

VALENTINO

ACT ONE

[An open stage apart from a large picture of Rudolph Valentino in 'The Sheikh' hanging up stage.]

MUSIC #1 INTRODUCTION

[The lights come up to reveal June Mathis, a Hollywood scriptwriter, at a desk and typewriter down stage left. She looks up from her typing.]

MUSIC #2 VALENTINO

JUNE How do you measure the fame of this man,
 How do you summarise?
 Why the whole world was turned upside down
 By his smouldering eyes?
 Playing the Hollywood game
 With his face in each celluloid frame,
 Causing passions to soar and what's more for the world to proclaim -

[The desk moves off as June joins the Ensemble, discovered in a group looking up at the picture. They turn and continue singing.]

ALL Valentino!
 Original heartthrob and Hollywood star.
 Valentino!
 Worshipped and cherished, revered from afar.

JUNE Up on the screen the epitome of
 Romance and passion, adventure and love,
 That was the man,

ALL Valentino.

[Valentino's Mother steps out from the Ensemble.]

MOTHER Who could foretell how his life would evolve
 From those early days?
 Turning and twisting each step on the road
 Leading so many ways.

[Laskey, Norman and Jean step out. These are characters from Valentino's future.]

NORMAN He lived for only one aim,

JEAN The pursuit of attention and fame,

LASKEY And the ultimate thrill when the billboard in lights spelled his name -

[The picture flies out revealing Valentino, a boyish 18 year old.]

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VALENTINO *[With a big smile on his face he crosses down stage as he speaks.]*
 Rudolpho Alfonzo Raffaello Pierre Filibert Guglielmi di Valentina!
[A ship's steam blast is heard and a ship's Purser crosses with a megaphone.]

PURSER SS Cleveland sailing for New York in ten minutes. All ashore who's going ashore.

SCREEN: ITALY 1913

[As he crosses the gangway of the SS Cleveland appears. The ship is preparing to leave Italy for New York in December 1913. From the bottom step Valentino picks up a small case.]

VALENTINO Momma.

MOTHER Rodolpho, remember your promise. Be a good boy in America.

VALENTINO Don't worry, Momma. I'm gonna love America. La Dolce Vita! Fine American ladies!

MOTHER Alberto, tell your brother. America is a bad place.

[Alberto, Valentino's older brother, steps out from the Ensemble.]

ALBERTO Forget about the ladies, Rodolpho. Ladies are why you are leaving.

MOTHER Give him the money, Alberto.

VALENTINE Money?

ALBERTO Some of the men folk here in Castellanetta make a collection for you.
[He gives him some lira.]

VALENTINO They think that much of me?

ALBERTO No. But with you gone they're sure that their daughters will sleep alone in their beds.

VALENTINO *[Laughing.]* I never forget them. Or the people of Castellanetta. Or their daughters!

[Another steam blast from the ship. The Purser crosses again.]

PURSER Last call. All ashore who's going ashore.

MOTHER You have the note? For your Poppa's friend?

VALENTINO *[Taking out note and reading it.]* It's here, Momma. Fredo Bonnetti, 215 West 49th Street, Lower Manhattan.

MOTHER Keep it safe.

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VALENTINO Bye Alberto. *[They embrace.]* Goodbye Momma. *[He hugs his Mother.]*

MOTHER *[Weeping.]* Make a new life, Rodolpho – a good life.

VALENTINO You'll see Momma. One day *[He paints a picture with his hands.]*
Rodolpho Guglielmi. Millionaire!

[The Ensemble continue the song as he moves towards the gangway. Two young ladies and a slightly older one are there to bid him a tearful farewell. He kisses them quickly and as they move away a young man waits for his farewell kiss. Valentino goes to kiss him, thinks better of it and quickly hugs him while looking around with a smile on his face, then hurries up the gangway.]

ALL Valentino!
Original heartthrob and Hollywood star.
Valentino!
Worshipped and cherished, revered from afar.
Up on the screen the epitome of
Romance and passion, adventure and love,
That was the man,
Valentino.

[The Ensemble and June slowly disappear as the gangway turns to become the stern of the ship. Valentino is looking out at what was his home.]

MUSIC #3 BRAVE NEW WORLD

VALENTINO Castallanetta farewell.
How I will fare time will tell.
Riding the Yankee gravy train
I leave these blue skies for the New York rain.

[Now on the back of the ship he slowly starts to think of the future. The tempo is slow at first.]

So at last I'm bound for a brave new world,
One I'm longing to see.
I've heard tell in that brave new world
Something's waiting for me.

[Slowly the tempo picks up.]

So what now, who knows what tomorrow brings,
What is my destiny?
Hey, this face
Will find a place
In that brave new world, wait and see.

[Now more excited.]

When I get to New York the folks of New York

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Will all come running down the street.
 "Rodolpho", they'll say, "we've waited so long for you!"
 When I get to New York the girls of New York
 Will soon be falling at my feet.
[With a cheeky grin.]
 Maybe a few of the gentlemen too!
 Form a queue!

[Seeing New York in the distance.]

With a giant step in this brave new world
 I can be what I want to be.
 Head held high
 Will show them I
 Can make it I guarantee.
 This brave new world will be a better world for me.

[The tempo is now driving faster.]

With a giant step in this brave new world
 I can be what I want to be.
 Head held high
 Will show them I
 Can make it I guarantee.
 This brave new world –
 This brave new world
 Will be a better world -
[Stops and thinks, and then with a wry smile -] with me.

SCREEN: ELLIS ISLAND, NEW YORK 1914

MUSIC #4 ELLIS ISLAND

[At the end of the number the scene changes to Ellis Island, New York. The gangway turns again as Valentino takes his place in the queue of immigrants awaiting entrance to the USA. An Immigration Officer is at a desk.]

OFFICER Next. *[Valentino moves forward.]* Name?

VALENTINO *[Shaking with cold.]* Que?

OFFICER Your name kid. What's your name? *[Sees him shaking. Suspiciously.]*
 You nervous or sumthin'?

VALENTINO I am freezing.

OFFICER It's Christmas. It's usually cold in New York at Christmas! Now, what's your name?

VALENTINO Name? Ah, si. Rodolpho.

OFFICER Full name. This is America. We're all bureaucrats around here!

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VALENTINO *[Saying it fast.]* Rodolpho Guglielmi di Valentina.

OFFICER I don't know what you said kid, but you better clean it up yourself.

VALENTINO Non capisco.

OFFICER *[To another Official.]* We got a comedian. Slower for Christ's sake.

VALENTINO *[Slower.]* Rodolpho Gugliemi – *[The Official holds his hand up to stop Valentino. He writes and indicates to continue.]* – di Valentina. *[The Officer mutters to himself as he writes.]*

OFFICER So Mr Gugliemi di Valentina, you gotta place to stay?

VALENTINO Si. *[Showing the note.]* 49th Street, Lower Manhattan. *[The Official stamps the papers and hands them to Valentino.]* Maybe you direct me

OFFICER *[Waving him away.]* Next.

MUSIC #5 THIS IS NEW YORK

[Valentino moves away and tries to attract the attention of other people. The Immigration scene disappears. A Street Sweeper notices him.]

SWEEPER So your hopes are as high as the torch held hand
Of the Statue of Liberty.
And it wills you to thinkin' ain't it grand
To be here in the land of the free.

[He indicates that Valentino should follow the crowd towards the Manhattan ferry, which comes into view.]

FERRYMAN And the bums on side-walks rattle their cans
Beggin' for nickels and dimes.
But that ain't you 'cause you got plans,
You're rollin' with the times.

[Valentino joins the packed ferry as it starts its journey to Manhattan.]

ALL Hey this is it kid, this is New York.
Home of the fast buck, home of jive talk.

FERRYMAN Where Bowery Boys dodge streetcar fares,
While Wall Street juggles them stocks and shares.

ALL What do you say kid, don't it feel good?
How tall can you walk?
Don't the cold winds blow when you sleep in the street?
How long can you go when you're busted and beat?

