

Miss Lulu Bett

By
Zona Gale

Illustrations by Irwin Myers

Copyright by D. Appleton and Company

(Conclusion)

"Then, for all our sakes, let's drop the matter. Tell you, Lulu, here are three of us. Our interests are the same in this thing—only Ninian is our relative and he's nothing to you now. Is he?"

"Why, no," said Lulu in surprise. "Very well. Let's have a vote. Your snap judgment is to tell this disgraceful fact broadcast. Mine is, least said, soonest mended. What do you say, Ina—considering Di and all?"

"My poor, poor sister!" Ina said. She struck together her little plump hands. "Oh, Dwight—when I think of it: What have I done—what have I done that I should have a good, kind, loving husband—be so protected, so loved, when other women . . . Darling!" she sobbed, and drew near to Lulu. "You know how sorry I am—we all are . . ."

Lulu stood up. Her white shawl slipped to the floor. Her hands were stiffly joined.

"Then," she said, "give me the only thing I've got—that's my pride. My pride—that he didn't want to get rid of me."

They stared at her. "What about my pride?" Dwight called to her, as across great distances. "Do you think I want everybody to know my brother did a thing like that?"

"You can't help that," said Lulu. "But I want you to help it. I want you to promise me that you won't shame us like this before all our friends."

"You want me to promise what?" "I want you—I ask you," Dwight said with an effort, "to promise me that you will keep this, with us—a family secret."

"No!" Lulu cried. "No, I won't do it! I won't do it! I won't do it!" It was like some crude chant, knowing only two notes. She threw out her hands, her wrists long and dark on her blue skirt.

"Can't you understand anything?" she asked. "I've lived here all my life—on your money. I've not been strong enough to work, they say—well, but I've been strong enough to be a hired girl in your house—and I've been glad to pay for my keep. . . . Well, then I got a little something, same as other folks. I thought I was married and I went off on the train and he bought me things and I saw the different towns. And then it was all a mistake. I didn't have any of it. I came back here and went into your kitchen again—I don't know why I came back. I s'pose because I'm most thirty-four and new things ain't so easy any more—but what have I got or what'll I ever have? And now you want to put on to me having folks look at me and think he run off and left me, and having 'em all wonder. . . . I can't stand it. I can't stand it. I can't stand it."

"You'd rather they'd know he fooled you, when he had another wife?" Dwight sneered.

"Yes! Because he wanted me. How do I know—maybe he wanted me only just because he was lonesome, the way I was, I don't care why! And I won't have folks think he went and left me."

"When a family one gets talked about for any reason—"

"I'm talked about now!" "But nothing that you could help. If he got tired of you, you couldn't help that." This misstep was Dwight's.

"No," Lulu said. "I couldn't help that. And I couldn't help his other wife, either."

"Bigamy," said Dwight, "that's a crime."

"I've done no crime," said Lulu. "Bigamy," said Dwight, "disgraces everybody it touches."

"Even Di," Lulu said. "Lulu," said Dwight, "on Di's account will you promise us to let this thing rest with us three?"

"I s'pose so," said Lulu quietly. "You will?" "You will?" "I s'pose so."

Ina sobbed. "Thank you, thank you, Lulu. This makes up for everything." "You'll be happy to think you've done this for us, Lulu," said Dwight. "I s'pose so," said Lulu.

Ina, pink from her little gust of sobbing, went to her, kissed her, her trim tailor suit against Lulu's blue cotton. "My sweet, self-sacrificing sister," she murmured.

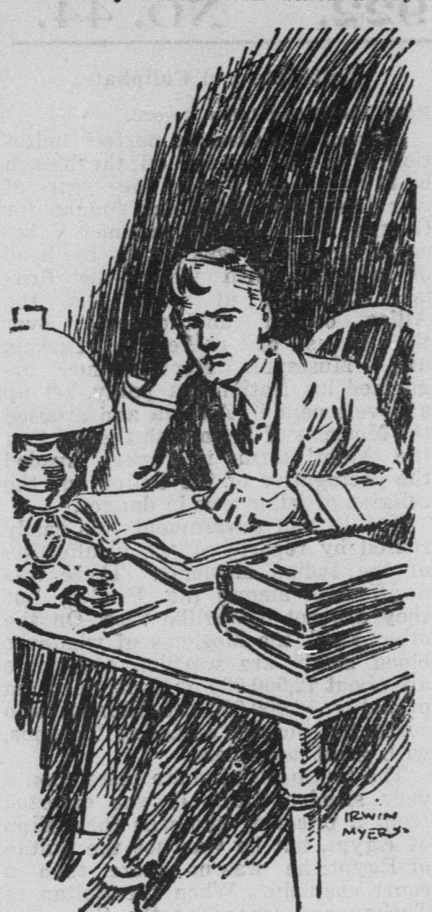
"Oh, stop that!" Lulu said. Dwight took her hand, lying limply in his. "I can now," he said, "overlook the matter of the letter"

Lulu drew back. She put her hair behind her ears, swallowed, and cried out.

