

# Parted by Fate

By LAURA JEAN LIBBEY

Author of "Parted at the Altar," "Lovely Maiden," "Florabel's Lover," "Ione," Etc., Etc.



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### G.T.R. LOCAL TIME-TABLE

DEPARTURES.	
Bellefleur Mixed	5:50 a.m.
Port Hope Mixed via Bethany	6:15 a.m.
Toronto Mixed via Whitby and Port Perry	6:50 a.m.
Port Hope Express	6:50 a.m.
Toronto Mixed via Peterboro	10:40 a.m.
Toronto Mixed via Lorneville	10:40 a.m.
Halliburton Mixed	2:40 p.m.
Toronto Mail	6:17 p.m.
Whitby Mixed	6:30 p.m.
Port Hope Express via Peterboro	8:05 p.m.

  

ARRIVALS.	
Halliburton Mixed	8:40 a.m.
Toronto Express from Toronto	8:50 a.m.
Port Hope Mail from Toronto	10:30 a.m.
Whitby Mixed	10:30 a.m.
Port Hope Express from Toronto	10:30 a.m.
Toronto Mail from Port Hope	6:13 p.m.
Port Hope Express from Toronto	8:58 p.m.
Whitby Mixed	10:30 p.m.
Bellefleur Mixed	10:30 p.m.

The 11.35 mail for Port Hope closes at the P. O. at 12:30 a.m.  
The 3.55 mail for Toronto closes at 5.40.  
The 11.00 mail going north connects with the I. B. C. O. R.  
The 2.40 p.m. north train carries no mail.

### I. B. & O. RAILWAY.

G. T. R. SERVICE.	
Leave Lindsay	10:50 a.m.
Leave Junction	2:40 p.m.
Arrive at I. B. & O. Junction	5:15 p.m.
Arrive at Lindsay	5:15 p.m.

  

I. B. & O. SERVICE.	
Leave Bancroft	11:00 a.m.
Leave Junction	2:30 p.m.
Leave at Junction	1:45 p.m.
Arrive at Bancroft	5:15 p.m.

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### ROBT CHAMBERS

"Have I done anything, Verne—Miss Sefton—to cause you to refuse?"

"I have not refused," she answered. "If I make a promise, I am quite willing to keep it."

Verlie wished with all her heart that she could have declined, just to please Rutledge; but as she had no reasonable excuse to offer, she placed her white hand on his arm and permitted him to lead her away.

She gave Rutledge a pleading look that said as plainly as eyes can speak: "You see I cannot help it."

But Rutledge turned away, and would not understand that silent message; and to make matters worse, in his jealousy of his handsome rival he avoided Verlie for the next hour. Yet his gloomy eyes haunted her wherever she went.

"If he is really to be as jealous as this, what am I to do?" thought Verlie in dismay.

Twice she was quite alone, and she certainly thought Rutledge would seize the opportunity of coming to her; but he did not. She would have given the world to have seen up to him and said: "You need not fear, Rutledge, I love you—I only care for the captain. I love you longer and better than you ever knew from the first moment we met."

It was his place to come to her. She could not go to him.

Yet, when he passed by where she sat without so much as glancing in her direction, she could not resist calling out, softly: "Rutledge!"

He turned hastily at the sound of the sweet voice, as though he was astonished to find her there so near him; but, man-like, he had intended to turn around and walk straight back to her and take a seat by her side if she did not call him when he passed. He raised his eyes in apparent surprise.

"Did you speak, Miss Verlie?" he asked, stiffly.

"Yes, Rutledge," responded Verlie, "I would like to talk to you."

"I thought you preferred talking to Captain Lansing," he answered. "You certainly seem to prefer dancing with him. I fear I may be dropped again."

"You know that is not the truth, Rutledge," she said. "I cared to dance with you, but I had given my promise. I was obliged to keep it, you know. Do not be angry with me, Rutledge."

"I could not help it," he answered, flushing hotly. "You must forgive me, Verlie. I hate myself for being such a jealous simpleton. But, ah, I love you so well, Verlie; and somehow, I am troubled with the harrowing thought that grows into a foreboding, almost that I may lose you. I shall never feel absolutely sure of you until we stand at the altar together. I have felt so wretched this past hour," he whispered, "I felt like killing myself, or doing something quite as desperate and reckless. I could never endure such an evening of torture again. When you know that it pains me to see you kind to Captain Lansing, why will you persist in it, my darling?"

