

The Death of Tintagiles.



ACT FIRST.

At the top of a hill, overlooking the castle.

Enter YORAINÉ, holding TINTAGILES by the hand

YORAINÉ.

Thy first night will be troubled, Tintagiles. Already the sea howls about us; and the trees are moaning. It is late. The moon is just setting behind the poplars that shide the palace. . . . We are alone, perhaps, for all that here we have to live on guard. There seems to be a watch set for the approach of the slightest happiness. I said to myself one day, in the very depths of my soul,—and God himself could hardly hear it,—I said to myself one day I should be happy. . . . There needed nothing further; in a little while our old father died, and both our brothers vanished without a single human being able since to tell us where they are. Now I am all alone, with my poor sister and thee, my little Tintagiles; and I have no

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faith in the future. . . . Come here; sit on my knee. Kiss me first; and put thy little arms, there, all the way around my neck; . . . perhaps they will not be able to undo them. . . . Rememberest thou the time when it was I that carried thee at night when bedtime came; and when thou fearedst the shadows of my lamp in the long windowless corridors?—I felt my soul tremble upon my lips when I saw thee, suddenly, this morning. . . . I thought thee so far away, and so secure. . . . Who was it made thee come here?

TINTAGILES.

I do not know, little sister.

YGRAINE.

Thou dost not know any longer what was said?

TINTAGILES.

They said I had to leave.

YGRAINE.

But why hadst thou to leave?

TINTAGILES.

Because it was the Queen's will.

YGRAINE.

They did not say why it was her will?—I am sure they said many things. . . .

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TINTAGILES.

I heard nothing, little sister.

YGRAINE.

When they spoke among themselves, what did they say?

TINTAGILES.

They spoke in a low voice, little sister.

YGRAINE.

All the time?

TINTAGILES.

All the time, sister Ygraine; except when they looked at me.

YGRAINE.

They did not speak of the Queen?

TINTAGILES.

They said she was never seen, sister Ygraine.

YGRAINE.

And those who were with thee, on the bridge of the ship, said nothing?

TINTAGILES.

They minded nothing but the wind and the sails, sister Ygraine.

YGRAINE.

Ah! . . . That does not astonish me, my child. . . .

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TINTAGILES.

They left me all alone, little sister.

YGRAINE.

Listen, Tintagiles, I will tell thee what I know. . . .

TINTAGILES.

What dost thou know, sister Ygraine?

YGRAINE.

Not much, my child. . . . My sister and I have crept along here, since our birth, without daring to understand a whit of all that happens. . . . For a long while indeed, I lived like a blind woman on this island; and it all seemed natural to me. . . . I saw no other events than the flying of a bird, the trembling of a leaf, the opening of a rose. . . . There reigned such a silence that the falling of a ripe fruit in the park called faces to the windows. . . . And no one seemed to have the least suspicion; . . . but one night I learned there must be something else. . . . I would have fled, and could not. . . . Hast thou understood what I have said?

TINTAGILES.

Yes, yes, little sister; I understand whatever you will. . . .

YGRAINE.

Well, then, let us speak no more of things that are not known. . . . Thou seest yonder.

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behind the dead trees that poison the horizon, — thou seest the castle yonder, in the depth of the valley?

TINTAGILES.

That which is so black, sister Ygraine?

YGRAINE.

It is black indeed. . . . It is at the very depth of an amphitheatre of shadows. . . . We have to live there. . . . It might have been built on the summit of the great mountains that surround it. . . . The mountains are blue all day. . . . We should have breathed. We should have seen the sea and the meadows on the other side of the rocks. . . . But they preferred to put it in the depth of the valley; and the very air does not go down so low. . . . It is falling in ruins, and nobody beware. . . . The walls are cracking; you would say it was dissolving in the shadows. . . . There is only one tower unassailed by the weather. . . . It is enormous; and the house never comes out of its shadow. . . .

TINTAGILES.

There is something shining, sister Ygraine.

. . . . See, see, the great red windows! . . .

YGRAINE.

They are those of the tower, Tintagiles; they are the only ones where you will see light; it is there the throne of the Queen is set.

TINTAGILES.

I shall not see the Queen?

YGRAINE.

No one can see her. . . .

TINTAGILES.

Why can't one see her?

YGRAINE.

Come nearer, Tintagiles. . . . Not a bird nor a blade of grass must hear us. . . .

