

"A

FIND"



by

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DON PEDRO OTEYZA rich, fat, and pompous said: "Lena, my wife wants Rosie to take music lessons. I want the best for my daughter. I shall send her to you."

"How old is she?"

"Sixteen. She will not be a musician and she will be rough but my wife insists and... you will earn good money. Well?"

I smiled and nodded. One more dull student did not matter after all.

My friend Carmen, who knew the girl, was much amused by this arrangement.

"Who knows" she said, "you may turn out something yet. She is giddy enough to try anything."

My expectations could well be imagined.

She came — a girl thin, ill-dressed, and shy. She listened attentively to my explanations and timidly squeaked through the scales. She drove me to distraction.

She never missed her lessons and although she wearied me I had to admit that she was doing well — astonishingly well. Still, I was not enthusiastic. Then one day I came suddenly upon her singing a simple little air with exquisite tones and grace. Could this millionaire's daughter be an artist? She fired my imagination and ambition. I drove her relentlessly. I had to produce an artist, the artist I could never be.

One evening I went to see Don Pedro at his house to talk about Rosie's progress. He was flattered and he said with a smile:

"So, my daughter will soon be ready to sing anything."

"Not everything" I answered, "but rather ready to be sent abroad for further studies."

"Ho, ho! A singer? Rosie? That's a joke. She has a better future, I think".

"FUTURE?"

"Yes. Between you and me, Tony Lado is around and — in a year or two Tony will manage his father's business, so..."

My heart bled. Could this dull millionaire think of anything else but money? I looked around.

"Where is your piano?" I asked. "In the playroom above the garage." He said with an air of sardonic surprise. "It is too bulky for this living room and

Rosie's racket would have bothered us. My wife does not like noise."

These were Rosie's parents! How could a jewel emerge from such gross surroundings?

My disappointment was great but my pupil's lessons continued. It was a crime to neglect the gift she possessed — a voice rich, smooth, and true.

The final blow came when Mrs. Oteyza called, and a few hours before the students' concert, to say that her daughter was hoarse from a bad cold.

"In a way I am glad." She said. "Rosie was very nervous about her first appearance on the stage. Now her father wants her lessons stopped."

I thought it best not to argue but I was disconsolate.

A few minutes before the concert, Rosie rushed in!

"Ma'am, may I sing?" She asked excitedly.

"How is your cold? Let me see — go in there and sing. Sing as you have never sang before." I commanded.

"My find" I breathed, as her marvelous voice reached me.

After the concert, Carmen and Dr. Jenner, the music critic, congratulated me.

"Lena, the girl is wonderful" he said. "Send her to me and I will help her."

"Nothing can be done for her", I sadly answered. "Her parents are rich. They do not want her to finish her studies."

I heard Carmen laugh.

"What's funny?" I demanded furiously.

"You, silly," and turning to Rosie she said:

"Tell her, go on, tell her who you really are."

"I am not Rosie," the girl confessed, looking at me contritely. I am Nelda Rada, Mrs. Oteyza's seamstress. I like music, and when Rosie offered me two pesos a lesson to take her place, well I... It was good business," she finished lamely.

I should have been furious but I was happy, very happy. I frowned heavily and said serenely: "I will punish you with more lessons and you will then know what is to study." I was to have my artist after all!