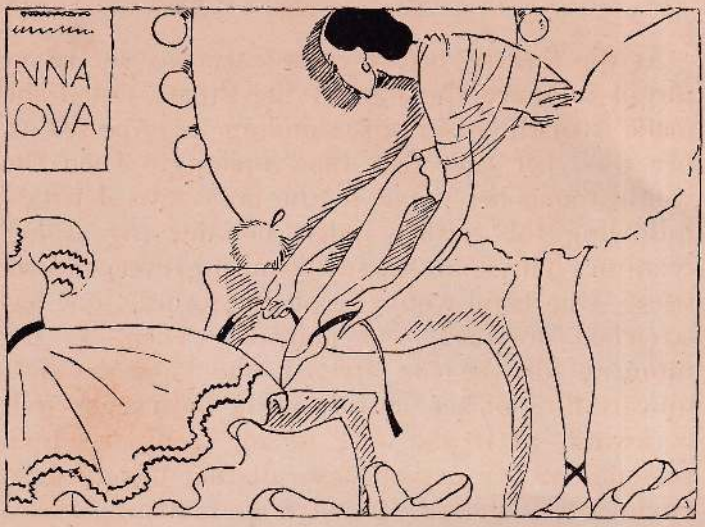
He gazed at her tenderly. She looked so exquisitely frail, like a delicate figure of finely carved porcelain, but she was rarely ill, and even when she had been sick, nothing had stopped her from dancing.

"You've done sometimes two matinees or three, at the most, a week," he went on worriedly, "but this means a matinee every day, Anna! How will you stand it? Besides, do you know what the Hippodrome is? Dillingham told you—a show with elephants, acrobats, ice skaters—and—*Pavlova*! Why, it's absurd! It's unthinkable! It will be like a circus—that's just what it is, a kind of circus. I can't imagine you dancing under such conditions. It will be horrible for you—horrible!"

She was thoughtful for a long time. The spring sunlight glanced into the room, focusing itself upon her satin-smooth hair, upon Poppy, blissfully asleep at her feet.

"That's one way of looking at it," she said at last. "I can think of it as horrible—or I can think of it as an adventure, a challenge. Whenever a thing presents itself as hard to me, I think of it as a challenge. And this contract is just that—a challenge. Actually, it will save the situation. Dillingham offers me £1,700 a week for six months. In that time, we'll be able not only to have new costumes and new scenery made, but we'll be able to save enough money at least to *begin* the South American tour. Will you give me your pen, please, my dove?"





CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

DANGER

WITH Sasha Volinine as her partner, Pavlova and her troupe settled down for six months at the Hippodrome. Between skating acts, contortionists, and elephants, they danced *The Sleeping Beauty* in costumes designed by Bakst.

The intense summer heat had no power over Pavlova. Not content with two performances a day, she called a three-hour rehearsal every morning. No matter how early the rehearsal might be called, when the company arrived, there was Pavlova dressed in her spotless white practice clothes, already at the bar doing her exercises. It made no difference how breathlessly hot the day, how tired, how physically unfit she might be feeling. Perfection was still the great, shining goal for which she unceasingly strove.

At the theatre, before every entrance, she never forgot to make the sign of the Cross. Often she made it in the rosin box, standing there poised on her toes, her thin face rapt, upflung. Then she would touch her palms to the floor several times, following this with a quick, nervous tug at her costume. This done, she stood waiting, every muscle tense. One hand would be on the scenery, one leg stretched forward, toe pointed. Then, as the moment for the cue arrived, she gave a quick, upward fling of her head, brought both arms well backward, as if she were tossing away her own personality, her nervousness, all that belonged to Pavlova, as if she were now free and unhampered of all earthly impedimenta, all personal thoughts, desires and problems, entering before her waiting audience alive with a life that was *above* the body.

In the dressing-room she was still raging about her ballet shoes, still spending hours fussing with them, trying them on, flinging some aside, ripping out the inner sole, pasting in new soles. Her foot was extraordinarily thin with an extremely high instep. Despite the war, huge boxes of shoes were constantly arriving marked "Niccolini Romeo, Milan, Italy," and she would open them with child-like eagerness, only to exclaim, "Oh, that Romeo! Why do I bother with him? You must send him another cable, Victor. And you must write him another long letter. Make it very, very firm. Tell him I'm displeased. Tell him I'm *furious*! Tell him——"

Dandré smiled, for he was always cabling or writing Romeo, and always telling him the selfsame thing. She had almost as much trouble with her

street shoes. Street shoes were kept in a special trunk never containing fewer than thirty-six pairs!

Spring . . . summer . . . autumn . . . winter. The engagement at the Hippodrome, seemingly unending, was now drawing to a close. So far there had been no hint as to what was to happen afterwards. The company were asking one another this important question constantly. Would "she" send them home? Had "she" any further plans at all?

At Christmas they were still at the Hippodrome. "We'll have our Christmas party Sunday," she announced gaily.

When they arrived at Pavlova's apartment on Eightieth Street they found the usual elaborate feast awaiting them, the tall tree with its myriad lights, its well-chosen presents. No one mentioned the fact that they were soon to close the Hippodrome engagement, and no one permitted the uncertainty of the future to dampen his spirits on that occasion.

But when the party was ending, Pavlova rose, clapping her hands for attention. Her eyes were alight with the eagerness of a girl, her red lips were parted in an all-inclusive smile, there was a faint flush on the pale cheeks.

"As you know, my doves, in two weeks we'll close at the Hippodrome. You've all been wondering what will become of you. Well, now I can tell you. It is finally settled, it is all arranged. The Pavlova company goes on! We'll stay here in New York until January seventeenth, then we'll sail for Havana. Then we'll go to Guayaquil for two weeks. You never heard of Guayaquil? No matter. After Guayaquil we'll visit every big city

in South America. We'll stay two whole months at the Teatro Colòn in Buenos Aires. We'll be on tour a year ! "

They applauded happily. The troupe was not to be disbanded after all. They were not to return to their homes in a war-strewn country. They cheered her, shook hands with one another, kissed, laughed.

When the noise had died down somewhat, Pavlova went on: "I know how difficult these last six months have been for you, but you've done wonderfully. However, you mustn't believe that the hard work is over—oh, no! Now we've a whole new continent to conquer. That means work, hard work, because we want the South Americans to see the Russian Ballet at its very greatest. Well, my doves, that's all I have to say, except—Merry Christmas!

There were more cheers. Now they had nothing to worry about, nothing in the world. Work was assured for another year, work in countries at peace.

Of all that gathering, only Pavlova and Dandré were worried. Only they knew how much it had cost to equip so large a company with new scenery, new costumes. They had lived as simply as possible, economising on their own personal expenditures, but there remained barely enough money to transport the troupe, the scenery, and the costumes to Cuba.

It was not an easy task to move so large a company. In Pavlova's repertoire were twenty-three ballets and eighty *divertissements*. Each of these required a different stage setting. In addition to all the scenery, there were the properties, the trunks belonging to the sixty-five members, Pavlova's bird cages, special lighting equipment, the costumes. In the entire

wardrobe there were over two thousand costumes, and often a hundred and sixty costumes were used during a single performance. These costumes were flimsy, perishable. Each had to be packed with utmost care. Arriving in a new town, each had to be unpacked, examined for tears, cleaned, pressed. New ones had to be constantly made. In addition to the costumes, there were hundreds of wigs which had to be dressed, there were shoes, tights, headdresses.

Often the theatre was so small that there was no room in which to place all the trunks. They had to be unpacked in corridors, on the stage. Most of the time the ironing was done on trunks. Besides all this, the company carried two sewing machines and over twenty electric heaters, because the stages and dressing-rooms were often unbearably cold.

But at last the costumes, the scenery, the heaters, everything was packed and ready. The Pavlova company sailed for Cuba. She was glad to be away from the Hippodrome and the elephants, glad to feel the sway of the big boat beneath her feet, glad to be actually started. Anna was used to drawing capacity houses everywhere she went, so the sadly depleted state of her exchequer had ceased to worry her. There was no reason to suppose that they would not play to standing room only in Cuba. Perhaps even now the house was sold out for a week in advance. Yes, life was good. The sea made her feel young, carefree. For once there was nothing to worry about.

"I'm afraid you won't do very well in Cuba, Madame," remarked the captain at dinner that night.

"Pavlova does well everywhere," answered Volinine crisply.

"Yes, but not in Cuba, not now. I've just had a radiogram that the country is in the midst of a revolution!"

Pavlova gasped, darting a quick, anxious glance at her husband. Revolution. And she had just invested in new scenery, new costumes!