TINTAGILES.

There is no grass, little sister. . . . [*A silence*]
—What does the Queen do?

YGRAINE.

No one knows, my child. She does not show herself. . . . She lives there, all alone in her tower; and they that serve her do not go out by day. . . . She is very old; she is the mother of our mother; and she would reign alone. . . . She is jealous and suspicious, and they say that she is mad. . . . She fears lest some one rise into her place; and it was doubtless because of that fear that she had thee brought hither. . . . Her orders are carried out no one knows how. . . . She never comes down; and all the doors of the tower are closed night and day. . . . I never caught a glimpse of her; but others have seen her, it seems, in the past, when she was young. . . .

TINTAGILES.

Is she very ugly, sister Ygraine?

YGRAINE.

They say she is not beautiful, and that she is growing huge. . . . But they that have seen her dare never speak of it. . . . Who knows, indeed, if they have seen her? . . . She has a power not to be understood; and we live here with a great unpying weight upon our souls. . . . Thou must not be frightened beyond measure, nor have bad dreams; we shall watch over thee, my little Tintagiles, and no evil will be able to reach thee; but do not go far from me, your sister Belhanger, nor our old master Aglovale. . . .

TINTAGILES.

Not from Aglovale either, sister Ygraine?

YGRAINE.

Not from Aglovale either. . . . He loves us. . . .

TINTAGILES.

He is so old, little sister!

YGRAINE.

He is old, but very wise. . . . He is the only friend we have left; and he knows many things. . . . It is strange; she has made thee come hither without letting any one know. . . . I do not know what there is in my heart. . . . I was

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sorry and glad to know thou wert so far away,
beyond the sea. . . . And now . . . I was
astonished. . . . I went out this morning to see
if the sun was rising over the mountains; and it
is thou I see upon the threshold. . . . I knew
thee at once. . . .

TINTAGILES.

No, no, little sister; it was I that laughed
first. . . .

YORAINÉ.

I could not laugh at once. . . . Thou wilt
understand. . . . It is time, Tintagiles, and the
wind is growing black upon the sea. . . . Kiss
me harder, again, again, before thou stand'st
upright. . . . Thou knowest not how we love.
. . . . Give me thy little hand. . . . I shall
guard it well; and we will go back into the
sickenng castle.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT SECOND.

*An apartment in the castle. AGLOVALE and
YORAINÉ discovered.*

Enter Bellangère.

BELLANGÈRE.

Where is Tintagiles?

YORAINÉ.

Here; do not speak too loud. He sleeps in
the other room. He seems a little pale, a little
ailing too. He was tired by the journey and
the long sea-voyage. Or else the atmosphere
of the castle has startled his little soul. He
cried for no cause. I rocked him to sleep on
my knees; come, see. . . . He sleeps in our
bed. . . . He sleeps very gravely, with one
hand on his forehead, like a little sad king. . . .

BELLANGÈRE (*bursting suddenly into tears*). . .

My sister! my sister! . . . my poor sister! . . .

YORAINÉ.

What is the matter?

BELLANGÈRE.

I dare not say what I know, . . . and I am not sure that I know anything, . . . and yet I heard that which one could not hear. . . .

YGRAINE.

What didst thou hear?

BELLANGÈRE.

I was passing near the corridors of the tower. . . .

YGRAINE.

Ah! . . .

BELLANGÈRE.

A door there was ajar. I pushed it very softly. . . . I went in. . . .

YGRAINE.

In where?

BELLANGÈRE.

I had never seen the place. . . . There were other corridors lighted with lamps; then low galleries that had no outlet. . . . I knew it was forbidden to go on. . . . I was afraid, and I was going to return upon my steps, when I heard a sound of voices one could hardly hear. . . .

YGRAINE.

It must have been the handmaids of the Queen; they dwell at the foot of the tower. . . .

BELLANGÈRE.

I do not know just what it was. . . . There must have been more than one door between us; and the voices came to me like the voice of some one who was being smothered. . . . I drew as near as I could. . . . I am not sure of anything, but I think they spoke of a child that came to-day and of a crown of gold. . . . They seemed to be laughing. . . .

YGRAINE.

They laughed?

BELLANGÈRE.

Yes, I think they laughed . . . unless they were weeping; or unless it was something I did not understand; for it was hard to hear, and their voices were sweet. . . . They seemed to echo in a crowd under the arches. . . . They spoke of the child the Queen would see. . . . They will probably come up this evening. . . .

