

A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM

"Well Brady," said the warden of Brandon Penitentiary, "five years have been taken off your term for good behaviour; you are now free to go. I think that you have had ample time to see how foolish your crime was. Good bye and good luck!"

"Good bye, sir, and many thanks to you for the kindness you have shown me," replied Brady, as he left the room to don the suit that had been prepared for him.

But Francis Brady did not emerge as chastened as the warden thought, for a black hate and desire possessed his soul. Fifteen long years he had occupied a felon's cell and sweated at hard labour for the crime of another. But those fifteen years had by no means lessened the hate he bore the man for whose crime he had suffered, who had once been his best friend, and who, to save himself from the punishments of his misdeed, had let an innocent man suffer, and perjured his own soul.

Outside the prison gates, Brady clenched his fists, and hate so filled his heart, that his features assumed a fierce and almost diabolical expression.

"I'll get him," he fairly hissed through his teeth, "I'll make him pay dearly for this."

Just then, he met one of his former friends. His anger for the moment forgotten, he stopped intending to address him, but the man turned the other way, and did not notice him.

This only served to increase the rage in his heart. Henceforth, he would be branded as a murderer, as an convict. Fairly choking with rage, he hurried along the crowded streets, heedless of the gaze of curious onlookers.

In this manner he walked aimlessly around the city for over an hour. Suddenly, as he was crossing a street, he saw a familiar figure emerge from an office, and enter a waiting limousine. Could he be mistaken? Was this William Desmond for whose crime he had been falsely ac-

cused, and imprisoned? He quickened his pace, and, as the car was starting, came up abreast of it on the side-walk. His suspicions were confirmed. It was William Desmond.

Rushing to a taxi, which was standing near, he entered it; then putting a bill into the driver's hand, told him to keep the limousine in sight. Entering the residential part of the city, the limousine stopped in front of a handsome mansion. Desmond then stepped out, and entered the house.

Brady told the driver to keep on for a few blocks, then, getting out of the taxi, he walked back past the house; he noted carefully the number, and the name of the street.

Late that night, as the clocks were striking mid-night, the muffled figure of a man could be seen walking down the same street, and stealthily creeping up to one of the windows on the ground floor of the Desmond home. It was Francis Brady who had come to fulfil his threat to wreak revenge on the man who had wrecked his life.

He entered the window noiselessly, and found himself in a large room which he rightly judged to be the parlor; moving cautiously across the room, and passing through the open door, he stood for a moment in the hall. He then saw a gleam of light proceeding from under a door farther down the hall.

Opening the door softly, he looked in; to his intense satisfaction he saw his intended victim sitting at his desk, apparently absorbed in some papers that lay before him. Taking his revolver from his pocket, he examined it carefully, so that there would be no delay when the time came for acting. He started to cross the room, but his foot, striking the leg of a table, made a slight sound. Desmond started and looked up.

"Yes Desmond, it is I," said Brady, "No wonder you tremble, and turn pale; you have ample cause. In less than five minutes your soul will be in eternity."

"Brady you don't mean—you don't intend to murder me."

"Why not? For fifteen years, I have been planning this hour, and gloated over it. It has been the one thing that has kept me alive through that long term of imprisonment for your crime."

"But, Brady, I was weak, and, when you were accused I could not resist the temptation of shifting the blame on you. Spare me! Think of my wife and child."

"Did you think of my wife, my child, my friends, and my wrecked business. I have sworn to get you, and by Heaven I will. Shooting is too good for a cur like you."

Flinging the revolver across the room, he seized Desmond by the throat, and pressing his fingers around his neck, almost strangled him.

Just then the portiers at the back of the room opened, and Desmond's little daughter entered the room. Seeing the struggling pair, she recoiled a step or two and screamed.

Then rushing up, she seized Brady by the arm, and said:

"Bad man to hurt my daddy."

Brady stood as if rooted to the floor at the sight of the anguish on the angelic face of the little girl. He threw Desmond from him and said:

"If ever a man deserved death, Desmond, it is you. But you may thank God, and your innocent daughter, for your life."

He then started to leave the house. Desmond got up, and taking a handful of bills from the desk, offered them to Brady.

"Do you think that your money will win back my reputation, and restore to me my wife and child," said Brady, scornfully pushing them away.

He left the house shuddering at the thought of the crime that he had almost committed. His next feeling was one of despair. He thought of his own wife and daughter. Where were they? The disgrace had been too much for them, and they had departed for parts unknown.

He hurried cityward, heedless of everything. As he started to cross a street, he heard the loud blast of an automobile horn and the screams of the occupants, but he paid no heed to them. The next moment he was struck, and hurled violently to the pavement.

When at last he recovered consciousness, he found himself in a hospital ward, with a physician bending over him.

"Where am I?" he feebly asked, looking around him with a bewildered look.

"Do not exert yourself, my good friend," replied the doctor soothingly. "You have been in an accident, and your recovery depends as much on yourself, as on the care you receive from us."

After a time he relapsed into a light refreshing sleep, from which he awoke, a few hours later, to find a tall girl in the uniform of a nurse standing near his bed.

Where had he seen that face before? could it be his wife grown young again?

Just then the girl glanced at the head of his bed, where a badge of the Sacred Heart was pinned to his pillow. Across it was written in indelible ink: Francis Brady. His wife had given it to him, and he had promised her that he would always wear it. The nurses had removed it from the lapel of his coat to the pillow.

As her eyes fell upon the name written across the badge, she turned pale, tottered, and clung to the bed for support.

"Your name?" she asked, "Is it Brady-Francis Brady?"

"Yes," replied Brady, "But who are you, and how do you know me?"

"My father!" was all she could say, as she dropped on her knees beside his bed.

Then Brady realized that this was his daughter grown into womanhood, the daughter who had been only three years old when he entered prison.

After the happy reunion between father and daughter, Brady learned that his wife was again residing in Adamsville. She came to the hospital immediately upon

being summoned by her daughter, and, with tears of joy, welcomed her long lost husband. After the first joy was over, she told him that she had written him several letters addressed to the prison.

But as he was at the time with a gang doing road work, he never received them, this was doubtless due to some oversight on the part of the prison officials.

Leaving the hospital, he joined his wife and daughter in the old home. He soon obtained a good position, and the past was gradually forgotten.

One night as he and his wife sat side by side in their peaceful home, he told her how near he had come to committing an awful crime, and becoming a murderer in reality.

She only smiled, and said:

"It was the badge of the Sacred Heart, Francis, when I pinned it over your heart, I asked God to keep you straight; every night I prayed that he would bring you back safely to me. Now I feel certain that the Sacred Heart has granted my petition. Don't you think so, dear?"

Francis Brady did not reply; his heart was too full, not with revenge, as before, but with love and gratitude. The look of love and tenderness with which he regarded his wife, spoke louder than words.

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