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Fall Fair Dates

The Western District Fair Association have fixed the following dates for the fairs of that circuit:

Parkhill.....Sept. 25-26
Wyoming.....Sept. 26-27
Brigden.....Sept. 30
Aldershot.....Oct. 2-3
WATFORD.....OCT. 7-8

At the Palace Inn

Where a Good Cook Scores a Success

By ALBERTA HARWOOD

Mrs. Bassett appeared in the doorway dressed in street costume. Her husband, smoking moodily in the glow of the evening lamp, looked at her inquiringly.

"I'm going now," she said coldly. "Going where?" he asked blankly. "I told you I was going away where my cooking would be appreciated. You just laugh at me," quavered his wife as she buttoned her glove.

"Lena!"

"You did laugh, and you were sarcastic. You said you couldn't understand why a woman should take up the responsibilities of housekeeping without the slightest knowledge of how to cook. You said I couldn't boil water without burning it!" Without another glance at his stunned face she slipped out of the door and was soon walking down the three flights of stairs that led to the street door of the apartment house.

In the entrance she paused uncertainly and then, grasping her traveling bag more firmly, went to the corner and, hailing a car, rode to the railroad station. A half hour spent at the information bureau resulted in her boarding the 9:30 for the west, and soon Chicago was a city of fairy lights far behind. To Lena Bassett it was the city of disillusionment.

"I am so glad that I remembered Kitty Frake's address," she murmured to herself. "I can remember her letter word for word: 'If ever you are left alone come out to Red Gulch and help me run the Palace Inn. I am making piles of money. It's nothing like the old days in the department store.'"

The ticket to Red Gulch was in her purse, and in two days she would be

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gone to Frisco to spend it," replied Link curiously. "Any kin of theirs?"

"No. I thought they kept a hotel."

"Miss Frake did, but she sold out. This is at the end of the row, the Palace, Wilder Bassett's place."

"Bassett's?" The stranger picked up his ears. "A widow, did you say?" he demanded eagerly.

"Guess so. Don't know whether it's grass or sod though. She's a mighty good cook just the same. Her biscuits are that light that you'd tend to heaven on 'em, sure thing!" exclaimed Link, with enthusiasm.

"I guess she's not the one I'm looking for," murmured the stranger in a disappointed tone.

"If you're looking for a widder woman, why, there's the Wilder Catinah over to Cottonwood," suggested Link jocosely.

"No, thanks; merely looking for the Frakes. I thought they still lived here. You said the Palace Inn, didn't you?"

"Yep; at the end of the street."

"Thanks." The stranger went on down the straggling street to the red painted door of the Palace Inn. It was a pretentious title for such a warped and shabby old wooden structure, but the veranda was filled with comfortable chairs and scattered potted plants, and the window curtains were snowy white. There was the odor of baking cake from the kitchen in the rear.

The stranger went into the cobby-hole of an office and, finding it empty, walked through the long dining room to the hot kitchen. He stood there for five minutes watching Mrs. Bassett as she flew from one task to another, plump, rosy and pretty, but with a strained look in her dark eyes. She was directing the movements of a stupid looking German waiter and scolding a public stricken Chinese.

"Now, Carl, see that the table is properly set before you slug the bell, understand? Yesterday you forgot to put a bit of silverware out, and you lost a half hour running in and out after forks and spoons. Wah Lee, I will show you what to do in a moment. No, you can't do the cooking! If Sam Lee had not left me in such a hurry! Oh, dear, I would give anything for a cook that could broil a steak and—"

"He's here, ma'am," said the stranger calmly.

Mrs. Bassett whirled around and stared at the newcomer. Her rosy cheeks grew pale and then red, and her eyes were first flaming yellow and then dark brown. Her hands shook as she placed a newly baked pie on the kitchen table.

"You? What do you want?" she asked bluntly.

"A job, I can cook," said the other.

Lena Bassett hesitated. "Very well," she said suddenly. "My Chinaman left yesterday and there isn't a soul here can do a bit of cooking except myself. Wah Lee, take Mr.—what did you say your name was?" she asked.

"I didn't say, but it's Dick," said the stranger as he gave his suit case to the little Chinese.

"Well, Dick, suppose you get into one of Carl's white coats and aprons and make yourself a paper cap and get to work. This is the day we have beefsteak and it's got to be cooked right."

"I can do it," said the other grimly, and he set to work.

Three hours later Lena Bassett sat on the kitchen doorstep talking to the waiter, Carl.

"Then they liked the new cooking?" she asked curiously.

The German nodded his blond head. "Yah. All say 'ut is dis we eat—Broadway stuff?'"

"Where is—he?" asked Mrs. Bassett diffidently.

"He has went to bed—dog tired."

Mrs. Bassett went into the parlor and sat by the open window. Her pretty face was a study in emotions.

At supper time the boarders took up a two bit collection for the new cook as a mark of gratitude for a wonderful Dutch apple cake he had concocted.

"Here," said Lena, holding out the handful of coins.

The new cook hesitated, reddened and then took the coins and put them in his pocket. "I'll give them to my wife," he said gravely.

"You are married?" asked Lena quickly.

Mrs. Bassett smiled oddly and went to eat her supper alone in the empty dining room. When the new cook brought his own tray of food and retired to a distant corner to eat it she gave no sign that she noticed his intrusion. Carl, who ate in the kitchen, peered fearfully at the bold cook though a crack in the pantry door.

"He'll get himself fired," he murmured regretfully, "and he can such eggs cook!"

A week passed by uneventfully. The recent Sam Lee did not return, and the boarders at the Palace Inn to a man declared that they would leave in a body if Mrs. Bassett did not keep the new cook.

The fame of the Palace Inn's table spread throughout the county, and the dollars rattled into the office drawer with astonishing rapidity. The red haired cashier was warm in her praise of the new cook, and she paid him little attentions that brought down upon her frivolous head the wrath of Mrs. Bassett.

"He's a married man," admonished Lena Bassett coldly.

"It can't matter to you so long as he isn't married to you," said the cashier saucily, and she was disconcerted at the effect of this remark upon her employer.

Mrs. Bassett reddened, then paled, and without another word marched away to the kitchen, where she flung herself upon the shoulder of the startled cook and burst into tears.

"Dick," she wailed, "if you don't speak to me, I shall go crazy!"

"My own dear!" cried Dick, dropping a spider of fried potatoes to fold her in his arms.

At that moment the cashier poked her ruddy head into the room in search of her employer. She found her in the embrace of the new cook. At the sight she scuttered back to her desk.

"Heavens," she muttered emotionally, "this man is a man! A afraid I'd flirt with him because he was married! And look at herself!"

But of course she didn't know that Dick Bassett and his wife had a perfect right to the happiness they had acquired by way of Chicago, Red Gulch and the cookery books.

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