"What do you want to do?" Dandré asked, as later they walked the deck in the moonlight. "What will be the good of opening at all? What will be the good of even trying to give a performance? You remember Preobrajensky's benefit?"

"Of course we'll open, Victor," she answered quickly.

"Of all the bad luck!" he grumbled. "That we should choose this time to play in Havana."

Pavlova said nothing. Her lips were tight, her head was well up. "Revolution or no revolution," she thought doggedly, "we're going there to dance —and dance we *shall*!"

"After all," murmured Dandré, "it may be over by the time we arrive."

But he was wrong.

Except for the soldiers, the streets were empty. Windows of the shops had been boarded up.

The members of the company circled about her forlornly. "What will we do, Anna Pavlova?" they asked. "What will we do?"

"We will do what we came to do! We will dance —and we will dance better than we ever danced in our lives!" she answered, but there was an odd little catch in her voice, and her eyes were stark with apprehension.

She remembered that other time when she had

come to Cuba to open this selfsame theatre on a guarantee of seventy-five thousand dollars for two weeks. The city then had been in a gala mood. Now there were snipers on every roof, and from time to time the sinister silence of the streets was broken by the whiz of bullets. There was not a conveyance, there was not a man to move the trunks and scenery from the dock to the theatre.

"What—what are we going to do, Victor?" she asked in a hushed, frightened voice.

"Hanged if I know!" he answered, and for the first time since she had known him, her husband looked positively helpless, baffled.

"We can't just give up! There must be some people in all this beautiful city, there must be some who aren't afraid, some that will help us."

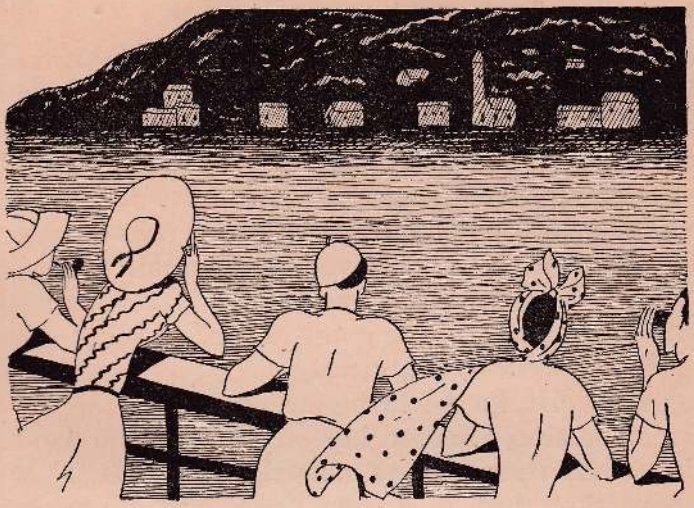
Victor's handsome face broke into a quick smile. He patted her arm reassuringly. "It's all right, my dear. It's all right. We'll have everything in the theatre on time."

"But—*how*?" she insisted anxiously.

"You said there must be some in this city who aren't afraid, some that will help us—and there are. There are American soldiers here. There's no one more ready to help in a time of need than an American soldier. The Americans will have army trucks. I'm going to appeal to the Americans."

He did not appeal in vain. The American soldiers, hearty, intrepid, hauled trunks and scenery like experts.

"*Sure!*" they cried. "If Pavlova wants to give a show, just leave it to us. Tell Anna Pavlova it's all *set*."



CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE SWAN WITH RUFFLED FEATHERS

THE Teatro Nacional was elaborate and imposing, but the Pavlova company danced to almost empty seats. The bad business continued throughout their stay. The Cubans were afraid to venture out of doors, not even the Swan could entice them. The strain of this, the anxiety, the worry about finances began to tell on Pavlova.

During a performance of *Giselle* she fainted three times in the wings. White-faced, taut, the faithful Dunia stood by with a bottle of spirits of ammonia. After each faint, Pavlova struggled to her feet, standing there dizzy, shaken.

"Anna, Anna," Dandré pleaded, "stop this! Let me ring down the curtain."

"No—" she whispered, "no. I—I'm all right."

And the few in the audience never knew that that dancing figure had been unconscious, a pathetic heap on the floor but a few seconds before her entrance.

As days passed apprehension increased. There was barely enough money to transport the troupe to Guayaquil, but how to go on paying salaries?

"It looks as if we'll have to close," said Dandré grimly.

"Close? Oh no, Victor, no!"

"What else can we do?"

"There must be some way! There must be! I tell you. Call the company together and explain the situation to them. Let them decide whether we go on or not. Get out your pencil, Victor. If we can't pay *all* the salaries, perhaps we can manage to pay *something*."

The next day at rehearsal, Dandré, dignified, obviously worried, faced the assembled dancers. Silence fell upon the entire group.

"You all know," he began in his quiet, kindly way, "what the business here in Cuba has been. As a matter of fact, business all over the world is uncertain. Travelling is dangerous these days. It looks to me as if America will enter the war at any moment. If we are to continue, all expenses will have to be cut right down to the bone. That means that everyone—*everyone*—will receive only three dollars a day. If we are to continue at all, that's what we'll have to do, at least for the time being."

"You mean food, hotel bills, laundry, everything must come out of three dollars a day?" someone asked sharply.

"Yes, that's what I mean. Of course, as soon as business picks up, we'll return to the old salaries. But now it's up to you. Do you want to accept these terms?"

"And if we don't?" asked a feminine voice.

Dandré shrugged. "Then the company will have to be disbanded."

There was much muttering, much grumbling. Some, especially the younger ones, were eager to continue. Some even felt that they ought to be *paying* Madame Pavlova for her training and for the honour of working with her. Others said it was an outrage and they positively wouldn't stand for it. No, better to close, give up the whole thing. Others had reason to remember how kind Madame had been when they were ill. There were others who thought how unfailingly good-hearted was Dandré, how often he had advanced them loans of out his own pocket. Desert Dandré? Desert Madame? It was unthinkable! So the arguments continued.

"It's all right for her to dance for the joy of dancing, but me, I like to eat—and to eat costs money!"

"How do we know what expenses will be in South America?"

"Why should she ask this of us? She works us almost to death. We earn every penny she gives us. How far will three dollars a day go? Everything is high on account of the war."

"But to close? What will become of us if we close? Will we be any better off? Is not a half a loaf better than no bread? Besides, to close—why, it would break her heart."

"Could *she* help it because there's a revolution in

Cuba? We were all glad enough to work for her when she could pay regular salaries, but now that she's in trouble, you want to desert her!"

"*Who* wants to desert Anna Pavlova?"

So at length they decided. They had grumbled, argued, rebelled. Now they were resigned. The Pavlova company would go on. Who knew what they might find in Guayaquil? Adventure . . . prosperity . . . gaiety . . . colour.

They were all united in anticipation of Guayaquil. None of them had ever seen or even heard of the place.

Leaving Havana, they travelled by cattle boat. Slow, ponderous, it plodded through the intense heat of the glaring sun. Accommodations for the sixty-five people were of the poorest. Tiny, unventilated cabins. The stench of the cattle. The plaintive, incessant bellowing. Impossible to remain in the cabins. There was not a breath of air, even on deck, where the dispirited company sprawled. The smell was sickening.

"We shouldn't have come," some of them were muttering. "This is an omen. We'd have done better to disband, go back to New York."

"Yes, that's true. This is terrible—terrible. We're fools to go on."

"The smell—it sickens me!"

"The moaning of the cattle—It's enough to drive one mad! And this heat! And the slowness of the boat!"

"It makes me wish I'd never *heard* of Anna Pavlova. Forcing us to travel on a boat like this. Does she think *we* are cattle?"

So it went, hour after hour. Night came, a hot, star-laden night without wind. The company lay about, men with their shirts open at the throat, women not caring how they looked, their hair plastered down in little strings on damp foreheads, eyes tragic, bodies uncomfortable and tense in the nerve-racking, incessant heat. At last, in the midst of further muttering, someone whispered, "*Ssh!*" A hush fell over the entire deck.

There was Pavlova coming towards them. All day she had remained in her cabin. Her face was paler than usual, but her hair was groomed to its usual smoothness, and she had put on one of her loveliest, newest evening gowns, a blue satin, superbly simple, made in long, flowing, Grecian lines. She walked quietly and gracefully among them, with that characteristic step which sometimes seemed as if she scarcely touched the ground at all. She was smiling, stopping now at one group, now at another.

"Good-evening, good-evening, my doves. You're comfortable?"

"Oh yes, oh yes! Thank you. Quite. It isn't bad, really. We're all right, Anna Pavlova."

