

Thus speaking, they both advanced, their arms entwined, towards the entrance of the grotto; but at this moment Annette uttered a loud cry.

'What is the matter,' said Marzou, whose eyes had never left her.

She did not reply but extended her hands; and Marzou, who had followed the gesture, recoiled affrighted. As far as he could see into the darkness, he could distinguish nothing but waves. The little beach which it was necessary to traverse in order to gain the ravine, had been so completely inundated, that the causeway which divided it could be recognised only by the boiling foam which was advancing towards them. The great rock opposite, which the sea had gained upon, seemed to bury itself every instant, like the gigantic poop of a vessel tossing in the night. Marzou ran to the second entrance; but there the bank had entirely disappeared, and he saw only a deep bay into which ran the surge.

After the first cry of terror, Annette had remained in the same place, silent, her hands clasped, and her eyes fixed upon Marzou, waiting till he should propose some means of safety; but when she saw him immovable at the second opening of the grotto, and still looking at the waves which already touched his feet, she seized his hand, and called him by his name. Marzou turned round.

'Well!' demanded she.

'Ah, Niette! you see,' stammered the young man; 'from this side we cannot regain the ravine, and on the other the causeway is covered: no person could attempt to pass there without being carried away.'

'But you who know the rocks of Castelli as well as I know my father's house!' replied the young girl, with intense anguish, 'cannot you, then, find another road? Are there no means of escape?'

Marzou shook his head, and as his only reply, pointed to the sea which was fast surrounding them.

'Mon Dieu!' cried Annette, with a burst of despair. 'Mon Dieu, Louis! we cannot, however, die here. See, the land is not far off.'

'Yes,' said he, bitterly; 'but to reach it, we must swim across.'

The daughter of Goron trembled.

'Well, you can swim,' cried she; 'you will cross the beach on the waves as easily as I crossed it yesterday on the sand; quick! quick! set out, Louis; if you delay it will be too late!'

'And leave you to die alone, dear one,' said the young man, with a melancholy smile.

'No,' replied Annette, 'I know that you will not abandon me; but here you can do nothing. Whereas if you gain the shore, you can run to the harbour; there, no one will refuse you a boat, and you will return and save me.'

The *traineur de greves*, shook his head. 'See, the tide is gaining upon us!' said he, pointing to the waves, which now began to invade the grotto; 'even if I had the wings of a sea-gull, all would be over with you, before my return.'