FERRYMAN Next thing you know you're back on your feet
And soaring like a hawk.

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ALL This is it kid, this is New York.

[The ferry arrives at Battery Park. People leave as Valentino tries to get directions. He approaches a Hot Chestnut Salesman.]

SALESMAN *[Looking at paper.]* 49th street? That's a ways up. Keep following the signs that say Broadway through Greenwich Village and Herald Square. Then it's about another fifteen blocks!

VALENTINO So many streets!

SALESMAN *[Singing.]* With fire in your belly you shake those shackles
And head off for Main Street.
While the frost that coats the side-walk crackles
And snaps beneath your feet.

[A Customer has been buying chestnuts and now sings.]

CUSTOMER As the morning mist on Park Avenue
Becomes Grand Central steam,
So Forty Second Street comes into view

SALESMAN/
CUSTOMER Ain't you glad you followed your dream.

[During the next sequence Valentino's journey progresses to Times Square.]

ALL Hey this is it kid, this is New York.
Home of the fast buck, home of jive talk.

[We are now by the stage door of a Broadway theatre. A group of hopeful auditionees practice their dance steps.]

HOOFERS You'll dance 'neath the Times Square neon signs
To Tin Pan Alley's best melody lines.

[The Stage Manager opens the door and they all look at him.]

STAGE
MANAGER We got all we need today. Try again next week. *[He slams the door. All groan and start to exit. Valentino's journey continues as he encounters an old prostitute.]*

PROSTITUTE Hey handsome, what d'ya say? I ain't too expensive if you ain't too particular

VALENTINO No comprendre. *[A Cop appears and the Prostitute moves away.]*
Scusa?

COP What's up, pal?

VALENTINO *[Showing paper.]* West 49th street?

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COP Six blocks up and look for Harry's Bar.

VALENTINO *[Not understanding.]* Harry's Bar? *[He looks away but when he turns back the Cop has gone. Getting more despondent he continues on.]*

 So this is it huh, this is New York.
 Home of the fast buck, home of jive talk.

[Valentino moves on through the crowds asking the way. Eventually, arriving at West 49th Street, he meets Fredo.]

VALENTINO *[Calling to Fredo.]* Scusa. This Lower Manhattan?

FREDO *[Turning.]* Yeah.

VALENTINO Grazie. *[Fredo starts to move away.]* West 49th Street? Number 215?

FREDO Yeah.

VALENTINO Scusa – you live here?

FREDO *[Getting impatient.]* Yeah.

VALENTINO You know Fredo Bonnetti?

FREDO *[Suspicious.]* Who's asking?

VALENTINO Rodolpho Guglielmi.

FREDO Rodolpho? Giovanni's son? *[Valentino nods.]* I'm Fredo. I've been expecting you. *[He calls to people in the neighbourhood.]* Hey guys, this is Rodolpho, the son of my good friend back in Italy. *[Some of the neighbours gather round to welcome Valentino.]*

NEIGHBOURS Hey this is it kid, this is New York.
 Home of the fast buck, home of jive talk.

MEN Vaudeville shows and cabaret dives,

WOMEN Where up town ladies have the time of their lives.

ALL What do you say kid, don't it feel good?
 How tall can you walk?

FREDO *[Spoken.]* This way to my place. It ain't exactly Buckingham Palace, but you can stay with me 'til you're on your feet.

VALENTINO *[Spoken.]* Grazie.

FREDO You're gonna love New York. The sights, the sounds

VALENTINO The women?

FREDO *[Laughing.]* Yeah, with them you'll be ...

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[Sings.]... popping like a champagne cork.
This is it kid.
This is New

ALL *[They all greet Valentino.]*
This is New
This is New
This is New
This is New York!

FREDO Hey this is it kid, this is New York.
Home of the fast buck, home of jive talk.
Jelly Roll blues in honky tonks
From Staten Island up to the Bronx.

ALL What do you say kid, don't it feel good?
How tall can you walk?
You're life is a drag and you're stuck in a spot
You're startin' to sag and you're losing the plot,

FREDO Then a Joplin rag playing hotter than hot
Has you –

VALENTINO *[Picking up the idea.]* – dancing on each cracked side-walk

FREDO *[Spoken.]* Yeah!

ALL This is it kid,
This is New York.
This is it kid,
This is New York.

[Song ends and the Ensemble disperses. Fredo's apartment appears and Fredo leads Valentino into it.]

MUSIC #6 FREDO'S APARTMENT

FREDO Come on in.

VALENTINO This is very kind of you, Fredo.

FREDO Ah forget it. You're practically family. *[Indicating a chair.]* Pull up a floorboard.

VALENTINO *[Not quite understanding the New York slang.]* Grazie. You have a nice apartment.

FREDO It ain't bad. Six floors up is a bit of a bitch, but at least there's a view.

VALENTINO *[Looking front as though at a window.]* Que?

FREDO *[Pointing.]* On a chair through that top window you can just make out the Hudson River.

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- VALENTINO Hudson River. Ah yes, I hear of it on the ship that bring me from Italy. *[Recalling other words he has picked up.]* Also I hear Broadway, Harlem and Burlesque – a place where the ladies dance with very little on.
- FREDO *[Smiling.]* My, my. You got quite an education on the way over. How was your trip?
- VALENTINO Not very comfortable. I have to travel third class. All crammed together like cattle. And the food! Ugh! I would not feed it to a dog.
- FREDO I'll make you some real food. Good Italian food. Plenty spaghetti.
- VALENTINO Grazie. *[Remembering.]* Oh, I forget. I have a letter for you from my Momma. *[Gives letter to Fredo.]*
- FREDO Pour yourself some coffee.
- VALENTINO *[Removing his coat.]* It's warm in here.
- FREDO This is New York. We got gas. We've even got hot water.
- VALENTINO And the New York ladies. They are, how you say? Hot – also?
- FREDO Hot – yes. And also expensive.
- VALENTINO Not for me. I only have to look at them. *[He smiles with a wink of his eye.]*
- FREDO Listen a dame ain't like no Model T Ford. You don't take her out for a test drive and dump her back at the garage. *[He laughs at what he reads.]*
- VALENTINO What's the matter.
- FREDO Your Momma! *[He reads.]* Keep my Rodolpho away from the ladies! Don't let him be no gigolo.
- VALENTINO I am Italian – so the ladies will adore me. *[Pick up an American phrase.]* They will be *hot* for me. *[Music starts.]*

MUSIC #7 YOU GET THE GIRL

- FREDO *[With a laugh.]* For hot ladies you need money – and for money you need a job. *[He sings.]*

Although this may be
The land of the free,
Free comes at a price.
If you wanna click
With some classy chick,
No dough, hey no dice.

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- VALENTINO *[Spoken.]* I don't need to pay for anything with a woman. In Italy the ladies beg me to be with them.
- FREDO But you're in America now. Everything is different. Here a lady expects you to treat her every time you take her out. *[Sings.]*
- The one thing you need
If you're to succeed
Is plenty of dollars and cents.
For them night of steamy passion
Fill your pockets full of cash'n
Make like them New York gents.
- VALENTINO *[Spoken.]* I did not know that American women were so expensive.
- FREDO The classy ones are. You get what you pay for – or on the other hand, they get what they pay for.
- VALENTINO You mean like a gigolo?
- FREDO *[With a smile.]* Male escorts – please.
- VALENTINO Oh, scusi.
- FREDO The real nice ladies require you to flatter them. And for that you need plenty of sponduli. *[Sings.]*
- To get the girl you need dollars,
To get dollars you need a job.
Don't be a lazy slob
And stay on the shelf.
To get the girl you need money
And that money will get you class,
Sitting here on your ass
You sit by yourself.
Work hard and play hard
With one result,
You win that faultless pearl.
With a wardrobe of three-button suits,
And your physical attributes,
You got the goods,
You got the looks,
You get the girl.
- VALENTINO *[Spoken.]* OK, OK. Now I understand. I must find work and then I get the girl.
- FREDO Well something like that! But finding a job ain't easy. Especially when you ain't got no experience in anything.
- VALENTINO I have experience....
- FREDO Yeah I know. *[Mimicking him.]* With the ladies.