"Don't you go around pitying me! I'll have you know I'm glad the whole thing happened!"

It was not yet nine o'clock of a vivid morning. Cornish had his floor and sidewalk sprinkled, his red and blue plush piano spreads dusted. He sat at a folding table well back in the store, and opened a law book.

For half an hour he read. Then he found himself looking off the page, stabbed by a reflection which always



Was He Really Getting Anywhere With His Law, and Where Did He Really Hope to Get?

stabbed him anew: Was he really getting anywhere with his law? And where did he really hope to get? Of late when he awoke at night this question had stood by the cot, waiting.

It was behind that curtain that this unreasoning question usually attacked him, when his giant, wavering shadow had died upon the wall and the faint smell of the extinguished lamp went with him to his bed; or when he waked before any sign of dawn. In the mornings all was cheerful and waned—the question had not before attacked him among his red and blue plush spreads, his golden oak and ebony cases, of a sunshiny morning.

A step at his door set him flying. He wanted passionately to sell a piano. "Well!" he cried, when he saw his visitor.

It was Lulu, in her dark red suit and her fitted hat.

"You're out early," said he, participating in the village chorus of this bright challenge at this hour.

"Oh, no," said Lulu. He looked out the window, pretending to be caught by something passing, leaned to see it the better.

"Oh, how'd you get along last night?" he asked, and wondered why he had not thought to say it before.

"All right, thank you," said Lulu. "Was he—about the letter, you know?"

"Yes," she said, "but that didn't matter. You'll be sure," she added, "not to say anything about what was in the letter?"

"Why, not till you tell me I can," said Cornish, "but won't everybody know now?"

"No," Lulu said. At this he had no more to say, and feeling his speculation in his eyes, dropped them to a piano scarf from which he began flicking invisible specks.

"I came to tell you good-by," Lulu said.

"Good-by!" "Yes, I'm going off—for a while. My satchel's in the bakery—I had my breakfast in the bakery."

"Say!" Cornish cried warmly, "then everything wasn't all right last night?" "As right as it can ever be with me," she told him. "Oh, yes. Dwight forgave me."

"Forgave you?" She smiled, and trembled. "Look here," said Cornish, "you come here and sit down and tell me about this."

He led her to the folding table, as the only social spot in that vast area of his, seated her in the one chair, and for himself brought up a piano stool. But after all she told him nothing. She merely took the comfort of his kindly indignation.

"It came out all right," she said only. "But I won't stay there any more. I can't do that."

"Then what are you going to do?" "In Milton yesterday," she said, "I saw an advertisement in the hotel—they wanted a chambermaid."

"Oh, Miss Bett!" he cried. At that name she flushed. "Why," said Cornish, "you must have been coming from Milton yesterday when I saw you. I noticed Miss Di had her bag . . ." He stopped, stared. "You brought her back!" he deduced everything.

"You never told!" "They don't know she went." "That's a funny thing," he blurted out, "for you not to tell her folks—I mean, right off. Before last night. . ."

"You don't know them. Dwight'd never let up on that—he'd joke her about it after a while."

"But it seems—" "Ina'd talk about disgracing her. They wouldn't know what to do. There's no sense in telling them. They aren't a mother and father," Lulu said.

Cornish was not accustomed to deal with so much reality. But Lulu's reality he could grasp.

"You're a trump anyhow," he affirmed.

"Oh, no," said Lulu modestly. Yes, she was. He insisted upon it. "You've been a jewel in their home all right," said Cornish. "I bet they'll miss you if you do go."

"They'll miss my cooking," Lulu said without bitterness.

"They'll miss more than that. I know. I've often watched you there—" "You have?" It was not so much pleasure as passionate gratitude which lighted her eyes.

"You made the whole place," said Cornish.

"You don't mean just the cooking?" "No, no. I mean—well, that first night when you played croquet. I felt at home when you came out."

That look of hers, rarely seen, which was no less than a look of loveliness, came now to Lulu's face. After a pause she said: "Well, I must be going now. I wanted to say good-by to you—and there's one or two other places. . . ."

