

"I thought you were leagues from Metzburg," the Duchess said in a whisper.

"Leagues from Metzburg, mistress! No. You did not send me on a journey. Are you thinking, dreaming that you had dismissed me?"

"I have dismissed you."

"You still dream, mistress. I know you have sent away a worthless fellow. Maurice of Savaria is gone, but Bergolet is here — just your fool, Bergolet."

She tried to tell him to go, but the words would not come.

"You have taught that same Maurice a lesson, mistress. I warrant he is thinking of it to-night. He came adventuring from Savaria, a wandering, romantic fellow, not thinking great evil of himself, yet careless, thoughtless, a fool. You have sent him back a different man. I think there was a time when his indifference would have allowed His Highness of Brandenburg to make a tool of him, but I am very sure that can never happen now. He was not very evil, mistress, you have my word for that; but he has learnt much in Metzburg. You have made a man of him. You may take my word for that too."

"I will not talk of him, nor to him."

"Mistress, let us forget him. Shall I sing to you, or will you deign to talk about a poor jester?"

"What of him?" she said, and her voice was very low.

"Let him stay with you always, mistress. I think you will never really love the man you must choose to-morrow, and when you are sad and the world is grey, you may call for Bergolet who will sing to you, or make you merry with a jest. I think, mistress, there will always be a place in your heart for