

# **ABELLINO, OR, THE BRAVO OF VENICE**

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Abellino, or, the Bravo of Venice by M. G. Lewis

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**M. G. LEWIS**

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BOOK I.

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# ABELLINO.

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## CHAPTER I.

### VENICE.

It was evening. Multitudes of light clouds, partially illumined by the moon-beams, overspread the horizon, and through them floated the full moon in tranquil majesty, while her splendor was reflected by every wave of the Adriatic Sea. All was hushed around; gently was the water rippled by the night wind; gently did the night wind sigh through the colonnades of Venice.

It was midnight—and still sat a stranger, solitary and sad, on the border of the great canal. Now with a glance he measured the battlements and proud towers of the city; and now he fixed his melancholy eyes upon the waters with a vacant stare. At length he spoke:

“Wretch that I am! Whither shall I go? Here sit I in Venice, and what would it avail to wander further? What will become of me? All now slumber save myself! The

Doge rests on his couch of down ; the beggar's head presses his straw pillow : but for *me* there is no bed except the cold, damp earth ! There is no gondolier so wretched, but he knows where to find work by day, and shelter by night—while I—while I—Oh ! dreadful is the destiny of which I am made the sport !”

He began to examine for the twentieth time the pockets of his tattered garments.

“No ! not one paolo, by heavens !—and I hunger almost to death !”

He unsheathed his sword ; he waved it in the moonshine, and sighed as he marked the glittering of the steel.

“No, no ! my old and true companion, thou and I must never part ! Mine thou shalt remain, though I starve for it !—Oh ! was not that a golden time when Valeria gave thee to me, and when as she threw the belt over my shoulders, I kissed thee and Valeria ? She has deserted us for another world, but thou and I will never part in this.”

He wiped away a drop which hung upon his eyelid.

“Psha ! ’twas not a tear ! the night wind is sharp and bitter, and makes the eyes water ; but as for *tears*—absurd ! my weeping days are over !”

And as he spoke, the unfortunate (for such

by his discourse and situation he appeared to be) dashed his forehead against the earth, and his lips were already unclosed to curse the hour which gave him being, when he suddenly seemed to recollect himself. He rested his head on his elbow, and sang mournfully the burden of a song which had often delighted his childhood in the castle of his ancestors.

"Right!" he said to himself; "were I to sink under the weight of my destiny, I should be myself no longer."

At that moment he heard a rustling at no great distance. He looked around, and in an adjacent street, which the moon faintly enlightened, he perceived a tall figure wrapped in a cloak, pacing slowly backwards and forwards.

"'Tis the hand of God, which hath guided him hither—Yes! I'll—I'll *beg*! Better to play the beggar in Venice, than the villain in Naples; for the beggar's heart may beat nobly, though covered by rags."

He said, sprang from the ground, and hastened towards the adjoining street. Just as he entered it at one end, he perceived another person advancing through the other; of whose approach the first was no sooner aware, than he hastily retired into the shadow of a piazza, as if anxious to conceal himself.