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VALENTINO To get the girl you need passion
 And the passion is what I got.
 Ladies will find me hot
 And give in to me.
 I see the girl, my eyes smoulder
 And the smoulder soon turns to fire,
 Every lady that I desire
 Is in ecstasy.

[Fredo shakes his head and sings.]

FREDO You'll soon find out it
 Takes great expense
 To make her senses swirl.
 You give big and she'll appreciate.

VALENTINO And what I've got to give is great!

FREDO *[Spoken and crossing himself.]* Oh my God!

VALENTINO I got the goods,
 I got the looks,
 I'll get the girl.

[Fredo shakes his head in despair as his apartment disappears and some Waiters enter. They cross to Valentino and put a waiter's jacket and white apron on him. Fredo crosses to one side of the stage as a Speakeasy scene takes shape.]

SCREEN: DRINKS AND DANCE

WAITERS To earn the dough you wait tables,
 Wash the dishes and scrub the floors.
 Grovel and open doors
 To the clientele.

[Some Customers enter. The Waiters carry out their chores as they sing.]

To earn the dough you smile nicely,
 And attended to each small request.
 If suitably impressed
 Their tip will be swell.

VALENTINO *[Calling to Fredo, rather depressed.]* Fredo, I have to do this?

FREDO Listen, the Americans, they lead the high life. Italians, they wait at tables. Be glad you got a job.

[A Female customer spots a Gigolo and crosses to him. She puts some money in his jacket pocket and they start to dance the tango. Valentino watches this. As the dance progresses Valentino speaks to Fredo.]

VALENTINO This dance. What is it?

FREDO The tango, of course.

VALENTINO Tango? I don't know it.

FREDO It's all the rage. The dance of love they call it. Women pay well for a man who can seduce them on the dance floor – as well as *[He gestures 'upstairs' with a finger.]*

VALENTINO Then I will learn it too!

[Fredo and the Customers disappear as the Gigolo leaves his partner and crosses to Valentino. He teaches him the tango. The sequence ends with Valentino dancing with various girls. Sam Malone, owner of Maxims Night Club, enters and watches him.]

ALL To get the girl you dance tango
Yeah the tango di Argentine.
Finest New York has seen,

VALENTINO Aphrodisiac!

ALL To get the girl you dance tango,

VALENTINO And the tango shows my physique,
She will be limp and weak
With no turning back.

ALL Lost in the passion
And dance combined
She's in a mindless whirl.
With a wardrobe of three-buttoned suites.

VALENTINO And my physical attributes

ALL You got the goods.

VALENTINO I got the goods!

ALL You got the looks.

VALENTINO Have I got looks?

ALL You get the girl.

VALENTINO/

ALL And with the goods
And with the looks
You/I get the girl.

[As the number ends and the Ensemble breaks up, Sam calls to Valentino.]

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SAM Hey kid. I know every gigolo on Broadway, but I ain't never seen you before.

VALENTINO I no here long. Just arrived from Italy.

SAM You dance good – you look good.

VALENTINO I am good!

SAM You wanna a job at my place?

VALENTINO Your place?

SAM Maxims. I'm Sam Malone, I front the joint.

VALENTINO *[Walking away.]* I no wait at tables.

SAM Easy tiger. Waiters is nickels and dimes. I want good tango dancers – to keep the dames happy. *[Loaded.]* Could you keep them happy?

VALENTINO Si, when I tango with a lady it's like I make love to her.

SAM 35 bucks a week and we'll see how things work out. What do they call you?

VALENTINO I am Rodolpho Guglielmi di Valentina.

SAM *[Struggling with the name.]* Rodolpho Gugl.... Let's make that Rodolpho di Valentina.

VALENTINO di Valentina. Si, I like that.

SAM *[To himself.]* I think the broads will too.

MUSIC #8 MAXIMS

SCREEN: MAXIMS

[The scene changes to Maxims. To one side is a small stage. Most of the clientele are elegant New York ladies. Valentino looks around as Sam explains how everything works.]

SAM This is a pretty classy joint. Not the sort of place you been bussin' tables at. Ladies who come here want a good time. Like to be treated right. You know what I mean?

VALENTINO Comprendre. Down here I dance with them. Upstairs they dance with me!

[Bianca de Saulles enters. She is an elegant society lady, wife of gangster Jack de Saulles. Valentino is immediately attracted to her.]

Bella! Who is that?

SAM Mrs Bianca de Saulles. She's married to Jack de Saulles.

VALENTINO I never heard of him.

SAM And you don't want to, neither. He's in real estate. Got a pretty mean streak, too, if he's crossed. He's got connections.

VALENTINO Connections?

SAM With people you don't wanna know. *[Sam crosses to Bianca.]* Mrs de Saulles, a pleasure to see you – as always. *[He shows Bianca to a table.]*

BIANCA Thank you, Sam.

[A fanfare.]

SAM Excuse me a moment. *[He crosses to a microphone to announce the act.]* Ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to Maxims. The bar is well stocked, the lights are low and the dance floor is ready and waiting. What more could one ask for? Well only one thing. A song from our guest artist tonight. Straight from a tour of the hit Broadway Revue, The Masked Model, Mr Norman Kerry.

MUSIC #9 I'M YOURS

[Norman Kerry enters to polite applause. He begins to sing the song. During the song various females approach male dancers, pay them and begin to dance. Valentino is prominent with his partner and is noticed by Bianca and also Norman.]

NORMAN I'm yours
And my darling I will be 'til I breathe my last.
I'm yours
I'll still love you long after the last stone is cast.
'Til the morning sun ceases to rise,
'Til my spirit takes wing and flies
Way up to those heavenly skies
Darling I'm yours.

Without you my days would be weary,
My nights would be cold and so long.
Praying for you to be near me,
For here in my arms you belong.
I'm yours
From the first time I saw you I knew I was lost.
I'm yours
And I need you forever whatever the cost.
Whatever it takes I will give,
For there's no one I'd rather be with
Than you for as long as I live
Darling I'm yours.

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[There is an instrumental break during which Norman speaks to some customers. Sam is by Bianca.]

BIANCA I see you have a new employee.

SAM Yeah, just started. A very good dancer. Moves like a breeze.
[Bianca gives Sam a knowing look and Sam beckons Valentino over.]
 Mrs de Saulles, may I introduce Rodolpho di Valentina?

VALENTINO Mrs de Saulles – *[He gives a bow.]* – may I have this dance.

BIANCA *[Stuffing a ten dollar bill in his pocket.]* Mr di Valentina, you don't understand. I do the inviting.

[They dance as the number continues with Valentino taking up the song.]

VALENTINO I'm yours
 Oh amore I will be 'til death us do part.
 I'm yours
 And hereafter your laughter remains in my heart.

[They continue to dance for a while. Norman notices Valentino and speaks to Sam.]

NORMAN *[Very taken with Valentino.]* Who is that?

SAM Bianca de Saulles.

NORMAN Not her!

SAM *[With a knowing smile.]* Sorry, my mistake! New dancer. Italian.
[Looks at Norman.] Interested?

NORMAN Very.

[They both watch Valentino and Bianca dance.]

SAM I think you may have lost out, Norman.

NORMAN Yeah. Looks like that de Saulles dame could be taking home the bacon!

[He and Sam laugh. Bianca breaks and returns to her table as Sam crosses to Valentino.]

SAM You may have struck gold with that little number. Quite a dame, ain't she?

VALENTINO She is. And one, perhaps I should get to know better.

SAM That's as maybe, but she does have a husband.

VALENTINO I care nothing for him.