The lovely blue eyes were raised reproachfully to Rutledge's flushed, handsome face. Ah! if he only knew what little cause he had for jealousy! He would never realize how dearly she loved him. He was the light of day to the earth. With him her life would be perfect. Without him it would be a painful blank.

On this eventful evening a slim figure wearing a long dark traveling cloak, her face concealed by a thick veil, had stepped off the southern express that had steamed into the gay capital. It was beautiful, hapless Uldene.

"I am mad to come here," she murmured, brokenly, under her sobbing breath. "But I must see him! I must look upon his face again, or die!"

"It is two years since that fatal railway accident occurred in which he loved I had lost my miserable life. Ah, would to Heaven that I had!"

"While he, my young husband, has been traveling abroad, seeking in vain to look calmly upon life without me, how has it fared with me?"

"How I used to laugh in madame's face at boarding-school when she used to say, 'If you are ever called upon to battle your bread by giving music lessons. Ah, child! you are a genius in music!'"

In the darkest hour of Uldene's life those words came back to her—when she found herself alone, friendless and penniless, thrown upon her own resources in a cold, hard, pitiless world.

It was no easy task securing pupils with all her skill, and many a time Uldene was reduced to positive want—she had known every luxury, every pleasure in hard work alone she sought to drown the yearning cry of her soul for Rutledge. Oh, if she could but look upon him just once more, she could go away forever, her heart at peace. How often she thought of the pitiful lines that seemed almost to have been written especially for her:

"Only to see his face again, full of beauty and of grace;  
One little prayer—'tis all I ask—only to see his face."

When Uldene picked up the morning paper one day, and read among the personals the return of Rutledge Chester and that he would spend a few weeks in Washington, she raised her face to the smiling, sunlit heavens, crying out: "I cannot be so near him without looking on his face just once—only once! Then I will go quietly away again, and live my lonely life out. My starved heart will be satisfied."

She had read that her husband was stopping at Willard's Hotel, and thither she bent her steps. Just as she was abreast of the entrance, two gentlemen hurriedly passed her and entered a coach in waiting. One of them she recognized in that fleeting glimpse as Rutledge—her Rutledge.

She did not cry out or utter any moan, but her joy was so great at beholding him that it made her faint and dizzy. "To the Renwick Villa, A Avenue Number —," she heard him say. Ah, yes! she remembered the place well.

She stood quite motionless, gazing with tear-blinded eyes after the rapidly disappearing coach. Poor Uldene! in the pitiful love for him, she could have knelt down and kissed the cold pavement over which his dark feet had passed.

CHAPTER XXIX.  
"BE MY BRIDE, VERLIE."

It was quite two miles to Renwick's Villa. Uldene knew the road well. She would have no conveyance and under took the journey on foot.

"She would follow Rutledge there," she told herself, "creep into the grounds of the villa unobserved, and watch him through the window."

She could not withstand the temptation.

How brightly the moon shone down upon the earth, bathing the trees, the flowers, and the white, winding road in its silvery light. How the golden stars glowed in the blue sky.

The birds had folded their wings and sought their nests among the leafy branches; the flowers had folded the dew-drops close to their hearts with their tender petals, and were rocked to sleep by the gentle night winds.

Uldene passed slowly along the well remembered road, tears falling like rain from her dark eyes. Ah! how often she had cantered over the same road, riding by Rutledge Chester's side. How gay and rosete the world had looked to her then!

Could she be the same creature, changed so completely? The beautiful bride, Uldene, whom every one petted, worshipped and spoiled, and who was fairly idolized for her beauty and pretty, witty ways? Now dead to the world—a living lie—flying like one accused from him whom she loved better than life itself, lest the family doom should fall upon him whom she loved so well.

At last an abrupt curve in the road brought her in sight of the villa, and then she saw by the brilliantly illuminated grounds, the merry throngs, and the music, that a lawn fete was in progress, which would, no doubt, end in a grand ball.

Rutledge had come to the lawn fete. It hurt her heart a little—the thought that he could mingle in gay festivities while he believed her lying cold in death in the lonely graveyard. No doubt he came there to drown his sad thoughts for a brief hour. Ah, yes! that must be it.