"I hate to have you go," said Cornish, and tried to add something. "I hate to have you go," was all that he could find to add.

Lulu rose. "Oh, well," was all that she could find.

They shook hands, Lulu laughing a little. Cornish followed her to the door. He had begun on "Look here, I wish . . ." when Lulu said "good-by" and paused, wishing intensely to know what he would have said. But all that he said was "Good-by. I wish you weren't going."

"So do I," said Lulu, and went, still laughing.

Cornish saw her red dress vanish from his door, flash by his window, her head averted. And there settled upon him a depression out of all proportion to the slow depression of his days. This was more—it assailed him, absorbed him.

He came back to his table, and sat down before his lawbook. But he sat, chin on chest, regarding it. No . . . no escape that way. . . .

A step at the door and he sprang up. It was Lulu, coming toward him, her face unsmiling but somehow quite lighted. In her hand was a letter.

"See," she said. "At the office was this. . . ."

She thrust in his hand the single sheet. He read:

. . . . just wanted you to know you're actually rid of me. I've heard from her, in Brazil. She ran out of money and thought of me, and her lawyer wrote to me. . . . I've never been any good—Dwight would tell you that if his pride would let him tell the truth once in a while. But there ain't anything in my life makes me feel as bad as this. . . . I s'pose you couldn't understand and I don't myself. . . . Only the sixteen years keeping still made me think she was gone sure. . . . but you were so downright good, that's what was the worst. . . . do you see what I want to say. . . ."

Cornish read it all and looked at Lulu. She was grave and in her eyes there was a look of dignity such as he had never seen them wear, incredible dignity.

"He didn't lie to get rid of me—and she was alive, just as he thought she might be," she said.

"I'm glad," said Cornish. "Yes," said Lulu. "He isn't quite so bad as Dwight tried to make him out."

It was not of this that Cornish had been thinking.

"Now you're free," he said. "Oh, that. . ." said Lulu. She replaced her letter in its envelope. "Now I'm really going," she said. Good-by for sure this time. . . ."

Her words trailed away. Cornish had laid his hand on her arm.

"Don't say good-by," he said. She looked at him mutely.

"Do you think you could possibly stay here with me?"

"Look here," he said, "I'd ought to tell you. I'm awful lonesome myself."



His Look Searched Her Face, but She Hardly Heard What He Was Saying.

This is no place to live. And I guess living so is one reason why I want to get married. I want some kind of a home."

"Of course," she said. "Could you risk it with me?" Cornish asked her. "There's nobody I've seen." he went on gently, "that I like as much as I do you. I—I was engaged to a girl once, but we didn't get along. I guess if you'd be willing to try me, we would get along."

"Isn't there somebody—" "Look here. Do you like me?" "Oh, yes!" "Well enough—"

"It's you I was thinking of," said Lulu. "I'd be all right."

"Then!" Cornish cried, and he kissed her.

"And now," said Dwight, "nobody must mind if I hurry a little wee bit. I've got something on."

He and Ina and Monona were at dinner. Mrs. Bett was in her room. Di was not there.

"Anything about Lulu?" Ina asked. "Lulu?" Dwight stared. "Why should I have anything to do about Lulu?"

"Well, but, Dwight—we've got to do something."

"As I told you this morning," he observed, "we shall do nothing. Your sister is of age—I don't know about the sound mind, but she is certainly of age. If she chooses to go away, she is free to go where she will."

"Can't you get mother to come out?" Dwight inquired.

"I had so much to do getting dinner onto the table, I didn't try," Ina confessed.

"You didn't have to try," Mrs. Bett's voice sounded. "I was coming when I got rested up."

She entered, looking vaguely about. "I want Lulu," she said, and the corners of her mouth drew down. She ate her dinner cold, appeared in vague areas by such martyrdom. They were still at table when the front door opened.

"Monona hadn't ought to use the front door so commonly," Mrs. Betts complained.

But it was not Monona. It was Lulu and Cornish.

"Well!" said Dwight, tone curving downward.

"Well!" said Ina, in replica. "Lulu!" said Mrs. Bett, and left her dinner, and went to her daughter and put her hands upon her.

"We wanted to tell you first," Cornish said. "We've just got married."

"Forevermore!" said Ina. "What's this?" Dwight sprang to his feet. "You're joking!" he cried with hope.

"No," Cornish said soberly. "We're married—just now. Methodist parsonage. We've had our dinner," he added hastily.