YGRAINE.

What? . . . This evening? . . .

BELLANGÈRE.

Yes. . . . Yes. . . . I think so. . . .

YGRAINE.

They spoke no one's name?

BELLANGÈRE.

They spoke of a child, of a very little child. . . .

YGRAINE.

There is no other child. . . .

BELLANGÈRE.

They raised their voices a little at that moment, because one of them had said the day seemed not yet come. . . .

YGRAINE.

I know what that means; it is not the first time they have issued from the tower. . . . I knew well why she made him come; . . . but I could not believe she would hasten so! . . . We shall see; . . . we are three, and we have time. . . .

BELLANGÈRE.

What wilt thou do?

YGRAINE.

I do not know yet what I shall do, but I will astonish her. . . . Do you know how you tremble? . . . I will tell you. . . .

BELLANGÈRE.

What?

YGRAINE.

She shall not take him without trouble. . . .

BELLANGÈRE.

We are alone, sister Ygraine. . . .

YGRAINE.

Ah! it is true, we are alone! . . . There is but one remedy, the one with which we have always succeeded! . . . Let us wait upon our knees as the other times. . . . Perhaps she will have pity! . . . She allows herself to be disarmed by tears. . . . We must grant her all she asks us; happily she will smile; and she is wont to spare all those who kneel. . . . She has been there for years in her huge tower, devouring our beloved, and none, not one, has dared to strike her in the face. . . . She is there, upon our souls, like the stone of a tomb, and no one dare put forth his arm. . . . In the time when there were men here, they feared too, and fell upon their faces. . . . To-day it is the woman's turn; . . . we shall see. . . . It is time to rise at last. . . . We know not upon what her power rests, and I will live no longer in the shadow of her tower. . . . Go, — go, both of you, and leave me more alone still, if you tremble too. . . . I shall await her. . . .

BELLANGÈRE.

Sister, I do not know what must be done, but I stay with thee. . . .

AGLOVALE.

I too stay, my daughter. For a long time my soul has been restless. . . . You are going to try. . . . We have tried more than once. . . .

YORAINÉ.

You have tried . . . you too?

AGLOVALE.

They have all tried. . . . But at the last moment they have lost their strength. . . . You will see, you too. . . . Should she order me to come up to her this very night, I should clasp both my hands without a word; and my tired feet would climb the stair, without delay and without haste, well as I know no one comes down again with open eyes. . . . I have no more courage against her. . . . Our hands are of no use and reach no one. . . . They are not the hands we need, and all is useless. . . . But I would help you, because you hope. . . . Shut the doors, my child. Wake Tintagiles; encircle him with your little naked arms and take him on your knees. . . . We have no other defence. . . .

The same. YORAINÉ and AGLOVALE discovered.

ACT THIRD.

YORAINÉ.

I have been to all the doors. There are three. We will guard the largest. . . . The other two are thick and low. They never open. Their keys were lost long ago, and the iron bars are bedded fast in the walls. Help me shut this; it is heavier than the gate of a city. . . . It is strong, too, and the thunder itself could not enter. . . . Are you ready for everything?

AGLOVALE (*sitting himself on the threshold*).

I shall sit on the steps of the threshold, with the sword on my knees. . . . Methinks it is not the first time I have watched and waited here, my child; and there are moments when we do not understand all we remember. . . . I have done these things, I know not when; . . . but I never dared draw my sword. . . . To-day it is there, before me, although my arms have no more strength; but I will try. . . . Perhaps it is time to defend ourselves, although we do not understand. . . .

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BELANGÈRE, *carrying TINTAGILES, enters from the adjoining room.*

BELANGÈRE.

He was awake. . . .

YGRAINE.

He is pale. . . . Why, what is the matter?

BELANGÈRE.

I do not know. . . . He was crying silently. . . .

YGRAINE.

Tintagiles. . . .

BELANGÈRE.

He looks the other way. . . .

YGRAINE.

He does not recognize me. . . . Tintagiles, where art thou?—It is thy sister speaking to thee. . . . What lookest thou at there?—Turn back this way. . . . Come, we will play. . . .

TINTAGILES.

No. . . . No. . . .

YGRAINE.

Thou wouldst not play?

TINTAGILES.

I can no longer walk, sister Ygraine. . . .

