

# THE FOURTH ESTATE

Novelized by FREDERICK R. TOOMBS

From the Great Play of the Same Name by Joseph Medill Patterson and Harriet Ford.

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### CHAPTER VIII.

HE abruptly with which Brand separated from Nolan as they appeared aroused the suspicions of both the judge and his lobbyist satellite. However, they little imagined the pronounced seriousness of the conversation they had interrupted. In the mind of each ran the thought that the Advance's proprietor and his editor had been discussing the proposal to elect Nolan to the Oak Door club. Even a failure in this laudable venture they would have considered a serious setback, but probably had they an intimation regarding the story Brand wanted to write and the effort that was to be made to detect the judge in offering a money bribe they would have exhibited less of the easy assurance that marked their re-entrance into the drawing room.

"Mr. Nolan, I'm afraid I must be going," said Bartelmy. "I hope to see you at my house soon, and you, too, Wheeler."

Nolan rose from his chair. "Judge, can you spare me a few moments?" put in Brand resolutely. The judge gave a look of surprise.

"Certainly, my boy; certainly. Will you excuse me?" turning to Nolan.

Nolan, surprised at the readiness of Brand to begin on the plan to entrap Bartelmy, readily assented and proceeded into the library with Dupuy.

"Well, Wheeler, what can I do for you?" asked Judge's father.

The young man stepped close to the other and faced him squarely. "Judge, how about your latest decision in the Lansing Iron case today?" he asked.

Bartelmy started back in surprise. "It was in accordance with the statutes and the constitution," he finally said.

"The supreme court of the United States was in variance with you in a similar case," advised Brand.

"Sir," indignantly, "I decline to discuss out of court questions relating to my conduct on the bench."

The judge moved as though to go. "You weren't so particular this morning."

Bartelmy began to lose his confident, easy pose. "I fail to comprehend you," he answered.

"Early this morning, between 1 o'clock and 3," went on the unrelenting editor.

The judge turned his head to one side and tugged nervously at his gray beard.

"A reporter for the Advance saw you come out of your house at four minutes to 1 and walk to a house on Washington avenue that belongs to the attorney for the Lansing Iron corporation."

Bartelmy turned his back on Brand, a furtive look coming into his eyes as he did so.

"You knocked at the servants' door, Judge," continued the editor. "This man admitted you. One hour and fifty-seven minutes later you left that house by the same door and returned home rapidly on foot. You kept your coat collar turned up, and, contrary to your usual custom, you wore a slouched hat pulled down over your eyes. Half an hour later Dupuy came out of the same house. Ten hours later you handed down your decision reversing on a technicality the judgment of the lower court in the Lansing Iron case and freeing out the small stockholders in favor of the insiders, as usual. Those, Judge Bartelmy, are my facts!"

Bartelmy made a desperate effort to retain his self control and to command his ability to think clearly and effectively in this dire emergency. At last he spoke after minutely scrutinizing the accusing figure of Brand before him.

"It's easily explained, Mr. Brand," he said in honeyed tones. "It's a lie; that is all it is. Your reporter lied."

"I was the reporter," exclaimed the accuser in a supremely contemptuous manner, and as he spoke he wondered and marveled that such a man as the betrayer, Bartelmy, could be the father of such a girl as Judith—Judith, whom he was even now, he was convinced, putting away from his arms and his love for all time.

The false judge paled. His mouth became parched. Had he not leaned against a chair for support it is likely that his knees would not have retained enough strength to hold him up. The jig was up. Plainly the end was in sight. Indeed, it had already arrived unless—unless— Yes, there was one possible way out—if Brand would listen to the proposal. Listen? Every man had his price. Dupuy had told him so. He knew it anyway, and Brand was poor. He was ambitious too. Ah, reasoned the false judge, that is a dangerous combination—poverty and ambition. Few could overcome it honestly; few ever had, ever would. And I am rich—

"Well, what do you propose to do?" he asked of Brand, putting it up to the other man to lead the conversation at this point, just as a clever tactician should.

"That depends," answered Brand doubtfully, a trifle weakly, sinking thoughtfully into a chair beside a table.

die. Bartelmy detected at once the note of doubt and weakness in Brand's reply and questioned to himself what it might portend. "On what?" asked the judge carefully, trying to analyze the mental processes of his opponent, who stared at him across the table. Brand spoke deliberately, in low voice. "On whether you're willing to meet me halfway."

Bartelmy's hopes immediately surged high. Ha, as plain a bid for a price as he had ever heard, and he had heard



"I was the reporter, Judge Bartelmy," then before. He gazed, reassured, at the young man's earnest face. Ha, how skillful he was, this young Brand! How he had deceived every one! Yes, he was just like some of the other reformers the judge had met—just like some of his political friends who started to clean up certain conditions, only to be retained to let them exist as they were. But Brand was the cleverest one of the lot by far, and probably he was to divide the proceeds of this bribe with Nolan. Oh, they were a cunning pair! Had even fooled Dupuy, who thought them dangerous. And what a son-in-law Brand would make! Yes, he could have Judith; he was worthy to possess the reigning beauty of a great city. So argued to himself the false judge, and he said: "Of course I am willing to meet you halfway, but it all depends on whether we understand each other."

"Your decision was doubtless of some value to you, and if I am willing to keep silent about its antecedent circumstances then"— Brand looked the judge in the eye expectantly.

Bartelmy felt relieved. He felicitated himself on the fact that his judgment had been correct.