The moaning of the cattle increased. She shuddered. "My God, that's unbearable!" she gasped, but then she went forward to the next group. "Good-evening, my doves. Everything's all good with you? You're making the best of it? You're not unhappy?"

"Thank you, Madame—no. No indeed. We're feeling fine. It doesn't matter. We're not minding it."

When she had left, the temper of the company was reversed. Now someone told a joke and there was a burst of laughter. Now someone got out his guitar

and began to strum, voices were raised in song. Never had she looked so beautiful, so immaculate, so ethereal to them as she had looked to-night, never had her uncanny magnetism been felt so keenly. They were better now. Life, after all, was worth living. Guayaquil awaited them—strange, alluring; a gay, rich, mysterious city all ready to welcome them.

"Anna Pavlova is wonderful!"

"Yes. How lovely she looked, so fresh, so cool."

"We're fortunate to be in her company. Think of the countless dancers who can't find work at all nowadays."

"She wasn't like a flesh-and-blood woman. She was like a goddess."

"If *she* can smile like that, who are we to grumble?"

When the day of landing arrived, they were all at the rail. As the cumbersome ship drew into the port, they gasped, looked at each other, startled. The torrid noonday sun spread itself tyrannically over a small, cowering village of unkempt, one-story houses. There was the pungent, sickish smell of raw cocoa. Natives crowded the dock. Were *these* the people before whom they would dance for two weeks? These people were ignorant, gross, hideous, most of them toothless, with flat, swarthy faces, many of them barefoot, half naked.

Guayaquil had no idea what the word ballet meant. No theatrical troupe had ever been there, the only amusement the town had ever seen were two small circuses. Yellow fever was raging.

Though the scene before them was uninviting, the voyagers were impatient to leave the boat. The

single dispirited horse and decrepit carriage which stood at the dock was, of course, for Madame. Her face was masklike. She stood very straight, looking down at the untidy spectacle before her, but she said nothing, not even to Dandré. When she stepped into the shabby Victoria, her step was assured, her head was up, her back was straight as a rod.

The others, men and women, clutched their heavy suitcases in their perspiring hands and trudged under the merciless sun through the staring crowd to the small hotel. The rooms were clean, their doors opening on a sun-scorched patio. Beds were shrouded with white netting.

There was a rehearsal at five. In twos and threes the dancers wandered through the littered, shadeless streets under the blistering heat of the sun. Nowhere to go but a sprawling market down by the water, nothing to see, nothing to do. And this was the place towards which they had looked so hopefully. Two weeks to spend here.

The Teatro Almedo was dirty and dingy. Already the wardrobe women, nerves on edge, tempers irritable, had begun unpacking the costumes. Already Pavlova, dressed in her practice clothes, was doing her exercises, scenery being moved on all sides of her, wardrobe women bustling and fuming about her. As the dancers entered for rehearsal, she was spirited and laughing.

"Hello, my doves. Are you comfortably located? We'll have a good, long rehearsal. It's good to be on land again."

Pavlova danced that night to an audience such as she had never faced. In the boxes were a few well-

dressed people, but the orchestra section and the balcony were crowded with the same barefoot, tattered crowd that had awaited them on the dock. Yet Pavlova danced that night and every night for the two weeks as beautifully as she had danced for Edward VII. Ignorant though the onlookers were, they were nonetheless appreciative. Every curtain fell amidst wild applause. Night after night they came, uncombed, half-naked, eager to drink in more and more beauty.

But to the dancers it seemed as if the two weeks would never end. Because there was no other place to go, nothing else to see, they strolled through the huge, messy market, and day after day, at morning rehearsals, Pavlova in her immaculate white practice clothes would greet them with determined cheerfulness.

"Good-morning. Good-morning. Tell me, tell me, my doves, are you behaving yourselves? You feel good? Is everything all right?"

Never did she permit any of them to guess how her surroundings were affecting her. She could not bear this ugliness, the smell of cocoa, the poverty, the soiled rags of the people. She could not bear the thought of any of her "family" being stricken with yellow fever. Why had she come to this place? Why? To bring joy into people's lives. And they certainly *needed* joy, they needed it here so sorely.

But day after day Pavlova was haunted by the poverty, the sickness on all sides of her. She tried to shake it off, but she could not. More and more it engulfed her. It was increasingly difficult to present a smiling face to her bored and jaded company.

Finally came the last night but one before they were to depart. When Dandré came to take her to the hotel, he found her in tears.

"Anna," he pleaded, "Anna—don't."

"Go away! Go away! Leave me alone!"

"But Anna, what is it?" He turned anxiously to Dunia, old and fat, who was standing near the door. "What is it? What's happened?"

She shrugged. "I don't know, Monsieur. She's been sobbing like that ever since the last curtain came down."

"Anna," he begged distractedly, "in heaven's name, tell me. Are you ill? What is it?"

"What is it? It's this place! It's the sadness of this place. I can't stand it, I tell you. Go away! Go away! I've got to be alone."

"As you wish my dear. Dunia will bring you back to the hotel. You——"

"Don't talk. Just go. I never want to see that hotel again. Go away! *Please*, Victor, go away!"

He did not argue with her. He left. She began sobbing again.

"The boat won't come," she moaned. "I know it. This is wartime. Boats are uncertain. We'll *never* get away from this place." Her anguished eyes met those of Dunia. "What are you waiting for?" she shouted. "Didn't I tell you to go away? Didn't I tell you to leave me alone?"

"Anna Pavlova, you can't stay in this theatre all by yourself all night."

"I can't go out on those awful streets. The faces, the sickness all about me. Those sad-looking children. I can't bear it."

"I'll make you some more tea. See, the water's already hot in the samovar. Tea—yes, with lemon."

"Always this heat. It claws at me. It seems as if I've already spent a hundred years in this place."

"Before the company you've been so gay, so full of life."

"Ah, the poor things. They walk through that awful old market there by the water. At nights they can't sleep any more than I with this heat. Go away, Dunia, go away and leave me alone."

"Here is your tea, Anna Pavlova. Drink it. It will make you feel better."

"If the boat doesn't come to-morrow I shall go mad, I surely shall!"

"Of course it will come. Why shouldn't it?"

"How do we *know*? How do we know we aren't stranded here? Travelling is so uncertain these days. Go away, Dunia! For heaven's sake, get *out* of here and leave me alone!"

"As you say, Anna Pavlova."

Pavlova remained in the theatre alone all night. Before daybreak next morning Dandré, frightened, came to find her. He burst into the dressing-room without knocking. There was Anna, perched on a trunk, a silken kimono about her thin figure, still weeping.

"Anna! Anna! Oh my dear, what has happened to you? Have you slept at all?"

"Slept? No. I've been wide awake all night. I kept thinking. Suppose the boat doesn't come!"

"Of course it will come."

"You're just saying that. You don't know for sure. Nobody knows. Go away! Leave me alone!"

"But—how about your breakfast?"

"I don't want any breakfast. This dreadful food would choke me. Victor, if you don't—if you don't get out of here, I—I'll——"

He saw that reasoning with her now was impossible. The best thing was to obey. He had never seen her in a mood like this, and he was completely at a loss as to how to cope with it. He went in search of Dunia.

"I don't know what to do," said Dunia. "Her eyes have hunted me all night, they're so full of suffering. Well, I will go and see what I can do."

She knocked at the dressing-room door. "Anna Pavlova! Anna Pavlova! It's Dunia. Let me in."

"No! Go away! Stay out of here!"

Dunia went to Natasha. Natasha went to the theatre, and without knocking flung open the dressing-room door. "I have some lemons, Anna Pavlova. I'm going to make you some tea."

"Tea. Yes, tea!"

Pavlova began pacing back and forth as Natasha prepared the samovar. "What in the world has come over you, Anna Pavlova?"

Pavlova was still sobbing. Seemingly, she could not make herself stop. But she drank the tea, and asked where Dunia had gone.

"Gone to the market, of course," grumbled Natasha. "Where else *is* there to go in this place? The hotel rooms are so small and hot and uncomfortable no one can stay in them."

"Yes. Yes. It's awful! It's awful! And those poor people. living here all the time—year in, year out. Ugh!"

At the market Dunia met a young dancer, one of Pavlova's favourites.

"Hello, Dunia!" he called brightly. "What are *you* looking so worried about?"

"Poor Anna Pavlova!" she sighed. "Ah, I don't know what to do. All night she has stayed in that dressing-room, sobbing—sobbing her heart out! Go to see her, Monsieur Olivéroff! She likes you—perhaps because you're so young!"

