

A Ladder of Swords

her and filled her eyes with tears. She turned them to the sea—instinctively towards that point on the shore where she thought it likely Michel might be—as though by looking she might find comfort and support in this hard hour.

Even as she gazed into the soft afternoon light she could see, far over, a little sail standing out towards the Ecréhos. Not once in six months might the coast of France be seen so clearly. One might almost have noted people walking on the beach. This was no good token, for when that coast may be seen with great distinctness a storm follows hard after. The girl knew this, and, though she could not know that this was Michel de la Forêt's boat, the possibility fixed itself in her mind. She quickly scanned the horizon. Yes, there in the northwest was gathering a dark-blue haze, hanging like small, filmy curtains in the sky.

The Seigneur of Rozel presently broke the silence so awkward for him. He had seen the tears in her eyes, and, though he could not guess the cause, he vaguely thought it