

FETTERED BY FATE

BY ALEXANDER ROBERTSON

"Jolette's Fate," "Little Sweetheart," "Lottie, the Sewing Girl," "Goldmaker of Lisbon," "Wedded to Win," "Diana Thorpe," "Nora's Legacy," Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

One afternoon while Carol walked in the forest, her thoughts upon the strange break that had come into her life, she became conscious of the fact that she was no longer alone, that some one stood leaning against a tree just in front of her. With a start she looked up and her eyes fell upon a strange girl.

"There was no mistaking what she was, for, although dressed much different, and in much more costly apparel than all the gypsies Carol had ever seen, as if she was of foreign blood, there was the unmistakable gypsy stamp about her face and peculiar costume.

"Stay, child of the house dweller," she said. "Be not in haste to leave me. I have come here with the purpose of meeting you, for I have something to tell you."

"Something to say to me? Of whom would you talk?" asked Carol, surprised.

"Of Roger Darrel."

The three words went like an arrow home to the heart of the pale girl, and the black eyes, quick to see the startled look of pain, took upon themselves a glow that one could easily imagine was satisfaction.

Carol saw this, and it served to give her a fictitious strength. She divined now that something terrible was about to be made manifest, and while her soul sickened with apprehension, she assumed a brave front.

"What would you tell me of Roger Darrel, girl?"

"Has it never occurred to you that this lover of yours has a secret? There is something in Roger Darrel's past that will chill your blood with horror—a skeleton that he has tried to bury these years back, but which will not be kept under ground. Ah! he has deceived you, as he deceived me. Soft words blind the eyes. To you, he is all that is good and noble—to me, all that is bad."

"What mean you? For heaven's sake, speak, girl. Don't you see I am stifling?" gasped Carol, one white hand clutching her perfect throat as though she was almost unable to breathe.

A wicked gleam came into the gypsy's orbs.

"Listen to me, then, daughter of the house dweller, and I will tell you of his infamy. All this Barbara Merriles can prove. The man you love, the man who has wooed you with soft, honeyed words, and whom you believe to be the soul of honor—that man, Roger Darrel, has a wife living, shut up in a mad house."

Carol Richmond shrank back appalled, as those terrible words, uttered in a sibilant whisper by the gypsy girl, smote her ears. There was something so blood-curdling in their significance that her very heart seemed to cease beating, and lie like lead within her. She would have fallen, but for the support the tree gave her.

"As for Barbara Merriles, she stood there watching her victim with the remorseless gleam of a pitiless tigress in her eyes. For fully a minute Carol was unable to say a word, for she was on the very verge of becoming insensible. The reaction came at last. Carol inherited some of the determined will of her father, and she recovered by degrees. It began to dawn upon her mind that there might be some mistake; her faith in her lover was great, and she could not believe that he would be guilty of such a terrible thing as this of which the black-eyed girl accused him.

"It is false!" she cried; "how dare you tell me such a thing? You are either insane, or else malicious. What reason have you to hate Roger Darrel, that you should traduce him to me thus? How dare you, I say?"

"Dare!" cried the other. "You are not acquainted with the gypsy character, I see, or you would not ask such a question. There is nothing that Barbara Merriles would not dare undertake. Hate Roger Darrel? Yes, I have cause to, but hate could never manufacture such a story. Do you want proof strong as holy writ? You can have it from your lover's lips. He will not dare deny the truth. Look him in the eyes and tell him you have heard the story of Nora Warner. Then mark well the pallor of his face, his shrinking eyes, his trembling form. He will stand before you condemned."

Turning, the strange creature was gone. The night was one long to be remembered.

In the eastern sky the round moon, walking in glory, lent her silvery light to the world below, and myriads of twinkling stars, mysterious lanterns of the night, were hung about to assist, in a feeble way, her brave effort.

Roger was walking slowly up and down with his arms behind him. When his thoughts were could be easily guessed, and, therefore, what must have been his astonishment to see a slender, white-robed figure standing in front of him.

"What, Carol, my darling, is it really you? Why are you here?" he asked, tenderly.

"I am here to learn the truth, Roger; where is Nora Warner?" she said, almost fiercely.

The moon fell upon his face, and he moved aside into the shadow, but not before Carol had seen the blood leap to his brow and cheeks, and a look of alarm, nay, of positive horror, come into his eyes.

"Roger," she cried, despairingly, "for the love of mercy, speak! Do you not see that I am almost dying, darling? Oh, say that it is not so; tell me it was a base calumny, and I will believe you; yes, believe you against all the world. Speak, my Roger, tell me it is not true."

The struggle in his mind was terrible, for he knew that if he denied all knowl-

edge of Nora Warner she would believe him as she would an angel from heaven.

