

Presently," she said to a man who just then came up and said something to her in a low tone," "I cannot attend to them now. . . . Wait, though; it may be well for him to see how *we* do justice. Then we will set him free without a ransom, on condition that he shall tell how Erdélyi Sándor was avenged. Give the new prisoner a good place—a place of honour. . . . And—now!"

I looked around to see who might be my fellow captive; but in vain. A couple of the bandits offered to help me with my toilette, but I made a point of declining, bared my neck, and seated myself as comfortably as I could; I trust I *showed* no fear. But it was a dreadful moment; try to put yourself in my place—do not ask me to put myself into it again. . . . Flamenka came forward, with uplifted sword; I did not see, but felt its gleam. And I heard her draw a hard sigh, almost a groan.

Why did not the sword fall? And yet I am sure it fell, for I felt a sharp wind on my flesh, so cold that, for a moment, I took it for the sharpness of steel. And, oh! what a horrible hush there was all round; and what a blinding mist of crimson filled the air. I was ceasing to breathe before I knew that the sword swung upward again; I was ceasing to care.

"*Isten anyá!*" exclaimed a man's voice. "What a bungle! Madam, it is impossible to strike straight if one shuts one's eyes. And *Angyal's Szentek!* What a way to hold a sword of justice! One would take you for the pupil of a hussar!"

"What means this?" I heard Flamenka through the midst. "Who are *yóu*?"