No one saw the white, wistful face peering in through the scroll-work of the tall iron fence.

Uldene was not near enough to distinguish many of the faces. A great longing came to her to enter the grounds. She remembered there was a small wicket in the rear of the house; toward this she made her way, entered the grounds, and stole up the lilac walk to the rustic bench, quite hidden by the drooping branches and the dense shadows.

Here she could have a full view of the grounds and the merry revelers. She knew it was hazardous, daring to venture here, lest some one should see her and recognize her; but her intense longing to see Rutledge, remaining the while unseen herself, had overcome prudence.

A moment later and the fall of a light footstep, that seemed strangely familiar to her, sounded on her ears.

"Am I mad, or do I dream?" she murmured, aghast. "It is—Verlie! What can she be doing here? I did not know she knew Mrs. Renwick!"

How calm and placid Verlie's sweet face, crowned in its sheen of golden hair, looked in the white bright moonlight.

Life would have been so different with both of us if I had not cheated her out of her lover," thought Uldene, with a sob. Still she knew Verlie loved her so dearly she would have given her lover up to her, even at the cost of breaking her own heart. Ah, yes! Uldene knew that well.

She knew, too, how Verlie must have grieved over her supposed death, refusing to be comforted.

A great longing swept over her lonely, yearning heart to creep after Verlie, to fall on her knees before her, cling to the little white hands, and sob out to Verlie all her pitiful story—surely the saddest that was ever locked in a young girl's breast.

Oh, how Verlie would gather her in her arms and weep over her as she told her pitiful story! She would readily give with her that Rutledge must be loved her dead, although it was cruel, oh, so cruel, to break two hearts by keeping them asunder.

Poor, hapless Uldene—always a creature of impulse—stole after Verlie as she passed the flower-beds, the lilac and magnolia walks. Both had crossed the starlight park, and were nearing the shadows of the trees but a few feet apart.

"Verlie!" called Uldene, softly.

But Verlie did not hear the low voice, so engrossed was she in her own tumultuous thoughts.

Uldene was silent for a moment. A bird flew from its nest in the nearest tree; a rabbit rustled in the brushwood; the wind stirred some fallen leaves; the sound of the dance music in the distance died away in a low wail.

"Verlie!" she called again, more softly than before.

The girl paused in startled, solemn wonder.

"It must be only fancy," she murmured, half aloud. "On this night, of all nights, the memory of Uldene haunts me. Even the winds sighing among the trees seem to whisper to me with Uldene's voice. Heaven grant it that it is no sin to love him, even though he belonged to Uldene first."

Before Uldene could speak again, another step came swiftly down the gravelled walk. With a quick motion Uldene drew back among the dense shadows of the trees until he should pass.

Ah, Heavens! it was Rutledge Chester. He was almost abreast of her now. She never knew how she restrained the mad impulse to cry out to him: "Rutledge! Rutledge! weep for me no more. Mourning for me no longer, my love! I am here! Oh, how her soul went out to him! He had brushed the drooping branches of the trees carelessly aside with his hand as he passed them. He would never know the lonely figure that stood under them, passionately kissing the green leaves his hand had touched.

She saw him join Verlie, but instead

of passing on with a nod and a smile, or some gay word, he quietly drew the little white hand within his arm, exclaiming in a glad voice:

"Here you are, Verlie, darling. I have been searching everywhere for you, I am sure you ran away to avoid me."

The girl crouching behind the flowering shrubs, which separated her from these two, listened in wonder. His voice had never sounded like that when he addressed her. There was an undercurrent in it that puzzled her.

She saw Verlie's fair, sweet face flush hotly in the bright, white moonlight. She looked up at Rutledge with a smile, drawing in girlish, bashful confusion away from his outstretched arms, answering, confusedly:

"I did not know that you were searching for me—that you wanted me, Rutledge."

His reply was like the shock of doom to the beautiful, hapless creature listening to them both so intently.

"You did not know that I wanted you! Oh, Verlie, what nonsense! Is there a moment in my life that I do not want you, my darling?"

These were the words that broke a human heart!

Clearly, through the solemn stillness of the summer night, the words fell from Rutledge Chester's lips upon the heart of the beautiful, solitary figure crouching among the flowering shrubs.

