

**TRUE  
BY THE  
SUN**  
—BY—  
**LIDA LARRIMORE**

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**SYNOPSIS**

Jim Fielding, one of the "lost generation" who had left college in the depression and is unable to find a job, arrives at Glendale to visit his friends the MacPhersons. Mac had formerly been gardener at his late uncle's estate and now works for T. H. Vaughn of "Meadowbrook." Jim is tired of being supported by his married sister Kay. While he still can marry Lenore, an attractive divorcee who is in love with him and has an easy life because of her wealth, his mind rebels. Stopping at the village drug store for a sandwich, he meets Dolly, a pretty soda fountain girl. When he inquires about the Vaughns, she asks if he is a friend of "Cecily's." She also entrusts a message to Tommy, young son of the family and tells him how to reach the Vaughn's estate. Approaching the house, Jim encounters a tomboyish little girl, fishing. She is startled and falls in the brook. Incensed at first, she discovers she liked Jim and he learns that she is Susan Vaughn. He discovers Cecily is her older sister. He sees Tommy, a youth of eighteen who imagines he is in love with Dolly. Jim explains his impeccable position to the MacPhersons. They tell him that Mr. Vaughn is recovering from a nervous breakdown and has been a widower since Sue was a little child. Mrs. MacPherson suggests that Mac give Jim a job as handyman. Jim goes for a walk to think it over and picks up a horse shoe. Soon Cecily, a lovely young girl, appears riding a limping horse. Jim scolds her when he sees the animal has thrown a shoe. There is an angry scene. Jim's ire cools and he is intrigued as he thinks about her. He tells the MacPhersons he wants to stay and assumes his duties as handyman.

**CHAPTER II—Continued**

Silence again, presently MacPherson asked hesitatingly, "Was there nothing left—of your uncle's fortune?"

"Very little. Only enough to take care of Uncle James and Aunt Emily. Incredible, isn't it?"

MacPherson did not reply at once. Unconscious of the revealing gesture, he polished his pipe against his nose. He and his conscience were grappling again. The strain of the conflict was visible in his lean face.

"Would you like the job here?" he asked at length. "I've the privilege of engaging whoever I please."

"Thank you," Jim answered. "I can't do that."

"It's no easy job. You'd earn your wages. Fifteen dollars and keep."

"At that figure I should be overpaid. No, I have definite plans for the future."

"As Bessie said, it would be something," MacPherson continued. "I appreciate that," Jim's voice was husky. He looked at his old friend and smiled, a crooked smile which did not reach his eyes.

"Well, do as you think best." MacPherson's hand touched Jim's arm for a moment. "If you want to stay, you can have the job. I must see to the men now. Supper in half an hour."

**CHAPTER III**

A plum-colored twilight lay over "Meadowbrook." Thunderheads were massed in the west blotting out the sunset. Streaks of saffron edged the churning billows of clouds. Thunder rumbled at intervals.

Jim, accompanied by the dog, walked about the grounds at the rear of the house. "Meadowbrook" had an ordered appearance, he thought, observing details with interest. The barn and garage, the low scattered out-buildings were freshly painted, incredibly white in the purple twilight. In the yard of a tenant house beyond the barn a child swung back and forth on a cross-barred gate. An older boy in blue dungarees followed the cows up the lane from the pasture.

The place was not pretentious. It was a glorified farm rather than an estate. The flower gardens at either side of the house were planted with simple sturdy things, larkspur and phlox, calendulas and poppies. There was, as far as Jim could see, only one small green-house.

MacPherson must have put his pride in his pocket when he accepted the position here. He had, obviously, little opportunity to use his skill as a gardener. Jim recalled the green-houses at "Whitehall," the masses of roses and carnations, the orchids and gardenias tended as carefully as infants.

Jim's eyes clouded thoughtfully. It seemed so short a time since he had wandered through the green-houses at "Whitehall," learning from MacPherson the names of the flowers and plants, learning geography, too, and the customs of other countries, cutting a bouquet of her favorite Russian violets for Aunt Emily, a dark red carnation for Uncle James to tuck in his coat lapel. So short a time. The crash, Uncle James' illness, was like a dream. Or perhaps "Whitehall" had been a dream.