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- SAM I'm sure the feeling's mutual. Only if you cross him you could end up dancing at the bottom of the East River. Besides, you also have another admirer – if you're interested. *[He looks in the direction of Norman who smiles and nods. Valentino returns the smile.]*
- BIANCA *[Calling to Valentino.]* Rodolpho, would you like a drink?
- VALENTINA *[Smiling at her.]* I would like to finish this dance, Mrs de Saulles.
- BIANCA *[Moving back to him.]* Please – it's Bianca.
- [Sam smiles and moves away as Norman picks up the song. Valentino and Bianca dance closely until the end of the song.]*
- NORMAN And when all of our moments have gone
Our story of love will go on,
And two souls will still be as one,
Darling I'm yours.
- [As the number ends Bianca and Valentino are very close. Bianca gives him a knowing look and returns to her table. Sam moves to the microphone.]*
- SAM Ladies and gentlemen, Mr Norman Kerry. *[Polite applause. Valentino looks again at Norman. Norman moves from the microphone as though going over to Valentino.]*
- BIANCA Rodolpho, how about that drink now?
- [Valentino and Norman acknowledge each other and Valentino joins Bianca.]*
- SAM Sorry Norman, looks like the lady won!
- NORMAN *[Smiling.]* Well I'm leaving for the coast tomorrow anyway.
- SAM Going into pictures I hear.
- NORMAN Yeah. Paramount has signed me.
- SAM Well good luck, and don't forget your friends when you're up there in lights. *[Both laugh and shake hands.]* And thanks for tonight. It's been swell.
- NORMAN *[Looking across at Valentino.]* The pleasure was all mine.
- SAM *[Noticing the look and singing impromptu.]* I'm yours.....*[He and Sam laugh. Bianca picks up her purse and exits looking back at Valentino who in turn looks at Norman but decides to follow her off. Norman shrugs at Sam and they both exit. The scene breaks up as the Ensemble reprise some of the VALENTINO number to cover a passage of time.]*

MUSIC #10 VALENTINO (DANGEROUS)

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COMPANY *[Music 'Valentino']*
 One fleeting glance for the flame to ignite.
 [Music 'Valentino']
 Two empty souls with a chance to unite.
 First in a dance as they circle the floor,

[Sam enters carrying an accounts ledger.]

SAM Then in romance as they hungered for more.

ALL Dangerous game
 For di Valentina.

[At the end of the sequence time has moved on a number of months. The Ensemble moves away. Sam is sitting in the empty club looking at the accounts. Valentino enters now dressed a little better. He carries his coat and tie.]

SCREEN: 1915

SAM So Rodolpho, how goes it with the lovely Bianca? You been seeing her for sometime now.

VALENTINO Oh Sam - she is the woman for me.

SAM I think her husband might have something to say bout that.

VALENTINO *[Continuing to dress.]* He is nothing – a nobody. I am the only man who can satisfy her. When we dance the tango we are as one.

SAM And not just when you're dancing I bet. *[Sam is intrigued by what Valentino says and gets an idea.]* Listen, I've been invited to one of them razzamatazz showbiz parties at the Rooftop Gardens. Bonnie Sawyer's throwing it.

VALENTINO Bonnie Sawyer?

SAM Yeah. She's just opened as the star in the new Ziegfeld Follies. A lotta the showbiz crowd are gonna be there. You should tag along. In this town it ain't what you know, it's who you can cosy up to.

MUSIC #11 ROOFTOP GARDENS

[The scene changes to a glitzy party on a rooftop in uptown Manhattan. Bonnie Sawyer is mingling with the crowd, as is June Mathis. Sam and Valentino walk into the scene. June turns to see them.]

JUNE Sam!

SAM June Mathis. I didn't know you were in New York.

JUNE Just doing a little research for a new picture. *[Looking at Valentino.]* Who's the one with the smouldering eyes?

SAM *[Introducing them.]* Rodolpho di Valentina.

JUNE A Hollywood name. Made for the movies. *[She holds her hand out to Valentino.]* Pleasure to meet you, Mr di Valentina.

VALENTINO *[Taking her hand and kissing it.]* The pleasure is mine, Miss Mathis.

JUNE Good looks and good manners. *[To Sam.]* Your choice of staff is improving, Sam.

VALENTINO I am a dancer. A dancer of the tango – the dance of passion.

JUNE Is that so?

SAM *[With a tango hold gesture.]* He's one of my best.

VALENTINO The ladies – they are very happy with me.

JUNE I'll bet they are.

[Bonnie Sawyer steps out from the crowd to speak to Sam. She is a bubbly blonde and the latest star of the Ziegfeld Follies. A little dizzy. She obviously got where she is despite her talent. During the following dialogue Valentino notices a handsome Waiter who brings him a drink. They exchange some words until he is introduced to Bonnie.]

BONNIE Hello Sam. *[They kiss.]*

SAM Bonnie Sawyer. The dancing queen of Broadway. Caught you in the Follies last night. Terrific as always.

BONNIE *[To June.]* Hello June. How's Tinsel Town?

JUNE Booming. You should come and try out for the silver screen.

BONNIE *[Giggling.]* Me? In the movies? I don't think so. *[Suddenly the dedicated actress.]* I need to have a contact with my audience. Feel the waves of love coming over the footlights towards me. Enveloping me. Know what I mean?

JUNE *[Stifling a smile.]* Oh I do, I do.

BONNIE *[Eyeing Valentino.]* And who is this?

JUNE *[Introducing them.]* Rudolpho di Valentina – *[The Waiter leaves as Valentino turns to June.]* - Bonnie Sawyer.

BONNIE *[Holding out her hand to Valentino.]* Delighted. Have I ever seen you perform?

VALENTINO I don't think so, Miss Sawyer.

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SAM He works for me at Maxims.

VALENTINO *[Proudly.]* As a dancer.

BONNIE A dancer? di Valentina? *[The name dawns on her.]* Oh, it's you everyone's talking about! The Italian with the big – *[She stops herself.]* – personality.

[Valentino reacts to this.]

SAM Your reputation precedes you, Rudolpho! *[The music starts for a tango.]*

MUSIC #12 ROOFTOP TANGO

VALENTINO If the lady would care to dance?

BONNIE Why not.

[Valentino and Bonnie dance. At a certain point some more guests arrive. It is Bianca and her husband, Jack. Jack is immediately greeted by other guests while Bianca stands transfixed at seeing Valentino there. He notices her and stops dancing. Bonnie turns to see Bianca and Jack, then crosses to them.]

BONNIE Jack. Bianca. Great you could make it.

JACK I hear your show is a smash.

BONNIE You must come and see it. I'll arrange tickets.

JACK That would be great.

BONNIE How about a drink?

JACK Sure. *[To Bianca, who is still staring at Valentino.]* Bianca?

BIANCA Sorry?

JACK Drink?

BIANCA Why not.

BONNIE *[Seductively to Jack.]* What's your fancy.

JACK Bourbon now. *[Quietly and seductively to Bonnie.]* Somethin' sweeter later.

[A moment between them as the music starts. They move to the bar. Bianca moves to Valentino.]

MUSIC #13 WHAT YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR

BIANCA This is a surprise.

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VALENTINO I came with Sam. So that is your husband.

BIANCA *[With disdain.]* Yes. The pig.

VALENTINO Why do you not leave him? Then we can be together – always.

BIANCA Because I won't get a penny. He'll make sure of that. *[Watching Jack getting close to Bonnie.]* Look at him – sucking up to that dumb broad. Do they think I'm blind? Half of New York knows they've been getting it on. *[She sings.]*

The way he's staring
At what she's wearing,
Mentally stripping her bare
With each lecherous look.
While he romances
She takes her chances
Words they convey in one glance
You can read in a book.

[Jack and Bonnie return with drinks.]

JACK Bonnie's been telling me she's looking for a new dance partner.

BONNIE When I finish in the Follies I've been offered a tour of the Eastern Seaboard. I'm gonna be doing a live show in movie theatres before the main feature.

BIANCA Really. Have you thought of Mr di Valentina here? *[Valentino is surprised at this suggestion.]*

BONNIE Well he can certainly hold his own on the dance floor.