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YGRAINE.

Thou canst no longer walk? . . . Come, come, what ails thee?—Art thou in pain a little? . . .

TINTAGILES.

Yes. . . .

YGRAINE.

Where is the pain, then?—Tell me, Tintagiles, and I will cure thee. . . .

TINTAGILES.

I can't tell, sister Ygraine, it is everywhere. . . .

YGRAINE.

Come here, Tintagiles. . . . Thou knowest my arms are gentler, and one is cured quickly there. . . . Give him to me, Belangère. . . . He shall sit on my knees, and it will go away. . . . There, thou seest how it is! . . . Thy great sisters are here. . . . They are about thee; . . . we will defend thee, and no harm can come. . . .

TINTAGILES.

It is there, sister Ygraine. . . . Why is there no light, sister Ygraine?

YGRAINE.

There is, my child. . . . Thou dost not see the lamp that hangs down from the vault?

TINTAGILES.

Yes, yes. . . . It is not big. . . . There are no others?

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YGRAINE.

Why should there be others? We can see all
we need see. . . .

TINTAGILES.

Ah! . . .

YGRAINE.

Oh, thine eyes are deep! . . .

TINTAGILES.

Thine too, sister Ygraine. . . .

YGRAINE.

I had not noticed it this morning. . . . I saw
arise. . . . one never knows just what the soul
believes it sees. . . .

TINTAGILES.

I have not seen the soul, sister Ygraine. . . .
Why is Aglovale there on the threshold?

YGRAINE.

He is resting a little. . . . He wanted to kiss
thee before he went to bed. . . . He was wait-
ing for thee to wake. . . .

TINTAGILES.

What is that on his knees?

YGRAINE.

On his knees? I see nothing on his knees. . . .

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TINTAGILES.

Yes, yes, there is something. . . .

AGLOVALE.

Nothing much, my child. . . . I was looking
at my old sword; and I hardly recognized it. . . .
It has served me many years; but for some time
I have lost all faith in it, and I think it will soon
break. . . . There, by the hilt, there is a little
spot. . . . I have observed the steel was growing
paler, and I asked myself. . . . I know not any
longer what I asked. . . . My soul is very heavy
to-day. . . . How can it be helped? . . . We have
to live in expectation of the unexpected. . . .
And then we have to act as if we hoped. . . .
There are those heavy evenings when the use-
lessness of life rises in the throat; and you
would like to close your eyes. . . . It is late, and
I am tired. . . .

TINTAGILES.

He is wounded, sister Ygraine. . . .

YGRAINE.

Where?

TINTAGILES.

On the forehead and the hands. . . .

AGLOVALE.

Those are very old wounds that do not hurt
me any more, my child. . . . It must be the
light falling on them to-night. . . . Thou hast
never noticed them till now?

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TINTAGILES.

He looks sad, sister Ygraine. . . .

YGRAINE.

No, no; he is not sad, but very weary. . . .

TINTAGILES.

Thou art sad too, sister Ygraine. . . .

YGRAINE.

Why, no; why, no; you see, I am smiling. . . .

TINTAGILES.

And my other sister, too. . . .

YGRAINE.

Why, no; she is smiling, too. . . .

TINTAGILES.

That is not smiling. . . . I know. . . .

YGRAINE.

Come; kiss me and think of something else. . . . [*She kisses him.*]

TINTAGILES.

What else, sister Ygraine? — Why dost thou hurt me when thou dost kiss me so?

YGRAINE.

I hurt thee?

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TINTAGILES.

Yes. . . . I don't know why I hear thy heart beat, sister Ygraine. . . .

YGRAINE.

Thou hearest it beat?

TINTAGILES.

Oh! oh! it beats, it beats, as if it would. . . .

YGRAINE.

What?

TINTAGILES.

I don't know, sister Ygraine. . . .

YGRAINE.

Thou must not be alarmed without reason, nor speak in riddles. . . . Stop! thine eyes are wet. . . . Why art thou troubled? I hear thy heart beat, too. . . . You always hear it when you kiss so. . . . It is then it speaks and says things the tongue knows not of. . . .

TINTAGILES.

I did not hear it just now. . . .

YGRAINE.

Because then. . . . Oh! but thine! . . . Why! what ails it? . . . It is bursting! . . .

TINTAGILES (*crying*).

Sister Ygraine! sister Ygraine!

