

A Ladder of Swords

A cry of dismay went up from the watchers on the shore. They turned with a half-conscious sympathy towards Angèle, for her story was known by all, and in her face they read her mortal fear, though she made no cry, but only clasped her hands in agony. Her heart told her that yonder Michel de la Forêt was fighting for his life. For an instant only she stood, the terror of death in her eyes, then she turned to the excited fishermen near.

"Men, oh men!" she cried, "will you not save them? Will no one come with me?"

Some shook their heads sullenly, others appeared uncertain, but their wives and children clung to them, and none stirred. Looking round helplessly, Angèle saw the tall figure of the Seigneur of Rozel. He had been watching the scene for some time. Now he came quickly to her.

"Is it the very man?" he asked her, jerking a finger towards the struggling figures in the sea.

"Yes, oh yes," she replied, nodding her head, piteously. "God tells my heart it is."