VALENTINO Mrs de Saulles, I don't think

BIANCA *[Stopping him.]* I understand from Sam Malone that he is the star dancer at Maxims.

JACK He's a gigolo!

VALENTINO *[Bristling.]* I am a dancer Mr de Saulles.

BONNIE Yeah, and a pretty good one, too. That's not a bad idea Bianca. *[To Valentino.]* Why don't you think it over – *[With a look at Jack.]* – while I have another drink?

JACK I'll get 'em. *[Jack and Bonnie move back to the bar.]*

VALENTINO Bianca

BIANCA This could be just what you've been waiting for. *[She sings.]*
Can't you see

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It's a grand opportunity?
 Nation wide tours
 Opening doors
 For you.
 This is what you've been waiting for
 You have to prove you're the best.
 This is what you've been waiting for
 Dance and forget all the rest.

VALENTINO *[Spoken.]* Bianca, these are wild dreams. And what of us? If I'm away dancing we'll never see each other.

BIANCA Oh we will my darling. I have relations all over the States. Time I started visiting them. *[Calling to Sam.]* What do you think, Sam?

[Sam has been talking to June. He turns to Bianca. June observes the scene.]

SAM What's that?

BIANCA Bonnie Sawyer has asked Rodolpho to join her act. I've told him he should.

SAM Really? Well I'd hate to lose you from Maxims, but I ain't gonna be the one to spoil your party.

BIANCA *[To Valentino.]* It would be a great career move.
 Don't say 'no'
 It's a chance that you can't let go.
 Don't hesitate
 This would be great
 For you.

SAM This is what you've been waiting for
 Take up the chance while you can
 This is what you've been waiting for,
 Show them Rodolpho the man!

[Slaps Valentino on the back. Bonnie and Jack return.]

BONNIE So, Mr Valentina, what's it to be?

VALENTINO *[After a pause.]* I would be honoured to join your act, Miss Sawyer.

BONNIE *[Taking his hand.]* Bonnie, please. I think we're gonna get on just fine.

[The scene breaks up and all exit except Jack and Bonnie.]

JACK What's all this nicey nice stuff with the grease ball. *[Imitating her.]* "Call me Bonnie"

BONNIE Don't worry Jackie, it's the perfect cover. Everyone'll think we're getting it on when in fact

JACK *[Getting it.]* Oh, not just a great body.

[He kisses her and exits as Valentino enters. He and Bonnie start their act.]

MUSIC #14 THE ACT

SCREEN: BONNIE SAWYER AND PARTNER PERFORM
THE NEW ARGENTINE TANGO

[After a few moments Bianca enters on one side of the stage and Jack on the other. They speak their lines of the following dialogue straight out. Bonnie and Valentino say their lines as they continue the dance, each one facing front as they speak, almost as if they were all on the telephone. The whole sequence is punctuated by the tango music.]

VALENTINO Bianca, darling. I miss you.

BIANCA Where are you next week?

VALENTINO Some place called Buffalo.

BIANCA My cousin Beatrice lives near Niagara. I must visit. I'll be at the Winston Hotel.

JACK Bianca wants to visit some cousin of hers. I'll be free for the whole day.

BONNIE What a coincidence. So will I! *[She giggles.]*

VALENTINO We are here in Boston two more nights then get the overnight train to Baltimore.

BIANCA Jack's gone to Boston on business. Some business – the rat. And what's the betting he'll be on that overnight train as well.

VALENTINO My compartment will be close to hers. I see who visits her.

JACK 'Til tomorrow.

BONNIE 'Til tomorrow.

BIANCA 'Til tomorrow.

VALENTINO Tomorrow.

[The dance climaxes. Valentino leaves Bonnie and dances to Bianca. Bonnie dances to Jack and, on the last beats of the music, he takes her in a tango hold that looks quite provocative. A Bailiff enters and crosses to Jack.]

BAILIFF Jack de Saulles?

JACK *[Still holding Bonnie.]* Yeah. Who's asking?

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BAILIFF The New York County Court. Mrs Bianca de Saulles is suing for divorce. *[He slaps a summons into Jack's hand.]*

JACK *[Dropping Bonnie and tearing open the summons.]* Adultery? With Bonnie Sawyer? Is she nuts.

[Bianca and Valentino smile at each other and exit. Four Reporters enter and together with Jack and Bonnie stand on the stage in individual areas.]

REPORTER1 New York County Court August 23rd 1916. Judge William Gilbert presided over de Saulles divorce case.

REPORTER 2 Jack de Saulles accused of adultery with dancing star Bonnie Sawyer.

JACK We're friends, me and Bonnie. We ain't never got it on.

REPORTER 3 The court hears reports of clandestine meetings -

BONNIE No, Jack and me just bumped into each other.

REPORTER 4 - in hotel bedrooms.

JACK Hey, this is crap. Besides, in my business a few broads enter the equation as part of the deal. It's an occupational hazard.

REPORTER 1 Assignations were witnessed by Sawyer's dancing partner.

JACK That grease ball gigolo? What's he got to do with this?

REPORTER 2 Sordid scenes on an overnight train to Baltimore.

JACK What train. I ain't ever been to Baltimore.

BONNIE We just bumped into each other at the station –

REPORTER 3 - said Sawyer

JACK *[Through clenched teeth.]* Shit.

REPORTER 4 Judge Gilbert finds for the plaintiff, Mrs Bianca de Saulles.

MUSIC #15 VERDICT

[Reporters and Bonnie exit. Valentino enters and Jack confronts him.]

JACK *[Fuming.]* You ain't heard the last of this, grease ball You're life ain't gonna be worth spit.

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[Jack exits as Valentino calls after him then moves into the next scene.]

VALENTINO I big shot now. I be millionaire. Momma be proud.

[Bianca enters as the de Saulles house appears. To one side is a small display table containing a very expensive vase. Pictures fly in to give the impression of a fine art collection. Valentino moves to Bianca and embraces her.]

BIANCA I knew we could do it. The settlement will give me the house and half of everything Jack owns. *[Pointing to the paintings.]* Some of these are worth a fortune.

VALENTINO *[Looking at the vase.]* What about this?

BIANCA Oh he can have that. I always hated it.

VALENTINO But it looks very expensive.

BIANCA I'm sure it is. He bought all sorts of crap. *[Jack enters, fuming.]* Oh just think we can do anything we want now.

JACK Not with my money you can't.

BIANCA *[Whirling round to see him.]* Leave it Jack.

JACK I ain't letting you and this gigolo grease ball take me to the cleaners.

BIANCA There's nothing you can do about it, Jack.

JACK *[Pulling out a gun.]* Oh yeah?

BIANCA Don't be a fool.

JACK Who are you calling a fool? I tell ya that gigolo is gonna walk all over you – with my money.

BIANCA Shut your mouth.

JACK Don't tell me to shut my mouth. This is my house and my money. I'll kill you both before I see you get a penny. *[With a movement as quick as lightning, Valentino lunges at Jack and knocks the gun from his hand. Bianca grabs the gun as Jack and Valentino struggle. Valentino is knocked to the floor.]* I'm Jack de Saulles. *[Starts to kick him.]* Jack de Saulles, grease ball *[Pulling Valentino's head up by the hair and taunting him.]* You're gonna wish you never heard of me.

BIANCA *[Pointing the gun at Jack.]* Leave him alone, Jack.

JACK *[Turning towards her and reaching for the gun.]* Give that to me – now!

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[Bianca fires and Jack drops to the floor. Valentino gets up and crosses to him. He checks to see if Jack is dead.]

VALENTINO Dio mio. He's dead. Bianca he's dead.

BIANCA *[Drops the gun and takes a step towards him.]* Rodolpho.

VALENTINO *[Panicking.]* I can not be here. This can have nothing to do with me.

BIANCA But I did it for you. For us. So we can be together. *[Valentino grabs his coat.]* Where are you going?

VALENTINO Anywhere. I was never here. *[He dashes out.]*

BIANCA *[Distraught.]* Rodolpho!

[She stands alone as the music starts.]

