

# 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 Vaughns, 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 likes 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 impetuous 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. He sees Dolly again. She explains that she has been seeing Tommy, but regards him with amusement. He writes a letter to Lenore, explaining about his new job. When Cecily returns from a house-party she asks him airily, "I wonder how long you'll stay?" Jim acts as Mr. Vaughn's part-time secretary. He opens a letter for Vaughn by mistake and learns it is a love message to Cecily from Jeremy Clyde, a young actor at a neighboring summer theater, of whom her father disapproves. Cecily accuses Jim of being hired to spy on her. Jim comes upon Sue sobbing rebelliously after an encounter with Cecily.

**CHAPTER IV—Continued**

"Who won?" Jim asked casually. The child looked at him questioningly, looked away. Jim surmised that she was about to take refuge in flight. He was relieved when she remained seated on the terrace, her arms clasping her knees.

"I don't know," she said. "Cecily stopped us."

"Who were you fighting?" Jim clipped off sprigs of box.

"Wilfred. He called me something."

"What was it?"

"I won't tell you."

"Please," Jim smiled.

The smile accomplished its purpose. Susan flushed. A wave of pink washed over her face.

"He called me 'freckles,'" she said in a barely audible voice.

"Have you freckles? Let me see."

She lifted her face.

"You have, haven't you?" Jim said.

"I like freckles," she said.

"Do you?" The pink flush deepened. The wide hazel eyes brightened with interest. "Do you really, Jim?"

"I certainly do."

Jim was moved by the wistful note in her voice.

"Do you dislike freckles enough to fight about them?" he asked.

"I don't like not being pretty," she said. "Cecily's a beauty and I'm just plain." Old grievances were in the words, a life-time of secret humiliation. "You think she is, don't you? You think Cecily is a beauty?"

Jim considered the phrasing of a carefully tactful reply. Susan rushed on.

"You do!" she insisted. "I thought anyway you liked me better than Cecily. And then you told Mrs. MacPherson that Cecily's eyes were the color of that kind of wine and I thought you didn't like them and I told Cecily one day when she was acting hateful and it was a compliment all the time. Cecily was as pleased as anything. She knew it was a compliment." Susan's eyes were reproachful. "She said thank you, Susie, that's an intriguing compliment. That's what she told me so I knew you liked Cecily better than me and I hated you, Jim."

She broke off abruptly, then asked in a breathless voice, "You do think Cecily is a beauty, don't you, Jim?"

"Well," Jim said slowly, "I think she's very pretty."

"Everybody does." Susan's chin trembled. "I hate to be homely!" she cried. "I hate it! I hate it! That's why I wish I was a boy. If you're a boy, it doesn't matter if you're homely."

"You aren't homely," Jim took a handkerchief from his pocket and wiped away the tears that streaked her face. "You have a cute face."

She looked up at him gravely.

"Have I? Honest, Jim?"

"But you ought to wear shoes and stockings."

"Why?"

"You'll ruin your feet if you don't." He looked at her appraisingly. "Pink would be a becoming color," he said. "Your hair cut even. One of those Alice-in-Wonderland combs."

"People would laugh," she said. "I wouldn't."

She looked up at him shyly.

"You're nice," she said. "I like you."

She plunged toward the door and bumped into Cecily coming out of the house. Jim returned to the hedge. Cecily addressed Susan.

"Is the hunger strike over?" she asked.

"What?" Susan asked vaguely.

"What did you say?"

"Oh, nothing!" Cecily shrugged her shoulders. "What's the use? I suppose you're going out to start another fight."

Susan appeared to be in a sort of gentle daze. "Fight?" she repeated absently. "Oh, no." She smiled dreamily. "I guess I'll just go upstairs and wash my face."

Cecily stood watching Susan's dignified departure. Her expression was puzzled, astonished. After a time she glanced at Jim.

"Have you ever been connected with a circus?" she asked, walking toward him across the terrace. Her gaiety was contagious. Jim felt his resentment ebbing away.

"Never—until now," he replied.

"You win!" she said amicably.

