

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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Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

Chapter I—Judith Bartelmy, society woman, goes into the office of the Daily Advance to protest against a story which had severely criticized her father, a judge of the United States court. She discovers that the author of the article was Wheel Brand, a brilliant young writer, whom she had promised to marry. He refuses to cease attacking her father.

Chapter II—Judith discards her engagement ring. Dupuy, a lawyer, representing big advertisers, calls and demands Brand's discharge, as his clients are friends of Judge Bartelmy.

Chapter III—Brand is discharged by the managing editor, for the paper, long owned by an insurance company, had been friendly to corporations. Michael Nolan, who buys the paper, comes into the office and finds Dupuy to be an old enemy of his.

Chapter IV—Nolan calls for Brand and makes him managing editor.

CHAPTER V—Brand tells Nolan and his socially ambitious family that the dishonest judge, Bartelmy, and his unsuspecting daughter have taken them socially so as to try to induce Nolan not to attack the judge in his newspaper.

Chapter VI—Dupuy aids Bartelmy in endeavoring to have Brand and the Advance avoid attacking the judge regarding a tricky opinion he has rendered in the Lansing iron case. "Every man has his price, even Brand," says Dupuy.

Chapter VII—Nolan says if Brand will trap Bartelmy in the act of offering him a bribe to keep silent that the Advance will print the story in full.

CHAPTER VIII—Bartelmy agrees to pay Brand \$10,000 to keep quiet about the Lansing iron case.

CHAPTER IX—Brand lays the trap for Bartelmy. X.—Bartelmy arrives at the Bartelmy office and arrives at the Advance office to pay Brand the \$10,000.

CHAPTER XI—Brand, aided by three reporters, takes a flashlight photograph of Bartelmy offering the \$10,000 bribe money and obtains by a most ingenious telephone trick an accurate record of the judge's words as he counted out the money.

CHAPTER XII—Sylvester Nolan, son of the paper's owner, endeavors to prevent publication of the story and photograph in the Advance. Dupuy also proves powerless to influence Brand.

CHAPTER XIII.

BRAND was busily engaged in writing the caption for the cut that was to reveal Bartelmy in his true light, was interrupted once more—this time by the entrance of the greenish faced face of the poet reporter, Powell.

"You sent for me, sir?" asked the new scribble.

"So you've covered a suicide?" said Brand.

"Powow's" eyes rolled wildly. He clasped his hands and his knees shook in his horror at what he had learned.

"Oh, yes—a terrible sight! I shall draw a-e-a-m of it, sir! It would take a Dante to write of it. Oh, I!"

"What was this girl's name?" asked Brand in matter of fact tones.

"Madeline."

"Madeline what?"

"Her last name," the poet asked dazedly. "I guess I don't remember. Oh, yes. It was Jenks—Madeline Jenks!" He spoke feverishly.

Brand picked up the poet's first newspaper story and began to read it. In spite of the high pressure of events that night in the Advance office, in spite of his ever present fear that Bartelmy and Dupuy might in some way persuade Nolan to order the sensational bribery story killed, this many sided young man found the time to bother

with the fantastic young poet reporter and his fantastic first article.

"Madeline Jenks, eh?" commented Brand, turning over the page. "Well, the first place you mention her name is on page 5."

He plucked off the first two pages and threw them on the floor. Powell winced painfully at the massacre of his first reportorial offspring. "Begin there," said Brand. Powell lunged downward to rescue his first two pages, but Brand kicked them away from him. "Where'd she live?" he next asked.

Powell clasped his hands and gazed plaintively at the ceiling.

"Over a chop suey cafe, sir."

"Number and street?"

"Two forty-three and a half West Pearl street."

Brand threw away two more pages. Powell watching him anxiously the while.

"Put that next. Here, Madeline Jenks," Brand began to write, "an inmate of 243½ West Pearl street. What did she do?"

"She destroyed herself utterly!" the new reporter wailed.

Brand went on writing.

"Is she dead?"

"Yes, sir."

"Shot and killed herself—when?"

"Tonight at 9 o'clock."

Brand wrote on.

"Last night at 9 o'clock. Why?"

Powell answered very intensely:

"Oh, she could no longer face the ghastliness of her existence. She knew she—"

"She was weary of life in the streets."

"I don't blame her," Brand commented to himself. He turned to Powell. "There's your story. Thirty words—you had 3,000. And remember the story of the creation was told in 600 words."

