

**MISS LULU BETT**  
by  
**Zona Gale**  
Illustrations by  
**Iwin Myers**



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Lulu came to the door in Ninian's thin black-and-white gown. She shook hands with the stranger, not looking at him, and said, "Come to supper, all." Monona was already in her place, singing under-breath. Mrs. Bett, after hovering in the kitchen door, entered; but they forgot to introduce her.

"Where's Di?" asked Ina. "I declare that daughter of mine is never anywhere."

A brief silence ensued as they were seated. There being a guest, grace was to come, and Dwight said, unintelligibly and like lightning, a generic appeal to bless this food, forgive all our sins and finally save us. And there was something tremendous in this ancient form whereby all stages of men bow in some now unrecognized recognition of the ceremonial of taking food to nourish life—and more.

At "Amen" Di flashed in, her offices at the mirror fresh upon her—perfect hair, silk dress turned up at the hem. She met Cornish, crimsoned, fluttered to her seat, joggled the cable and, "Oh, dear," she said audibly to her mother, "I forgot my ring."

The talk was saved alive by a frank effort. Dwight served, making jest about everybody coming back for more. They went on with Warbleton happenings, improvements and openings; and the runaway. Cornish tried hard to make himself agreeable, not ingratiatingly, but good-naturedly. He wished profoundly that before coming he had looked up some more stories in the back of the Musical Gazette. Lulu surreptitiously pinched off an ant that was running at large upon the cloth and thereafter kept her eyes steadfastly on the sugar bowl to see if it could be from that. Dwight pretended that those whom he was helping a second time were getting more than their share and facetiously landed on Di about eating so much that she would grow up and be married, first thing she knew. At the word "married" Di turned scarlet, laughed heartily and lifted her glass of water.

"And what instruments do you play?" Ina asked Cornish, in an unrelated effort to lift the talk to musical levels.

"Well, do you know," said the music man, "I can't play a thing. Don't know a black note from a white one."

"You don't? Why Di plays very prettily," said Di's mother. "But, then, how can you tell what songs to order?" Ina cried.

"Oh, by the music houses. You go by the sales." For the first time it occurred to Cornish that this was ridiculous. "You know, I'm really studying law," he said, shyly and proudly. Law! How very interesting, from Ina. Oh, but won't he bring up some songs some evening, for them to fry over? Her and Di? At this Di laughed and said that she was out of practice and lifted her glass of water. In the presence of adults Di made one weep, she was so slender, so young, so without defenses, so intolerably sensitive to every contact, so in agony lest she be found wanting. It was amazing how unlike was this Di to the Di who had ensnared Bobby Larkin. What was one to think?

Cornish paid very little attention to her. To Lulu he said kindly, "Don't you play, Miss—?" He had not caught her name—no stranger ever did catch it. But Dwight now supplied it: "Miss Lulu Bett," he explained, with loud emphasis, and Lulu burned her slow red. This question Lulu had usually answered by telling how a felon had interrupted her lessons and she had stopped "taking"—a participle sacred to music, in Warbleton. This vignette had been a kind of epitome of Lulu's biography. But now Lulu was heard to say, serenely:

"No, but I'm quite fond of it. I went to a lovely concert—two weeks ago."

They all listened. Strange, indeed, to think of Lulu as having had experiences of which they did not know.

"Yes," she said. "It was in Savannah, Georgia." She flushed, and lifted her eyes in a manner of faint defiance. "Of course," she said, "I don't know the names of all the different instruments they played, but there were a good many." She laughed pleasantly as a part of her sentence. "They had some lovely tunes," she said. She knew that the subject was not exhausted and she hurried on. "The hall was real large," she superadded, "and there were quite a good many people there. And it was too warm."

"I see," said Cornish, and said what he had been waiting to say: That he, too, had been in Savannah, Georgia.

Lulu lit with pleasure. "Well!" she said. And her mind worked and she caught at the moment before it had escaped. "Isn't it a pretty city?" she asked. And Cornish assented with the intense heartiness of the provincial. He, too, it seemed, had a conversational appearance to maintain by its own effort. He said that he had enjoyed being in that town and that he was there for two hours.

"I was there for a week," Lulu's superiority was really pretty.

"Have good weather?" Cornish selected next.

"Oh, yes. And they saw all the different buildings—but at her "ve" she

flushed and was silenced. She was coloring and breathing quickly. This was the first bit of conversation of this sort in Lulu's life.

After supper Ina inevitably proposed croquet. Dwight pretended to try to escape and, with his irrepressible mien, talked about Ina, elaborate in his insistence on the third person—"She loves it, we have to humor her, you know how it is. Or no! You don't know! But you will"—and more of the same sort, everybody laughing heartily, save Lulu, who looked uncomfortable and wished that Dwight wouldn't, and Mrs. Bett, who paid no attention to anybody that night, not because she had not been introduced, an omission which she had not even noticed, but merely as another form of "tantrum"—a self-indulgence.