Jim's thoughts turned to the Vaughns. He had a message for Tommy. And he had promised to mend the fishing-rod. He would be

obliged to confide in MacPherson, ask him for varnish and twine.

The Vaughns' handy-man! Jim left the gravelled path, walked along the edge of a rose garden bordered with box and across the lawn at the foot of the terrace, his brief glimpse into the private life of the Vaughns gave him a rather clear idea of what he'd have been in for if he had followed Mrs. Mac's suggestion. He'd have needed the tact of a master diplomat, the strategy of a Sherlock Holmes, the disciplinary tactics of the United States marines. It seemed a great deal to expect for \$15 a week.

And yet, it might be amusing to stay—

What had inspired that idea? Amazement brought Jim to a momentary standstill. He discovered, surprisingly, that under his surface preoccupations the thought had remained in his mind. At least it would be a change. He was so everlastingly tired of his present existence. Impulse and instinct were in favor of the experiment. But he was through with impulse. He was going back to Long Island. He was going to marry Lenore.

The reluctance he felt alarmed him. Was no emotion permanent? He'd been so terribly in love with Lenore. How he had suffered when she told him that she was going to marry Frederic Ames! Kay had been a bridesmaid. She had given him an agonizing account of the wedding he had refused to attend. He had suffered in brooding silence. His noble grief had set him apart from commonplace mortals. Tristram and Isolde, Romeo and Juliet, Jim and Lenore.

He had thought that Lenore was the love of his life. What a state he'd been in when he learned, two years ago, that she was divorcing Freddy Ames and returning to her family in Roselyn. The sleepless nights he'd spent then! Despair had flavored with wormwood and gall his bright anticipations. He couldn't ask her to marry him. He was no longer his uncle's heir.

And then it hadn't mattered. The first time he saw Lenore again he realized that he did not love her. She hadn't changed disappointingly. She was as lovely looking as when he had first known her. The tragedy of an unhappy marriage had given her a new wistful expression. He simply did not love her. He had realized, with astonishment and poignant regret, that what he had considered the love of a lifetime was a boy's infatuation.

Jim's aimless course had brought him again to the drive. He walked between the double line of oaks and cedars down toward the bridge across the stream. The plum-colored dusk had deepened. The collic pressed close against Jim's legs, whimpering at recurring rumbles of thunder. Jock was terrified in a storm.

Jim was, at the moment, unaware of the dog's increasing fright. The problem of his immediate future absorbed his attention. And yet it wasn't a problem. He was going to marry Lenore. He knew that she loved him. And he was fond of her. Wasn't that enough?

The collic whimpered more, sharply. The sound caught Jim's attention. He looked down. The dog had squatted on his haunches and was licking one of his front paws.

"What's the matter, old fellow?" he asked. He stooped to investigate and found that Jock had stepped on a horseshoe lying in the grass at the edge of the drive. One of the projecting nails had penetrated into the soft part of the paw. The injury was not serious. Jim gave the collic a reassuring pat and straightened, the horseshoe in his hand.

Here was luck! Jim examined the horseshoe. It had been cast recently, he thought, the iron had not rusted; the nails were all there. The shoe was small. It had been forged, he surmised, for a riding-horse, a lady's horse, almost certainly.

A sound scattered Jim's straying fancies, the unmistakable sound of hoof beats on the gravelled drive. Cinderella in search of her slipper, perhaps. He glanced down the driveway and whistled softly, his eyes lighting with pleasure.

The horse coming up the lane was a chestnut mare, small, spirited, beautifully proportioned. Jim loved horses. He stood watching the mare's approach in delight and admiration.

As the horse drew nearer, his expression changed. The mare was limping badly. He stepped out into the lane, only vaguely conscious of the fact that the rider was a girl.

She saw him and tightened the reins. The mare came to a stop.

"What's the idea?" Jim asked sternly.

An amazed exclamation was his only reply. Jim scarcely glanced at the rider. His concern was for the animal. Jim glanced at the horse's hoofs, ignoring the girl in the saddle.

"I thought so!" he exclaimed. "She's thrown a shoe. No wonder she's limping!"

