



### I WEAR THE MASK OF THE SERVITORE

Born poor, I was. Up in the valley, far away from this lagoon. We broke our backs every day, dragging everything to the market and coming back with small change. But I wasn't going to be fooled, not me, so I walked my feet off until I got to big Venice. Like so many before and after me. The appearance of honour, my dear gentlemen, us folks dance it under the cudgel. It's none of our business, not until we sully someone else's.

But enough with the complaining, for years now I've been serving the one who wears the mask of the **Magnifico**. And how well does it fit them! Took me in, fed me, dressed me. I'm not their confidant, I am their spectator. Often it feels like when they bring me to the theatre or put me behind a book: I watch without understanding a thing.

Still I stay there, always ready at their need.

I was there every time they invited that one into our palace, the one who wears the mask of the **Innamorato**. A delicate young thing, blue-blooded and fine-minded, never suffered a day in their life. Never felt their insides clench with hunger, never had the instinct to nibble off their own elbows, to munch on a mountain, to climb up and swallow the Lord Almighty with a whole host of Cherubs on the side. Mea culpa. But they want to try their hand at killing now, without even knowing what blood tastes like.

Not like the **Capitano**, the one who walks with them. That one knows a whole lot about killing. People say they're just a braggart, but I take them seriously all right. Seeing them makes me weak in the knees, I've got no shame in saying that. But I pray I'll be the one who laughs last. I won't allow the two of them to strike at my master, even if that is what they themselves might desire.

Me and the **Giudice** cut our fingers trying to piece together the shards of their broken honour, but no finagler can fix this. I always say I never think. I'm clearly too intelligent for that. That one is all about the thinking, but in the end they're tangled in this mess as badly as I am. Me and a merchant's heir stuck in the same boat, who'd have ever thought. But if my master dies they'll maybe sigh and say a little prayer, while I'll tear down the earth and sky before I go back to begging on the streets!