Dwight recovered himself in a measure. "I'm not surprised, after all," he said. "Lulu usually marries in this way."

FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN.

DAILY THOUGHT.

Life is a leaf of paper white
Whereon each one of us may write
His word or two, and then comes night.
Greatly begin, though thou have time
But for a line, be that sublime—
Not failure, but low aim, is crime!
—J. R. Lowell.

The dressy top coat or the three-piece suit seems to be the last word for winter wear.

Many a woman finds it hard to choose becoming dresses. In the salon of the designers she sees a lovely creation and imagines herself being the envy of all her friends when she wears it. But at home, because the dress is really not "quite her style," she finds it disappointing. How can these dress tragedies be avoided?

This question is answered here by Lucile.

Study your personality and figure is the first maxim of good dressing. Then you will dress according to your type, and all will be well.

The tall and statuesque woman must stick to straight lines and graceful, long draperies. She must avoid jeune fille frocks and "baby" dresses.

As for the picture gown and the bouffant or billowy skirt, these are for the debutante who is not too tall and not too plump. For her, too, is the long, straight frock with the waist long, but not too long.

Extremes in this matter of long waists merely spoil the figure. As to the picture gown, attractive as it is, generally speaking, it is better adapted for use at home than at public functions. Wide-spreading skirts are apt to be a nuisance in crowded rooms.

For those who are stout the dress problem is more complicated, but with care and thought many becoming styles can be found. In brief, if you are stout, fanciful draperies and too tight gowns are not for you.

The straight panel back will give the correct "line" and help to give an impression of slimmness. The best corsage is some variant of the becoming cross-over, and carefully draped effects, according to the figure, can safely be used.

If there were any old ladies these days, a beautiful lace fichu allied with soft gray brocade, made with a pointed bodice and a skirt slightly full at the sides would make an ideal dress. Some wear such gowns, but the number is not great.

Bearing these general rules in mind, any woman can dress well. Failure to do so is, in nine cases out of ten, not the fault of fashion, but want of taste.

If a man beats his horse in the street, a threatening crowd gathers and he is arrested and goes off under police escort, with the hoots of the bystanders assailing his ears.

Should a thoughtless lad stone a dog or a cat, there is always some one about who makes his error plain to him in short order. "Leave that poor thing alone, or I'll come out there to you, young man!" And the young man has strong interests on the other side of the street in no time at all.

Yet a woman may beat a helpless child, and, while folks frown and move away from her immediate presence, nobody says a word or lifts a finger in protest. But we ought to. What we do as a matter of course for animals we ought to do instinctively for little children.

Two mothers were standing on the street corner having a chat. A two-year-old girl was swinging on her mother's skirts and she shook her off. She was deeply interested in what she was telling her friend and the youngest annoyed her.

The little one wandered off to the roadway and shouts and toots and cries informed the mother that she was in danger. A car was almost upon her when she was snatched up and carried to the curb again. Then her mother fell upon her. Nobody said anything; just walked away in disgust.

I saw another mother dragging a tiny girl along the station platform. The mother was striding along and the child's feet scarcely touched the floor. Her hat slipped back and hung by the elastic around her neck. Her hair ribbon fell off. Her hair fell into her eyes. Still her mother strode ahead, oblivious to the plight of the little daughter.

Then one tiny pump fell off. The child tried to tell her mother, tried to pull back against the arm that was dragging her along, but the mother gave her a powerful jerk and lifted her a few feet into the air and hurried faster. The other pump fell off. People called, "Wait! Wait! Her shoe! Her shoe!"

The gathering din of voices calling at last attracted her attention and the mother stopped and looked about her and then down at the disheveled child she was holding by the hand, a towed wreck. A man offered one shoe, a woman the other, and a small boy handed in the hair ribbon. And the mother promptly spanked the little girl, right there in full view of 1000 people, had they cared to watch her performance.

It might be a good thing for the children if we abandoned our conservative attitude toward mothers with their children and spoke out our minds exactly as we do to the ignorant driver and the thoughtless small boy. Beating children for every little thing they do that happens to annoy folk of little patience and no understanding ought to stop or be stopped.

There is such a distinct difference between the bags which we carry with our summery frocks and the ones we sport with our spiffy new fall suit, isn't there? The former may be dainty and lovely and charming, but the latter must have richness and distinction.

Among the very newest are the duvetyne bags which are woven in the delightful colorings and patterns of the popular paisley design. There doesn't seem to be such a thing possible as the passing of either paisley or duvetyne. Both are as popular to-day as they were when we first knew them, and both harmonize with nearly every type of costume.