"Carol, my love," he groaned, piteously, "would to heaven I could deny it. I would give ten years of my life to wipe out the blot upon the Darrel name. I have bowed my head beneath the shame that came with Nora Warner for years, and had come to look upon myself as a misanthrope when I met you, and loved you."

She uttered a low, piteous moan at this, for never did the death sentence passed by Judge upon culprit in the prisoner's box sound with more terrible force than his words to her. He would have come to her again, but she motioned him away imperiously.

"Do not touch me, Roger; I will not allow it. Remember that hereafter we can be nothing to each other. Nora Warner stands between us. Loet to us are all dreams of happiness. We must face the future bravely and fight the battle of life. You must never even see me again."

"Great heavens, Carol, you do not, can not mean it. You love me even as I love you. Nay, I will say it in spite of you. Why, then, should this terrible specter of the past haunt us? Let the dead past bury its dead; we live for the present and the future. Once more, Carol, my one and only love, will you come to me? For heaven's sake, do not turn away so coldly; you will kill me!"

"Roger," she was calm now, apparently, though heaven only knew the state her poor lacerated heart was in. "Roger, you are wild when you insult me in that way, but I forgive you, for I do not think you realize what you are saying. You were unwise to remain here, to seek my love when you saw that I was beginning to care for you, but I cannot blame you for that. Here we must part!"

"Part?" he cried, with anguish in his voice. "Is it, then, so absolute? Oh, Carol, my love, my life, are you to be lost to me forever? Am I to live on in the future—not even the aimless life of the past, but one full of regrets, of pain so intense that death itself would be a mercy? Do you doom me to this living grave, beloved?"

"You know not what you ask, Roger. In the time to come you will see that my course was the only right one. I bear with you because of my love, and for the reason that you are mad now. I could hardly wait to see you. The very seconds seemed hours, and I thought I should lose my senses."

"Where and from whom did you hear about—Nora Warner?" he asked.

"From a gypsy girl who seemed to know you—Barbara Merriles."

"Barbara Merriles?"

He repeated the name after her, and she knew not whether it was fear or hatred that made his voice vibrate like a cord tensely strung.

"You do know her, then?" she asked.

"I have good reason to. Why, you shall know some day, but it has nothing to do with our present trouble. Carol, is there no chance for me? Must I suffer still for that old stain? Speak, and with a word decide my future. Shall it be go, or stay?"

She turned upon him then, her face pale and firm.

"There is but one way, Roger. Do not try to tempt me. Let me remember you as an honorable man. I am going now. No, do not try to kiss me; it can never be again. Think of me sometimes, my lost love, and I—I shall pray for you."

He watched her out of sight, his whole frame strained to the utmost tension. Oh! what agony was in his heart, what longing in his eyes.

"The curse of Cain must be upon me," he muttered, almost groaning. "I thought to live down that disgrace, but it has sprung upon me unawares, and ruined my life. The gypsy hag's curse has doomed me!"

CHAPTER III.

How Carol reached the terrace she never knew, for it seemed to her she had just parted with Roger at the foot of the steps where she entered the broad hall, to be confronted by her father, who caught her wrist most fiercely.

"Come into the library, Carol," he said, with intense passion in his voice.

Once the library door was closed, Lawrence Richmond turned on her almost savagely.

"Did you meet Captain Grant?" he asked.

"I saw nothing of him," she replied.

The Captain was a gentleman who had been visiting them for a few days past, a fierce war dog—in his own estimation—and the most celebrated duelist outside of Paris. He had been showing Carol some attentions, but she detested him, and consequently when the Captain learned from her father of her love for Roger Darrel, the soldier duelist was not in the most pleasant of humors toward the young Virginian.

"Child," he said, and his heavy eyebrows contracted into a frown, "you have been disobeying my wishes. This very night you have been in the company of the man I hate. Have you not been with Roger Darrel?"

"You speak truly, father."

"And you have dared disobey me, girl. You know not what you do when you so recklessly brave my anger. My temper has been a curse all my life, and but for my great love for you I would not now be able to control it. Hear me, child; you shall never be Roger Darrel's wife! This I have sworn, and in it I will not be thwarted."

"Spare your words, father. If I was of the same mind as yesterday, you would find that I possessed just as reso-

lute a determination as you, but a higher power has seen fit to accomplish the work. This night Roger Darrel looked his last on my face. Never again will we meet, father, unless by accident; and then it will be as strangers. The hand of fate has turned our lives apart, and through Nora Warner he is lost to me."

"Nora Warner! That girl still alive? Then she has done me one good turn at last."

Carol could but start when she heard these words, for they told her that her father had known this mad woman in the years gone by, although it was evident that he was not acquainted with her history from the time she had come to know Roger Darrel.