They emerged for croquet. And there on the porch sat Jenny Plov and Bobby, waiting for Di to keep an old engagement, which Di pretended to have forgotten, and to be frightfully annoyed to have to keep. She met the objections of her parents with all the batteries of her coquetry, set for both Bobby and Cornish and, bold in the presence of "company," at last went laughing away. And in the minute areas of her consciousness she said to herself that Bobby would be more in love with her than ever because she had risked all to go with him; and that Cornish ought to be distinctly attracted to her because she had not stayed. She was as primitive as pollen.

Ina was vexed. She said so, pointing in a fashion which she should have outgrown with white muslin and blue ribbons, and she had outgrown none of these things.

"That just spoils croquet," she said. "I'm vexed. Now we can't have a real game."

From the side door, where she must have been lingering among the water-proofs, Lulu stepped forth.

"I'll play a game," she said.

When Cornish actually proposed to bring some music to the Deacons', Ina turned toward Dwight Herbert all the facets of her responsibility toward Di was enormous, oppressive, primitive, amounting, in fact, toward this daughter of Dwight Herbert's late wife, to an ability to compress the offices of stepmotherhood into the functions of the lecture platform. Ina was a fountain of admonition. Her idea of a daughter, step or not, was that of a manufactured product, strictly, which you constantly pinched and molded. She thought that a moral preceptor had the right to secrete precepts. Di got them all. But of course the crest of Ina's responsibility was to marry Di. This verb should be transitive only when lovers are speaking of each other, or the minister or magistrate is speaking of lovers. It should never be transitive when predicated of parents or any other third party. But it is. Ina was quite agitated by its transiency as she took to her husband her incredible responsibility.

"You know, Herbert," said Ina, "if this Mr. Cornish comes here very much, what we may expect?"

"What may we expect?" demanded Dwight Herbert, crisply.

Ina always played his games, answered what he expected her to answer, pretended to be intuitive when she was not so, said "I know" when she didn't know at all. Dwight Herbert, on the other hand, did not even play her games when he knew perfectly what she meant, but pretended not to understand, made her repeat, made her explain. It was as if Ina had to please him for, say, a living; but as for that dentist, he had to please nobody. In the conversations of Dwight and Ina you saw the historical home forming in clots in the fluid wash of the community.

"He'll fall in love with Di," said Ina.

"And what of that? Little daughter will have many a man fall in love with her, I should say."

"Yes, but, Dwight, what do you think of him?"

"What do I think of him? My dear Ina, I have other things to think of."

"But we don't know anything about him, Dwight—a stranger so."

"On the other hand," said Dwight with dignity, "I know a good deal about him."

With a great air of having done the fatherly and found out about this stranger before bringing him into the home, Dwight now related a number of stray circumstances dropped by Cornish in their chance talks.

"He has a little inheritance coming to him—shortly," Dwight wound up.

"An inheritance—really? How much, Dwight?"

"Now isn't that like a woman. Isn't it?"

"I thought he was from a good family," said Ina.

"My mercenary little pucsy!"

"Well," she said with a sigh, "I shouldn't be surprised if Di did really accept him. A young girl is awfully flattered when a good-looking older man pays her attention. Haven't you noticed that?"

Dwight informed her, with an air of immense abstraction, that he left all such matters to her. Being married to Dwight was like a perpetual rehearsal, with Dwight's self-importance for audience.

A few evenings later, Cornish brought up the music. There was something overpowering in this brown-haired chap against; the background of his negligible little shop, his whole capital in his few pianos. For he looked hopefully ahead, woke with plans, regarded the children in the street as if, conceivably, children might come within the confines of his life as he imagined it. A preposterous little man. And a preposterous store, empty, echoing, bare of wall, the three pianos near the front, the remainder of the floor stretching away like the corridors of the lost. He was

going to get a dark curtain, he explained, and furnish the back part of the store as his own room. What dignity in phrasing, but how mean that little room would look—cot bed, washbowl and pitcher, and little mirror—almost certainly a mirror with a wavy surface, almost certainly that.

"And then, you know," he always added, "I'm reading law."

The Plows had been asked in that evening, Bobby was there. They were, Dwight Herbert said, going to have a sing.

Di was to play. And Di was now embarked on the most difficult feat of her emotional life, the feat of remaining to Bobby Larkin the lure, the beloved lure, the white to Cornish she instinctively played the role of womanly little girl.

"Up by the festive lamp, everybody!" Dwight Herbert cried.

As they gathered about the upright piano, that started, Dwightish instrument, standing in its attitude of unrest, Lulu came in with another lamp.

"Do you need this?" she asked.

They did not need it, there was, in fact, no place to set it, and this Lulu must have known. But Dwight found a place. He swept Ninian's photograph from the marble shelf of the mirror, and when Lulu had placed the lamp there, Dwight thrust the photograph into her hands.

"You take care of that," he said, with a droop of lid discernible only to those who—presumably—loved him. His old attitude toward Lulu had shown a terrible sharpening in these ten days since her return.

She stood uncertainly, in the thin black and white gown which Ninian had bought for her, and held Ninian's photograph and looked helplessly about. She was moving toward the door when Cornish called:

"See here! Aren't you going to sing?"

