



***R. D. BLACKMORE***

***FRIDA; OR,  
THE LOVER'S  
LEAP: A LEGEND  
OF THE WEST  
COUNTRY***

**R. D. Blackmore**

# **Frida; Or, The Lover's Leap: A Legend Of The West Country**

**From "Slain By The Doones" By R. D. Blackmore**

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# CHAPTER I.

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On the very day when Charles I. was crowned with due rejoicings—Candlemasday, in the year of our Lord 1626—a loyalty, quite as deep and perhaps even more lasting, was having its beer at Ley Manor in the north of Devon. A loyalty not to the king, for the old West-country folk knew little and cared less about the house that came over the Border; but to a lord who had won their hearts by dwelling among them, and dealing kindly, and paying his way every Saturday night. When this has been done for three generations general and genial respect may almost be relied upon.

The present Baron de Wichehalse was fourth in descent from that Hugh de Wichehalse, the head of an old and wealthy race, who had sacrificed his comfort to his resolve to have a will of his own in matters of religion. That Hugh de Wichehalse, having an eye to this, as well as the other world, contrived to sell his large estates before they were confiscated, and to escape with all the money, from very sharp measures then enforced, by order of King Philip II., in the unhappy Low Countries. Landing in England, with all his effects and a score of trusty followers, he bought a fine property, settled, and died, and left a good name behind him. And that good name had been well kept up, and the property had increased and thriven, so that the present lord was loved and admired by all the neighbourhood.

In one thing, however, he had been unlucky, at least in his own opinion. Ten years of married life had not found issue in parental life. All his beautiful rocks and hills, lovely