MUSIC #16 ONCE IN A LIFETIME MOMENT

So this is how the story ends
A love affair, two people who were more than friends.
I gave you ev'rything my heart could ever own
How could I have know or comprehend?

SCREEN: NEWSPAPER HEADLINE "Real Estate Tycoon slain."

[A Detective, Cop and Police Photographer enter and move to the body.]

Now the world is growing dark,
For you and I have lost the spark
Of love we had between us that I thought would always last
But shadows of the past have left their mark.

[The Detective moves to Bianca and speaks to her but we only hear her thoughts as she sings.]

A once in a lifetime moment
Happened when you spoke my name.
A magical, mystical moment
As into my life you came.
You tore my soul inside out,
I had no reason to doubt
Our once in a lifetime moment would always remain.

SCREEN: NEWSPAPER HEADLINE "Wife pleads self-defence."

[The Detective moves to the Cop.]

DETECTIVE She says it was self-defence, but I'm not sure. There ain't a mark on her.

COP Ain't she the ex-wife? Cleaned him out in the divorce case.

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DETECTIVE We gotta motive here. Take her down town and book her.

COP OK. *[He crosses to Bianca as the Detective and Photographer exit.]*

BIANCA Memories now fade and die,
Your words of love were just a lie.
Like a summer rose that finally withers in the fall
You took my very all and bled me dry.

[Bianca is handcuffed by the Cop.]

A once in a lifetime moment
Happened each time you came near.
A magical, mystical moment
Took love to another sphere.
Swearing to never deceive
Giving me cause to believe
Our once in a lifetime moment would always be here.

[As she is lead away a group of Press appear and call out.]

1st PRESS Hey Bianca, where's that nickles and dimes pimp?

2nd PRESS Who plugged Jack? You or di Valentina?

3rd PRESS Has the gigolo run out on ya?

[The Press disappear as the lights pull in around Bianca and she finishes the song.]

BIANCA Watching you walk out the door
Tells me for certain I'm sure
This once in a lifetime moment will disappear.

MUSIC #17 BACK TO MAXIMS

SCREEN: MAXIMS

[At the end of the number the scene changes to Maxims with Valentino, Sam and Fredo. Fredo is reading a newspaper telling of Bianca's arrest.]

FREDO She's going for self defence. What happens if she puts the finger on you? You could be deported. Sent back to Italy.

VALENTINO She won't. I'm sure she won't.

SAM Anyone see you there?

VALENTINO I don't think so.

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- SAM Then it's your word against hers. Sure you been seen with her, but in your occupation you're seen with lots of women.
- VALENTINO Sam, what am I gonna do?
- SAM You're a dancer – and a good one. You were a big hit dancing with Bonnie Sawyer.
- VALENTINO She have new partner now to dance with in the movie houses.
- FREDO Find yourself another one.
- SAM You know something, you'd be better off dancing in pictures instead of in front of them. Get yourself to Hollywood. There's a ton of money to be made out there by young fellas like you.
- VALENTINO Hollywood? It's many mile, no?
- SAM Three thousand to be exact. Well away from New York.
- FREDO It's worth a try.
- VALENTINO You think? *[They both nod.]* OK. I go Hollywood. Hey, Fredo, maybe I be a big star. Have the Hollywood ladies screaming for me!
- FREDO *[Exasperated.]* Rodolpho!
- SAM Not just the ladies.
- VALENTINO *[With a knowing wink.]* That's OK. I still got to – how you say – sow my wild oats?
- FREDO Sow many more and you'll put Kelloggs outta business!
- SAM You just concentrate on getting a career. *[Music starts.]*
- MUSIC #18 UNION PACIFIC
- FREDO I've read tales about the movies
And what they are out to prove is
Folk can hit it big in Hollywood.
- SAM He got looks, he's got the stance an'
Knows what cooks when he starts dancin'
I believe this kid can make it good.
- VALENTINO Write to Momma – I go west now
Rodolpho will do his best now.
- FREDO Remember there are other dancers there.
- SAM For ev'ryone that makes the headlines
There's a thousand on the breadlines.

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VALENTINO *[Spoken.]* No! Rodolpho di Valentina – millionaire!

SAM *[Spoken.]* Yeah – maybe. One of these days! We gotta get you there first.

SCREEN: GRAND CENTRAL STATION

[The scene changes to Grand Central Station. Passengers enter with various pieces of luggage. A Porter for Union Pacific enters calling]

PORTER Union Pacific, track nine for Cleveland, Chicago and points west. Leaving in five minutes.

FREDO *[Handing Valentino his case.]* Here you go. Everything's packed.

VALENTINO *[Embracing him.]* Grazie, Fredo. Thank you for everything.

SAM *[Shaking his hand.]* I hate to lose you kid. You take care of yourself out west. Remember what happened to Custer!

VALENTINO *[Looking down at some money Sam has put in his hand.]* Sam – I –
[Sam nods "forget it".] I pay you back. I promise – *[With a big smile on his face and his arms out wide.]* When I big star!

PORTER Board. All aboard.

[Passengers board the train. Valentino takes his place with them and wave to Sam and Fredo as the train, amid a gush of steam, leaves.]

ALL Union Pacific start your journey to another destination
Criss-cross the nation,
Mile after mile.
Union Pacific mighty giant of a railroad corporation.
A combination
Of chic and style.
Hour by hour,
Steam and power
Racing down the track.
There's no turning back once we ascend.
Union Pacific, prince of trains and quite the best of
transportation
To journey's end.

[By this time the train has reached Chicago and pulls into the station.]

SCREEN: CHICAGO

PORTER Chicago Union Station. Union Pacific departs for Los Angeles in half-hour.

[Passengers disperse. Valentino, sitting on his case, is lost in thought.]

VALENTINO *[Mumbling to himself.]* Los Angeles. *[He sings.]*

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What is the music they play?
 Will I have heard it before?
 What if my feet
 Won't dance to the beat
 Anymore?
 What if the songs that I hear
 Sound unfamiliar and strange?
 Rhythm and rhyme
 That's so out of time –
 I must change –
 To a new life,
 A new way of living.
 Giving me hope to survive.
 Keeping my dream alive
 To rise above the crowd.
 And make my Momma proud!

[He is now standing with renewed determination.]

PORTER Board. All aboard.

[The passengers reassemble as the train moves on.]

ALL Union Pacific start your journey to another destination
 Criss-cross the nation,
 Mile after mile.
 Union Pacific mighty giant of a railroad corporation.
 A combination
 Of chic and style.

VALENTINO *[Singing to a fellow passenger who seems quite bemused.]*

Folks should know
 Rodolpho
 Soon will kick up dust,
 Hollywood lies just around the bend.

[The passenger moves away as they all pick up the song.]

ALL Union Pacific, prince of trains and quite the best of
 transportation
 To journey's end.

[We are now in Los Angeles and as the Passengers depart to a musical tag, Valentino is left on his own. A young lady notices him. We will know her as Natacha Rambova, although at the moment her name is Winifred Kimball Shaughnessy.]

SCREEN: LOS ANGELES 1917

NATACHA Are you lost?

VALENTINO I just arrive from New York.

NATACHA And this is your first time in LA?

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VALENTINO Yes. I want to be in the movies.

NATACHA *[With a smile.]* I'd never have guessed.

VALENTINO I need to find Hollywood.

NATACHA Well this is your lucky day. I happen to work for Paramount Pictures.

VALENTINO You do? Are you famous film star?

NATACHA No, just famous wardrobe assistant. But I intend to become a designer. What about you?

VALENTINO I am a dancer, but I intend to become an actor. Rodolpho di Valentina.
[He gives a slight bow.]

NATACHA Winifred Kimball Shaughnessy, but that's about to change! *[They both laugh.]* I'm taking the streetcar to the studio now. Why don't you tag along with me? Get you on the extras line.

VALENTINO Extras line. What is that?

NATACHA You'll see.