"What?" Dwight used the falsetto. "Lulu sing? Lulu?"

She stood awkwardly. She had a piteous recrudescence of her old agony at being spoken to in the presence of others. But Di had opened the "Album of Old Favorites," which Cornish had elected to bring, and now she struck the opening chords of "Bonny Eloise." Lulu stood still, looking rather piteously at Cornish. Dwight offered his arm, absurdly crooked. The Plows and Ina and Di began to sing. Lulu moved forward, and stood a little away from them, and sang, too. She was still holding Ninian's picture. Dwight did not sing. He lifted his shoulders and his eyebrows and watched Lulu.

When they had finished, "Lulu the

mocking bird!" Dwight cried. He said "ba-ird."

"Fine!" cried Cornish. "Why, Miss Lulu, you have a good voice!"

"Miss Lulu Bett, the mocking ba-ird!" Dwight insisted.

Lulu was excited, and in some accession of faint power. She turned to him now, quietly, and with a look of appraisal.

"Lulu the dove," she then surprisingly said, "to put up with you."

It was her first bit of conscious repartee to her brother-in-law.

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(To Be Continued.)

**WOMAN'S WORLD**

**Matters of Especial Interest to Feminine Readers of The Enquirer.**

—Women are appointed notaries in both New York and Illinois.

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**IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL**  
**Sunday School Lesson**

By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D. D.,  
Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.  
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**LESSON FOR OCTOBER 1**

**BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST**

**LESSON TEXT**—Luke 1:5-23, 57-63.  
**GOLDEN TEXT**—He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink.—Luke 1:15.  
**REFERENCE MATERIAL**—Isa. 40:3-5; Mal. 4:4-6.  
**PRIMARY TOPIC**—An Angel Brings Good News.  
**JUNIOR TOPIC**—The Birth of John the Baptist.  
**INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC**—Preparation for the Coming of Christ.  
**YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC**—The Place and Work of John the Baptist.

We are today entering upon a six months' course of study in the Gospel of Luke, whose general subject is "Jesus the World's Savior." Today's lesson concerns the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ.

**I. The Parents of John the Baptist (vv. 5-7).**

1. When They Lived (v. 5). "In the days of Herod the King." They lived in a day when ungodliness was rife. The priesthood was very corrupt and the ruling classes were wicked. Zacharias and his wife lived in a time when it was not so easy to be godly.

2. Their Character (v. 6). They were righteous before God. To be righteous before God is a high tribute. Many appear to be righteous before men who are not righteous before God. Their lives were so mated that they walked in the commandments of the Lord blameless. How beautiful it is when husband and wife are united in the Lord and walk together in fellowship with God.

3. They Were Childless (v. 7). Though this godly couple were well mated and they possessed the joy of the Lord in their souls, there was a real lack in that home.

**II. The Birth of John Promised (vv. 8-17).**

1. By Whom (v. 11; cf. v. 19). The angel Gabriel appeared and made known the good news to Zacharias. This exalted being, the special messenger of God, was sent to make this disclosure.

2. When (vv. 8-14). While officiating as priest this good news came to him. Zacharias must have been definitely praying about this very matter (v. 13). As he burned incense, which typified prayer, the multitude without were praying.

3. Characteristics of the Child (vv. 15-17). (1) Shall be great in the sight of the Lord (v. 15). Though the people did not greatly esteem him he was highly esteemed by the Lord. This is infinitely better than if he had been greatly esteemed in the eyes of men or in his own eyes. This is the esteem for which we all should long and pray. (2) Shall drink neither wine nor strong drink (v. 15). The child shall become a Nazarene, separating himself from the sensuous things and dedicating himself to the service of the Lord. (3) He filled with the Holy Ghost (v. 15). The energy of the divine Spirit would enable him to lead the people to repentance (v. 16). (4) Shall go in the spirit and power of Elijah (v. 17). In this power he was to prepare the people for the coming of the Savior and the salvation which He was to bring.

**III. Zacharias Asking for a Sign (vv. 18-23).**

Although the aged priest was earnestly praying for the salvation of Israel the gracious promise of the angel, which was the beginning of that salvation, staggered his faith. He was unable to believe that that for which he fondly hoped and prayed would be realized. The angel gave Zacharias a sign. He was smitten with dumbness which was to continue until the fulfillment of the promise. Because he refused to praise God in faith for this gracious promise God caused his tongue to be silent until the promise was fulfilled and his lips could open in thanksgiving and praise. Though he was thus rebuked, at the same time his faith was strengthened by the manifestation of the supernatural. God wants us to trust Him, to believe his promises, no matter how contrary to reason they may seem.

**IV. The Promise Fulfilled (vv. 24-63).**

When the time came for the birth of John, Elizabeth brought forth a son and the neighbors rejoiced with her. On the eighth day they circumcised the child and gave him a name according to the instruction of the angel (v. 13). The name John was contrary to the family custom. By means of writing Zacharias made known the name which he would have by divine instruction. At this time God opened the mouth of Zacharias and he offered up praise.

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