

Ruled Destiny!

**CHAPTER VIII.
A FAVORITE.**

"I am growing foolish," she thought, "and all because the Right Honorable Earl of Norman chooses to amuse himself with Lady Pendleton's companion! What have I done, or said, that he should presume to act as he does? I suppose he thinks a servant a fair target at which to practice pretty speeches," and with a bitter smile she pushed the rose aside with her feet.

But a moment later she stooped and picked it up.

"No, I will keep it and wear it to remind me of my folly," and she placed the crimson flower inside the bosom of her white dress.

She had scarcely finished dressing when Josine knocked at the door, and scarcely waiting for permission to enter, came in.

Her dark, beady eyes took in the whole of Floris' attire at a glance, then sought the floor.

"Miladi would be glad if you would trouble yourself to come to her, mademoiselle," she said. "And miladi desires me to assist mademoiselle with her toilet."

"Thanks, Josine, but I am dressed," said Floris.

The dark eyes surveyed her coldly. "Pardon! Mademoiselle's hair could be arranged more effectively."

"I dare say," said Floris, carelessly; "but I won't trouble you, Josine. It does not matter," and she passed out before her, and, as usual, Josine peered about the room, and turning over everything Floris had left about.

"Dressed already!" exclaimed Lady Pendleton. "Oh, my dear, what a lovely dress!"

"Lovely!" echoed Floris, with a smile. "Oh, Lady Pendleton, it is as simple as it can possibly be."

"I don't care whether it's simple or not—perhaps that is it. It's perfectly ravishing! Don't come near me all the evening, mind, or you will make me look like a Mayday sweep!" and she laughed.

Floris laughed with her, then suddenly her eyes glistened as she looked down at the little woman.

"You are very kind to me, Lady Pendleton," she said, softly.

Lady Betty looked up at the glass. "I wish you would do my hair like Miss Carlisle," she said to her maid.

Josine crimsoned and set her teeth. This, after she had informed Floris that her hair was capable of improvement!

"I know not how, miladi."

"Then—do you mind, my dear?—let Miss Carlisle do it," said Lady Betty. The girl stood for a moment as if transfixed, then laid the ivory brush on the table, and stood with folded arms, while Floris, willingly enough, arranged Lady Pendleton's hair as nearly her own as possible.

"Oh, thank you, my dear! There, Josine, that is how I like it done. I wish you'd learn to do it like that. Remember now, will you?"

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He blushed again, opening his lips as if about to speak, then took up his opera hat and led them to the carriage, into which he put them with extraordinary care, as if they would fall to pieces if roughly handled.

The hall was crowded when they arrived, but though Bertie, with a lady on each arm, had to almost fight his way in, their appearance created what is called in newspaper parlance "a sensation."

Never had Floris looked more beautiful than she did to-night in the simple white dress, with its trimming of swansdown; and before they had been in the room a quarter of an hour, Lady Betty, much to her delight, found herself surrounded by friends and acquaintances, all of them "dancing men," who begged an introduction to the proud-looking girl seated so calmly and quietly beside her.

"What did I tell you, my dear?" she whispered. "You have created quite a sensation! Is your programme full?"

"Not quite," said Floris, for she had scribbled some make-believe names in some of the spaces.

"Mine is!" said Lady Betty, gleefully, for the sutors for Floris' hand could not do less than ask her chaperone for a dance.

**CHAPTER IX.
IN THE GLOW OF LOVE.**

FLORIS danced one or two dances with strangers, then Bertie came up.

"I didn't like to seem too pressing, Miss Carlisle," he said, his blue eyes fixed on her wistfully, "but I hope you have saved me a waltz."

"Would you like to have this one?" said Floris.

His handsome face beamed.

"Really? How fortunate!" and he put his arm around her.

If there was one thing Bertie did better than another it was waltzing.

Dancing with him, indeed, the poetry of motion.

Floris and he were nicely matched and made a splendid picture of youth and comeliness.

By the time they had taken a turn round the room, Bertie's heart was beating fast, and the blood coursing through the veins with the ecstatic delight of having her in his arms.

The hand seemed to be a heavenly choir; he moved on clouds through opous space; he was half intoxicated with passionate love and despairful longing.

"Shall we go on? Am I tiring you?" he asked presently, in a almost tremulous whisper.

"Oh, don't stop, please!" said Floris, all unconscious of the storm within his breast, of the mad longing that possessed him to whisper:

"I love you! Floris, I love you!"

"Have I got your step?" he asked, for the sake of saying something, for he knew that they were moving in perfect accord, like one person instead of two.

"Perfectly," she said. "How can you ask? It is a delicious waltz. One of Waldteufel's, isn't it?"

"Yes—I don't know," replied poor Bertie, wondering how she could talk thus easily and carelessly.

It came to an end at last, all too soon for him, and he stood, as the music died away, panting a little and very pale. He was thinking how he should be able to bear seeing her dancing with other men for the rest of the evening, after the few delicious moments that had passed. He would go away, go home and shut himself up and think of her.

Floris' voice roused him from his abstraction.

"Will you take me to see those palms, Lord Clifford?" she said. "I have been longing to stand underneath them all day. How calm and solitary they look out there in the dimness. One can almost fancy that they have the scent of the desert in their leaves still."

Bertie got her cloak, and they made their way into the conservatory. Two or three people were standing about, but Bertie found a seat in a quiet nook underneath the palms, a nook shut out from the gay ballroom beyond, and almost hidden amid the huge fronds of a royal fern.

"This is delicious!" said Floris, leaning back and pulling the leaves softly across her hand. "If I were rich, I would have a very large conservatory, with nothing but palms and ferns in it, with just a trickling fountain or two, but no birds to disturb the solemn quiet; and I would not permit any one to speak above a whisper," and she laughed softly.

Bertie stood beside her, his blue

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Such a thing makes the average

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St. John's, June 15th, 1918.
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