"Of course I'll go," he answered.

"It will probably do no good," sighed Dunia forlornly.

A few minutes later Olivéroff was knocking at Pavlova's dressing-room door.

"May I come in, Madame? It's Andrusha Olivéroff."

Before Pavlova could answer, Natasha, stern-faced, wrinkled, opened the door. There was Pavlova, her legs crossed, a tea cup beside her, seated on a wardrobe trunk. On the wall behind her hung her costumes. As usual the floor was almost carpeted with toe slippers.

"Ah," she said dolefully, "it's you, Andrusha."

"Dunia told me. I saw her in the market."

"I haven't slept a wink all night. I can't stop thinking—the boat, suppose it doesn't come, Andrusha? All the time, every moment I keep listening for it, straining my ears. There isn't a sound—not a sound!"

"The worst is over now. These two weeks have been pretty ghastly, Madame, but to-morrow—to-morrow we'll be leaving this place."

"How do we *know* that?" Her big, tragic eyes

filled with tears again. "If we stay here much longer, we'll all be sick. Everybody in this place has yellow fever! And suppose the steamer doesn't *come*? Who knows? Who knows?"

"Well," answered the youth cheerily, "as yet no one's been sick. And as for the boat—why, it wasn't even expected until to-day. I'm certain it'll arrive, and that we'll all be on our way to-morrow!"

Natasha sat in a far corner, picked up a headpiece and began sewing on it. From time to time she looked at the boy and thought how wonderful it was to be young like that.

"Yes," she agreed. "Yes, Anna Pavlova, that's true. No one *expected* the boat until to-day. And to-morrow we'll be leaving this place, and business has been good, and so far we're none the worse for the experince."

Pavlova wiped her eyes. "Yes," she admitted, in a suddenly calm voice, "yes, that's true." A faint smile tugged at her mouth. "Fix the samovar, Natasha, I'd like more tea."

Natasha put aside the headpicce on which she was sewing and rose to obey.

Pavlova sprang to her feet, all tears forgotten. "We'll rehearse. Yes, that's what we'll do! That will make us forget. Work *always* makes us forget our troubles. We must give a fine performance to-night. These poor people have been most appreciative. Perhaps—perhaps we *have* brought some happiness into their lives."

As she spoke, Dandré entered. She was laughing. Her eyes were radiant. Her voice was gay.

"Victor! Call a rehearsal in an hour."

"But, Anna, you haven't slept all night."

"It doesn't matter. I feel fine now. Is the tea ready, Natasha? Hurry, Victor, my dove. Rehearsal in one hour."

"Very well, Anna."

As Dandré left, the young man exclaimed impulsively, "You're wonderful, Anna Pavlova!"

She came close to him, looking up into his face with the earnestness and trustfulness of a small child. "You're—you're *sure* the boat will come, Andrusha?"

"I'm sure of it," he answered readily. "And once we're on our way to Lima, it will grow cooler. We'll forget about this place."

"Yes," she smiled. "Ah, how you've helped me, Andrusha! Good-bye, my dear. Get into your practice clothes and be prepared for some real hard work."

"Very well. We'll all feel like working to-day, because to-night's the last show."

The smile faded. The eyes went suddenly bleak with terror. "No!" she cried. "Don't—don't say that! One must *never* say such a thing—never! No matter what we go through, no matter how we suffer, never say—*the last show*!"

When he had gone, she stood very still, her hands clasped tightly in front of her. How dreadful, she thought, to give a performance—and know all the time it was to be the last. How could one ever live after such an experience?

CHAPTER TWENTY

THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF

DESPITE Anna's fear, the boat arrived that day. By noon of the morrow they were all on board, and by nightfall the experience in Guayaquil began to assume the haziness of a bad dream.

Lima received them with open arms. Business was gratifying and soon the company was put back on regular salaries. They were to remain here a month. Rehearsals continued daily under the direction of Ivan Clustine, the ballet master, a fat, pompous little man with a bristling grey moustache.

"What do you think you're doing?" Anna cried during rehearsal one morning. "What *is* this, Ivan Clustine? Is this a rehearsal or what?"

He turned to stare at her angrily, every hair of his moustache aquiver.

She walked up to him like a wrathful goddess. "It's all terrible—terrible—terrible! It can't go like that!"

He threw up his hands in a dramatic gesture of utter despair. "Anna Pavlova! Anna Pavlova! What in heaven's name do you mean? I'm working! I'm slaving! I'm doing the very best I can! But what's the matter? Why don't you like the way I'm doing?"

She stamped her foot. "It looks terrible—terrible! It's sloppy! Where are your eyes? Don't you *see*?"

He began tearing his hair. "Anna Pavlova! This is the finish! I can't work for you! I *won't* work for you! Nothing pleases you! This is the end—the end! I'm leaving—*this* time for good. You hear what I say, Anna Pavlova? I'm leaving—now! No, you can never make poor Papa Ivan come back to you. It cannot be. This is the end. *This—is*—the end!"

He stalked out. The company stood, staring. They were used to this. How many times had "Papa Ivan" declared he was leaving?

Pavlova, her mouth set firmly, picked up the stick he had tossed to the ground and motioned the pianist to begin again.

As she watched, her sharp eyes fell upon one girl in the back row. The girl, thinking herself hidden, had dropped from her toes.

"No! No!" cried Anna. "*Sur les pointes!* Stop! Stop! Do it again!" She turned to the pianist. "Go back fifteen measures. Now, all of you, *sur les pointes!*"

They began again. Again the girl dropped from

her toes. Anna frowned. "Stop! Now, why do you try faking like that? Why? Why? Do you want to dance or don't you? We'll go over it again."

After the next attempt, she exclaimed, "No! You *must* keep on your toes. I will not have this faking. We'll go over it again. We'll go back to the beginning again. So. *Now!*"

The girl began to sob. "I'm not faking, Anna Pavlova. Honestly, my toes hurt dreadfully. I can't stand the pain. I can't. I just can't stand the pain of being on my toes."

"You must! Sore feet or no sore feet, you're a dancer. You're an *artiste.* What does it matter whether your toes are sore or not? Do you think *I* don't know what it is to be on the point when *my* toes are sore? Stop wailing and get to work. Come!"

"I can't. I can't."

Pavlova, her face white and stern, turned to the pianist. "Again! Go back fifteen measures—no, twenty measures."

"Not again!" cried the girl. "See, my feet. Look Anna Pavlova, my toes are bleeding."

But Pavlova's face was relentless. "And have *I* never danced with the blood oozing through my slippers? Have you never seen *me* dance when I left a trail of blood on the stage? Did you think it would be *easy* to dance with Madame Pavlova? Did you think Madame Pavlova would have faking in her company? Did you think Madame Pavlova would accept *excuses*? No! You are an *artiste.* You will not forget it. I want only *artistes* in my company. Now, stand aside, you others. So. As for you, you go through it alone—alone. Begin!"

The girl limped forward. As the music started and she began to dance, she sobbed with pain. At last she cried out, "I can't! I can't!" and ran to the dressing-room.

Pavlova took hold of a chair furiously, then she tossed it aside. "Clustine! Ivan Clustine! Where is he? Clustine! Come here!"

He came forward meekly, his face lugubrious. "Anna Pavlova," he asked, "why do you treat me like this?" He sighed noisily. "Ah, poor Papa Ivan!"

She thrust the stick into his hand and returned to her practising on the other side of the stage, but her eyes remained riveted upon the company. "This is terrible. This is awful," she kept muttering. "We can't go on like this."

Months later, there was a morning when Dandré, usually the soul of composure, came tearing into the rehearsal. At sight of his face, Anna rushed to him.

"Victor, what is it?"

"I've just come from the Consulate. Russia's in chaos! The Czar has been forced to abdicate!"

A sudden hush fell upon the assembled company. Anna sank into a chair. "Oh, the kind little father. Where—where did he go? Where is he? Where is the royal family?"

"They're in prison. A social republic has been established. It's revolution. There are no trains running in all Russia. Kschessinska's house had been broken into and looted."

"And—and she?"

"Yes, she's all right. Luckily, she'd gone to the Crimea for a vacation."

"Victor. Cable Mamasha. I must know——"

"Yes, my dear, I've already done so, but heaven knows whether or not the cable will ever be delivered."

There was a long, dull silence. At last, his voice choked with tears, Clustine spoke. "Shall I—dismiss rehearsal, Anna Pavlova? No one feels like dancing—now."

Anna looked up at him, her face strong and sad. "But we must dance, Papa Ivan, all of us, whether we feel like it or not. Yes, let rehearsal go on. Come, back to work, everybody. Work. Let us work and—*forget*."