He looked at the girl directly. It was then that he really saw her, her long graceful legs in whipcord jodhpurs, her bright hair bound with a tortoise-shell bandeau, blown in curling tendrils against her cheeks, her sherry-colored eyes darkening with anger. Good Lord! This was "Cecily," of course. He'd blown off as though she'd been a stable-boy. But she deserved it. What would she say?

A flash of lightning streaked the purple dusk. The horse quivered. The collic whimpered softly.

The girl found her voice.

"Who are you?" she asked scornfully. "The National S. P. C. A.?"

Jim swore vehemently under his breath. Spoiled brat! He'd be damned if he would apologize.

"I can't see a horse mistreated," he said, his voice quite as scornful as hers. "It's none of my business, of course, but freedom of speech is the right of an American citizen."

"And rudeness too, I suppose."

How lovely she was! Jim disliked her intensely but he was obliged to admit that obvious fact. It was beginning to rain.

"Here is your horse's lost shoe," he said, extending the symbol of good fortune. "I found it at the side of the drive."

She took the horse-shoe from him. For a moment their fingers touched. The rain was falling faster. Drops of moisture glittered on her lashes and in her short curling hair. Her features were exquisite. Her skin was the tawny pink and gold of an apricot in the sun.

"Thank you," she said disdainfully. Her hand, a slender hand with coral tipped nails, emerged from a pocket in her blouse. A coin spun through the air, fell on the drive at his feet. She glanced at him mockingly and flicked the leather tip of her crop. "If you care to know," she said, "I'd just discovered 'Lady' had lost a shoe, and was bringing her back." The mare turned and went on up the road.

Jim picked up the coin at his feet. It was a quarter, the form and substance of her retaliation. She had meant to be insulting. He



"No Wonder She's Limping!"

deserved it, of course. She had spirit and she rode superbly. Those facts, too, he was obliged to admit.

His rage softened, dissolved, was gone. He realized, then, how very angry he'd been. It was stimulating to let go. He ran up the drive, delighting in the breaking fury of the storm, in the feeling of being alive again. He'd been a vegetable for so long. Why must he return to Long Island? Why couldn't he stay?

The idea was exciting. He burst into the cottage.

MacPherson glanced up from a newspaper.

"You've been in the storm, lad," he said. "I'll wager you're wet to the skin."

Jim proceeded directly to the matter nearest his heart.

"Will you let me have a try at the job?" he demanded. He flipped the quarter into the air and caught it as it fell.

MacPherson shot him a quizzical glance from under his shaggy brows.

"What made you change your mind?" he asked. The boy had been up to something, he thought. Could it have been that—He'd heard Miss Cecily's horse clattering up the drive a few minutes ago—His pipe moved in an upward direction, paused, returned to the arm of the chair.

"The job is yours," he said. "Go up and change into some of my clothes. Supper is just about ready."

"Meadowbrook," during the first two weeks of Jim's servitude, was ruled by an invisible master. Thomas Huntley Vaughn, senior, conveyed, less from a nervous breakdown, was confined to his room. All that Jim knew of his employer was an impatient voice calling from the second floor, a bell buzzing incessantly, the irritated promptness with which the trained nurse answered any summons from the invalid's room, Miss Parker's nervous anxiety and repeated requests for silence.

Jim's duties were varied and, at times, confusing. He swept the terrace and the verandas in the morning and brought up the mail from the rural delivery box at the end of the drive. He drove to the village with marketing lists and washed the cars and picked vegetables in the garden. He assisted MacPherson about the grounds, learned to trim a hedge and spray for beetles and make neat edges along the borders of the lawn.

He enjoyed working out of doors, though he was frequently humiliated by his lack of skill and amazed at the intricacies involved in achieving apparently simple results. There was, he learned, a right and a wrong way to train a vine against a wall, to roll a tennis court, to thin and transplant a bed of tulips. MacPherson insisted upon the right way

in every instance. He was a kindly but exacting superior and showed Jim no favoritism beyond a sympathetic patience with his blunders and an occasional word of encouragement.

"You're learning, lad," he said one afternoon, inspecting with approval the transplanted tulips.

