

**MY BROTHER**

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My brother by Vincent Brown

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**VINCENT BROWN**

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MY BROTHER

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DEATH, THE KNIGHT, AND THE LADY.

By H. DE VERE STACPOOLE.



MY  
BROTHER

BY  
VINCENT BROWN

LONDON  
JOHN LANE  
THE BODLEY HEAD  
CHICAGO  
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1896

C.W.B.

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## MY BROTHER

### I

"No, no; we must stick to the peacocks," Lord Lusson said. "If they are a bit untidy, they make up for it by completing the picture. See that one on the terrace there, against the red creepers—the genius of pride and the genius of colour. They realise life: the old place wouldn't look the same without the peacocks. And my mother was very fond of them."

The young man, in a pleasant social temper, strolled on the grass, a cigarette between his fingers, a collie at his heels. The gardener fell silent, having said his ill word for the peacocks. Swallows made magic lines in the sunny air: on a lake, set amid trees and undergrowths, swans idled perfectly; the laughter of children came from

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the home park, where the turkey-cocks, in excess of vanity, were making themselves ridiculous. Lord Lusson, catching sight of an uncouth figure standing in a gap in an old wall (that was embroidered with beautiful things), made a somewhat irritable gesture.

"Who is that man, Reid? I have seen him about the place several times of late. I came upon him again yesterday in the rhododendron walk in the Little Wood; that seems to be his favourite loafing-ground. Who is he?"

"It's the Prophet, my lord."

The figure disappeared.

"Is he a tramp?"

"Not by profession, my lord, though his manner of life comes near to the same thing. He does odd jobs for the farmers and in the small gentry's gardens when he's able. But he has a damaged spine, or something, and that keeps him from putting in a decent man's work."

"He looks deformed. He is always alone when I see him."

"— unless when there's children with him," said Reid.

"Is he married?"

The gardener (having a sense of humour) smiled. "No, my lord, he's not got a wife yet. Some women are not over particular, but there's hardly a woman in Occlesby who'd not draw the line at the Prophet."

"Has he a bad character then?"

"I'd not say that of him, my lord. It's not his character, but his feeble body and spirit that's the obstacle. He's such a poor wreck of a creature."

"Oh, quite so. Why is he called the Prophet?"

"The name grew up with him; except for his queer religious opinions, I can't say why. He's not so old as he looks, because of his beard, and those ancient eyes of his, and the way he hobbles about on his big blackthorn. I remember him a little lad, when nobody could make head or tail of him; his dullness was beyond words. His mother's dead, and there's always been a mystery who his father was. He lives alone, and has done these