But it was impossible to forget. Weeks, months passed with no word from the little mother. News of their beloved Russia became more and more alarming. The Czar and his family had been killed. The Social Republic had been discarded, and the Soviets, dominated by Lenin and Trotsky, were in power.

At last came a letter from Mamasha. People in St. Petersburg were hungry, she said, therefore she and the aged grandmother were moving into the country because there one was more likely to get food. Everybody went around suddenly calling each other comrade. Lenin had made Kschessinska's house his headquarters. One day Karsavina, who was dancing at the Marinsky, was accused of being a spy, but the next day there was a public apology. The streets were full of shooting. Electric light was never turned on until six, and no candles were procurable. The streets were never swept any more, and snow was above the knees. But Anna was not to worry.

Both Mamasha and Grandmother were well, and not in any danger at all. Every once in a while some soldiers came and searched the house, but they always went away again, after leaving the place in a mess. Mamasha was getting used to it. Anna was to take care of herself, and thank God she was in a world far away, where such things were unknown.

For days after receiving that letter Anna brooded, thinking of the two old women, so helpless and alone. Not even the playful antics of Poppy could divert her now. On the trains she would sit, wordless, terror-stricken, her eyes staring fixedly ahead.

When they played in Buenos Aires the Diaghilev company was playing at another theatre. Fokine, Karsavina, Diaghilev and Cecchetti were not with them, and Anna did not see Nijinsky.

Leaving Buenos Aires, the Pavlova company went to Montevideo. They had been there only a short time when one afternoon a stranger appeared at Madame's suite at the hotel, announcing himself as the manager of the Colón Theatre in Buenos Aires.

"I have come to ask you to return, Madame," he said.

"Return to Buenos Aires after I've just left? But why?"

"You see, Nijinsky is ill. He will probably never dance again. The company has gone all to pieces. We want you to come back and take the place of the Diaghilev troupe at the opera. We're ready to pay you any——"

"No!" cried Anna sharply. "No!"

"Perhaps you'll change your mind, Madame? Perhaps you'd like a little longer to consider?"

"No," answered Anna, "I won't even consider such a thing. I'm eager to go on—Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Bahia, Caracas."

"But, Madame, I beg of you. We're willing to pay you any amount you——"

"No. I left Buenos Aires with people still wanting more of me. I'm too wise, my friend, to return too soon. Besides, there's another reason. These people, the members of Diaghilev's company, they are my countrymen. Diaghilev himself has been my friend. Now the troupe is—in trouble, as they say in America, down and out. How heartless, how cruel it would be for me to return and flaunt my success in their faces! Oh no, Monsieur, I need no time for further consideration. All the gold in South America couldn't tempt me. I'm not interested in your proposition, no matter *how* much you offer!"

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THE SWAN FLIES HOME

AND now the strenuous tour was ending. The company was in Panama. It was there that they learned that the fearful war was over. The world, it was said, was safe for democracy at last. After Panama, the Pavlova company was booked for a season of eight weeks in Mexico. Dandré was worried about that.

"I can't find out how we're to *get* to Mexico," he announced. "There are no boats. President Wilson has ordered every possible boat to be used for transporting food to Europe. It looks as if we're going to have to stay in Panama for a long, long time."

The night the company closed, he *still* had found no means of transportation to Mexico. A week passed, two.

"But we can't sit *idle* here," announced Pavlova. "Just because there are no boats, we can't sit around and do *nothing*."

Secretly the company disagreed with her. One and all they were of the opinion that after a solid year of touring and dancing, it was rather desirable just to do nothing.

"Ah," announced Pavlova gaily, at last, "I know! See all the nice American soldiers here! We'll give benefits for them. Yes, that's what we'll do, we'll give benefits for the American naval forces stationed here in the Canal Zone."

It was after one of these benefits that Dandré told her that he had found out that there was a French cargo boat that would be able to take them.

She laughed. "Good! Why do you look so worried, my dove? Everything's all right. We'll take the French cargo boat and we'll get to Mexico, after all."

"Ah, but *do* we? I find that the boat has only two cabins. Where will sixty-five people sleep?"

"You'll think of something, my dear Victor," she patted his arm affectionately. "You're so resourceful!"

"Well, as a matter of fact, I *have* thought of something, but I suppose it's impractical. The only way we can manage is to set up tents on the deck. The captain has already agreed to it, but——"

"Then buy sixty-five tents. Oh, I shall *love* sleeping in a tent."

"Yes, but that's not all I'll have to buy. I'll have to buy sixty-five mattresses, a carload of sheets, blankets, wash basins, chairs, pillows——"

"Then buy them. We have an engagement in Mexico. Nothing must keep us from fulfilling our contract."

And so, after a wait of twenty-three days, it was under tents that Pavlova's company made the trip from Panama to Mexico.

Mexico gave Pavlova one of the warmest receptions of her career, yet dancing in Mexico City, seventy-five hundred feet above sea level, was torture. In spite of this, Pavlova was happy. A trying, momentous year had ended. The war was over. At last she lived in a world at peace. At last—at long last, she was free to return to Ivy House. The caretaker wrote that the garden was thriving, and soon she would actually see it, touch its flowers, dig her hands into the rich soil. On her trip through South America she had collected a great assortment of exotic birds for her aviary. It hadn't been easy to transport them all this way.

Home. Five years since she had seen it. The birds would be singing in the garden. She would go down to the lake and call for Jack and he would come to her. For a little while there would be no more rehearsals. No more watching, eagle-eyed, and calling out, "No! No! Go over that again." For a little while there would be no trains to catch, no costumes and lighting to worry about, no boxes of rosin in the wings.

These five years had been the most difficult of her strenuous life. The more famous she became, the more deeply Anna Pavlova felt her responsibility to her public. Her working day was scarcely less

than fifteen hours. From seven to twelve every morning she practised. Often before the performance there would be an extra hour of practice for herself alone. Counting make-up, the performance took five hours. During a programme there were often six changes of costume and never less than four. After the performance, before removing her make-up, she would receive visitors in her dressing-room. Often there had been a matinee twice a week when, after rehearsing all morning, she would be back in the theatre by one-thirty. Usually, between matinees and evening performances there were auditions. If there were no matinee, the auditions would last all afternoon. Besides this there were interviews with reporters, sittings for photographers. Well, almost all the world had seen her dance, seen this great gift which the good God had given in her keeping. Fine orchestras, bad orchestras. Little towns, big towns. War, wind, floods, storms, heat—nothing could stop her. From the first that had been her ultimatum to life, to fate—*nothing could keep her from dancing.*

There was only one sorrow to mar the voyage home. After five years of travelling, Poppy had died.

"You'll have another dog," said Dandré, in an effort to soothe her, "and meanwhile—how wonderful to think of Ivy House waiting for us."

She smiled. "And the pigeons, and the peacock—and Jack. Do you suppose he'll know me after all this time? And I'll see Mamasha and Grandmother again."

When they drove up to Ivy House, her eyes were misty with tears. Proud and ancient it stood, two

stories high, surrounded by its wide grounds. Beneath it were the broad cellars where costumes, the "props," the enormous library of music would be stored. Already Mamasha and Grandmother were on their way to see her. Later there would be the Cecchettis, saddened now, because they had lost one son in the war. Pavlova had so few friends and so little time to enjoy them. She disliked parties and loathed visiting people. If she could possibly avoid it, she never accepted an invitation.

The first thing she did after alighting from the car at Ivy House was to rush down to the lake to find Jack—but Jack did not remember her. He remained sulky and aloof. She tried calling him, offering him food, but at first it was no use. Well, she knew she would win him over in time. Meanwhile, she would have the lake enlarged, she'd have the gardens relandscaped, and there were improvements to be made in the house.

"I thought you intended to rest after you got home?" smiled Dandré.

She laughed.

However, the tranquillity of Ivy House could not be enjoyed for long. Already she had a contract for Drury Lane in London, and after that seven months in America again.

It was impossible for Mamasha and Grandmother to understand these tours.

"You say you have a special train, Niura, just for you and your company?"

"Yes, and we practically live on it. Why, in the United States we played one hundred and forty cities in six months."

"I simply can't believe it," muttered Grandmother. "It's incredible. How do you *do* it, child? How do you do it and keep so young-looking, so fresh?"

Mamasha, very thin, with sharp features and a shawl about her stooped shoulders, sat there trying to reconcile the Anna Pavlova whom the world knew with the gentle, affectionate Niura who was her daughter.

