

# Ruled Destiny!

CHAPTER XXII.  
LINKED WITH THE PAST.  
Her face flushed for a moment at the name of "Norman," then went pale again. Romantically concluded indeed! If he could but have guessed how romantically, even the dry old lawyer as he would not have been so complacent.

"But to return to the business in hand," he said, with a little cough. "I have been going into the late Mrs. Carlisle's affairs, and I am sorry to say that they have not proved as satisfactory as I could desire, no, not nearly as satisfactory," and he shook his head.

Floris turned her sad, wistful eyes upon him for a moment.

She had no idea as to where his words were drifting.

Since her mother's death there had been one or two interviews, in each of which he had talked and she had listened, but understanding little or nothing.

"I am very sorry," she said, more for his sake than her own.

"Yes, so am I. I had hoped that, upon examination, the estate would have come out pretty flourishing. It was rather a confused and tangled business—the lawsuit had entailed a great loss, and there were several mortgages; but I had hoped that we should have been able to clear them off—I am afraid I don't make myself plain." He broke off, for Floris' gaze had settled on the fire again, with a far-off expression.

"I beg your pardon," she said, meekly. "Yes, I understand. You mean that I am not as rich as you thought I should be?"

He looked at her curiously. "Exactly; that is what I was trying to convey, Miss Carlisle. The estate has been so much encumbered and entangled that your mother scarcely knew how she really stood."

"Poor mamma!" murmured Floris, slowly.

"And having gone into matters I find that the prospect is not nearly so inviting as it should be," he continued, smoothing out his gloves and frowning at the teacup.

Floris watched him with listless attention.

"To add to our difficulties," he resumed, having arranged his gloves to his satisfaction, "the principal mortgage has chosen this particular time to foreclose. He could not have chosen a worse, because property is at a very low ebb in the market, and a sale would do not do more than realize a half of the money lent. I am afraid I scarcely make myself understood."

"Yes, oh, yes," said Floris, calmly.

But in truth she did not realize all that his legal phraseology implied.

"I have endeavored to persuade him, the principal mortgagee, to waive his claim to foreclosure, but I have not succeeded. He wants the money, and in simple language, Miss Carlisle, he must have it."

"Yes, oh, yes," said Floris again.

"What! What did you say?" she asked, very quietly.

Mr. Morrell, driven into a corner, pulled himself together.

"That is the simple English of it, Miss Carlisle," he said. "We find that the liens on the estate are so great that to meet them everything must be sacrificed."

Floris stood, leaning her hand on the table.

"But—but there is my own money!" she said, faintly.

Mr. Morrell wagged his head.

It was certainly hard work having to do business with a lady, and a young one, especially.

"You forget, Miss Carlisle, that your own little fortune went in paying the costs of the last lawsuit between you and Lord Norman," he replied.

She shuddered at the sound of the name.

"Then—then I am penniless!" she said.

He smiled.

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"Therefore it will be necessary, indeed, inevitable, that the estate should be sold."

"Yes," said Floris. "Please sell it all—all but the cottage. I would like to keep this and live here."

Poor Mr. Morrell coughed and knit his brows.

"They say that lawyers always dread having dealings with female clients, they are so long in understanding exactly how the land lies; and certainly Floris was long in understanding."

"But my dear Miss Carlisle," he said, leaning forward; "I am afraid this cottage must be sold."

It had come at last!

Floris sat up and looked at him.

"The cottage must be sold! But—but Mr. Morrell, I wish to live here. I wish to live here—as my mother did!"

He frowned and brushed an imaginary crumb from his coat sleeve.

"I am very sorry, but I am afraid this cottage must be sold, Miss Carlisle. Of course I am aware that, placed as you are, this is merely a matter of arrangement. You are to be, if you are not now, the possessor of immense wealth, and can buy the cottage for yourself."

"I don't understand," said poor Floris slowly.

Mr. Morrell grew desperate.

"In one word, Miss Carlisle, we find that your mother's estate, if sold, will barely pay off the mortgage upon it, and—and that if you were not the betrothed of Lord Norman you would be penniless."

Floris rose, white and calm, dreadfully calm.

"What! What did you say?" she asked, very quietly.

Mr. Morrell, driven into a corner, pulled himself together.

"That is the simple English of it, Miss Carlisle," he said. "We find that the liens on the estate are so great that to meet them everything must be sacrificed."

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"Then—then I am penniless!" she said.

He smiled.

"Well, yes, if you put it as bluntly as that, you are," he said. "But," and he smiled unctuously, with quiet enjoyment, "that is a small matter to the future Countess of Norman!"

Floris turned deathly pale, but her eyes never left his face.

"Mr. Morrell," she said, quietly and calmly, "you are laboring under a misapprehension. I am not the future Countess of Norman."

"Not—not—the future—but, my dear Miss Carlisle, all the world knows of your engagement!"

"All the world knew of it, perhaps," said Floris, steadily, though her eyes wavered and her lips quivered. "But not all the world, it seems, knows that the engagement is broken off."

"Broken off!" he exclaimed, staring through his spectacles at her words. "Do you mean to say, Miss Carlisle, that you are not engaged to marry Lord Norman?"