YGRAINE.
What?

TINTAGLES.

I heard! . . . They . . . they are coming!

YGRAINE.

They, who? . . . Why, what's the matter? . . .

TINTAGLES.

The door! the door! They were there! . . .
[*He falls backward on YGRAINE'S knees.*]

YGRAINE.

Why, what's the matter? . . . He has . . .
He has fainted. . . .

BELLANGÈRE.

Take care; . . . take care! . . . He will
fall. . . .

AGLOVALE.

[*Rising abruptly, sword in hand.*] I hear
too; . . . some one is walking in the corridor.

YGRAINE.

Oh! . . .
[*A silence — they listen.*]

AGLOVALE.

I hear. . . . There is a crowd of them. . . .

YGRAINE.

A crowd! . . . What crowd?

AGLOVALE.

I do not know; . . . you hear and you do not
hear. . . . They do not walk like other beings,
but they come. . . . They are touching the
door. . . .

YGRAINE.

[*Clasping TINTAGLES convulsively in her
arms.*] Tintagles! . . . Tintagles! . . .

BELLANGÈRE.

[*Kissing him at the same time.*] I too! . . .
I too! . . . Tintagles! . . .

AGLOVALE.

They are shaking the door . . . listen . . .
soft! . . . They are whispering. . . .
[*A key is heard grating in the lock.*]

YGRAINE.

They have the key! . . .

AGLOVALE.

Yes; . . . yes. . . . I was sure of it. . . .
Wait. . . .
[*He posts himself, with raised sword, on
the last step. — To the two sisters:—*
Come! . . . come, too! . . .

[*A silence. The door opens a little. Trem-
bling like the needle of a compass, Aglovale
puts his sword across the opening, sticking
the point of it between the beams of the
door-case. The sword breaks with a crash
under the ominous pressure of the folding-*

door, and its fragments roll echoing down the steps. Ygraine leaps up with Tintagiles, still in a faint, in her arms; and she, Butangere and Aglovaie, with vain and mighty efforts, try to push back the door, which continues to open slowly, although no one is heard or seen. Only a brightness cold and calm, pierces into the room. At this moment, Tintagiles, suddenly straightening up, comes to himself, utters a long cry of deliverance and kisses his sister, while at the very moment of this cry, the door, resisting no longer, shuts abruptly under their pressure, which they have not had time to interrupt.]

YGRAINE.

Tintagiles! . . .
[*They look at each other in amazement.*]

AGLOVAIE (*listening at the door*).

I no longer hear a sound. . . .

YGRAINE (*with wild joy*).

Tintagiles! Tintagiles! . . . See! See! . . . He is saved! . . . See his eyes! . . . You can see the blue. . . . He is going to speak. . . . They saw we were watching. . . . They did not dare! . . . Kiss us! . . . Kiss us, I tell thee! . . . Kiss us! . . . All! all! . . . To the very depths of our souls! . . .

[*All four, with eyes filled with tears, remain closely embraced.*]

ACT FOURTH.

[*A corridor before the apartment of the preceding act. Enter, veiled, three handmaids of the Queen.*]

FIRST HANDMAID (*listening at the door*).

They watch no longer. . . .

SECOND HANDMAID.

It was useless to wait. . . .

THIRD HANDMAID.

She preferred that it should be done in silence. . . .

FIRST HANDMAID.

I knew that they must sleep. . . .

SECOND HANDMAID.

Open quickly. . . .

THIRD HANDMAID.

It is time. . . .

FIRST HANDMAID.

Wait at the door. I will go in alone. It is needless to be three. . . .

SECOND HANDMAID.

It is true, he is very little. . . .

THIRD HANDMAID.

You must be on your guard for the elder sister. . . .

SECOND HANDMAID.

You know the Queen would not that they should know. . . .

FIRST HANDMAID.

Fear nothing; I am never easily heard. . . .

SECOND HANDMAID.

Go in, then; it is time.

[*The first handmaid opens the door prudently and enters the room.*]

It is nearly midnight. . . .

THIRD HANDMAID.

Ah! . . .

[*A silence. The first handmaid comes back from the apartment.*]

SECOND HANDMAID.

Where is he?

FIRST HANDMAID.

He is asleep between his sisters. His arms are about their necks; and their arms are about him, too. . . . I could not do it alone. . . .

SECOND HANDMAID.

