

"I wish you to remain," said Fleda to Ingolby with resolution in her bearing, as she placed herself beside the chair where the dead man sat. "What is it you want to say to me?" she asked Rhodo again.

"Must a Romany bare his soul before a stranger?" replied Rhodo. "Must a man who has been the voice of the Ry of Rys for the long years have no words face to face with the Ry's daughter now that he is gone? Must the secret of the dead be spoken before the robber of the dead——"

It was plain that some great passion was working in the man, that it was wise and right to humour him, and Ingolby intervened.

"I will not remain," he said to Fleda. To Rhodo he added: "I am not a robber of the dead. That's high-faluting talk. What I have of his was given to me by him. She was for me if I could win her. He said so. This is a free country. I will wait outside," he added to Fleda.

She made a gesture as though she would detain him, but she realized that the hour of her fate was at hand, and that the old life and the new were face to face, Rhodo standing for one and she for the other.

When they were alone, Rhodo's eyes softened, and he came near to her. "You asked me what I wished to tell you," he said. "See then, I want to tell you that it is for you to take the place of the dead Ry. Everywhere in the world where the Romanys wander they will rejoice to hear that a Druse rules us still. The word of the Ry of Rys was law; what he wished to be done was done; what he wished to be undone was undone. Because of you he hid himself from his people; because of you I was for ever wandering, keeping the peace by lies for love of the Ry and for love of you."

His voice shook. "Since your mother died—and she was kin of mine—you were to me the soul of the Romany people everywhere. As a barren woman loves a child, so