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# The

**Coralie Stanton** Heath Hosken

he murmured faintly. "Forgive me, but—well, I am accustomed to surprises, but this fairly took me off my guard. What can it mean?"

I will tell you," said Monk. "It is a very unusual story. I must go back a long way, to the days of my first marriage, and the days when my ambitions were just beginning to be realized. I was a young man then, Mr. Garth, and I had determined to be a great one. My wife helped me, as only a woman of strong character, who is devoted heart and soul to her husband, can help a man. I could tell you wonderful stories of her devotion, of her economies, of her judgment and management. Sufficient for you to know that we were one in heart and mind, and that we both had only one longing—that was to have a son, a boy, who would become a great man and carry on worthily the work that I had begun. We had married young, and my wife had had two children, who, however, both died in infancy. They were both girls. I children, who, however, both died in infancy. They were both girls. I cannot tell you the hopes that we cherished when we realized that my wife would have a third child, and wife would have a third child, and that at last our passionate desire might be fulfilled. We made up our minds that the child must be a boy. We chose his name and his career; we wove splendid dreams about that being who was going to put the crown of happiness and contentment on our lives."

The detective inclined his head with

The detective inclined his head with

"As the time drew near," Monk went on, "I could scarcely go about my business for anxiety and suspense. Everything hung on this child being a boy. Perhaps you cannot understand, Mr. Garth, how a man may long to be the father of a son."

Again the detective inclined his head and smiled with a mixture of obsequiousness and sympathy.
"I am enlarging on this part of my story," said Monk, "so that you will be able to understand the strong motive I have for what I did. I suppose nobody knows better than a man of your profession how a man will lose

nobody knows better than a man of your profession how a man will lose sight of everything save one object, if it is very deeply rooted in his mind. That quality, if I may say so, has made me what I am."

"A most admirable quality, Sir Glare," said Mr. Garth, seeing that something was expected of him, "though it may become a dangerous one"

those days with anything be direct pursuit of what I wanted. one's reason." He paused for a moment, and passed his nervous little hand across his eyes. "My wife died," he added in a very low voice.

"Ah!" said the detective. "And the child?"

"The child lived. It was a strong,

"Now," said Monk, "I suppose you understand."
"Yes. But the details must be of the greatest interest. Please tell the

story in your own way, Sir Glare."

"For a couple of days I was like
man demented," said the great man
"The house was in chaos; no one we man demented," said the great a.
"The house was in chaos; no one wa
allowed to come near me. We live
at that time at Allerford, about fir
miles out of Blackport. In the mid
of my distracted grief I hardly notice
the fact when I was informed of itthat the doctor who had attended n
wife had been killed the very ne
day in a shocking carriage accidet
It was not until three days after n
wife's death—the day of the funer
in fact—that this piece of news
came the basis of a daring plan th
I carried out with the most comple
success. I must tell you that, owi
to the terrible state of mind of
household, and the arrangements
the funeral, the birth of the child h
not been registered. I had no fem
relative to come to my aid, and
child was left entirely in the char
of the nurse, who, as I have alrea
said, I knew very well indeed.
"It was early on the morning

said, I knew very well indeed.

"It was early on the morning the funeral that there called to me a certain Mrs. Brand, the yo wife of an engineer in my empment. My wife had been very to her, and, hearing of her death, had come to bring some flowers to ask to be allowed to attend funeral. I don't know what me see her. It was one of those traordinary coincidences that is sometimes devises and that make sometimes devises and that make all the difference in a man's life. It was something that she told me that gave me the idea of the plan that I carried out. In the midst of her condolences she told me, weeping bitterly, that her own sister, a certain Mrs. Smith, the wife of a very respectable man of the lower middle class, who made his living by designing wallpapers, had given birth to a child on the very same day as my poor wife, and that she, too, had died on the following day. Even now I don't know what prompted me to ask her the sex of her sister's child. It was a boy, she said—a solendid, healthy little fellow."

"As soon as the thought flashed into my head," Monk went on, "I put it into execution. I made my proposal to Mrs. Brand. I didn't stop to think. Would she exchange the two children, mine for her sister's, the girl for the boy? She was startled, she protested at first; but money won her, as money wins everybody. I offered her a comfortable income for life and to make good provision for the child as long as it lived. I've no doubt she thought me an inhuman monster, willing to give away my own flesh and blood for a stranger's child. She did not understand the passion that devoured me. But that was not her business, and she agreed. We fell to discussif ways and means."

"Ah, yes," put in the detective, "that interests me very much indeed. It sounds difficult."

"Fate was with me," said Mont, with a kind of pride. "It appeare that as soon as her sister died, Mrs Brand had taken the child to her own house. Her brother-in-law was distracted with grieft; he had not asket treated with grieft; he had not asket to the process of the same treated with grieft; he had not asket the child to her own house.

Brand had taken the child to her own house. Her brother-in-law was dig tracted with grief; he had not asked for the child; she did not even know whether he had inquired if it was to boy or a girl. Her sister had beet his second wife; he was much older than she, and he had worshipped her. Mrs. Brand thought he would be only too glad to have a daughter; he had already a little boy by his first wife. Her sister had had no doctor in attendance but a midwife who was a Her sister had had no doctor in attendance, but a midwife, who was a stranger to them, and who had gone away, and whom in all probability they would never see again. The Smiths had no servants; a strange girl had come in to help during Mrs. Smith's illness. She would be none the wiser. The child had not yet been registered, and the nurse could be dismissed.

"On that side there seemed to be no difficulties. On mine the difficulties fell away as we faced them. I remembered that the doctor who had attended my wife was dead. Our servants were in a state of agitation. If they had been told the child was a girl first, they would only think they had been misinformed in the confusion that reigned in the house. There was only the nurse."

"She had to be squared," murmured the detective.

"She was squared. I knew her well, "On that side there seemed to be

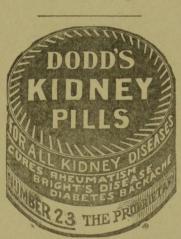
"She was squared. I knew her well. She knew me; she knew my ambitions, my hopes, my prayers. There was nothing wrong, to her were of thinking. The two mothers were dead. What mattered if the children changed places?"

dead. What mattered if the children changed places?"

"And so it was settled?" said Mr. Garth expectantly.

"So it was settled. Everything was in my favor—the two households in chaos, the distracted husband, the willing accomplice, the bribable nurse. And I wanted the boy as I wanted nothing else in the whole world. I do not understand my own state of mind now. I had no feeling about sending my own child out into the world to be brought up by strangers in an inferior position. I had gers in an inferior position. I had no thought of what the boy might be who was thus given to me in exchange, of what tendencies might be implanted in him. I wanted him—a male child, a boy, who would grow to be a man who would carry on my be a man, who would carry or work, who would take all his from me, who would succeed to great inheritance that I meant to behind. It seemed a Heav chance—my only one. The ir remarriage revolted me; I had loved my wife. I wanted a devote myself to. I did not humble stock myself; and althouthad already then laid the found of my fortune and had risen to a in life far above the one I was in, I still had no fear about this Environment, education would do everything for him, I told myself. Once the idea had formed in my mind, I

(Le pe courronequ)



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