

behind her. After twenty years they stood here alone together — face to face.

The colonel shaded his eyes and looked into the fire; the grave of his love yawned deep, a shudder ran through him. Letitia had remained standing by the door, the mature elegance of her figure, the slightly bent head, recalled nothing when he finally looked up. She had left him a mere girl; she returned a worn woman of the world; the suggestions of her past, gay and unhappy, seemed to penetrate the classic mask of her still beautiful face. He knew her even less than Dr. Cheyney. He made an attempt to rise, failed and, sinking back, motioned her to a seat.

She took it without a word, turning her face aside to avoid the light of that one tall candelabrum. In the old room, facing the man who had aged so greatly in these heavy years, she was ashamed. She had planned a dozen glib speeches, but her parched lips refused to utter them. She put her ungloved hand to her throat with a gesture that was like one who struggled for breath, and Colonel Royall noticed the flash of the jewels that she wore on her slender fingers. A little thing will sometimes turn the balance of thought, and the flash of Letty's jewels recalled her former husband to himself. He remembered the divorce and her marriage. Between them the white ashes of the past fell thick as snow. He could dimly see through them the outlines of her matured and hardened beauty, and the suggestions

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