"We are pretty awful, aren't we?" A private menagerie. Parker is a startled doe and Susie's a wild cat. Tommy is a donkey and Father's the big bad wolf. I—

She paused, smiling down at Jim from the arm of a wicker chair.

"Yes?" he asked, neglecting the hedge. "In the menagerie, what are you?"

"I don't know." A shadow clouded her gaiety. "I'd like to think of myself as something magnificent, a white peacock, a bird of paradise, a mythical creature with wings and wisdom and glamour."

She smiled ruefully, a little embarrassed, a little sad. "Really, though," she continued, "I'm afraid I'm just the tortoise-shell cat who thought she was a lion."

The words, lightly spoken, gave Jim a new impression of Cecily. Was her arrogance a defense? Under her surface manner of self-assurance was she unhappy, restless, confused? At the moment he felt drawn to her by something more intangible than her beauty. A dangerous moment, filled, for him, with disturbing magic. His heart beat with an accelerated rhythm. There was a singing sound in his ears.

The moment passed. Cecily laughed, a clear gay sound, unacquainted with sadness or regret.

"Can you tame donkeys?" she asked teasingly, "and ambitious tortoise-shell cats? Father would give you a Croix de Guerre. A shining gold medal," she added, moving away from the arm of the chair. "Think how magnificent it would look with your six medals for swimming!"

**CHAPTER V**

Jim, partially dressed for the evening, his blond head still damp from a shower, sat beside an open window in his bedroom in the cottage. Writing materials were arranged on the table before him. A sheet of stationery bore the crisp salutation—

"Dear Lenore"—

He scowled at the paper, laid down his pen and lit a fresh cigarette. He didn't want to return to Roselyn for Lenore's house-party and he was finding it difficult to decline her invitation. He had promised, of course. That was the worst of it. He had promised soon after he came to "Meadowbrook" when the party was still in the undetermined future and he had used any means at his command to placate Lenore. Now that the time had arrived he found himself in a perplexing situation.

Pleasant, but—Perhaps he was afraid to go. Perhaps that was the truth of the matter. He might find the old life too easy and agreeable. He might not want to return to "Meadowbrook" after the week-end.

Why should he? He wasn't getting anywhere. He couldn't conceive of a life-time of living with the MacPhersons and serving the Vaughns in the capacity of an extra man in and about the house. It was a romantic fool, though certainly there was nothing romantic in using a typewriter clumsily and pulling weeds and buying groceries. Perhaps if he accepted Lenore's invitation, someone would be there who'd put him on to a decent job. Business conditions were improving. The newspapers were optimistic. Perhaps—

But he liked being at "Meadowbrook." He glanced out of the window, over the young apple trees to the visible portion of the grounds at the rear of the house. The sunset was fading into the clear still light of early evening.

Jim's eyes lingered thoughtfully upon the tranquil scene. Presently two figures came into view, scattering his thoughts. The first figure, amazingly, was Susan, a dainty almost unrecognizable Susan in a pink dress artfully ruffled, slippers tied with bows, an Alice-in-Wonderland comb restraining her taffy-colored hair. She walked toward the house along the drive with consciously mincing steps, her pointed chin lifted high. Behind her, at a respectful distance, followed Wilfred, the farmer's boy.

Jim laughed. Little monkey! She'd lost no time in acting upon his suggestions. The pink dress and the slippers tied with bows were probably the reason for the shopping trip to the city which she and Miss Parker had made yesterday. Susan was testing the effect of her altered appearance, and with obvious success, upon the only male person on the estate approximating her age.

Jim was amused and touched. Susan, too, he reflected, had gotten

under his skin. He watched the small mincing figure until the pink ruffles had whisked out of sight; feeling as he fancied Pygmalion must have felt when his statue came to life. He had, inadvertently, discovered an approach to Susan. Not that he wanted her to be tamed entirely. He was fond of the spunky little rebel. His attention returned to the sheet of stationery on the table.

Did he want to spend the approaching week-end in Roselyn? He'd have to make up his mind. He was taking Dolly to dance to-night and he ought to mail the letter to Lenore while he was in the village.

