

to the wretched noble who cowered behind Antonio, still gingerly feeling at his calves.

"And did you not know, Sir John," said the Prince, with the measured coldness that spelt suppressed fury with him, "that this lord was Raimondo del Mayno, the uncle of my cousin the Princess Giulia, and therefore my own kinsman in a distant fashion?"

"Indeed, then, my lord, I am sorry both for you and for the Princess," I cried, and stared again at the noble in question. At present he was charily bending one knee, as if suspecting that it might be broken.

The Prince gave me so black a look that I fancied the end was come. Perhaps he did not value me so highly as I had believed—perhaps, much as he longed to worst the Duke of Padua by means of my men and my skill in warfare, he might toss away all such hopes in sheer rage at my presumption. But even as I looked, to my utter amazement he choked back the angry words that were on his lips, smoothed out the dark line from his forehead, and banished the dangerous gleam that had come into his half-closed eyes. There was a short silence; then he spoke—angrily, indeed, but not to me; to those who had thronged into the loggia to watch the conflict.

"Begone, you!" he cried, snarling at them with his upper lip raised from his teeth in the fashion of a threatening dog. "Do you know no better than to