

**THE SPIRIT OF LOVE:  
A NOVEL, IN THREE  
VOLUMES, VOL. I**

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The Spirit of Love: A Novel, in Three Volumes, Vol. I by Anonymous

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*THE SPIRIT*  
*OF LOVE*

*A NOVEL*

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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1893

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## LOAN STACK

God against her breast was a long thing, she  
brank from it. . . . "He has signed one word  
only to me in the desert—"Jussion'"

OLIVE SCHREIKER

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# THE SPIRIT OF LOVE.

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## BOOK I.

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### CHAPTER I.

THE sun was shining brightly into the breakfast-room of the Deanery of Harminster. It was a high, narrow room, with a large five-light window looking out upon the Cathedral park, and, beyond the park, upon the grey walls of the north front of the Cathedral. It was a prettily furnished apartment. Pale green serge curtains, with muslin inner ones, hung at the window; the seats of the chairs were in shades of green and red; the ceiling paper was green and white, the wall-paper red and white. On a stand at the window were pots of scarlet geraniums, and other flowers were about the room. The upholstery was simple and fresh-



looking, the tints of walls, ceiling, and furniture making up a pretty harmony of colour.

It was nine o'clock. The breakfast-hour at the Deanery was half-past eight, and Dean Fitzame, with the elder members of his family, was seated at the breakfast-table. Facing the window sat the Dean himself, a fine white-haired man of fifty. His features were clearly cut and bold. The nose was large and of a somewhat Jewish cast ; the eyes were blue, and, despite his years, very bright ; the mouth was wide, the lower lip being full, with a decided curve outwards. His complexion was fair, with a healthy tinge of pink, and his frame was portly.

He was a strong contrast in appearance to the lady at the head of his table. Lady Muriel was his second wife, and was twenty years his junior. She was a fragile little woman, with a pale thin face, large soft dark eyes, under which lay the blue shade indicative of delicate health, and dark hair already streaked with silver. As a girl she had been pretty after a delicate type, but ill-health had robbed her of most of her prettiness, all that was left of it now being the softness of her brown eyes and the delicate sweetness of her small mouth. She had never

been very strong, though tolerably healthy and active as a girl, and since the birth of her third child she had been practically an invalid.

The other persons at the table were a young man and a young woman. These were the Dean's children by his first wife, Lady Elizabeth.

The girl was a tall straight creature, with a clear pink-and-white complexion, pale gold hair, and bright blue eyes like her father's. Her features also resembled his, but were smaller and prettier. The young man's resemblance to his father was not pronounced. The colouring, and the cast of the features, were different, the single point of likeness being the mouth, the Dean's worst feature, which, in the son as in the father, was large and full, with the under lip curving deeply outwards.

The coarseness of the Dean's mouth was not very noticeable, his broad brow, rendered higher in appearance by the scantiness of his hair, giving to his face an expression of benignity that was antipathetic to coarseness ; but in the son, who had inherited from Lady Elizabeth a low narrow forehead and coarse dark skin and hair, it gave an unpleasingly animal look, which a short thick nose, *retroussé*

almost to comicalness, did not lessen. A clever physiognomist, regarding the father and son, would have readily surmised that between the two there could not be either a warm friendship or a high degree of parental and filial love. And his surmise would have been a correct one. Gilbert, though the Dean's eldest-born, was not a favourite with his father; while Gilbert's affection for the Dean was both exceedingly limited and exceedingly lacking in the quality of filial respect.

Conversation at the breakfast-table, this bright August morning, had turned chiefly upon two subjects—the expected arrival at the Deanery later in the day of Rupert Nollath, a cousin of Lady Muriel's, and a garden-party which Lady Muriel was giving the following day. Lady Muriel's garden-parties were very popular social gatherings. Harminster was a military station, but its society in general was not given to much entertaining. The county people, of course, had their big balls and parties, but the poor gentry, who constituted a large portion of the city society, were not in a position to entertain freely, and to them, as to the wives and daughters of the inferior clergy