Powell picked up the pages of his story which Brand had discarded and walked dejectedly away.

"Mac," Brand ordered, "here's a dance hall suicide. Put it with local brevities, will you?"

Had Brand at this moment been able to see through the wall that separated the composing room from the hall he would have witnessed a sight that would have deprived him of some of the self possession that marked his present demeanor. A figure clad in an elaborate evening gown crept softly up the stairway, stood irresolutely at the landing and then turned into the managing editor's office. Judith Bartelmy probably never looked more beautiful in her life than she did that night. A flush of excitement enhanced the soft allurements of her exquisite features, and the low cut neck of her sleeveless gown completed a picture of feminine loveliness that, innocently enough on her part, was admirably adapted to the purpose Judge Bartelmy had in his unprincipled mind when he sent her to the Advance office. "You are my only hope," he had told her after Dupuy had at first failed to locate Nolan. "You must go and plead with Wheeler—Brand or else I am ruined. Your father will be ruined absolutely." At the sight of her father's emotion and yielding to the fervent pleadings of her only living parent she had willingly consented to undertake the mission. Unpleasant though she knew it would be, she believed it her duty to stand by in his hour of dire need the father whom she loved, the father whom she did not know.

As she entered the office and paused in conjecture as to just how she would proceed she heard footsteps hurriedly ascending the stairs, and, withdrawing into a shadow in a corner, she saw Michael Nolan and Mrs. Nolan cross the hall and disappear into the composing room.

"Thank heaven!" she murmured fervently. "They will stop this story which father says is a horrible lie."

Wheeler Brand will never forget—the

"Remember the story of the creation was told in 600 words."

has since said so from the depths of his soul—the shock that went through him when he saw Nolan, accompanied by his wife, making their way toward him on that memorable night.

McHenry was speaking when they entered.

"There is your first page, Brand," he was saying, "and it sends Bartelmy to state prison."

The managing editor gazed approvingly at the appearance of the page of type and the cut in the form as it lay exposed on one of the stones under a shaded electric light. He looked up to congratulate McHenry on the manner in which he had completed the makeup of the page when his jaw suddenly fell. His eyes took on an amazed stare. He was looking straight over the night editor's shoulder. McHenry caught Brand's expression and whirled about. Then he, too, saw the owner of the Advance and his wife draw near. The triumphant air with which the wife and mother sailed along by his side loaded no good to Brand and his story.

Nolan paused in front of the form without looking at the contents at first.

"Wheeler," he said kindly, "I've been notified about this story, and I think

He led her out of the room.

Brand spoke to McHenry.

"Did you hear, Mac?" he asked. "He won't decide to run it."

"It's tough, old man—it's tough!"

"This is such a live thing I don't see how I can kill it," the managing editor said, rubbing his hand over the face of the form.

"That's the best first page ever made up in America," said McHenry, with justifiable professional pride.

Brand was inconsolable.

"I've been working ten years for just this thing," he said, "something so plain that even children would see what the big thieves are doing."

"You go home!" Brand suddenly ordered McHenry.

"What?" was the surprised exclamation.

"I said go home!"

Brand's face was beginning to twitch nervously. He stood in the middle of the composing room, under the flooding white glare from a sixty-four candle power electric light, and clinched and unclenched his hands, not daring to look McHenry squarely in the face. The night editor began to guess what was passing through Brand's mind.

"Yes, but," he began to protest—"but—"

Brand cut him short, saying agitatedly:

"I am still managing editor."

McHenry now realized plainly that the intensely earnest Brand had decided to run the story that very night regardless of Nolan's attitude. It would be an easy matter, as Nolan, of course, would not remain at the office much longer. And McHenry well knew that such an act would not only bring about Brand's discharge from the Advance, but that it would as well injure his reputation in other newspaper offices, where obedience to one's superior, as in any well regulated organization, is a man's first duty under all circumstances.

"Why, man," he exclaimed questioningly, "you're surely not going to run this story?"

Before Brand could give an answer to this last question, even if he had intended to do so, Nolan broke in on the pair.

"Mr. Nolan," began Brand, "you have heard the whole story of this miserable affair, both sides of it—Bartelmy's and my own, from our own lips. Whatever defense or explanation Bartelmy gave you I don't know. But, so far as I am concerned, I told you the facts and the truth. You must know that by this time. You must believe it. Therefore why do you or

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