MY BROTHER. A NOVEL, PP. 1-202

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649653676

My Brother. A Novel, pp. 1-202 by Vincent Brown

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

www.triestepublishing.com

VINCENT BROWN

MY BROTHER. A NOVEL, PP. 1-202

Trieste

MY BROTHER

MY BROTHER

A Novel.

BY

VINCENT BROWN.

CHICAGO AND NEW YORK:
RAND, McNALLY & COMPANY.
LONDON:
JOHN LANE.

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 color. They realize 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 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 favorite 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 humor) 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 many years, in a hut in a dell off the Alveton Wood. He made it himself, helped by some—Willie May, mostly—that had regard for his feckless loneliness. He has gipsies for neighbors generally, unless when the children go to see him. But nobody would meddle with the Prophet."

"I suppose he lives by poaching?"

The gardener shook his head.

"I doubt if he has the heart for a poacher, my Lord."

"But what is his name?"

"Paul Penfold."

"Quite so." Lord Lusson moved up the steps onto the terrace. "I shall be leaving

in a day or two, Reid," he said, turning, "and, of course, you will see that everything goes on all right here."

"Yes, my Lord."

"There has been a little too much license of late; people seem to imagine that this place is kept up for their convenience. I fancy my mother spoilt them—but one likes to feel sure of being alone sometimes. It is time at least to put a stop to the abuse of the Little Wood; the rhododendron walk has been turned into a public thoroughfare. It is nothing of the kind, and I shall have a notice board put up. Oh," he added, "you might tell Anscombe to have these white bantams fastened up; they scratch and cackle all day long, and keep coming into the house. I found a couple roosting in the hall last night, and there was a fine shindy when I tried to catch them."

Reid said again, "Yes, my lord," and went on to the gardens. Lord Lusson