"Victor tells me, Niura, that out of twenty-four hours you never get more than four or five hours' sleep. He says you never go to bed before two or three in the morning, and you're up by seven. Do you think that's right? Don't you think you ought to take better care of yourself?"

"I do take care of myself, darling. A dancer's health is an essential. But now I want to talk about you two. Please, I do so want you to make your home here in England.

Mamasha shook her greying head. "Russia is not like it used to be, but it's the only land we know and it's the only language we speak. It hasn't been easy. Your grandmother and I don't go outdoors these days any more than we have to."

"It's still difficult to get enough food," put in Grandmother, "but all the same we'll go back—and call everybody *comrade*. I was so glad when Fokine got away, he and his wife and their little son. And Karsavina, she got away, too. I hear she had a very hard time, but it would have gone worse with you, because everybody knew that you were such a favourite with the Czar."

"Yes," sighed Mamasha, "I wonder sometimes if you realise how lucky you are, Niura?"

"Lucky!" scoffed Grandmother. "I, for one, wouldn't think so. Never to see my own home from one year's end to another, always to be on the go, forever among strangers, never to have a moment's rest, never to know what peace means."

Peace was unknown to Pavlova for the next few years. Following the season at Drury Lane, Ivy House was closed again. When the engagement in America was over, she returned, but not to rest, for in May she was to appear at Covent Garden, and beginning in July there was a season in Paris.

In Paris she was forced to undergo an operation, and the day afterwards they carried her to the theatre on a stretcher. For weeks she danced, carried in and out of her dressing-room, collapsing at the curtain's fall, being revived, going on again.

That autumn began the tour of Canada, Japan, India, Egypt.

A new interest had entered Pavlova's life now. At a cost of three hundred and twenty thousand francs, she had founded a home for orphans in the Rue Chemin de Fer at Paris. Here twenty refugee Russian children lived, were fed, clothed, educated, cared for. This had become, second only to dancing, the most important thing in her life. She was always thinking about it, planning for it, talking about it. Expenses were met out of her own income. Now and then she gave special performances for the benefit of her orphans, and sometimes members of her company would come to her with contributions.

Ardently patriotic, she never ceased to grieve over what was happening these days in Russia. Novikov's own story brought tears to her eyes. He was the

hard-working, quiet, patient sort, and he had saved a great deal of money. Homesick, he had returned to Russia and was caught in the terrors of the revolution. Every penny he owned had been taken away from him, and for eight months, working his way on foot to the border, he had been dancing in beer gardens. Now he was in England, destitute.

He brought her news of Kschessinska and Fokine. Kschessinska had married the Grand Duke Alexei Valdimirovitch, and was living in Monte Carlo, exiles from their native land, both of them very, very poor. Anna could not imagine the great Kschessinska stripped of her pearls, her diamonds, her furs, her vast estates, her luxuries.

Fokine had been more fortunate. He had an engagement at Stockholm, and had been permitted to leave Russia with barely enough money for travelling expenses.

Anna's heart was heavy. There seemed so little she could do to help those of her countrymen who had managed to escape from the land they loved, the land which henceforth they must renounce.

Dandré tried to divert her by reading excerpts from travel books about Japan and India, but she only gave a deep sigh and stared off moodily into space.

Japan, however, made her forget. The geisha delighted her. The company opened in Yokohama, went on to Tokyo, Nagoya, Shimonoseki, Nagasaki, into the smaller towns where they had to sleep on mattresses on the floor and live on a diet of fish and rice. It was in Japan that Pavlova was inspired to create the dance which she called *Oriental Impressions.*

In addition to this, she somehow managed to find time to study Japanese dancing.

During the autumn of 1923 she permitted herself a short holiday in Italy, and visited Niccolini Romeo's tiny shop on a side street of Milan. Now, *surely*, at last, she could make him understand what was wrong with her slippers. What a long time she had been doing business with this old man. He stood there, blandly nodding, while Pavlova made innumerable gestures with her fine, expressive hands, and Dandré, quieter, broke in now and then with a more lucid explanation of her meaning. Romeo kept nodding, smiling, raising his eyebrows. "Ah! *Si. Si. Si, Signora! Si. Si.*"

When she left the place, Pavlova took Dandré's arm gaily. "It will be all right now," she exclaimed happily. "Now at last he understands exactly what I want."

But when she returned to London and the next box of slippers arrived, they were even less satisfactory than they had been before.

"*Oh!* That Romeo! Write him, Victor. Write him at once. Tell him I'm furious.

"Yes," answered Victor in a jaded tone, "yes, I know."

Mamasha joined her there for a few weeks. Grandmother remained in Russia. It was growing increasingly difficult these days for her to travel.

"Well," asked the little mother, "and where do you go *next*?"

"Next, darling, we have a short season in Germany and Paris, then we leave for South Africa, after that Australia and New Zealand."

"Do you realize you're forty-one? You've enough money now to live on comfortably. Your fame reaches from one end of the earth to the other. Why not be content? Why not take things easy? Do you expect to go on dancing forever?"

"Forever!" Anna laughed. "And forever I shall try to express in dancing what the composer puts in his music, what the painter expresses with his colours and brushes, what the actor expresses with voice and words. I try to express all this with my body—and my spirit."

"But—don't you sometimes long for another life?"

"Dancing," Anna answered earnestly, "*is* my life!"

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

PAVLOVA THE DAUNTLESS

It was in South Africa, and solely because of a feather fan, that Pavlova composed the exquisite ballet *Rondino*, choosing for it the music of Beethoven-Kreisler.

An immense crowd had met the boat in welcome and presented her with the fan, which was made of ostrich feathers.

"Before I leave here," she promised gaily, "I'll dance something for you with this fan."

And she did.

As she grew older, instead of relaxing, her vigilance in regard to the company grew greater. Now, before every performance, she herself inspected each dancer. If make-up was not smooth, it must be put on anew. A creased costume, a slipper bow

incorrectly tied, and she was sure to notice it. If one girl in the *pas de quartre* carried her head at a different angle from the others, Pavlova was sure to see and to call "Papa Ivan" to account. With the sewing women she was equally strict. If her slippers must be imported from Italy, she would use no tarlatan that was not from America. Bolts and bolts of it would be waiting for them in all parts of the world. Every costume had to be immaculate. The sewing women were forever making new ones, especially the white costume for *The Swan*, for audiences everywhere clamoured for this, the most famous dance of her diversified repertoire.

Sometimes away from the theatre, Dandré would remind her of the hasty things she had said during a rehearsal. She would look up at him amazed. "Did I really say that?" she asked. "Did I *really*?" At these times she scarcely looked like a martinet. In her soft, simple street dresses she still looked like a young girl. She never wore a corset in her life, not even on the stage. She did not need one. Her body was firm, lithesome, seemingly ageless.

As the company approached Java, Pavlova was as happy as a child. "Java!" she cried. "I can hardly wait to see it. I know it will be beautiful."

As the ship drew into port, she was standing at the rail, her eyes delightedly upon the scene before her. "It's like a Bakst stage setting," she murmured.

The members of the company soon lost sight of its beauty. Java was hot. The terrific heat left them jaded, wilted. Their bodies felt sticky. Their clothes were damp, their hands clammy. Grease paint melted. But Pavlova went everywhere, saw every-

thing, even spent five hours watching the Javanese dances.

At rehearsals she had never seemed more radiantly alive. "Ah, good-morning, my doves, good-morning. Isn't it lovely? How are you to-day? Isn't this a heavenly place?"

"Heavenly!" they answered. "It's hotter than —"

"Yes," she agreed with a wide and brilliant smile, "isn't it a nice heat? Makes you feel like working, doesn't it?"

"Feel like working!"

They were limp. Their legs felt weighted. Their arms seemed to be filled with lead. They only wanted to sit quietly under a fan and sip long, cool drinks.

Not so Pavlova. She'd pick up Javanese children, fondle them, kiss them, talk to them, sparkle at them—but she was always doing that. She did it with the dirtiest children of India and Japan. She was forever picking up some strange child, holding it in her arms, kissing it, setting it on its feet again, waving to it as she walked away.

Her generosity was almost as renowned as her dancing. Every mail brought begging letters. Even Dandré, the soul of kindness, often remonstrated with her. "But Anna, obviously, my dear, you're being imposed upon. Now, this letter, for instance, anyone with any sense could tell that this is a fraud."

"Yes," she agreed pensively, "yes, it may be, but then on the other hand, maybe it isn't, and I'd just never forgive myself if I turned away from someone really in need."