I will go help you. . . .

THIRD HANDMAID.

Yes; go in together. . . . I will watch here. . . .

FIRST HANDMAID.

Take care; they are aware of something. . . . They are all three struggling with a bad dream. . . .

[*The two handmaids enter the room.*]

THIRD HANDMAID.

They are always aware; but they do not understand. . . .

[*A silence. The first two handmaids come back again from the apartment.*]

Well?

SECOND HANDMAID.

You must come too; . . . we cannot detach them. . . .

FIRST HANDMAID.

As fast as we undo their arms, they close them on the child again. . . .

SECOND HANDMAID.

And the child clings to them harder and harder. . . .

FIRST HANDMAID.

He is resting with his forehead on the elder sister's heart. . . .

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SECOND HANDMAID.

And his head rises and falls on her breasts. . . .

FIRST HANDMAID.

We shall not succeed in opening his hands the least. . . .

SECOND HANDMAID.

They plunge to the very depths of his sisters' hair. . . .

FIRST HANDMAID.

He clenches a golden curl between his little teeth. . . .

SECOND HANDMAID.

The hair of the elder will have to be cut off. . . .

FIRST HANDMAID.

The other sister's as well, you will see. . . .

SECOND HANDMAID.

Have you your shears?

THIRD HANDMAID.

Yes. . . .

FIRST HANDMAID.

Come quick; they stir already.

SECOND HANDMAID.

Their hearts and eyelids beat in the same time. . . .

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FIRST HANDMAID.

It is true; I caught a glimpse of the blue eyes of the elder. . . .

SECOND HANDMAID.

She looked at us, but saw us not. . . .

FIRST HANDMAID.

When one of them is touched, the other two start. . . .

SECOND HANDMAID.

They struggle without being able to move. . . .

FIRST HANDMAID.

The elder would have cried out, but she could not. . . .

SECOND HANDMAID.

Come quickly; they look warned. . . .

THIRD HANDMAID.

The old man is not there?

FIRST HANDMAID.

Yes; but he sleeps in a corner. . . .

SECOND HANDMAID.

He sleeps with his forehead on the pommel of his sword.

FIRST HANDMAID.

He is aware of nothing; and he does not dream. . . .

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THIRD HANDMAID.

Come, come; we must have done with it. . . .

FIRST HANDMAID.

You will have trouble untangling their limbs. . . .

SECOND HANDMAID.

True; they are intertwined like those of the drowned. . . .

THIRD HANDMAID.

Come, come. . . .

[They enter the room. A great silence, broken by sighs and dull murmurs of an anguish smothered by sleep. Afterwards, the three handmaids come out in all haste from the sombre apartment. One of them carries Tintagles asleep in her arms, his little hands and mouth shrivelled with sleep and agony; and flooding him all over with the flowing of long Golden Locks ravished from the two sisters' hair. They flee in silence until, when they come to the end of the corridor, Tintagles, suddenly waking, utters a great cry of supreme distress.]

TINTAGLES (*from the depths of the corridor*).

A-ah! . . .

[New silence. Then the two sisters are heard, in the next room, waking and rising un-
easily.]

YGRAINE (*in the room*).

Tintagles! . . . Where is he? . . .

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BELLANGÈRE.

He is no longer here. . . .

YGRAINE (*with increasing anguish*).

Tintagles! . . . A lamp! a lamp! . . . Light it! . . .

BELLANGÈRE.

Yes . . . yes! . . .

YGRAINE.

[She is seen, through the open door, coming forward within the room, with a lamp in her hand.]

The door is wide open!

THE VOICE OF TINTAGLES (*almost inaudible in the distance*).

Sister Ygraine! . . .

YGRAINE.

He cries! . . . he cries! . . . Tintagles! Tintagles! . . .

[She rushes headlong into the corridor. Bel-
langère tries to follow her, but faints on the steps of the threshold.]

ACT FIFTH.

*A great iron door beneath gloomy archway.
Enter YGRAINE, haggard, dishevelled, with a
lamp in her hand.*

YGRAINE.

