

THE SECRET WITNESS

"You said that if I caught you——"

"The race— isn't always—to the swift——" she protested falteringly in her pretty broken English.

"Your promise——"

"I made no promise."

"You'll make it now, the one I've waited for—for weeks—Marishka. Lift up your head."

"No, no," she stammered.

"Then I——"

Renwick caught her in his arms again and turned her chin upward. Her eyes were closed, but as their lips met her figure relaxed in his arms and her head sank upon his shoulder.

"You run very fast, Herr Renwick," she whispered.

"You'll marry me, Marishka?"

"Who shall say?" she evaded.

"Your own lips. You've given them to me——"

"No, no. You have taken them——"

"It is all the same. They are mine." And Renwick took them again.

"Oh," she gasped, "you are so persistent—you English. You always wish to have your own way."

He laughed happily.

"Would you have me otherwise? My way and your way, Marishka, they go together. You wish it so, do you not?"

She was silent a while, the wild spirit in her slowly submissive, and at last a smile moved her lips, her dark eyes were upturned to his and she murmured a little proudly:

"It is a saying among the women of the House of Strahni that where the lips are given the heart must follow."