No one could ever accuse Pavlova of being snobbish. She would talk to everybody and any-

body. People on boats. People on trains. People waiting in stations. Stagehands. Maids in hotels. "I love talking to people," she admitted.

The few friends she had made were always scattered. Fokine, now in America. Cecchetti, Karsavina, Diaghilev, Bakst. She had always looked forward to seeing Isadora again, but Isadora had been killed in a motor accident. Bakst, too, was dead.

But the triumph of Pavlova continued unimpeded, expanding instead of decreasing with the years. At Liége in Belgium, the newspapers refused to accept a penny for printing the announcement of her engagement.

"No," the editors unanimously agreed, "we can't accept money from Pavlova."

And each night during her stay the gentlemen of the press bought up every flower in the city, not only those in florists' shops, but the flowers in private gardens. These they gave to members of the audience so that when the final curtain had descended, every flower in Liége was tossed in joyous tribute at the dancing feet of Anna Pavlova. The stage was heaped with blossoms, a riotous deluge of colour and scent.

She stood there, suddenly humble, her dark eyes misty with tears of joy and gratitude, a great sea of flowers on all sides of her, the bravos of the audience ringing in her ears.

"The world has been so *good* to me," she thought. "It has always been so."

Yes, the world had been good to the little girl who had once been so desperately poor, the little girl who had not been afraid to work—and dream.

"Life loves you, Madame," said her new maid, Marguerite Letienne.

"That's because I love life, Marguerite. Life—" The sensitive face grew suddenly wistful. "What is it but another word for *activity*? I've known bad storms, and I've weathered them. I've known radiant dazzling sunlight. I'm grateful for both. I've seen every dream realised. I've seen the fulfilment of every aim."

"That should make you the happiest woman in the world!"

"In my heart of hearts," answered Pavlova, "it makes me—very *humble*!"

"Humble, Madame?"

"It makes me feel that I must do *better* so that I can be worthy of all this. It makes me feel that I must work even harder."

In the spring of 1928 Anna and her company were playing in Milan, where Cecchetti now had his famous dancing studio. Night after night he brought all his pupils to her performances.

"You must be very happy, Maestro," said one of his pupils. "Think what a great part you've played in making her what she is."

He smiled wisely. "No, there you are wrong. I can teach anything connected with dancing, but Pavlova has that which can only be taught of God."

When he went backstage to see her, he embraced her as if she were his own daughter. Then he stood off looking at her, his eyes keen and bright as the eyes of a bird. Though forty-six, she still had the clear, almost transparent complexion she had had when he first saw her that night in Moscow. Her

uncorseted body was as lithe and supple as ever.

"I'm getting old, Anna, old—and a little tired; but you—you're unchanged and unchangeable. I think you will never know what it is to be old. Ah, well, I've no complaints with the world. My life has been long and full. I've known triumph and I've watched great triumphs come to those I've taught—Pavlova, Nijinsky, Sedova, Lopokova, Preobrajensky, Kyasht, Tchernicheva, Egorova, Cherri, Trefilova, Karsavina, Albertieri, Woizikovsky, Idzikovsky, Gavrolov, Massine. Yes, life has been very good to Cecchetti."

That was the last time she saw him. He died that autumn. His death brought Anna the sharpest grief she had ever known.

When in 1929 she visited Denmark, the King attended every performance, invited her to the palace, presented her with a Danish order to add to her collection of trophies.

"Such a charming man," she told Dandré later. "Really, Victor, I feel as if I've known him all my life!"

When she played the Teatro Reale in Madrid, the King sat in the box every night and always presented her with great sheaves of flowers. She remembered the time so long ago when she was dancing at the Palace in London and Alfonso had sent her the enormous basket of orchids. She reminded him of that now when he invited her to his box after the performances. Slender, beautifully tailored, he seemed very young. It was hard to believe he was forty-two.

Kings, she thought, on the way back to her hotel,

are always such *pleasant* people—Edward, Oscar. Christian, Alfonso, Nicholas. There had been only one king with whom she did *not* feel completely at home, and that was the German Kaiser.

It was after a performance in Madrid that Dandré told her of Diaghilev's death in Venice.

The news stunned her. Duncan, Bakst, Cecchetti. And now—Diaghilev. It seemed strange to think of Diaghilev dying. He had always seemed so strong, so active. He had always feared pain—pain and death. She remembered how he had loved to eat, how he would never let a black cat cross his path, how he always wrapped himself up against draughts. And now that turbulent, eventful life was ended.

While she? She was already booked for another tour through England and Ireland, and mapping out another round-the-world itinerary. Only there was something the matter with her kneecap. Every step, every move, brought excruciating pain that shot like lightning through her tortured body.

Marguerite, who adored her, begged her not to dance. "Why should you? To the devil with these people. What do they care how you suffer, Madame? They keep calling you back again and again. And you can scarcely stand."

Dandré was worried. "Anna, nothing's worth this. I can't bear seeing you suffer. We must cancel the tour."

Her mouth set stubbornly. "No," she answered, "we'll go on. I won't have the tour cancelled."

"But why not? Be sensible, Anna. Anna, please!"

"No. No. I tell you, it's nothing. I'll be all right in a day or two."

Between performances she tried massage and diathermy, but nothing eased the pain. In Dublin, as usual, Dandré was out in front during every performance. Year after year, night after night, he had watched, and her dancing never grew stale to him. She was greater now, he thought, than she had ever been. How hushed was the audience—not a movement, not a cough, not a whisper. How she held them!

Suddenly, as he watched, a piece of scenery toppled. He wanted to call out a warning to her, but he was unable to make a sound. The scenery—it had fallen on her, fallen on that little white, dancing figure! Was she hurt? Dead? A second later she was dancing again as if nothing had happened. She had not *crawled* from beneath the scenery, clawing and grasping and breathless—no, not she. Somehow, she had managed to emerge—smiling, dancing, composed.

Never had Dandré been so happy at the close of a tour as he was at the end of this. The falling scenery had only bruised her a little, but the inflamed kneecap was so painful that for nights she had been unable to sleep.

"We don't begin our Continental tour until the nineteenth of January," she said, her face twisted in pain. "Let's go to the south of France. The sun will help me, I know it. And we'll stop off in Paris to see Dr. Zalvesky."

Dr. Zalvesky called in a group of specialists. "Rest," they agreed, "complete rest in the sun for five weeks and you'll be quite all right again, Madame."

So, that was all. Just rest. Just rest in the sun.

Arriving in Cannes, Anna obeyed orders. Every day the knee improved. As soon as possible she went for long walks, and finally at one of the local theatres she was able to do a little practising.

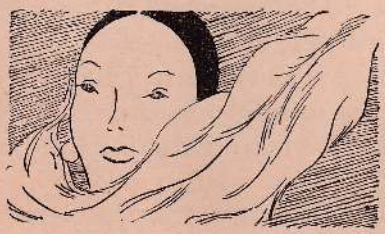
"I feel wonderful," she declared, when the five weeks had ended, "wonderful. Better than ever. Every day I've done a little more exercise. At first it was terrible, Victor, the pain shot through me like a knife. And now—ah, now I can do my full course of exercises with perfect ease. I've rested long enough. I can hardly wait to begin the next world tour."

"I suppose you mean by that that we open in Holland as scheduled, on the nineteenth of January?"

"And here it is the tenth! Think of it, Victor, already it's the tenth of January, 1931! Oh, there's so much to do!"

"I think it's best that we stay here until the time comes to open at The Hague, Anna."

"Stay here? Nine more days? Heavens, no! I want at least a week of rehearsing privately with Vladimirov in Paris. Hurry, Victor, arrange for the compartments on the train. I never felt better in my life. It seems as if I simply cannot wait to be at work again!"



CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

THE LAST CURTAIN

ARRIVING at Paris, she went at once to Dr. Zalvesky.

"Yes," he said, after he had made a thorough examination, "I'm quite pleased with your condition, Madame."

"Oh Doctor, I'm so glad. You know, I think never in my life have I looked forward to a tour as I do this one. Just imagine, on the way here from Cannes, we were in a railroad wreck. It was pretty bad, but the car Victor and I were wasn't hurt at all. We had such a narrow escape, though. All I could think of was: Suppose something had happened to us—*and we couldn't go on with this tour!* But now, there's nothing to prevent it, is there?"

"Nothing at all, Madame. You're in excellent health."

Satisfied that all was well, Dandré went to London on business.

After the warmth and brightness of Cannes, it was cold in Paris, cold and rainy, but this cold could not dampen Anna's spirits.

"You look radiant," Vladimirov exclaimed, at the first sight of her. "I never saw you looking better."