This Captain Grant, who has made his appearance upon the stage of our story, was also connected with this strange and dramatic past, in what manner the reader will soon see.

That he was a bold and bad man, the young girl had been already warned by her keen sense of perception, yet the soldier had a dashing aspect, and it was only the gleam of his eye and the sneer of his voice that had warned Carol against him. What influence he had over her father she could not even guess, but without a doubt the master of Richmond Terrace feared him.

Varied though the emotions of Carol Richmond must have been, they could not, of course, equal those that filled the mind and heart of Roger Darrel, as he stood there looking after his lost love, and realizing that fate had again taken a hand in the game, sundering the hearts that it had so strangely brought together.

"Why did we ever meet? Was it because heaven wished to punish a Darrel for that sin?"

While he still stood there, his thoughts busy, there came the sound of footsteps, not light and full of grace, like Carol's, but heavy and firm—the tread of a man.

Ere he could turn, some one tapped him on the shoulder.

"A word with you, sir."

Wheeling, he found himself face to face with a dashing looking man. The moon's rays fell upon his figure, but the broad-brimmed hat shaded his face, so that only a general view could be obtained.

"You are at perfect liberty to say as many as you choose, sir," replied Roger.

He had no idea who this man was or what he wanted, and in his present condition it was a matter of small importance to him. Captain Grant did not realize what a volcano he was arousing—perhaps he did not care, being such a fire-eater himself.

"My words shall be brief and to the point. That lady you were speaking of was Miss Richmond?"

The words were in the form of a question, and though the Virginian had started at first, he drew his form up proudly.

"Taking it for granted that your conjecture is the truth, what business is that of yours, may I inquire?" he said, with some show of warmth.

"You are impudent, Roger Darrel. It is my business in so far that Miss Richmond is my promised wife, and it behooves a man to see that her honor is not tarnished by clandestine meetings such as the one I have just witnessed," said the Captain in pompous tones.

"What you say I brand as an infamous falsehood, sir, whoever you may be."

"For that I will call you to an account, Roger Darrel. In the meantime I wish to ask you a question in regard to this meeting. Was it a voluntary one on the part of Miss Richmond, or did you force her into making the assignation?"

"I am the cause of the meeting. Does that satisfy you, sir? Whatever blame there may be, put it upon me," he replied, calmly.

"I accept the apology," returned the Captain, quickly.

"That it was not meant for an apology, you coward, is well known to you, and I prove it thus."

There was an agile spring, and with his open palm he slapped the Captain in the face.

"You will hear from me, sir, and this hour will be the bitterest of your life," returned the Captain, taking out his pocket handkerchief and rubbing his cheek as if it had been contaminated.

Roger uttered an exclamation.

"The Man with the Black Glove," he muttered.

Some years before, while traveling in Europe, he had met in the company with which he was making the tour, a strange, mysterious man, of whose antecedents no one knew.

One most peculiar circumstance attached to his presence was the fact that no matter where seen he invariably wore upon his left hand a black kid glove. Speculation was rife. Some guessed it was a bet he was carrying out, others that his hand had been disfigured from birth, while one even whispered it was his belief that the Count Romanoff, as he was known to them, was some escaped political Russian convict, who had been branded on the hand.

When the Captain raised his handkerchief to his face, he did so with his left hand, and no wonder Roger gave vent to an exclamation when he saw that it was incased in a black kid glove.

"You recognize me, then. I had not forgotten you, Roger Darrel, and the fact of our having once traveled in company will not prevent me from running my sword close to your heart."



Every mother possesses information of vital value to her young daughter. That daughter is a precious legacy, and the responsibility for her future is largely in the hands of the mother. The mysterious change that develops the thoughtless girl into the thoughtful woman should find the mother on the watch day and night. As she cares for the physical well-being of her daughter, so will the woman be, and her children also.

When a young girl's thoughts become sluggish, when she experiences headaches, dizziness, faintness, and exhibits an abnormal disposition to sleep, pains in the back and lower limbs, eyes dim, desire for solitude, and a dislike for the society of other girls, when she is a mystery to herself and friends, then the mother should go to her aid promptly. At such a time the greatest aid to nature is Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. It prepares the young system for the coming change, and is the surest reliance in this hour of trial.

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"I felt terribly discouraged; I was spending money for doctor's bills right along, but she was receiving no help. At that time I was taking Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, and I read in one of your books about young girls. I decided to drop the doctor, and give her your medicine. I wish you could see the change in her, and the pink cheeks Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has given her. She had taken but half a bottle when menstruation started again and her heart trouble went away like magic. I had her continue the medicine, and now she is fat, rosy, and perfectly healthy. Menstruation is regular and painless, and I owe my thanks to you and to your wonderful medicine for her good health."—MRS. MARGARET PERLAN, 673 Tenth Avenue, New York City.

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