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she wandered much out of door, but her maids, who loved the scented chamber and the snug wood-fire, let her wander and took no heed.

"Her marriage will come in the time of the barley harvest," they said, and sewed fine embroideries apace, whilst one pale maiden who had been carried off from a mountain fastness wove a web of silk with a border of white lilies, such as is used in the lands of the North for a maiden's pall. But of this none took heed.

Little Lady Lucile braided her hair in two long plaits now, wore a gown that reached to her ankles and looked no longer a child; yet for all that she was sweeter and fairer than before, and it was small wonder that Sparrow-hawk waxed desirous. He even took to paying her compliments and showering gifts upon her. Of his compliments she took no heed, of his gifts she set no store. Once indeed she flung back a great chain of rubies with which he had bound her.

"I like it not," she said. "It smells of blood."

Then he laughed a mighty laugh, caught her in his arms, and for the space of a heart-beat held her captive. She struggled not, but gave him one cold look, and he felt his hands go as wax, and that night the Sparrow-hawk drank long and deeply.

The barley field ripened beneath the summer sky, the beads glistened in the sunlight, poppies were astir with their lazy longing, and golden bedstraw glowed on the wayside banks that lined the rocky path up to the house upon the hill. Already the chapel was being prepared, its musty interior swept and garnished, and the great altar hung with the silken cloth and the lilies that the maids had woven. But Lady Lucile sought not the chapel, nor yet the banqueting hall, where long tables were being spread. Day after day she sought the barley field and listened for the song of the wind among the sheaves. She heard the whippers of the South, the wonders of the West, even the strange secrets of the North, and once she wept as the chill east wind swept in from the sea, bringing tears of brine. But for all that no figure of blue ever wandered in from the sea-path, and no strange bark ever hovered near the shore.

So came the eve of her bridal. Late that evening she dressed herself in a russet gown, twisted a gold chain she had worn about her middle the night she had been brought to the house upon the hill, and taking with her nothing but her little book of prayers, wandered out into the barley field, her heart big with longing, and her eyes all aching with a misery she could not fathom.

Would he come—and too late? None saw her go, and had they seen who could guess what were her thoughts? The morrow's bridal was to be a wonderful sight, and gay doings were promised. So they smiled and gossiped in corners, and Dame Marjorie told her beads. Dame Marjorie knew that little Lady Lucile was the heiress of La Vendee, and that by this marriage a mighty fief would fall to her son's share. Who could say him nay when his bride was this wondrous child, so loving and so doted on by him? So her foolish old heart pated.

Out in the barley field Lucile stood with finger on lip listening. Would he come in time? Ah! through the twilight she heard the sound of oars, and her heart beat fast. It was he. She was sure. So the little russet-clad figure stood motionless and waited.

But not for long. Up the sea-path he strode, his golden curls gleaming, his heart beating with hers. She saw his blue cloak, and clapped her hands softly. With that he came and knelt at her feet.

"Ah, my Lady Lucile!" he said, and he kissed her hands; "my little Lady Lucile." She wondered why her heart beat so fast, why her hands trembled.

"Come," he said, "and quickly. My boat waits below."

So with her hand in his she went down the seaward path till they stood alone on the shore. But not alone, for there amongst the rocks was a strange company. Men in armour! She looked at him in amaze.

"What do they here?" she asked. "Who are they?"

"My lady," he said, "it is twelve years since Bernard the Rubber Chief invaded La Vendee, treacherously struck down our Chief, and laid dire insult upon his widow. He bore off our little lady, and we, all lads as we were, swore vengeance.

But we must needs have time. We wert stripings and our fathers were slain, slain as only the Sparrow-hawk can slay brave men. Some were hamstringed, and their bitter shrieks have dwelt in our ears since. Lads though we were, we rescued our lady, your noble mother, and in caves and hiding places have we hid our time till we were grown. Now we have come to deal vengeance, and it is time. Up at the house on the hill to-night all men will be drunk. They are making merry over the bridal that will

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