MUSIC #19 ON THE SET

[The scene becomes the set of a film. Jesse Laskey is directing a picture. June is nearby as scriptwriter and Norman Kerry is one of the actors. He has on a false villain's moustache. The company becomes the film crew including Milt, the first assistant and a Cameraman. Some of them are Extras. Natacha leads Valentino to the Extras line.]

You wait there. If they like the look of you, they'll call you.

VALENTINO Thank you - Winnifred.

NATACHA I'm thinking Natacha may be right for me.

VALENTINO Natacha. Yes – I like that.

LASKEY *[Calling OK, are we ready?*

VALENTINO Who is that?

NATACHA Jesse Laskey. He's the big white chief of the studio.

VALENTINO I should tell him I want to be an actor?

NATACHA *[Smiling.]* I should wait there in line, or you may be back on the Union Pacific quicker than you think.

LASKEY *[Calling to his assistant.]* Milt, set up for the next scene.

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MILT Sure thing, Mr Laskey. *[Calling to the crew.] Set up for the street scene. [The crew set up a street scene.]*

NATACHA I gotta go. See you around.

[Natacha rushes out as June, armed with a script moves to Laskey.]

JUNE Jesse, I wanted to build this scene into a busy street. Have Norman searching every face he sees.

LASKEY Yeah, good idea, June. *[Calling to Milt.]* Milt, sort me out a bunch of people.

MILT Yes sir. *[He crosses to the Extras and selects a few including Valentino.]*

LASKEY *[To Norman Kerry.]* Norman, I want you looking desperately to find the girl you saw in the hotel lobby. Lots of big stares and moustache twirling.

NORMAN Just do what I usually do, hey Jesse?

LASKEY You got it Norman. *[He turns to talk to Milt.]*

NORMAN *[To June.]* That's the trouble when you're typecast as a villain. You give the same performance — different costume.

JUNE But you do it beautifully Norman! *[He smiles. June turns and sees Valentino being brought onto the set with the other Extras. She looks closely at him remembering him from New York.]*

LASKEY OK, now everyone I want a busy street scene. Lots of action. Let's go. *[All slowly move into their places.]* Come on, what are you waiting for? The next solar eclipse? *[Norman moves to one side ready for action.]*

MILT Mark it. *[The slate is held in front of the camera.]* Roll 'em.

LASKEY And action. *[All start to cross in front of the street scene. Norman crosses through them as the villain. As Valentino passes him June gets an idea.]* And cut. *[June whispers to Laskey.]* OK, we'll try it. *[He calls to Valentino.]* Hey you. *[Valentino looks around and realises Laskey is talking to him.]* Yeah you. Next time you pass Mr Kerry I want you to bump into him as though you're in a hurry. Got that?

VALENTINO Yes sir.

LASKEY *[Calling.]* Wardrobe. Get me a good coat.

[Natacha is attending to the other Extras.]

NATACHA Sure thing, Mr Laskey. *[She grabs a coat off the wardrobe rail and crosses to Valentino.]*

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LASKEY And Norman, give me some facials to the camera.

NORMAN Facials?

LASKEY You know.

NORMAN The usual!

MILT OK studio re-set. *[Everyone goes back to the first position.]*
Mark it. *[Slate is held again.]* Roll 'em.

LASKEY And action. *[The scene is repeated, this time with Valentino brushing against Norman. Norman looks at him coming out of character. He recognises him from Maxims.]* And to camera, Norman. *[Norman quickly goes back into character, mugging to camera.]* Cut. That's great. Okay everyone take ten while we set up for the final scene. *[The scene breaks up. The Crew carries on working. Laskey consults with his Secretary. Valentino moves down stage and June crosses to him. Natacha is by the costume rail and hovers up stage watching Valentino.]*

JUNE Rodolpho di Valentina! I'm right aren't I?

VALENTINO Miss June Mathis. You have a good memory.

JUNE For faces I do. And you've got one hell of a face.

VALENTINO Grazie.

JUNE So what brings you to the West Coast?

VALENTINO *[Slightly embarrassed.]* I needed a change from New York.

JUNE *[Realising.]* Oh yeah. And away from the Bianca de Saulles case – right.

NORMAN *[Before he can answer Norman comes up to them.]*
[Removing his moustache.] That was a good piece of business June.
[To Valentino.] Norman Kerry.

VALENTINO *[Recognising him.]* The guest singer at Maxims.

NORMAN You remembered. I'm flattered.

VALENTINO Of course. *[With a slight nod.]* Rodolpho di Valentina.

NORMAN The dancer. *[They smile at each other and shake hands.]* Well welcome to Tinsel Town.

VALENTINO I want to make it in pictures.

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NORMAN Where everyone dreams of becoming the next Fairbanks. *[Clearly taken with Valentino's looks.]* And looking at them big Italian eyes of yours – you may just make it.

JUNE He certainly has the right looks.

NORMAN Just what is needed in pictures.

[Laskey crosses to exit as June calls to him.]

JUNE Hey, Jesse. Rodolpho here's just arrived from New York. He wants to be a movie star!

LASKEY That'll depend on whether he can cut it with the ladies?

JUNE Oh he can do that all right!

NORMAN He's Italian. Look at those misty eyes of his.

LASKEY *[Looking Valentino over.]* There's a small part in June's next script that calls for a ladies man type. But he's also a schoister.

VALENTNO A schoister?

NORMAN A villain.

VALENTINO No! I play no villain. *[The others react.]*

LASKEY When did you leave New York?

VALENTINO Five days ago.

LASKEY When did you last have a decent meal?

VALENTINO Five days ago!

LASKEY Then you owe it to your gut! I start filming on Monday. Be here. *[He leaves.]*

JUNE Congratulations kid. Your first break.

NORMAN Come on, I'll stand you lunch to celebrate.

VALENTINO *[Taking off the coat costume.]* You're very kind.

NORMAN *[Indicating the coat.]* Just leave that on the rail.

[Valentino crosses to Natacha and gives her the coat.]

JUNE *[To Norman who is still staring at Valentino.]* Do I get lunch too, or is three gonna to be a crowd?

NORMAN *[Smiling at June.]* Just make excuses and leave after dessert. *[They laugh.]*

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VALENTINO *[To Natacha as she takes the coat.] Grazie. [He crosses back to the others.]*

MUSIC #20 VALENTINO (WHAT WAS HIS NAME?)

NORMAN *This way. [He slips his arm through Valentino's and leads him off followed by June. Natacha eases down stage looking after them. She sings a short reprise.]*

NATACHA *There is a man with ambition and drive,
Eager and unafraid.
Ready for Tinsel Town's backstabbing ways
Maybe he'll make the grade.
Playing the Hollywood game
While searching for fortune and fame
There are pitfalls out there so beware Mister Rodolpho.....
[Spoken to herself.]
What was his name?*

[She exits as on the screen we see a montage of films credits. At first Valentino's name is seen at the bottom of the credits in titles such as:

SCREEN: FILM TITLES 'Alimony', 'A Society Sensation' and 'Rogue's Romance'

[Then much larger and more prominent in –

SCREEN 'The Eyes of Youth'

SCREEN: SANTA MONICA, 1919

MUSIC #21 SANTA MONICA

[The scene moves to a swish Hollywood party in Santo Monica. Hollywood Royalty are there including June, Laskey, and actresses Alla Nazimova. Also present is Jean Acker, also an actress. She is dressed in a very masculine way. Valentino and Norman enter. Valentino has on a white dress jacket and black trousers.]

VALENTINO What is this party for?

NORMAN To launch Jesse's new picture 'Stronger than Death'. And it's free booze!

VALENTINO Who is the star?

NORMAN *[Pointing to Nazimova.]* That Russian chick, Nazimova.

VALENTINO She is a very beautiful woman.

NORMAN *[Sarcastically.]* So was Salome. Look what she got up to.

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VALENTINO *[Not understanding the reference.] Eh?*

NORMAN Let's say that Miss Nazimova has certain ideas about the male population.

[Before Valentino can question this Laskey makes an announcement.]

