

mimicked all the different sounds of the sea, from the long, slow rise and fall of the waves that broke now at their feet stained red as wine by the sunset, to the hurrying and confusion of the billows in a storm. As she sang the color rose in Kevin's cheek and his eyes kindled; and the child herself was carried away by the weird power of her own music, rising and waving her little brown arms in the tempest, and sinking down and rocking her body backward and forward dreamily as the waves subsided into peace again.

When she had finished Kevin, who had covered his face with his hat, removed it, and gazed at her with adoration in his eyes. Then he took her two slender, sunburnt hands into his own large one and kissed them reverently.

"You liked it," said the child eagerly. "Oh, then, quick with your story!"

But before Kevin could reply a figure appeared which took them both by surprise. A large dark, singular-looking woman was standing before them—a real gipsy of the more respectable class. Her brilliant black eyes and eastern-tinted complexion were enhanced by the varied and glowing colors of her dress, which was so clean and well arranged as to be vividly picturesque rather than gaudy. Elderly and portly as she appeared, yet there was something brisk and elastic about the whole expression of her figure, and her face was strangely handsome in its setting of scarlet and amber and white.

In most country places gipsies are not an uncommon sight, but in remote Killeevy they were unknown. Strangers of any kind were seldom seen, and the apparition of this foreign-looking creature on their lonely island struck our two simple friends with a surprise which left them breathless. Both sprang to their feet, and Fan slid her little hand into Kevin's.

"My pretty dear," said the woman, with a sort of contralto laugh, which was not unmusical, "you are not going to be frightened of the gipsy. I have been listening to your singing. When I came over to see this nice little island I did not expect to find a bird among the rocks with so sweet a pipe."

"You startled us," said Kevin smiling: "for we do not see many strangers. No one comes to this island but ourselves."

"I saw your boat," said the gipsy, nodding her handsome head, "and I thought I should startle somebody, for we never have been in this country before. But we are friendly people, and nobody need fear us. When you return in your boat you must come and see the gipsies, my little dear."

"I do not know your house," said Fan shyly, gazing with fascinated eyes upon the stranger.

"My house!" laughed the gipsy. "No one ever knew it, my pretty. Gipsies have no houses; but they live under the hedges and in the pleasant green fields. Look yonder, where some white things are shining in the sun, on the slope of the hill, just under the mountains! Those are our tents, where we are resting from a journey."

Kevin and Fanchea looked towards home, following the gipsy's finger with their eyes, and saw tents gleaming on the hillside, which had not been there in the morning.

"We have music in there," said the stranger, "and dancing and singing, and all sorts of games. People come to see our show and pay us money, but when you come, my little singer, you need not bring anything but your own pretty face."

Music, and singing, and games! Fanchea became interested and forgot her shyness. "Oh, thank you!" she said gladly. "I will be sure to go to see you."

"We are greatly obliged to you," said Kevin, more slowly.

"Oh, I did not promise to refuse *your* money, young man," said the gipsy laughing. "Be sure to fill your pocket when you come to our tent."

Kevin blushed. "I did not mean—" he began, proudly, but the stranger nodded her head at him and moved away. They saw her descend the rocks, where she was met by a man. They entered the boat and put off from the island.

This trifling incident was an event of importance to our inexperienced pair. Neither could forget the stranger, but sat silently watching the retreating boat.

"Kevin," said Fanchea, "what are gipsies?"

"People that wander about," said Kevin. "Shawu Rua told me of them."

"You will bring me to see them, Kevin?"

"Yes, but you must hold tight by my hand. They are not always good people, I fancy."

"Oh, she spoke so kindly, I am sure she must be good."

"Are you wishing to come home, Fanchea?"

"Home, without your story?"

"Ah, well," said Kevin, "I thought you had forgotten the story." And his slight jealousy of the gipsy melted away. "Indeed, I have almost forgotten it myself."

"But you must try to remember it."

Kevin covered his eyes for a few minutes and listened to the long roll of the waves breaking on the beach. Fan sat patiently watching the shifting of the crimson clouds until he spoke.

"Once upon a time there was—"

"A brave prince and a lovely princess," said Fan. "That makes such a nice beginning."

"Very well. And the brave prince loved the beautiful princess so well that he became braver every day, and all men were afraid of him in the wars."

"Does loving people do that?" asked Fan.

"Yes," said Kevin, "it can do everything wonderful. It brings out all the good that is in people."

"Go on."

"It was his love that made the world beautiful to him; his heart grew larger every day, and great thoughts poured into his mind. The prince used to think sometimes that the princess had his soul in her hands."

"How could that be? God gives every one a soul of his own."

"I don't know how it could be," said Kevin wistfully, "but I know the prince felt that it was only by living near his beloved princess and doing everything good to please her he could hope to win in the end the soul she had in keeping for him. When he had won his soul he thought he would do some noble work in the world."

"Well," said Fan, "do make haste. I hope she kept it for him well."

"She did," said Kevin: "but something happened."

"What?"

"The brave prince had an enemy."

"Oh," said Fan, drawing a long breath.

"An enemy who had been overthrown by him in the battle. And this enemy was longing to destroy him. And he thought and thought for a long, long time. At first he intended to kill him."

"Oh, *what* did he do?"

"He thought the most terrible thing he could do would be to carry off the princess; and he put her in a ship, and sailed with her away into far distant seas. They arrived at a lighthouse one calm, moonlight night—a tall, lonely lighthouse on a rock in the middle of the ocean. He killed the lighthouse man and put out the light and imprisoned the princess in the lonely tower in the darkness. Then he sailed away and left her."

"Oh-h-h-h!" sighed Fan.

"When the prince found she was gone he became so unhappy that he could scarcely bear his life. However, he thought he must surely be able to find her somewhere in the world; and he set out to search for her all the wide world over. He went from land to land, and from city to city, inquiring if any one had seen his beloved princess; but no one could tell him anything about her. And years passed on and still he could not find her. His heart was always breaking, and his hair grew grey, and still he kept searching and searching. But he never became wicked and fierce, as his enemy thought he would become. If he had left off searching he would have grown wicked and fierce,

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