Why not let Fate decide the question. Jim took a coin from the watch-pocket of his trousers. Heads he'd go and tails he wouldn't. He tossed the coin experimentally.

Then again he tossed the coin, watched it descend to the table, spin, roll, waver, come to a stop. In that split-second he knew that he didn't want to go back to Roselyn. The decision of the coin was unimportant. He took up the pen, ignoring the coin with a feeling of defiance. He'd make his own de-



His Attention Returned to the Sheet of Stationery on the Table.

cision. The pen moved swiftly over the paper, making a scratching sound which, presently, blended with the melody of a dance tune loudly and cheerfully waltzed.

Half an hour later Jim drove the MacPhersons' coupe down the drive toward the road. It was nearly dark. In the deepening dusk he saw a solitary figure seated in an attitude of despondency on the fence-rail beside the mail-box.

"Hey, wait a minute!" Tommy detached himself from the fence-rail. He walked over to the coupe. "You going to the village?" he asked.

Jim nodded.

"Will you?" Tommy hesitated. "Can I trust you?" he asked solemnly, his expression strained and anxious under a drooping lock of hair.

"Of course," Jim assured him. "I mean it's pretty private," the boy continued. "I mean, I wouldn't want it to get around, if you know what I mean."

"You can rely on my discretion, old man."

"Well," Tommy gulped and went on. "You know the girl that works in the drug-store?"

"Dolly?"

"Well, will you take her a letter from me?" Tommy drew from under his jersey a somewhat crumpled envelope. "I was just trying to decide whether to put it in the mail-box or not," he continued. "I should think a fellow would have a right to ask for his letters back. But gosh, I don't know what she'll do—"

Jim drew his eyebrows down over his twinkling eyes.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "Have you and Dolly quarreled?"

Tommy worried a loose bit of gravel with the toe of his oxford. "Well, Dad wouldn't let me use the Pierce after he got better. I'd taken her out in it lots of times before and I guess she sort of got the impression that it belonged to me. I haven't had any money to take her out with for about three weeks. That's why I thought maybe I'd better get my letters back."

"But what could she do?" Jim asked, controlling his amusement with difficulty.

"She could do plenty," Tommy hinted darkly. "She knows Dad's got jack."

"But Tommy—" Jim protested. "It happened to a fellow at school," Tommy went on. "His father had plenty of jack and the girl who worked in the drug-store in the town where the school is sued him for breach of promise and it got in the papers and cost his dad a lot of money."

"But the fellow of whom you're speaking was—well, older than you are, wasn't he?"

"I don't know what difference that makes," Tommy's voice was a little aggrieved. "Anyway, it was the mess Pete VanHorn got into that got Dad all hot and bothered over Fay and me."

"Fay?" Jim inquired.

Tommy, for a moment, forgot his

anxiety in the pleasure of flaunting his previous conquests. "Fay's an actress," he said. "It was on account of her that I got fired from the school before this last one. I used to skip classes on Wednesdays and go to the matinees," he added, unaware that he was informing Jim of the juvenile nature of the entanglement. She sent me her photograph with something written on it and the headmaster found it and told Dad. Maybe you've seen her."

"If Dolly does make a fuss," he continued, swallowing nervously, "I'll be all up with me. Dad said if I ever got into another scrape, he'd do something drastic, leave me here to work on the farm or send me to a military school. I can't help it if women like me," Tommy continued plaintively. "I mean I can't help it if they get ideas and start a fuss."

"I suppose that is difficult to avoid," Jim said.

"It's fierce! I'm different from most fellows, I guess. I'm sort of sympathetic. Now Dolly—Gosh, Jim, if Dad should find out—Maybe you could talk to her," he suggested hopefully. "You've been to college. Maybe you could."

"I don't know about that," Jim replied doubtfully. "You know how it is. She probably wouldn't like me to interfere."

"You could try, anyway, couldn't you? I mean I'm pretty desperate, Jim. If Dad should find out, I'll run away. I'll join the navy and go to China, or somewhere."

