

the prow while they got out, she rose from her seat slowly, and almost reluctantly, like one disturbed in a dream that she would fain continue.

"Have you seen the Signorina, Gaspare?" she asked him. "Has she been out?"

"No, Signora. She is still in the house."

"Still reading!" said Artois. "Vere must be quite a book-worm!"

"Will you stay to dinner, Emile?"

"Alas, I have promised the Marchesino Isidoro to dine with him. Give me a cup of tea *à la Russe*, and one of Ruffo's cigarettes, and then I must bid you adieu. I'll take the boat to the Antico Giuseppone, and then get another there as far as the gardens."

"One of Ruffo's cigarettes!" Hermione echoed, as they went up the steps. "That boy seems to have made himself one of the family already."

"Yet I wish, as I said in the cave, that I had put a knife into him under the left shoulder-blade—before this morning."

They spoke lightly. It seemed as if each desired for the moment to get away from their mood in the confessional of Virgil's Grotto, and from the sadness of the white and silent day.

As to Ruffo, about whom they jested, he was in sight of Naples, and not far from Mergellina, still rowing with tireless young arms, and singing to "*Bella Napoli*," with a strong resolve in his heart to return to the Saint's Pool on the first opportunity and dive for more cigarettes.

CHAPTER IV

At the Antico Giuseppone, Artois left the boat from the islet and, taking another, was rowed towards the public gardens of Naples, whose trees were faintly visible far off across the Bay. Usually he talked familiarly to any Neapolitan with whom he found himself, but to-day he was taciturn, and sat in the stern of the broad-bottomed craft looking towards the city in silence while the boatman plied his oars. The memory of his conversation with Hermione in the Grotto of Virgil, of her manner, the look in her eyes, the sound of her voice there, gave him food for thought that was deep and serious.

Although Artois had an authoritative, and often an ironical manner that frightened timid people, he was a man capable of much emotion and of great loyalty. He did not easily