

# MAGIC BAKING POWDER



## "ECHOES of the Past; The Recompense of Love!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

"You wait a bit," said Tibby, with a sharp return of her old form. "Business first and pleasure after. Besides, I want to get it off my chest; it's worrying me. I want to say that I mistook you; and that I'm sorry that I—I came between you and Mina. Yes, I mistook you. I thought myself precious clever; but I was only making a fool of myself and spoiling 'er happiness, and I expect that's what most people do when they set about interferin' in other people's business."

"That'll do, Tibby," said Clive, his own voice unsteady. "You acted for the best, and in accordance with that true, that faithful spirit of yours. I honored you for it at the time, I honor you for it still. But, Mina?"

"Mina's goin' to make a fool of herself," said Tibby, shutting her lips tightly and nodding at the fireplace. "Her voice is coming back and she's written to that old Robinson—the shoveller, as he calls himself—telling him that she is ready to go on with her engagement; and, of course, he jumped at 'er; and she's goin' to sing next week. He wants her to go abroad to Paris or the Continent, I forget which."

Clive clasped the arms of his chair and rose.

"You needn't jump up. Keep still. She ain't gone yet; there's plenty o' time. But I thought I ought to come and tell you. It's only the fair thing, seein' how I've behaved. And I owe

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you one for savin' 'er life. If I'd ever had any doubts as to your lovin' 'er true and honest, that night settled 'em. Yes, I'm on your side, Mr. Harvey, and you'll want some help, I can tell you. Of course, you can see what Mina's feelin'; she's got an idea into 'er 'ead that she ought to have died that night—that she ain't ought to take advantage, as she calls it, of what passed between you."

Clive groaned and wiped the perspiration from his face. "I know, I know, Tibby!" he said, with impatient impatience. "And I'm tied here in this beastly chair and can't go to her."

"And you'll be stuck there till it's too late, if you don't keep quiet," Tibby adjured him firmly. "What you've got to do is to get well enough to come to her soon, even if it's on a stretcher. I tell you strite, I can't do anything with her; no more can father; and we've both of us tried; for fair play is fair play, and we both of us know that, in a manner o' speaking, you've got a right to her."

"God bless you, Tibby!" said Clive. "Yes, the right that love alone can give."

"Jus' so," said Tibby. "That's a proper way to put it. You always had a nice way o' speakin', Mr. Harvey; I admitted that even when I was most agin' you. Howsomever, if you want Mina, you'd better get well in double-quick time."

The door opened and Quilton came in; he looked from one to the other; and, for the first time in Clive's experience, Quilton actually appeared, embarrassed.

"It's a fine day, Miss Tibby," he remarked almost feebly.

"Who said it wasn't?" retorted Tibby. "You'll be telling us next that Queen Anne is dead."

Quilton seemed quite abashed by this onslaught, and his eyes wandered over her figure as if he were trying to think of something else to say.

"A great many people in the park, now," he remarked.

"There's a good many more outside of it," snapped Tibby. "You seem to be full of information this morning, Mr. Quilton; been listenin' to other people talkin' I suppose. No wonder I find Mr. Harvey humped to death; I suppose he's had a lot of your society."

Quilton looked helplessly, appealingly to Clive. "This is the way she always treats me," he said.

Tibby eyed him with the compassionate gaze with which a mother might survey her imbecile child.

"No doubt you mean well," she said leniently, "but you can't express yourself, as the man said to the boiled egg. Well, I'm off. Keep up your spirits, Mr. Harvey, and don't let him depress you more'n you can help."

Notwithstanding his anxiety, Clive could not help bursting into a laugh.

"Oh, go to the devil!" said Quilton. And he went out again, slamming the door after him.

(To be Continued.)

## Love in a Flour Mill,

## The Romance of Two Loyal Hearts!

CHAPTER I.

In the outer world it was still light, with the delicious clearness of an evening in early summer; but in the card-room of the Ace of Spades Club the heavy crimson plush curtains were drawn closely across the windows, and the light from the carefully shaded electric lamps fell on the green tables and the players seated at them.

There were ladies as well as gentlemen present, for the Club was composed of both sexes. The members were in evening dress; the toilettes of the women were of the latest and most costly mode; diamonds sparkled on white bosoms, on taper fingers, and on deftly moving wrists as they dealt or played the cards; some of the men, and some of the women also, were smoking cigarettes; for all the members of this exclusive Club belonged to the Smart Set, that set which has sprung up like an unwholesome fungus in the centre of our modern civilization.

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The room was strangely quiet, for the players conversed in low tones so that their work should not be disturbed. For it was work, rather than play, that these foolish people, most of them young, were engaged in.