Floris shook her head. His amazement and consternation almost amused her.

"Yes," she said, "the—the engagement is broken off, Mr. Morrell. You must not take Lord Norman into your calculations."

"But that is just what I have been doing!" he said, stolidly. "I was under the impression that you were betrothed to the earl, and that—that in short—good Heavens, my dear young lady, how did this happen?" and the poor man rubbed his knees in a state as nearly approaching agitation as a lawyer permits himself.

In her despair and misery Floris laughed, actually laughed.

"What does it matter?" she said. "Results are all you lawyers care for. Mr. Morrell, and I have given you the result. There is no engagement between Lord Norman and myself. It ceased before—before my mother's death."

"Great Heaven!" he exclaimed. "Dear me! good gracious! Then—then you are actually penniless!"

She smiled.

"Yes, I suppose so," she said, so calmly that he stared at her. "It sounds very dreadful, but I suppose it is not so bad as it sounds."

He was silent for a moment, then he said, almost to himself:

"Lord Norman would refund her private fortune."

She heard him and turned upon him almost fiercely.

"Mr. Morrell, let us understand each other," she said. "If you think of asking any favor from Lord Norman, cast aside the idea at once. I would rather die than accept a crust of bread from him," her voice grew thick and heavy. "put all thought of Lord Norman out of your mind. Think of me as simply Floris Carlisle; penniless, if you like—but beholden to no man."

He looked at her as she stood erect in front of the fire, and his thoughts went back to the evening long ago when she had written her note of defiance to Lord Norman's offer.

He shook his head.

"Think what might be done in that quarter," he commenced, but she interrupted him.

"Mr. Morrell, you are my lawyer, not his—"

"Certainly."

"Then I forbid you—f forbid you, remember—to communicate with him. Let happen what may; let them sell the house over my head—the very chair I have sat upon; let them do what they will and can, but do not think I will permit you to apply to Lord Norman!"

"My dear young lady," he pleaded—"a lovers' quarrel."

"Yes," she said, with a wild, despairful smile, "it is a lovers' quarrel."

In making cake, the butter should be creamed first, then the sugar and yolks of eggs beaten into it, then the milk and flour and baking powder.

In opening a coconut, puncture the eyes and drain off the milk. Then put the nut in an oven till the shell is hot, and it can be cracked open with ease.

A fruit salad can be made from red and white cherries, stoned, ripe strawberries, oranges and bananas, the whole marinated with a French dressing.

A delicious summer drink is made of crushed pineapple, sweetened, with cracked ice and water poured over it. This should be served with a long-handled spoon.

A buffet luncheon calls for a hot dish and a salad, except in the summer, when a jellied meat or something else cool and refreshing may take the place of the meat.

A delicious summer drink is made of grapefruit juice, a little grape juice and a very little orange and lemon juice. It should be sweetened, chilled and diluted with ice and water.

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The poor man did not know what to say or do.

He had been comforting himself with the reflection that although the Carlisle estate had disappeared, it mattered little, seeing that she was to marry Lord Norman and become Countess of Norman; and now she had said that it was not to be.

He got up as bewildered and flustered as ever he had been in his life.

"May I ask, Miss Carlisle," he said, "what you intend to do?"

She looked at him vaguely.

"I do not know yet," she said, speaking as bravely as she could; "but I will let you know as soon as I know myself. At any rate, I must leave here," and she looked round with a sigh.

Mr. Morrell drew a long breath.

"Miss Carlisle," he said, "I am an old man, or nearly so, and—and I have no one to consider but myself. If—if you will allow me to offer you any assistance—I have been connected with your family for many years, and have reaped substantial benefit from the connection—I say if you will allow me to offer you—"

Floris put out her hand. For the first time her eyes filled with tears.

"No, no!" she said. "I cannot accept that. I am young and strong—oh, I am very strong!—and I can fight my own way. There are so many things a woman can do; now, and I shall find something. But I am grateful to you—very. I—I will go now, please? I am feeling tired and upset."

He took up his hat and held out his hand.

"Good-by, Miss Carlisle. I should feel very much obliged if you would write to me if you want any assistance. I—bless my soul, this is very sad!" and blowing his nose he got out of the house.

When one is suffering from two such sorrows as had befallen Floris, one does not think much of a third. It would seem as if the human soul were capable of so much misery and no more; and that when the limit has been passed, all that happens afterwards is borne in a happy-go-lucky frame of mind that may be despair or the indifference of actual exhaustion.

(To be continued.)

### Household Notes.

Blue is the most quieting color to use in a room for the person whose nerves are highly strung, and green (pure and cool) comes next.

An epsom salt solution in warm water is said to relieve sunburn. Rinse in clear warm water and bathe in warm water and glycerine.

A delicious sauce for lamb is made with currant jelly broken up and mixed with finely chopped mint leaves and a few shavings of orange peel.

The most delicious chery pie is made in the English fashion, in a deep dish with no bottom crust and a cup in the middle to hold the juice.

A carpenter's apron is handy to wear when gardening. It is firm enough to resist dirt, and the pockets are an everlasting convenience.

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