

"This language, Lorenzo, is astonishing and offensive," I replied. 'I had hoped to have been able to appeal to your reason—to your feelings, but I see with profound regret, that I can to neither; but be assured, if aught could persuade me from continuing my addresses to your sister, your menaces would be the very last.'

"If they cannot, at least, I shall forbid your ever beholding Emilia again.'

"That is a right, sir," I answered quickly, which I shall take the liberty to contest.'

"We shall see," said Lorenzo.

"The dispute being ended, we parted. We who were once inseparable friends, were now irreconcilable enemies. I returned to my home, and shortly after, I received a letter from the elder Morosoni, couched in respectful yet serious language, requesting that I should no more consider myself a visitor at his palace.

"What was to be done? how was I to obtain a sight of Emilia? If I dared to force myself into the palace, certain destruction, I was sure, awaited me. Thus circumstanced, my only consolation was, at night, to wrap myself in my mantle, and pace before the gates of the palace, in hopes that I should see her at her casement, or to embark in my gondola, and give myself up a prey to melancholy, watching the dashing of the waves, and imagining them to the agitated feelings of my bosom.

"At this time, I had a valet in my service, by name Stefano, who was attached to the maid-servant of Emilia, and entrusting him with my secret, I endeavoured to gain intelligence of what was passing in the Morosoni palace, but this, too, was denied me, all access being strictly guarded. All that he could learn was, that Emilia was destined, by her parents, to espouse a member of the Grimani family, but against whom she had expressed herself in terms of strong repugnance. This report of Stefano served only to increase my agony, while my rage against Grimani knew no bounds. In every place, and at all hours, I sought to encounter him, but in vain.

"One day, having wandered in search of him, I found myself opposite the church of Saint Marc, and entering it, sought to calm my agitated bosom by the holy solitude of the place. Leaning against a pillar, I beheld a female figure closely enveloped in a mantle, which entirely concealed her visage. Suddenly she approached me, and thinking her a mendicant, I was about to offer her some money, when she slipped, mysteriously, a letter into my hand, and darted from my presence.—

Regardless of the place he broke the seal, and read:—

"There are beings who still love you. They wish to sacrifice Emilia in marriage to Grimani, but she will never consent. A convent shall receive her sooner. For her sake, support life.

'BIANCA.'

"Oh, joy unutterable. Emilia then loved me. She prayed that for her sake, I should support life. This unexpected intelligence revived again my hopes, and I felt as breathing a new existence. One morning shortly after this, Stefano entered my apartment with the intelligence that a magnificent mask was that night to be given at the Morosoni palace, and I at once resolved, under disguise, to be admitted, and thus, perhaps, procure a sight of the being of my love. Stefano acquiesced in my design, and having obtained for me the necessary disguise, at midnight, I departed for the palace. Amidst the bustle and confusion which reigned, as the guests arrived, it was not difficult to effect admission, and I shortly found myself in the principal apartment. As I entered, I was seized with a giddiness, and nearly was falling, when my eyes chanced to rest upon Emilia. She was seated upon a sofa, without her mask; her face was pale, and her beautiful eyes, once bright as diamonds, were sunk and lustreless; her whole aspect contrasting strangely with the rich habiliments in which she was attired. Around her were seated her parents, and by her side stood Lorenzo. I saw, too—oh, agony—my rival bending over, and breathing in her ear his words of—perhaps of love, but to which she coldly listened. In perceiving Grimani, my first feeling was to place my hand upon my sword. Judge of my feelings—of my horrid situation. There, in the midst of a magnificent assembly, surrounded by the richest and most powerful in Venice, with a thousand lamps making the scene more brilliant than day—a thousand instruments sending forth their strains of melody, and the laugh and smile of joy and innocence around me. There I stood enveloped in my robes of darkness, burning with the furies of love and hate. I was in the dark cloud which conceals the tempest, ere the thunderbolt bursts forth to level and destroy.

"As I thus stood, a rich mask approached me, and laughingly said to the others around him, 'What silent visitor have we here? Why, his very habit is the symbol of melancholy.'

"I recognized the voice of my friend, Manfredi, but replied not, and only endeavoured to elude his presence, by mixing in the throng; but he was not to be evaded, and seizing my arm, continued, 'I will know who we have