"Yes, thank heaven I'm in fine condition for the beginning of our new season. I'm so impatient to get started."

Never had he seen her work with more thoroughness, more enthusiasm, more sparkle. Hour after hour she continued, tireless.

One morning when they arrived at the rehearsal room, the place was icy cold. Vladimirov complained about it.

"Never mind," she said, giving him one of her quick, smiles, "we'll get to work and forget it. There's something wrong with the heating, I believe. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter at all."

"It's you I'm thinking of, Anna Pavlova. You'll get overheated and then chilled——"

She laughed. "And what if I do? You know I've never believed in pampering myself. Come, let's get started!"

Next day it was all too evident that she was not feeling her best. "Don't be concerned," she told her partner airily, "it's nothing, nothing at all. I'll forget all about it when we start working. I left Cannes on the tenth, I arrived in Paris on the eleventh, and on the seventeenth we're to take the train for The Hague. Do you realise that's to-morrow, my friend? And on the nineteenth

we open. So we have much to do. Come, let's get to work!"

But next day on the train she was strangely languid. "It's—curious," she murmured, "how—how fatigued I feel. So—so terribly—*tired*."

As the train sped towards its destination, she grew palpably worse. Arriving at The Hague, she went at once to bed. Marguerite called a doctor. When the doctor had left, all the members of the company, who were already awaiting her in the city, came into her room and clustered about the bed. Dandré arrived in the midst of an outburst of laughter.

"Anna," he exclaimed worriedly, "what's the matter?"

"Oh, it's nothing, Victor, nothing, my dove," she answered lightly. "Just imagine, this doctor says I have pleurisy of the left lung—and I just probably ate something in Paris which poisoned me. But I shall be all right to-morrow."

"Pleurisy!"

"No, no, it's not that at all. We'll open on schedule, never fear. Come, sit here close to me and tell me all you did in London. How was the garden? How are my precious birds? My, how serious you look. But this is nothing to worry about, *really*."

The next morning Dandré called the Queen's physician, Dr. de Jong. "Yes," the doctor said gravely, "it is pleurisy. She has worked so hard all her life, she has given so much of herself for so many years, that she has no resistance. Her heart action is quite weak."

"Heart action! But—there's—no—danger?"

"How old is Madame now?"

"She's fifty-one."

"She looks much younger. No, there's no danger. Of course, even after recovery from a case of pleurisy, one must take certain precautions."

"For instance?"

"Well, another cold would cause a relapse. She must take care of herself, rest, stay out of draughts, not too much exertion, that sort of thing."

"Anna Pavlova has a mind and will of her own, Doctor. If I were to tell her that, she'd only laugh at me. Would you mind telling her this yourself? She might believe it if you said it."

When the doctor told her, she shook her head stubbornly. "It's impossible, Monsieur le docteur, quite impossible. I start my season to-morrow."

"You can't, Anna," answered Dandré gently.

"Can't? Why ever not? I shall be all right. There's nothing very much the matter."

"No, you mustn't. I've never forbidden you to do anything you wanted to do, my dear, but I do forbid this!"

"I agree with your husband, Madame," put in the doctor.

"To-morrow you'll change your minds. Nothing can stop Pavlova from dancing," she affirmed. "My body obeys *me*. I do not obey my body. That was one of the first things I learned when I first began to dance."

"She has a will of iron," murmured the doctor to Dandré as he left the sickroom.

But the next day, Monday, she found it difficult to breathe. "I couldn't sleep all night," she said.

"Well, perhaps—perhaps we won't start the season to-day, after all."

None of the company were worried, not even Dandré. It was merely a slight postponement, that was all.

On Tuesday the doctors looked more serious. "Of course," declared Pavlova, "I shall go on dancing. You *know* that, don't you, Victor?"

"Of course," he answered.

On Wednesday she declared she felt much better and wanted to sit up. "I feel almost like myself again. Tell me, Victor, how are rehearsals going? Is Papa Ivan making them work? Has Kuzma got the costumes all ready? How is the advance sale?"

For hours they discussed details of business.

"It's too bad, this delay," she said wistfully.

"It's a long way we have to go, Anna. Holland, Germany, Poland, Rumania, Serbia, Italy, France, and beyond France another world tour, the Orient, America, South America, Central America, Australia. Anna, why not agree to wait a little? Why not disband the company and——"

"No," she answered, "I can't wait. Oh, the years we've been voyaging, Victor! Do you remember Cuba, and the empty seats? And the cattle boat? And do you remember Guayaquil? And those lovely days in California with Doug and Charlie and Mary? And Poppy? Do you remember Poppy?"

"Yes, I remember, my dear. Try to sleep now."

"Go see how they're doing at rehearsal," she begged. "Don't let them grow slack just because I'm not there to watch them."

He started for the door, then turned back.

"What is is, Victor?" she asked fondly. "You—you're not worried about me, are you?"

"Anna——"

"I'm not sick," she cried rebelliously. "I'm better. I won't be sick. I *can't* be sick."

"Anna, you must cancel this tour."

"Nonsense, Victor I tell you, I shall be quite all right. No, I will not hear of such a thing. I can't disband the company, you know that. I can't disappoint my public. I never have. I never shall. These doctors, don't believe them. I shall be at rehearsal to-morrow."

"Anna—" He sat on the side of the bed and took her hand tenderly in his. "I—I don't know quite how to tell you this, but—well, I've just had a long talk with the doctors. They—they say——"

She smiled. "They say I'm worse? Tell me the truth. They say I shall die?"

"No. No, they don't say you'll die. They say you'll live, if——"

"If? Go on."

"If you'll permit a trepanning operation on your ribs at once—to-day!"

"Well, yes, of course, Victor, if it's necessary—only let them hurry up about it. We *must* begin the tour as quickly as possible."

"Well, that—that's just it, Anna." He avoided her eyes. "If—if you—I mean—well, you see, the operation, it would mean that there would be no more tours—ever!"

She was silent for a long time. "I see," she said at last. "What you're trying to tell me is, that if I permit this operation I shall never dance again."

"Yes, Anna, that's it."

"The answer," she told him, "is—*no.*"

"But—it will save your life, Anna."

"The answer," she repeated, "is *no.*"

"Anna! Anna—please!"

"No. To live without dancing—what kind of life would that be? How could I exist if I couldn't dance?" She smiled, pressed his hand. "Don't worry, my dove. How often have you heard me say that nothing can stop me from dancing? And that is true now, as true as it ever was. Write Niccolini Romeo that I shall want a double order of shoes at once. Write Mamasha for me. Tell her—tell her the tour has been temporarily postponed, but it is nothing to worry about, nothing at all. Tell the company they are not to be anxious, they are to go on with rehearsals."

Next day, Thursday, her heart was weaker. At six o'clock she lost consciousness. For hours Dandré, with Marguerite, who had never left her, watched by the bedside. Every moment seemed a dim eternity. From somewhere in the distance came the funereal tolling of a clock. Seven . . . eight . . . nine.

"Marguerite," whispered Dandré, "I'll watch here. You had better go get something to eat."

"No, Monsieur, I won't leave her. She's so used to me. She might wake at any moment and want something."

Dandré was silent, his anguished eyes riveted upon that calm, beautifully chiselled face. There were no lines, no wrinkles, but the cheeks looked sunken, the cheekbones stood out more prominently than

ever. It was unthinkable that Anna Pavlova could die. She was only resting, resting quietly. Yes, that was it.

He thought how, all these long years, she had mothered her troupe, scolded them, cheered them, goaded them always to greater endeavours. Hers was a life of incessant voyaging, a life of strange hotels, trains, theatres. Her whole existence had been a quest—a quest for perfection. All she had ever wanted to do was dance, and she had danced anywhere, everywhere. Never before had illness kept her from dancing. For all her appearance of frailty, she had amazing energy, stamina. She was not going to die, of course. Nobody could think of Pavlova dying. After all, she had only been sick six days.

Ten o'clock . . . eleven . . .

At last, at midnight she opened her eyes. The eyes held a vague smile. She moved her head a little, as if she were listening to something.

Marguerite leaned over her, speaking softly. "You—want something, Madame?"

Pavlova smiled, a faint, rather twisted smile. "Bring me—my—swan costume," she whispered.

Then, as they watched, they saw the long, lovely hands rise, fluttering a little as they had so often done in the swan dance.

Gradually the gestures grew slower—and at last the hands sank to the coverlet. They were still, strangely still, but the lovely face was smiling.

Pavlova was happy. Death had not stopped her. Nothing could stop her from dancing.

Anna Pavlova went dancing into eternity.

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