Rutledge believed himself quite alone with Verlie; he could speak his thoughts freely now.

"You avoid me purposely, Verlie, that I may not tell you what is in my heart. You must have read what I wanted to say in my eyes, you cruel dear."

"Oh, Rutledge!" breathed Verlie, shuddering, "I—I cannot bear to hear any more tonight. It almost seems as though the spirit of Uldene comes between us. I almost think I ought not to listen to you. You belonged to her living—it almost seems that you belong to her even though she is dead."

"Verlie," he answered, gravely, "I agree with you. I belonged to Uldene while she lived, but the love of mortals blends into tender, devoted memory when one or the other, whom God joined together in holy wedlock, dies. Heaven knows I did my duty, my whole duty, by my beautiful Uldene. I gave her every thought of my life—my whole love. I have worn my heart out in grieving over her untimely fate. Now, because Heaven has sent a balm to my sorely wounded heart, do not seek to hurl it back into bitter despair again. It is our duty to forget a dark, sorrowful past, and try to live in the brightness of a future. I shall always love and reverence the memory of Uldene; but, because of that, do not I implore you withhold your love from me, Verlie; it would be unjust."

"Am I mad, or do I dream?" sobbed the wretched girl who watched these two, who were so utterly oblivious of her presence.

What Verlie's answer was she never knew. She saw Rutledge clasp the little white hands he held fondly—bend his handsome head over them, and raise them to his lips tenderly.

"Remember, Verlie," Rutledge went on, pitilessly, "I have told you the exact truth as to how I happened to wed Uldene—not that what I loved her well after she became my bride—but you, Verlie, were my first as well as my last love; but for that strange death-brayer, it is you whom I should have asked to become my bride."

The words fell like drops of molten lead upon the breaking heart so near them. The swaying figure had sunk down among the sharp thorns and brambles, but she did not even feel the pain of them. The earth and sky seemed to meet above her; the leaves of the trees seemed to moan in the night wind; the moon hid her sorrowful face in the white clouds.

If the hand of God had stricken beautiful, hapless Uldene dead, the white face, upturned to the night skies, could not have been whiter.

CHAPTER XXX.  
"I WOULD FIND REST IN THE DARK WATERS," SHE MURMURED.

Uldene crouched motionless among the swaying roses, like one turned to stone, looking and listening. In that moment that great, yearning love in her heart was slain; no words could picture such grief as hers. It would have been a thousand times more merciful if Heaven, in its infinite mercy, had let her die that night in the awful collision, then let her live to face this.

The moon in all its rounds, looking down in its pure white light upon sin, suffering, pain and all human woes, never looked upon a sadder sight.

"In my thoughts I go over the past time and time again," continued Rutledge Chester, slowly. "In the moment you and Uldene stood before me, my heart went out to you. Beautiful as Uldene was, she was not the mate my heart craved. Imagine my intense surprise, Verlie, upon making the discovery, in an unexpected manner, that Uldene loved me. I was amazed, bewildered at the worshipful love a human heart had lavished upon one who had not sought it."

"I was intensely sorry for Uldene," he went on, huskily, "and through pity that marriage was consummated. In the after days I saw the folly of giving the hand where the heart could never go."

"Since Heaven has severed the bonds that united me to Uldene, and I have again met you, I have begun to realize that the sweet possibilities of life are not yet over for me. The happiest hour of my life will be the moment in which I call you mine, Verlie, darling."

"They passed on, arm in arm, through the lilac grove, over the moonlit lawn, making a tour of the circular path. They must not find Uldene there when they reached that spot again."

Like a hunted hare, Uldene sprang to her feet, hurrying through the pleasure grounds, through the arbor, and into the heart of the grove that lay beyond.

No human being was near; but the birds were soon startled by the passionate cries of a broken heart; cries that fell freely and clearly on the soft, sweet air, and seemed to pierce the heavens; bitter, passionate cries that took with them the burden of a most unhappy soul.

After a time they died away—the moans and sobs ended.

The girl lay among the crushed golden-roses, with wide-open, horror-stricken eyes, looking the future full in the face. "Oh, broken dream of love!—oh, dark future, without one gleam of light!—how was it to end?"

(Continued next week)

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