[*Turning back swiftly.*] They have not loved me. . . . Bellangere! . . . Bellangere! . . . Aglovale! . . . Where are they? — They said they loved him, and they have left me all alone! . . . Tintagles! . . . Tintagles! . . . Oh! it is true. . . . I have climbed up, I have climbed up innumerable steps between great pitiless walls, and my heart can no longer sustain me. . . . The arches seem to stir. . . . [*She leans against the pillars of an arch.*] I shall fall. . . . Oh! oh! my poor life! I feel it. . . . It is at the very edge of my lips, trying to get away. . . . I do not know what I have done. . . . I have seen nothing; I have heard nothing. . . . Oh, the silence! . . . I found all these golden curls along the steps and along the walls; and I followed them. I picked them up. . . . Oh! oh! they are very beautiful! Little thumbkin! . . . little thumbkin! . . . What did I say? I remember. . . . I do not believe in it either; . . . one can sleep. . . . All that is of no consequence, and it is not possible. . . . I do not know what I think any longer. . . . One is walked up, and then . . . At bottom, come, at bottom,

one must reflect. . . . They say this, they say that; but the soul — that follows another road altogether. You do not know all you unloose. I came here with my little lamp. . . . It was not blown out in spite of the wind in the stairway. . . . At bottom, what must be thought of it? There are too many things unsettled. . . . And yet there are some who should know them; but why do they not speak? [*Looking about her.*] I have never seen all this. . . . One may not climb so high; everything is forbidden. . . . It is cold. . . . It is so dark, too, one might fear to breathe. . . . They say the shadow's poison. . . . Yonder door is fearful. . . . [*She approaches the door and groges over it.*] Oh! it is cold! . . . It is of smooth iron; all smooth, and has no lock. . . . Where does it open, then? I see no hinges. . . . I believe it is embedded in the wall. . . . One can go no higher; . . . there are no more steps. . . . [*Uttering a terrible cry.*] Ah! . . . still more golden curls, shut in the door! . . . Tintagles! Tintagles! . . . I heard the door fall to just now! . . . I remember! I remember! . . . It must! . . . [*She beats frantically with fist and feet on the door.*] Oh! the monster! the monster! . . . You are here! . . . Listen! I blaspheme! I blaspheme and spit at you! . . .

[*Knocking, in tiny strokes, heard on the other side of the door; then the voice of Tintagles pierces, very feebly, through the iron barriers.*]

TINTAGLES.

Sister Ygraine, sister Ygraine!

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YGRAINE.

Tintagles! . . . What? . . . What? . . .
Tintagles, is it thou? . . .

TINTAGLES.

Open quickly, open quickly! . . . She is
there! . . .

YGRAINE.

Oh! oh! . . . Who? . . . Tintagles, my little
Tintagles! . . . dost thou hear me? . . . What is
it! . . . What has happened? . . . Tintagles!
. . . Thou hast not been hurt? . . . Where art
thou? . . . Art thou there? . . .

TINTAGLES.

Sister Ygraine, sister Ygraine! . . . I shall die
if thou dost not open me the door. . . .

YGRAINE.

Wait; I am trying; wait. . . . I am opening
it, I am opening it. . . .

TINTAGLES.

But thou dost not understand me! . . . Sister
Ygraine! . . . There is no time! . . . She could
not hold me. . . . I struck her, struck her. . . .
I ran. . . . Quick, quick, she is here! . . .

YGRAINE.

I am coming, I am coming. . . . Where is she?

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TINTAGLES.

I see nothing, . . . but I hear. . . . oh! I am
afraid, sister Ygraine, I am afraid! . . . Quick,
quick! . . . Open quickly! . . . for the love of
the dear God, sister Ygraine! . . .

YGRAINE (*grasping over the door anxiously*).

I am sure to find . . . wait a little . . . a min-
ute . . . a moment . . .

TINTAGLES.

I cannot wait any longer, sister Ygraine. . . .
She is breathing behind me. . . .

YGRAINE.

It is nothing, Tintagles; my little Tintagles,
don't be afraid. . . . It is because I cannot
see. . . .

TINTAGLES.

Yes, thou canst; I see thy light plainly. . . .
It is light by thee, sister Ygraine. . . . Here I
can see no longer. . . .

YGRAINE.

Thou seest me, Tintagles? Where can one
see? There is no chink. . . .

TINTAGLES.

Yes, yes, there is one, but it is so little! . . .

YGRAINE

Which side? Here? . . . Tell me, tell me!
. . . . There, perhaps?

TINTAGILES.

Here, here. . . . Dost thou not hear? I am knocking. . . .

YGRAINE.

Here?

TINTAGILES.

