



I WEAR THE MASK OF THE GIUDICE

And law may be my trade, but I might as well be disguised for Carnevale, for this duel is nothing but a farce.

Patricians call for my services and out of affection I obey, but I bear none of the trappings of justice today. When speaking of duels, those of noble birth claim they owe nothing, not to their fathers, not to the Doge, perhaps not even to God Himself. Duel is their right by birth and they clamour for it, wherever and whenever they may wish. Their right...

*Right should be familiar to the one who wears the mask of the **Magnifico** and sits in the Great Council, where laws are made by the will of the Doge. The very same will they now spit upon by fighting, though not without qualms: Thus they wish me here, as if my presence alone could dissipate the foul stench of illegality. I know I am in their debt, and yet they make no mention of their past generosity. To be impartial is all they ask of me.*

*At their side stands the **Servitore**, one of most vulgar birth, that may only be chosen as second in a duel in order to bring offence to the other party. Over the long days of this dispute I have grown accustomed to their mediation against my own will. Long have I lashed them with arguments founded on reason and ill-treated them with logic, but they are a thick-skinned beast, and so loyal to their master as to be blind to anything else.*

*Not that the **Capitano** is any better, like any soldier convinced that those entitled to speak on a matter of honour, should be experts in duelling and not in the law.*

They affect nobility by looking down on me, laughing at my worries, which they take for good-heartedness. I do not have a good heart! How often must I say that I'm a soul of intellect?

*The pompous fool plays second to the young noble who wears the mask of the **Innamorato**, the same youth that once happily perched on the hand of the Magnifico, drinking of their wisdom like a nightingale. I thought them better, poised, studious. But like everyone else, they greet me with one hand and with the other they sully the law I represent. Only appearances matter: A judge's robe and a judge's hat can hand down a better sentence than a man without them.*