

I loved you. I loved you for the sake of your mother. I gave her to the Ry, who was the better man, that she might be great and well placed. So it is I would have you be ruler over us, and I would serve you as I served your father until I, also, fall asleep."

"It is too late," Fleda answered, and there was great emotion in her voice now. "I am no longer a Romany. I am my father's daughter, but I have not been a Romany since I was ill in England. I will not go back; I shall go with the man I love, to be his wife, here, in the Gorgio world. You believed my father when he spoke; well, believe me—I speak the truth. It was my father's will that I should be what I am, and do what I am now doing. Nothing can alter me."

"If it be that Jethro Fawe is still alive he is free from the Sentence of the *Patrin*, and he will become the Ry of Rys," said the old man with sudden passion.

"It may be so. I hope it is so. He is of the blood, and I pray that Jethro has escaped the sentence which my father passed," answered Fleda. "By the River Starzke it was ordained that he should succeed my father, marrying me. Let him succeed."

The old man raised both hands, and made a gesture as though he would drive her from his sight.

"My life has been wasted," he said. "I wish I were also in death beside him." He gazed at the dead man with the affection of a clansman for his chief.

Fleda came up close to him. "Rhodo! Rhodo!" she said gently and sadly. "Think of him and all he was, and not of me. Suppose I had died in England—think of it in that way. Let me be dead to you and to all Romanys, and then you will think no evil."

The old man drew himself up. "Let no more be said," he replied. "Let it end here. The Ry of Rys is dead. His body and all things that are his belong now to his people. Say farewell to him," he added, with authority.