

"Never mind—your men will find it. You fell, and then there was silence, and presently I heard my father's voice saying that he had killed you defenceless. They went away. I was half dead myself when I fell there beside you on the floor. There—do you see? You lay with your head towards the door and one arm out. I shall see you so till I die, whenever I think of it. Then—I forget. Adonis must have found me there, and he carried me away, and Inez met me on the terrace and she had heard my father tell the King that he had murdered you—and it was the King who had done it! Do you understand?"

"I see, yes. Go on!" Don John was listening breathlessly, forgetting the pain he still suffered from time to time.

"And then I went down, and I made Don Ruy Gomez stand beside me on the steps, and the whole court was there—the Grantees and the great dukes—Alva, Medina Sidonia, Medina Celi, Infantado, the Princess of Eboli—the Ambassadors, every one, all the maids of honour, hundreds and hundreds—an ocean of faces, and they knew me, almost all of them."

"What did you say?" asked Don John very anxiously. "What did you tell them all? That you had been here?"

"Yes—more than that, much more. It was not true, but I hoped they would believe it. I said—" the colour filled her face and she caught her breath. "Oh, how can I tell you? Can you not guess what I said?"