

dangerous light which he found hard to explain. He could see that she was flattered by what he had said, that his words had made her waywardly happy, that for a moment, in fact, she had been swept off her feet.

Then dark afterthought interposed. It crept like a cloud across her abandoned face. It brought about a change so prompt that it disturbed the Second Deputy.

"You're—you're not tied up already, are you?" he had hesitatingly demanded. "You're not married?"

"No, I'm not tied up!" she had promptly and fiercely responded. "My life's my own—my own!"

"Then why can't you marry me?" the practical-minded man had asked.

"I could!" she had retorted, with the same fierceness as before. Then she had stood looking at him out of wistful and unhappy eyes. "I could—if you only understood, if you could only help me the way I want to be helped!"

She had clung to his arm with a tragic forlornness that seemed to leave her very wan and

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