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## The Double-Walled Secret

checked the impulse. In moving his feet to the floor he saw that his shoes had been removed, and he wondered if this were the first step in his wor'd incarceration. He smiled mirthlessly at the thought. He was sitting on the edge of the couch, his throbbing temples pressed between right thumb and fingers, elbow resting on his knee, when the girl came in to him.

"You didn't convince father," she said. "He's gone ten miles to the near est telephone to disprove your prevariations."

Kelcey said listlessly: "Let him What do I care."

What do I eare."

She atood with her back to a heavy oak table, her hands resting lightly on the edge, her compelling eyes on him curiously, speculatively. He noticed that she had changed to a house dress of Nile green silk and foamy lace, and a trifle later it came over him that she was one of the most striking girls he had ever seen—and quite the most unusual.

"Did you follow my instructions?"
she saked.
"Not all of them. I had't time." "Not all of them. I had't time."
He looked up, met her eyes. I'm tired of guessing at puzzles," he said. "Won't you clear things up for me, please?"

Again he saw that troubled express ion on her piquant face. Bbe hesitated momentarily, then walked over and sat down near him.

down near him.

"Did you ever," she asked, looking at him, "hear of Redmond Stryker!"
And when he shook his head: "He's my father—the man who was here a little while ago. When I was three little while ago. my father—the man who was here a little while ago. When I was three months old he was arrested for murder. He was innocent, but the evidence against him was strong and—he was

He was innocent, but the evidence against him was strong and—he was sent to prison for fifteen years. It killed mother. He left the penitentiary after serving ten years. And he was a different man." She paused and sat staring broodingly at the rug, her chin cupped in her palm.

After a pause he asked: "Didn't they ever find the right man?"

She answered with an almost imperceptible shake of her head. Sitting he side her, regarding her bowed head and girlish figure, outlined slenderly in the gathering dusk, young Kelcey mused upon what she had told him: the tragedy of a lifetime compressed in a few brief sentences.

But the thought of his own predicament soon drove all others from mind. "I'm still in the dark," he protested. "Why should your father feel savage toward me!"

She glanced up swiftly, her blue eyes birdling "Why should", het?" she stirill in the dark," he protested.

toward me?"

She glanced up swiftly, her blue eyes kindling. "Why shouldn't he?" she flared. "You are a member of the society, eivilization—call it what you will—which made those barbarous laws that sent him to prison. Why shouldn't he?" She leaned toward him, flats elemented even blazing. In that instant he?' She leaned toward him, asseclenched, eyes blazing: In that instant he thought her superb.

"And you?" he countered, striving to speak lightly. "Aren't you also a member of that society?"

"No!" And she struck her little fist in the leather seed. "I am on father's

into the leather seat. "I am on father's side, now and always! I am opposed to the law and all it stands for. It is rotten to the core, unjust, heinous! And you—'' She cheeked her runaway tongue and drew slightly away. She was breathing rather more rapidly than normal, for she had spoken fiercely, and normal, for she had spoken fiercely, and her mounting emotion had sent an excess of blood to her cheeks, richle flushing her fine-grained skin.

"Well?" bantered he, trying to fancy her in his mother's living-room. "What's to be done with me? Am I to be decapitated?"

She did not respond to his smile. In stead, she stared at him silently, and he noticed that her bosom was rising and falling less tempestuously now.

"I think I told you," she said presently, "that your arrival marked a

sently, "that your arrival marked sprecedent."

"Then my punishment is proofe matie?" "that your arrival marked a

She nodded unsmiling acquiesence.
"I can only throw myself on your mercy," he said, leaning back in his corner of the couch and studying her. He was beginning to enjoy his adven-



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