They were playing bridge, a game which, however more or less harmless in itself, can be made, like any other game, a source of evil; the stakes were high—that they should be so was one of the reasons for the existence of the Club—and the varied emotions which excite and torment the soul of the gambler were depicted, in many cases, on the faces of the players; greed of gold shone in the eyes of some of the women, though their carefully lowered lids strove to conceal it; a white hand would quiver just perceptibly as it dealt the cards or played one; the men's faces were hard set, or masked with an assumed indifference.

At small tables, placed conveniently near the green ones, stood glasses and bottles of champagne; two or three of the Club footmen, in handsome but subdued livery, moved to and fro noiselessly on the thick pile carpet.

Within almost a stone's throw of this magnificent room in Mayfair were noisome slums, in which men and women struggled and fought for a bare existence; and just beneath the windows carriages and cabs rattled loudly; the great world was moving rapidly around this little group of selfish pleasure-seekers; but they were dead to the life about them, absorbed in their evil task of winning each other's money. To them it was a matter of indifference that the cry of the unemployed was rising throughout the land more loudly and ominously every day; that philosophers and statesmen were wearily trying to cope with great social problems of the gravest kind. These men in their immaculate evening dress, these women clad in silks and satins and resplendent with gems, cared for nothing at that moment but the turning of a card, the making of a trick.

Nero fiddled while Rome was burning; certain kinds of men and women would gamble on the Stock Exchange or the card-table—while the fate of a great Empire trembled in the balance, and dynasties tottered and fell. The world, alas! is made so. At the end of the room, near the door, was an unoccupied table, the four chairs placed ready, two packs of cards waiting temptingly. One of the players glanced at it, in an interval of dealing, and said in a low voice:

"Lydstone and the Princess have not turned up."

"Oh, they will be here presently," said his partner, a lady. "They were dining somewhere to-night. They made a match with Ronnie Desborough and another man."

"It's to be hoped that Lydstone will keep his temper to-night," said the man who had first spoken. "I'm of opinion that a man who loses his wool so quickly should chuck cards—or, for that matter, any game of skill."

"Lydstone is an ill-tempered fellow at most times," said a third. "It's a good thing he's playing against Ronnie Desborough. Now, there's a man who never cuts up rough, whatever happens. Win or lose, it's all the same to him; he's the best-natured man I know—a thoroughly good chap."

"Most of those big, strong men are like that," observed the lady. "I never saw Ronnie Desborough out of temper, and I have seen him tried pretty severely, especially by Lydstone; but, all the same, if I were a man, I shouldn't like to see him roused, or be one who had roused him."

"No," said her partner with a laugh. "I can imagine that Ronnie, with his bristles up, would be an awkward customer to tackle. Ah! here comes Lydstone!" He turned and nodded to a lady and gentleman, who had just entered.

Lord Lydstone was a tall, but badly built man, with round shoulders and a head thrust forward in half-defiant, half-deprecatory fashion. His face was thin, and pallid with dissipation; there was about him an air of meanness, accentuated rather than concealed by a blustering expression and manner; his thin lips twitched with nervous irritation, his hands moved restlessly.

Behind him was the slight and almost shrinking figure of his wife. They had been married but recently, and there was a kind of history attached to her. She was a Princess—a Princess of the once flourishing, but now decayed, Zorelli family. She was very pretty, in a dainty, elfish fashion; and the world said that she had married Lydstone for his money. Poverty makes almost as many marriages as Heaven.

Lydstone was rich, very rich; for his father, the first Baron, had been a successful city-man—some said, a moneylender—and had bought his title in the usual way, a way which has become a scandal nowadays. Notwithstanding his title and his wealth, Lydstone was regarded rather coldly by the higher Society, which still, to its honour, declines to accept persons of Lydstone's character and origin; and it is possible that he had married the Princess with the object of forcing his way into that inner circle which had kept him at arm's length up to the present.

They had both made a bad bargain; and the poor little Princess revealed her failure in her pale face and timid, shrinking manner. She was beautifully dressed, her fragile form enveloped in the costly dinner cloak, which one of the footmen helped her to remove, her husband utterly disregarding her. He stood and looked round the room, exchanging a nod and a bow here and there, with sullen impatience; then he said, almost loudly:

"Aren't Mr. Desborough and Mr. Bradon here?"

"Not yet, my lord," replied the man.

Lydstone flung himself into a chair at the table, and the Princess went timidly to a set of players, and murmured a few words of conventional greeting; but, while she was speaking, her eyes glanced with a peculiar, nervous expression from her lord and master, who was impatiently shuffling the cards, to the door. After a minute or two it opened, and two men came in.

(To be Continued.)

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