

# 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 XI.

**B**ARTELMY, now that he had taken the final and extremely distasteful plunge and had come to the office of the Advance, waited for Brand to make the opening remarks about the particular object of his visit.

Brand was waiting for the judge to do the same. It was the newspaper man who spoke first, after the two had seated themselves. He was anxious to get the matter over with as quickly as possible, for he well knew that, in spite of all his precautions, affairs in a newspaper office are so uncertain that an interruption of an unexpected nature might occur to ruin the entire plan.

"Mr. Dupuy was here a short time ago," he ventured.

Judge Bartelmy proceeded to explain the appearance of the lawyer lobbyist in the affair. While it was plain to Brand that the judge had sent Dupuy as a go-between so that it would be impossible to connect Bartelmy with the payment of any money as a bribe, the jurist did not propose to acknowledge that such had been his laudable purpose. He gave an entirely different reason.

"Yes, I know," he said. "He found me at the opera with my daughter. I hoped, Mr. Brand, that by allowing me to act through him you would spare me this last humiliation."

"Would it not be safer for you if no third party knew of your transaction with me?" suggested Brand.

The judge pitied the colossal ignorance of this amateur in trickery. Did not he know that in the superior spheres of crooked practices it became necessary to employ third persons on many occasions to put through matters of this sort? And he was a newspaper man of years of experience too. No, this peculiar young man would never finish supplying the judge with surprises; of that Bartelmy was positive. Perhaps it might be in order to observe at this point that, while Brand of course could not know that these thoughts were passing through his visitor's mind, he at the same time would have been ready to confess that he was going to provide several more surprises for the jurist. But there are different varieties of surprises.

"Dupuy is in my confidence," the judge pronounced with an air of finality.

"He's not in mine," responded the managing editor.

"You're mistaken in him. I know him intimately."

"Oh, the pity of it," exclaimed Brand, "that you should be intimately acquainted with such a man as Dupuy!"

Bartelmy could not restrain a sarcastic smile at the editor's sneer at Dupuy.

"Mr. Brand," he said quickly, "your moral reflections at this juncture impart a certain quaint humor to the situation."

"I am afraid that is the trouble with me. My humor is nearly always unintentional." Brand sighed as though sorry for himself.

The judge began to show signs of nervousness.

"Well, shall we get on with it?" the editor asked him.

"Yes. I must rejoin my daughter. She's waiting for me at the opera. She was very anxious that I should not come here tonight. It was curious—her persistency in the matter."

Brand drew his chair closer to the desk—closer to the telephone.

"Let us get to business," he said.

The judge went on talking about his daughter.

"She displays an unusual, I should say an extraordinary, curiosity as to my mission here," he said. "My daughter would have made a great cross-examiner if she had been a man."

"We're wasting time, judge." Now it was Brand who was becoming impatient.

"Am I to understand that the payment of this sum"—Bartelmy began.

Brand raised his voice to a high pitch.

"Ten thousand dollars!" he said.

"Yes," agreed Bartelmy cautiously.

"Am I to understand that it—ab—wipes out of your recollection not only the incident of which you were speaking, but also as to"—He paused.

Brand helped the would-be briber to complete his sentence.

"You mean your secret interview last night with Dupuy and the attorney for the Lansing?"

The visitor raised his hand warningly at Brand's loud tones, as though to counsel caution.

"Yes, yes."

"Lansing Iron corporation?" continued Brand, bending close to the telephone.

"Yes. Will this sum, paid in hand, induce you to forget—ah—not only that incident, but also various other matters to which the Advance seems to have taken exception in the past?"

Brand sank back in his chair.

"You mean you want us to let up on you all around?"

"Precisely."

"Then that's understood."

"You will make a memorandum for me in writing to that effect—a receipt, so to speak?"

He pushed a pad toward the managing editor.

"All right—certainly," agreed Brand, taking up a pen.

The judge began to congratulate himself on the ease with which he was handling the young man.

"This is—ah—more businesslike," he said.

But Brand gave him another shock when he said:

"Yes; I'll draw it up in duplicate. Each of us will keep a copy—signed."

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"IT IS A PICTURE OF YOU IN STRIPES, JUDGE BARTELMY."

"Ah-ha-ha!" The jurist leaned back and laughed. "You're a clever lad, Brand. Well, well, youth will be served!" He pushed the pad away.

"You're not in mine," responded the managing editor.

"You're mistaken in him. I know him intimately."

"Oh, the pity of it," exclaimed Brand, "that you should be intimately acquainted with such a man as Dupuy!"

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of light that had subsided as quickly as it had come.

"My God! What is that?" he cried, rubbing the back of one of his hands across his eyes.

Wheeler Brand, who had risen in his place at his desk when the judge had finished counting the money, set his face into hard, unyielding lines as the judge besought him to speak, to explain. He had won. He had completely at his mercy this cold, crafty betrayer of the public trust he had sworn to hold sacred. And it was with unmistakable triumph in his voice that he gave the reply that was to be imprinted on the brain of the false judge as long as he was to live—a reply that would haunt him while awake and awake him when he slept.

"It is a picture of you in stripes, Judge Bartelmy," he announced.

The judge, realizing that he had been tricked—that he had been photographed in the very act of handing bribe money to the managing editor of the Advance—displayed rare presence of mind for a man whose complete social and professional ruin had become suddenly imminent. He rushed across the room at the point where the flash occurred, hoping to obtain hold of the camera and destroy the plate. Owing to the pall of smoke he had been unable to see just in what manner the camera had been arranged. But when he reached the side of the room there was no camera to be seen, only a round hole extending through the partition into the next room and from which the camera had been removed. He stood and gazed in dismay. He knew now that he was at the mercy of Brand and the Advance to a degree that he hardly dared to estimate.

He turned around and walked back to the desk. Brand was still standing in his place, looking fixedly at the judge.

Bartelmy was not beaten yet. He knew that he would not be beaten until the Advance appeared in the streets spreading forth to all the world the story of his shame.

Shaking from head to foot in his rage, he pounded the desk and cried out:

"You have gone to all your trouble for nothing. I am going direct to Mr. Nolan's house, and in less than an hour you will receive orders to kill that story—that dastardly pack of lies you want to print!"

Brand smiled calmly. He gathered the \$10,000 in bills, which lay scattered on the desk where Bartelmy had thrown them when he dashed for the camera.

"I'll keep these as evidence," he said. "When they have served their purpose we will return them to you, or maybe we will send them to the minority stockholders in the Lansing Iron company. That's who the money probably belongs to."

Bartelmy accepted the situation with stoical composure for the time. He saw that he would have no chance in a hand to hand struggle with the young athletic editor for possession of the money. Besides, he must see Nolan—must see him at once. That was the most important matter to which he should now attend.

He walked deliberately to the closet and secured his hat and coat. He turned the key and went out of the door leading to the outer hall.

As the judge disappeared Wheeler Brand sank heavily into his chair. He spread his arms on his desk and bowed his head between them until his cheek rested on the cool polished surface.

"Judith, Judith!" he sobbed, and his body shook uncontrolledly as he wept for the girl he loved.

(To Be Continued.)

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