

"The night is beautiful, dear Fredwald. Let us take a walk."

"I prefer sitting here," returned I, sullenly.

"Well, dearest, be it as you will. Let me at least sit beside you." The heart of a tiger might have been melted by this softness, but mine was not. I replied haughtily: "I wish, lady Christiana, to be alone."

"I will not leave you, Fredwald, till you look kindly upon me."

"Are not you afraid of me, Christiana?" I cried, seizing her fiercely in my arms. "Remember, a madman is not accountable for his acts." I felt her heart throb against mine; she was evidently alarmed by the rudeness of my manner, but she looked up in my face with an expression of the most tender confidence. "If an angel from heaven told me that you were mad, I would not believe him," she said. "And if he told me that you could harm the being who loved you better than anything in earth or heaven, I should look upon him as a spirit of evil."

"Oh, thou angel!" I cried, locking her fast in my arms. "I would to God, that he had given thee another father! A mother more worthy of thee."

"I know your wrongs, Fredwald. My heart bleeds for you. Let my love atone for their hate, and time, which always does justice to the injured, will restore you to your own. The wicked are mad, Fredwald, while the innocent and the oppressed are the especial favorites of heaven."

"Had I been as wicked as I now am, as men say I am, I could have repaid with interest, in the person of that young and lovely thing, all my wrongs. The lonely hour, the lonely place, my own strong passions, and her child-like confidence and love. It was these that saved her, and awed the voice of the tempter in my soul. I had the power. The triumph over her innocence could have been obtained without a struggle, but I rose superior to the madness of the moment, and rushed from the spot. Crossing the outer court of the castle, I was met by the huntsman, Christian Vander; he beckoned me aside. 'I have been injured, my lord,' he said. I started at his addressing me by my title. 'Aye,' he continued, bitterly. 'I wish you had the power, as well as the right to redress my wrongs.'

"Who has injured you, Christian?" I replied, soothingly.

"Who! you need scarcely ask that. Your cousin Adolphus. We were hunting among the hills during the greater part of the day, without meeting the track of a single deer. He grew impatient and out of temper; declared that I had led him to a part of the forest where I well knew that he would not find any game. That if I had

attended his cousin Fred, the case would have been different. I remonstrated with him upon the injustice of this charge; and he bade me hold my impertinent tongue, and struck me over the head with his riding whip. Oh! he continued, grinding his teeth; 'if it had not been that I once owed my life to his father, I would in one flash of my gun, have restored you to your rightful inheritance.'

"I sighed deeply. A glance of mutual intelligence passed between us. For the first time, the thought rushed across my mind, that if he were indeed out of the way, I might enjoy my own by asking the lady Christiana for my wife.

"'I would to God!' muttered the huntsman: that this maiden-faced tyrant were in heaven. 'If I were my lord, I would not submit to be a slave in my own castle, when the chance of obtaining freedom lay in my own hands.'

"'Christian,' said I, slowly. 'We will talk over this matter some other time. We understand each other.'

"'You may trust me to the death,' said the huntsman, his red weather-beaten face flushing to crimson. 'When you can break your mountain pine with your fist, you may win Christian Vander from his purpose.'

"In no very amiable mood I returned to the castle. I found several young noblemen of my own age assembled in the supper room. My cousin Adolphus, was in high spirits, and appeared to be playing the great man among them. I sauntered carelessly past the group, and sat down by the table.

"Who is that handsome young gentleman?" asked the youthful Count P——, of my cousin.

"Oh! him," glancing contemptuously towards me, for his jealousy was excited. "That is the son of the late Count."

"His legitimate son?"

"Yes. But he is mad; that is, he is subject at times to mental aberrations. You will remember Baron Alten telling your father that Count Kulof was unable to visit court for many years before his death, on account of this malady."

"True, poor lad," sighed the generous youth. "But for a certain air of melancholy which seems to proclaim a consciousness of his calamity, I should never have suspected the fact."

"He is quite unconscious of it, too," returned Adolphus; "and were you to question him upon the subject, he would consider himself a dreadfully injured person; and look upon my father and me as the cruel usurpers of his rights."

"It requires a wise man to be a fool, I have heard said," replied I, suddenly turning towards them. "But it must be a person of considerable