The boy was in earnest. There was bravado in the threat but there was determination, too. Jim became a little alarmed.

"Don't go yet," he advised. "I'd wait if I were you."

Tommy looked up eagerly. "You mean you'll talk to her?" he asked. "I'll try. Give me the letter."

The envelope changed hands. "That's swell of you, Jim," Tommy said, the weight of anxiety lifting. "Gee, I don't know how to thank you."

"Better wait. I may not succeed."

Tommy's lifting spirits drooped again. "That's so," he said. He sighed sentimentally. "She was fond of me, I guess. Poor little girl! I certainly feel like a cad. Well, cheerio, Jim!" He attempted a jaunty salute. It did not quite come off. Jim perceived that the boy was really frightened.

"Cheerio!" He returned the salute. The car moved slowly forward. Tommy wandered into the shadows at the side of the drive, his shoulders hunched, his attitude dispirited and forlorn. "Keep your chin up!" Jim called encouragingly. "We aren't licked yet, old man!"

Tommy made no reply. The car picked up speed. As Jim drove through the gateway and along the road to the village he took with him a mental picture of Tommy moving dejectedly into the shadows, his shoulders hunched under the prep-school blazer. Ridiculous young donkey! Of all the preposterous ideas! Tommy fancied himself as a dashing Don Juan, a debonaire man about town. He needed the discipline of a military school. He needed to be made to work on the farm. He needed . . .

He might have relieved the boy's mind at once. There was a practical reason, though, for keeping him on the rack. Tommy had delivered a weapon into his hands. He'd use it to extract a little industry from the youngster. Tommy would work off his school conditions or he'd know the reason why. He had found a way to bring Tommy to time.

Jim accelerated the speed of the car. The prospect of an evening with Dolly was stimulating. They'd go to "Dutch's," the beer-garden he had discovered over near Cherry Hollow. It would be fun to dance with Dolly tonight.

Tonight he would be himself again, not the playboy Jim whom Lenore glorified and cherished, not Jim the extra man at the Vaughns, but the Jim he both regretted and approved, the Jim who followed vagrant impulses, the Jim who could become agreeably sentimental over moonlight and "The Blue Danube" and dancing out-of-doors in the soft summer night.

He'd give Dolly the time of her life. "Dee dum deededeedum!" Funny kid. He liked her. Good Lord!

A car rushed past him, speeding like a rocket under the arching trees. He recognized the sound of the motor, the fawn-colored enamel, the long smooth lines of the open roadster. It was Cecily's car with Cecily at the wheel, driving somewhere, alone. A feeling of irritation routed the melody of the song. Little fool! Jim thought grimly. She'd break her neck or be arrested! Where was she going? Whom was she going to meet? Was she—?

"Nice evening, Mister," Dolly said, settling herself into the MacPhersons' coupe. "A moon and everything."

"Made to order," Jim slipped in behind the wheel. "I wired the weather man."

Nonsense. A broad white road. A summer night lavishly sprinkled with stars. Jim recaptured the feeling of gaiety he'd had earlier in the evening, had and lost in the moment that Cecily's roadster had shot past him through the village. Dolly looked almost demure tonight in a white flannel coat and a white beret pulled over her glistening curls. The red sandals added a piquant touch.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## Worthy of Your Pridel



MOTHER, between you and me Sis is getting to be a little show-off. Last night when Dick called, there she sat, big as life, right in the middle of things chirping about the new dress you made her: how you used a remnant left over from one of your dresses, and got it finished in one afternoon—she even had Dick feel the material.

Well, Elsie, you can't blame the child's appreciating herself in a new dress. How about ourselves? Didn't you say your jumper was the talk of the Tennis Club meeting yesterday? And haven't I been spending more time before the mirror since I made my new "Stylish Stout" model? I actually feel like a new person in it—imagine me being vain at my age!

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Oh, Mother, you're not vain and you're as young as any of us. You just were lucky to find a particularly flattering style for your figure. That soft jabot makes you look lovely and the whole thing is so slenderizing. But only an expert like you could make such a dress.

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