LASKEY *[To everyone.]* Ladies and gentlemen, it is with great pleasure that I introduce the star of my latest picture 'Stronger than Death' – the incomparable Nazimova. *[All applaud and Nazimova acknowledges. Laskey moves to Nazimova.]* I think the picture is going to be a smash.

NAZIMOVA I hope so, Mr Laskey. *[She introduces Jean.]* This is Jean Acker, another talented actress.

LASKEY I have had the pleasure of seeing some of your films Miss Acker.

JEAN *[Shaking his hand.]* Thank you, Mr Laskey.

[Natacha, who has now become Nazimova's personal costume designer, enters. She is remarkably changed. Different hair and appearance. She has a cocktail that she hands to Nazimova.]

NAZIMOVA Thank you my dear. *[To Laskey.]* Have you met Natacha Rambova, my personal designer?

LASKEY I don't think I've had the pleasure.

NATACHA We have met Mr Laskey. I was in wardrobe on a number of your pictures.

LASKEY I'm sorry

NATACHA *[Smiling.]* Please don't be. There were dozens of us.

LASKEY Well you must be something special if you're working for the great Nazimova.

NAZIMOVA She is. Very special.

[Natacha moves away as Laskey spots Norman and Valentino.]

LASKEY Norman, Rodolpho. *[They move to him.]* May I introduce Rodolpho di Valentina. He features in a number of my films. *[Valentino goes to kiss Nazimova's hand, but she pulls it away when she sees him and a rage builds up.]*

NAZIMOVA Rodolpho di Valentina! *[Natacha, hearing the name, turns back to look at Valentino.]* I know who you are, you filthy money grabbing swindler. *[Some comments from people nearby.]*

LASKEY What?

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NAZIMOVA He was involved in New York with my friend Bianca de Saulles. He seduced her, drove her mad until she shot her husband dead because of him. Then he left her to take the rap. *[All eyes are on Valentino.]*
 VALENTINO That is not true.

JEAN I remember the case. The dame was acquitted, wasn't she?

NAZIMOVA That's as maybe. But *he* deserted her.

LASKEY *[Trying to stop her.]* Come on, it was years ago. Why drag it up now?

NAZIMOVA Because Mr Laskey, I am surprised that you are now casting cheap little gigolo's in your pictures.

MUSIC #22 PARTY BREAK-UP

[Gasps and comments from the guests. Valentino turns and almost runs from the scene.]

NORMAN Rodolpho.

[People, embarrassed at what has happened, start to leave the party. Norman, Laskey and June also leave.]

JEAN That was a pretty awful thing to say – and in public.

NAZIMOVA *[Ever the actress.]* My public have a right to know these things.

JEAN *[Looking around at the dwindling crowd.]* What public? *[She exits. Natacha has started to follow Valentino but Nazimova's voice stops her.]*

NAZIMOVA Natacha. Where are you going?

NATACHA *[Searching for an excuse.]* I was just

NAZIMOVA *[Holding out her glass.]* Another cocktail.

[Natacha slowly takes the glass from Nazimova's hand as the scene changes to outside the party. Valentino stands there shaking at what has happened. Out of the shadows another woman appears. It is Jean. Valentino turns and bumps into her.]

VALENTINO Scusa.

JEAN Well, that was quite a scene.

VALENTINO I'm sorry I *[He is embarrassed and turns away.]*

JEAN Oh don't worry. Nazimova never lets the chance of a dramatic performance escape her. Nobody will take that much notice of her.

VALENTINO She says terrible things.

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JEAN Just ignore her. Everyone else does! I'm Jean Acker.

VALENTINO You are also an actress?

JEAN You guessed!

VALENTINO And a very beautiful one.

MUSIC #23 TWIN SCENES

[Their scene dims and we see Norman and June on the other side of the stage. June is at her desk, typing.]

JUNE Rudolpho and Jean seem to be getting on well together.

NORMAN Yes, but does he know what he's getting into?

JUNE He must have heard all the rumours flying around Hollywood.

NORMAN Well if he has he's taking no notice of them. They met two days ago and have hardly been out of each other's sight.

JUNE Get your shoulder ready Norman, I think someone will be crying on it very soon.

[The lights come back up on Valentino and Jean.]

VALENTINO Jean, you are the most fascinating woman.

JEAN *[Laughing.]* Get outta here. You hardly know me!

VALENTINO I know where I want to be – and who I want to be with. *[He sings.]*

MUSIC #24 BEING WITH YOU

Being with you
Is like tasting champagne and caviar,
Making a wish on a shooting star!

JEAN *[Spoken and laughing.]* Rudolpho, you're such a poet!

VALENTINO *[Continuing.]* I could sing your praises,
With romantic phrases,
Like 'Castles in Spain',
Or 'caught in the rain'.

JEAN *[Spoken. Slightly mocking him.]* You are a poet!

VALENTINO Being with you
Is like watching fireworks light up the sky.
Everyday is the fourth of July.
Presents each day of the year,
Jewels from a wealthy emir!

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Nothing compares to me being here with you.

JEAN *[Spoken.]* Oh Rudy, I just love that romantic Italian way of yours.

VALENTINO Let's do something mad. I know, tomorrow let's go riding on the beach at Santa Monica.

JEAN Oh why the hell not. Nothing else to do.

[The lights cross to June and Norman.]

JUNE Riding on the beach?

NORMAN That's what he said. Then he wants to find a *[He imitates Valentino's accent.]* "quiet, secluded spot for just the two of us."

JUNE Just the two of them?

NORMAN That's what he said.

JUNE Disaster! *[She sings.]*

Being with her
Maybe fun but boy, it's a big mistake.
Like a repeat of the Frisco Quake!
This romance is headin'
Straight for Armageddon!
As sure as you're born,
It's pistols at dawn!

NORMAN Being with her
Is a summer stroll in a force eight gale.

JUNE Warning of ice as Titanic sets sail!

NORMAN Planes that collide in mid-air.

JUNE Murder and rape ev'rywhere.

BOTH Nothing compares to him being there with her!

[The lights cross back to Valentino and June lying in a sand dune. She has her head in his lap.]

VALENTINO You are truly the most wonderful woman I have ever met.

JEAN Rodolpho

VALENTINO I mean it. Beautiful, funny – I fall more in love with you every minute.

JEAN *[Thinking he is joking.]* Hey, that's enough.

VALENTINO Marry me, Jean.

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JEAN *[Laughing and sitting up.]* Marry you? You better be joking or I might hold you to that proposal!

VALENTINO I'm not joking.

JEAN *[Stops and thinks for a moment.]* Oh why the hell not? The studio will love it.

VALENTINO You will? You'll marry me?

JEAN Sure. *[Another thought.]* But on one condition.

VALENTINO Anything. I do anything for you.

JEAN Change that crazy name of yours.

VALENTINO Rodolpho di Valentina? But it's me – my family name.

JEAN I don't mean change it completely. More so people can recognise it easily. *[She thinks.]* Rudolph. Rudolph Valentino.

VALENTINO Rudolph Valentino. Yes, I like that. I change the name and you marry me.

JEAN *[Laughing.]* It's a deal.

VALENTINO Only then you Mrs Guglielmi!

JEAN Ah, for Christ's sake! *[She laughs and picks up the song. The lights also come back on June and Norman and the song becomes a quartet.]*

Being with you
Makes tomorrow seem like for evermore.

JUNE &
NORMAN Rudy watch out, danger is in store!

JEAN This is like the action,
Of a main attraction.

NORMAN His Romeo's quaint,

JUNE But Juliet she ain't.

JEAN Being with you
Makes me sentimental and starry-eyed.

JUNE &
NORMAN Better prepare for a grim homicide!

[The lights fade on Norman and June leaving Valentino and Jean to finish the number.]

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VALENTINO I see the future so clear.

JEAN Me with my own cavalier!

BOTH It feels so right with me being here with you.

[The number ends and Jean exits. Valentino crosses to Norman and June.]

VALENTINO Norman, June. A wonderful thing has happened.