But there were countless difficulties. MacPherson's authority, unfortunately, stopped short at the house and it was with the domestic arrangements that Jim was largely concerned. Life in the rambling stone house presented a marked contrast to the ordered routine of the farm.

Miss Parker, he learned, was, technically, Susan's governess. She was, at the moment, acting as housekeeper as well. She did her best to keep things running smoothly but her best was far from adequate. Tommy was difficult. Susan was a grubby little savage. Nora, the cook, disliked the country. Rose, the maid, a girl from the village engaged for the summer, was involved in a flirtation with one of the farmer's assistants and careless about her work. Miss Jones, the trained nurse, was supercilious and sensitive and demanded a great deal of service.

It was into this maelstrom of conflicting personalities that MacPherson delivered Jim. Nora summed up his dilemma the first time he entered the kitchen with a basket of vegetables from the garden.

"So you're the new man," she said, her bright blue eyes regarding him with interest and a sort of acid compassion. "Well, the Lord have mercy on you!"

He soon discovered that Nora, with reason, had invoked Divine assistance in his behalf.

"Nice people!" he remarked, talking over his first day on the job with the MacPhersons at supper. "I feel as though I've been in a nightmare most of the afternoon. Miss Parker gave me the marketing list so late that when I got back from the village the cook hadn't time to do the roast and was obliged to resort to salmon salad which, according to her own sworn statement, gives the nurse indigestion."

"I should think so!" Mrs. MacPherson remarked, serving stewed chicken and dumplings with an air of complacency not unmixed with scorn. "Salmon out of a can!"

"The cook threatened to leave, of course," Jim continued, "and was pacified only when Miss Parker made me promise to drive her in to the movies tonight."

"Susan fell off the roof of the barn," Jim continued between soothing attacks on the dumplings. "Tommy had an accident with the station-wagon last night. Are such things daily occurrences or were they arranged especially to make me feel at home?"

"They want taking in hand," Mrs. MacPherson said crisply, obviously referring to the Vaughns. "Discipline! That Miss Parker is no more than a fly in a hail-storm!"

MacPherson made no attempt to deny the statement. The conversation veered, momentarily, from the Vaughns. Half way through the cherry cobbler, however, Jim asked a question.

"Isn't there another Vaughn?" he inquired casually. "I thought you mentioned an older daughter."

MacPherson glanced at him quickly but Jim, with a bland and innocent expression, was pouring cream on the cobbler.

"Cecily," Mrs. MacPherson replied. "She's visiting friends."

"You see?" MacPherson appealed to Jim. "Sees all; knows all. Where is Miss Cecily, Bessie?"

"Cape May," Mrs. MacPherson snapped, justifying her husband's humorously expressed opinion of his wife. "It's a house-party," she added.

The house-party at Cape May extended well into Jim's second week at "Meadowbrook." The girl he had met in the drive was Cecily. He was sure of that. There were photographs of her scattered about the lower floor of the house.

The painting above the fireplace was more vivid. The artist had captured a suggestion of her coloring, the apricot bloom of her skin, her sherry colored eyes, her bright curling hair. But the artist had given her a gentle dreamy expression. Gentle expressions were charming, no doubt, and indicated a pleasant disposition, but Jim, when he glanced at the portrait, recalled the scornful glint in the red-brown eyes, the arrogant tilt of the rounded chin.

The house-party was a break for him, Jim reflected. If Cecily had discovered him filling wood-boxes the day after the encounter in the drive she would, no doubt, have ordered him off the place. By the time she returned, he reasoned, she would have forgotten the incident.

He learned, by devious means, a few scattered facts about Cecily. She dominated the household. "Since Miss Cecily isn't here, I suppose we can have corned-beef hash for luncheon," he heard Miss Parker remark to Nora as he waited, respectfully, hat in hand, to drive her to the village.

Cecily was popular. The telephone rang and cars filled with young people raced in and out of the drive. A large portion of the mail each day was addressed to her.

Cecily was interested in someone who did not meet with her father's approval. He could scarcely avoid hearing snatches of a conversation between Miss Parker and a friend from a neighboring estate.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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