"Yes; you"— He halted. "Why"— Brand paused. "Well?" queried the judge irritably.



"HOW ABOUT \$10,000?" ASKED THE JUDGE.

"There you are," responded Brand simply, his eyes meeting those of the jurist.

Bartelmy glanced cautiously at the editor, seeking for signs of deception, of a trap, but he found them not.

"Mr. Brand, what do you want?" he asked sharply.

"What's it worth to you?" "I would prefer you to set the figure."

"How about \$10,000?" asked the judge.

"Yes," agreed Brand, rising—"In cash tonight."

"Rather short notice for such a sum," protestingly. "Where shall I see you?" "At my office."

"Your office—the Advance? No, no. I prefer you to come to my chambers about noon tomorrow. We shall be quite private there."

dinner." "But I've got to be at my office," insisted the editor. "I hardly like to go there, Mr. Brand."

"That's up to you, Judge. But if you don't come the story goes to press tonight. Well?" with a rising inflection.

"I"— Judith Bartelmy entered. "Will you come now, papa?" she asked.

"Just a moment, my dear. I intended to ask Dupuy to dine with us."

"Oh, can't you take him to the club?" she pouted.

"That wouldn't be convenient, my dear. You know we're going to the opera."

He stepped back toward the library. "Mr. Brand, I'll see you again before you leave."

There was a moment's embarrassed silence between Judith and Wheeler Brand as the judge disappeared.

"How do you do, Mr. Brand?" she finally asked.

"How do you do, Miss Bartelmy?" His manner was awkward and strained. A moment of embarrassed silence.

"I haven't seen you all winter." She placed her hands on the back of a chair near a settee.

"No; I haven't been anywhere. I've been kept pretty close at work." He paused. "Won't you sit down?"

She moved to the left and occupied the settee. After a few moments of silence she said:

"It's strange I haven't seen you all winter. I suppose it will be another hundred years before I see you again."

Brand looked intently at her. "It won't be if you wish to see me any sooner, Judith," and, thus speaking, he leaned over the back of the settee toward the girl he loved.

"Why, of course I wish—er— You were having a talk with father when I came in, weren't you?"

"Yes," rising and stepping back from her.

"Wheeler, come here," the girl asked wistfully. "I want to talk to you."

He moved to a chair close by her side. "Aren't you beginning to realize that you may have been a bit headstrong?" she said tenderly, looking into his eyes.

"I'm afraid you are getting in very deep. Your friends, most of them, have been patient with you so far, but there's a limit, you know, and you'll lose them."

"I'm sorry."

"Oh, Wheeler—she was intensely in earnest—"is it worth while to let them go just for an idea?"

"A man must act according to his light, Judith."

"And a woman according to hers. Perhaps you don't realize it, but that's what I've been trying to do. You know I've been alone a great deal of

girl, and she rather liked a somewhat gloomy young man. But one night something happened and then—they didn't speak for a long time—oh, a very long time. But there were other young men, and one of them has asked to call tomorrow afternoon at 5 o'clock. He was very serious about it. You see, the girl has been waiting so long that she's beginning to be afraid—afraid that—er— Oh, Wheeler, why won't you drop it all? It's not too late!"

She rose to her feet, still with her hands in his, and in another moment he stood beside her. He threw both his arms around her and held her close to his bosom.

"Judith," he whispered passionately to her.

"Why don't you call tomorrow at 4?" was her response.

As they stood there in fond embrace, her lips raised to his, Judge Bartelmy appeared at the extreme end of the room. He gave a sudden start as he saw their oblivion to all else but themselves. His cold blue eyes shone with the satisfaction that filled him. He had done a good day's work; he congratulated himself. He had arranged to buy Brand's silence for \$10,000 when it was really worth twice that sum to a man of the United States judge's wealth and standing. Why, he had originally planned to give Brand twice that sum as a wedding present when he married Judith.

"Mr. Brand," the judge declared, "I will call at your office tonight at 9 o'clock. Judith, I am ready to go now."

The couple drew apart in confusion. She walked away slowly from her lover, her eyes wet with tears. She went out of the room with her father, leaving Wheeler Brand standing in the middle of the room, overcome by the unconquerable sorrow that filled his soul.

The towering figure of Nolan appeared from the library. He stepped toward the editor.

"Well, did you put it through?" he asked.

Brand threw back his head, and his misery was imprinted in every line of his face. Yet by superhuman will power he forced his voice into steadiness as he said:

"Yes—I put it through."

(To Be Continued.)

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## "GET BUSY GIRLS AND CLINCH A JOB"

Advice to Undergraduates by Head of Intercollegiate Alumnae Association.

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Feb. 24.—Miss Gill, president of the Intercollegiate Alumnae association, in addressing the undergraduates and alumnae of Radcliffe college yesterday, advised her hearers to "get busy" and "clinch a job."

"The trouble with our college women of today," she said, "is that they spend too much time darning out what their future lord and master is to be like, instead of hustling around every morning to employment agencies and looking up some nice, congenial occupation."

"College women have not been successful in industrial life because they prefer to start at the top of the ladder and fall down, their ultimate object always being matrimony."

"Get an occupation and go into it with both feet. Don't let marriage interfere with your work. Hang on to your job like you would to your social aspirations. Always have your weather eye out for something that will take up eight or nine hours of your time when you have a household of children to look after."

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\$300 per acre—Finest five and ten-acre orchard and garden tracts in the valley; easy terms.

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