Higher. . . . But it is so little! . . . One could not pass a needle through it! . . .

YGRAINE.

Don't be afraid; I shall be there. . . .

TINTAGILES.

Oh, I hear, sister Ygraine! . . . Pull! Pull! Thou must pull! She is here! . . . if thou couldst open it a little. . . . just a little. . . . I am so tiny! . . .

YGRAINE.

I have no nails left, Tintagiles. . . . I have pulled, I have pushed, I have pounded! . . . I have pounded! . . . [*She pounds again and tries to shake the immovable door.*] Two of my fingers are numb. . . . Do not weep; . . . it is iron. . . .

TINTAGILES (*sobbing desperately*).

Thou hast nothing to open it with, sister Ygraine? . . . Nothing at all, nothing at all! . . . and I could go through; . . . for I am so little, so little. . . . Thou knowest well. . . .

YGRAINE.

I have nothing but my lamp, Tintagiles. . . . There! There! . . . [*She beats hard on the*

door, with the help of her lamp of clay, which goes out and is broken.] Oh! . . . Everything is dark all at once! . . . Tintagiles, where art thou? . . . Oh, listen, listen! . . . Thou canst not open it from within? . . .

TINTAGILES.

No, no; there is n't anything. . . . I can't feel anything at all. . . . I can't see the little bright chink any longer. . . .

YGRAINE.

What ails thee, Tintagiles? . . . I hardly hear any longer. . . .

TINTAGILES.

Little sister, sister Ygraine. . . . It is no longer possible. . . .

YGRAINE.

What is it, Tintagiles? . . . Where goest thou? . . .

TINTAGILES.

She is there! . . . I have no more courage.— Sister Ygraine, sister Ygraine! . . . I feel her! . . .

YGRAINE.

Who? . . . Who? . . .

TINTAGILES.

I do not know. . . . I do not see. . . . But it is no longer possible! . . . She. . . . she is taking me by the throat. . . . She has put her hand on my throat. . . . Oh! oh! sister Ygraine, come here. . . .

YGRAINE.

Yes, yes,

TINTAGILES.

It is so dark!

YGRAINE.

Struggle, defend thyself, tear her! . . . Don't be afraid. . . . One moment! . . . I shall be there. . . . Tintagiles! . . . Tintagiles! answer me! . . . Help! . . . Where art thou? . . . I am going to help thee. . . . Kiss me. . . . through the door. . . . here. . . . here. . . .

TINTAGILES (*very feebly*).

Here . . . here . . . sister Ygraine. . . .

YGRAINE.

It is here, it is here I am giving kisses, hearest thou? Again! again!

TINTAGILES (*more and more feebly*).

I am giving them, too. . . . here. . . . sister Ygraine! . . . sister Ygraine! . . . Oh!

[*The fall of a little body is heard behind the iron door.*]

YGRAINE.

Tintagiles! . . . Tintagiles! . . . What hast thou done? . . . Give him up! give him up! . . . for the love of God, give him up! . . . I no longer hear. . . . — What have you done with him? . . . Do him no harm, will you? . . . It

is only a poor child! . . . He does not resist. . . . See, see. . . . I am not wicked. . . . I have gone down on both knees. . . . Give him up, I pray thee. . . . It is not for myself alone, thou knowest. . . . I will do all one could wish. . . . I am not bad, you see. . . . I beseech you with clasped hands. . . . I was wrong. . . . I submit utterly, thou seest well. . . . I have lost all I had. . . . Let me be punished some other way. . . . There are so many things that could give me more pain. . . . if thou lovest to give pain. . . . Thou wilt see. . . . But this poor child has done nothing. . . . What I said was not true. . . . but I did not know. . . . I know well you are very good. . . . One must forgive in the end! . . . He is so young, he is so beautiful, and he is so little! . . . You see, it is not possible! . . . He puts his little arms about your neck, his little mouth on your mouth; and God himself could not resist any longer. . . . You will open, will you not? . . . I ask almost nothing. . . . I should only have him a moment, one little moment. . . . I do not remember. . . . thou understandest. . . . I did not have time. . . . There needs hardly anything to let him pass. . . . It is not hard. . . . [*A long inexorable silence.*] — Monster! . . . Monster! . . . I spit — . . . !

[*She sinks down and continues to sob softly, with her arms stretched up on the door, in the darkness.*]

[CURTAIN.]