FARM NOTES.

The improvident man who sold his heating stove in July because the circus was near and the winter far off differs only in the degree of his shortsightedness from the poultry raiser who waits until spring to select the breeding stock that is to be used to replenish his flock. This important work of picking out the superior birds must be done in the fall to get the best results, says the United States Department of Agriculture, for it is then that the greatest contrast between the profitable birds and the poor ones shows up. Of course the culling out of the poor layers should go on all through the summer and fall, but at least the top notchers should be selected as foundation for the coming flock, which ought to be better each year.

One good rule to follow is to keep the pullets out of the breeding flock until they are fully matured. An immature bird may be a good layer and may be from the best stock, but still it is undesirable. Eggs from pullets not yet fully developed will not produce as large or as strong chicks as those from older hens or fully grown pullets.

There is no difficulty in knowing when a bird is mature enough to be used as a breeder, as at that time the eggs laid will have reached the general run of hens in the flock.

Young pullets always lay a rather small egg, sometimes very small at the start. Those that mature early may be picked out by keeping track of the birds that start laying first in the fall. These birds may be marked with leg bands, so that they will not become mixed during the winter with those that started their work later.

The late molters are the birds that stick to the job longest and consequently they make up another gap that should be used in forming the breeding flock next spring. Leg bands may be used to distinguish these profitable birds, or, better, the early molts may be marketed so that they will no longer have an opportunity to keep down the average egg production of the flock.

The general-purpose breeds which include the Plymouth Rocks, Rhode Island Reds and Wyandottes, as a rule are not profitable after the second year. It is therefore advisable to cull out all of the older birds of this class. Of these, the late molters are the ones to select for breeders, just as in the case of fowls of any other breed.

But the selection of birds on the basis of age and time of molting is not all the preparation that need be made for raising the foundation of the new flock. The health and thrift of the fowls must be looked after carefully during the winter. After selecting the breeding birds the poultry house needs close attention. Keeping it in sanitary condition is one of the important points; also the comfort of the house, which is closely connected with the health of the birds.

Fowls are very sensitive to moisture conditions, and these should be controlled carefully by ventilation. When moisture from the fowls gathers on the ceiling and walls there is apt to be trouble soon. In cold weather this moisture may collect in the form of frost, but the heat from the sun in the middle of the day will melt the frost, and the water, dripping down, will make the litter wet. Hens are a good deal like sheep in their sensitiveness to wet feet, either in the house or when outside, and they can not be kept in good health on damp litter.

A sick hen is a hard proposition to deal with if you expect to get out with a profit on her. It is a lot cheaper to depend on dry litter than on medicines to cure colds and roup. Roup is the sequel of colds, and when it gets into a flock, as one poultryman puts it, you are on the rocks.

Plenty of fresh air in the house is a well-recognized preventive of colds in humans, and it is just as efficacious in the case of poultry. The open front house with cloth curtains is the most practical means for the average flock owner to keep the house thoroughly aired, and the fowls will not suffer from the cold if the building has been properly planned; also the egg production will keep up. By going into the house frequently in changing winter weather it will be easy to judge of the condition of the atmosphere and bring it to normal by adjustments of curtains and windows. Moisture can be kept from accumulating by opening up the house for a thorough ventilation on sunny days.

The most successful houses, as found by the experiences of hundreds of poultry raisers and by experiments of the Department of Agriculture and State experiment stations, are from 16 to 20 feet deep if the open front plan is followed. From this point the nearer toward the front the fowls are moved the fewer eggs are produced. In smaller houses the relative proportion of openings in the front of the house must be reduced during the winter months in order to keep the fowls comfortable. Open fronts or openings covered with cotton cloth are most practical in deep houses.

The detailed survey of Pennsylvania's \$22,000,000 swine industry, which is being made by the State Department of Agriculture, promises to show, in every concrete form, the real present day problems of the swine raiser. The survey was officially launched on August 1 with the holding of group conferences of the workers assigned to this compilation of statistics. These enumerators will distribute several thousand questionnaires, the answers to which will throw considerable light on the production of one of the most important livestock classes in the corn-belt area of the State.

It has been discovered that the bare figures given in the latest census, do not answer certain questions that the hog farmer might properly raise in regard to prevailing feeding, management and marketing practices. The Pennsylvania State College is co-operating in making the survey, and Dr. H. H. Hayner, in charge of the animal husbandry extension, stated that the completed survey would give a comprehensive view of this important industry in which such widespread interest has been developed.

[THE END.]