

# **THE BORROWED BABY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649244638

The Borrowed Baby by Lillian Brock

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Cover @ 2017

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**LILLIAN BROCK**

**THE BORROWED  
BABY**





# The Borrowed Baby

BY

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BOSTON  
RICHARD G. BADGER

*The Gorham Press*

1907

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*The Gorham Press, Boston*

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## THE BORROWED BABY

### CHAPTER I

**F**OUR of us, 'thout counting the Duchess and Peter and Jerry," was the way the youngest of the four reckoned the family, and though certainly far from definite, perhaps it was as understandable to a stranger as Fadee, Little Muz, Girlie, Cookie, and the others, which being interpreted meant Father Blaine, Mother Blaine, their little Jean, and big black Charlotte, who all lived together, though not in a little crooked house, but in the quaintest, prettiest cottage, set in the midst of a beautiful garden, both of which they shared with the Duchess, a handsome Maltese cat, Peter the parrot, and a fine English setter,— a worthy dog with a pedigree, answering to the name of Jerry, short for Jeremiah, so called because of his prolonged lamentations on the first night of his arrival, a very juvenile puppy.

Here they had lived for three happy years, and, being often spoken of as the B's, had called their "wee bit housie " the B-Hive.

Father Blaine could not be home half as much as he wished, being a "traveler man " for a big railway company. But the days when Girlie's faithful watching from her perch on the garden gate was rewarded by seeing a tall figure swinging briskly up the road, were marked by an extra big red letter by herself and Little Muz.

Fadee had come from bonnie Scotland when quite a young man, settling for a time in a western town.

There he had met and married Little Muz and there Girlie was born and lived for the first two years of her little life. When business called him East he had brought them with him to the beautiful village of Riverbank, which, beside being a good center for his work, enabled them to be together as much as possible and to live quietly and economically, which last was perhaps more needful, as they had undertaken to pay some debts contracted by Mr. Blaine, Senior, and were also trying to save for a long looked forward to trip across the sea.

Little Muz, according to Fadee and Girlie, was just about perfect; but as she laughingly told them they always wore rose-colored spectacles. Brought up in one of the best of life's training-schools,— a large family,— she easily adapted herself to her new life, and though missing the family compacts and consultations, made up her mind to keep cheery and to devote herself chiefly to lively and imaginative Girlie, — a veritable little witch, with large brown eyes and dark curling hair, for she favored the "Missus," as Charlotte said, and a power in the B-Hive was that same Charlotte, who, big, black, strong, and cheerful, not old, though a widow with a grown-up son, could put her hand to anything, spade, broom, or pudding-spoon, and who mixed her words and phrases, as well as the most delightful pies, cakes, and biscuits, in a marvelous way, and took as her sole dissipation a daily pilgrimage to the post office, with a basket large enough to carry mail for the whole community, in expectation of a letter from her worthless son; and a yearly attendance at the colored camp meeting, held every summer not far from the village, and from