CHAPTER XXVI.

Make-Believe. For upwards of three-quarters of all hour of that golden morning which fol lowed the night of his return to New York, Mr. Law was permitted to es-

teem himself je applest of mortals. And inasmuch as this is not only a longer uninterrupted term of happi ness than is humanly common but is more of that emotion than ordinarily leavens the whole of a lifetime, Alan was perhaps to be envied, even though disillusionment when it came was sudden, sharp, and to him unspeakably shocking-a swift, unpresaged plunge from sunlit peaks of supreme content to the black depths of a bleak Aver-

The beginning of the period was synchronous with the slam of a taxicab door that shut away a superfluous | me, I mean." world from the company of two who

success in Alan's understanding.

The car slipped smoothly away from the curb, pursued only by a little gust of semi-ironic cheers from the little company of working men who had witnessed as well as measurably particithe house of Trine.

evasion had had a witness in that make-believe you love me-" strange home of deathless hatred, Alan watched it through the little window in the back of the cab until a corner blotted out the vision of it; little—until you wake up and realize feet and helping him to the sidewalk the next corner as another cab, fare- Wright. . . . Ah, yes, Mr. Digby. explosion followed instantly. In by the side of the woman to whom his every thought, impulse and emotion

"Rose!" he whispered, and tentatively touched one of the hands that lay clenched in her lap.

She responded with never a sign to ndicate consciousness either of his ouch or his whisper.

And reminding himself of the strain imposed upon her by the experience through which they had just passed, Alan excused her unresponsiveness on grounds of reaction, and for the time felt constrained to let his sweetheart rest and regain her normal poise: there was bliss enough for him in the consciousness that he had won her caress exchanged to know that they safely away, that nothing now more were lovers, who had eyes to see the than a short hour's drive across town | flushed loveliness of the girl shrinkand by ferry across the Hudson stood ing back in her corner or wit to interbetween them and the marriage that pret the radiant happiness that shone should prove the consummation of all in Alan's face as he bent forward and

Alan had too often suffered the penalty of disappointment for over-indulgence in this failing of his for depreciating the unforeseen, not to make the mental reservation, "Barring accidents!" with a little shiver of dread.

Had any of Trine's household been cognizant of his daughter's escape, Alan argued, interference must have been instant.

Despite the reassuring aspect, the preoccupation of his companion so wore upon him that he was presently ful touring car tearing madly toward ing her.

hand tenderly over hers. "Dearest purple with congested chagrin as he out with a report like a cannon-crackcalm yourself: remember we are safe



She Appeared Anxious to Escape Without Being Seen.

now; we fooled them handily-thanks to your faith and bravery, sweetheart! and everything is going to be well with us from now on. Over in Jersey the minister is waiting now to marr us; and down at the White Star dock the boat is waiting that is to carry us off to England the moment we're marled. Think of that-and that I love strength of that combination!"

For another minute she rested as she had ever since sinking into her corner of the taxicab-moveless, taut.

Then a long sigh shook her to her | was doing his best to fracture dat in Alan's grasp relaxed and her the girl's fears were amply justified face turned to his like a flower to a shout from behind drew Alan's head now soft and yielding, its eyes un. girl's on the other and proved to both all misty with unshed tears.

"Alan," she breathed gently. can't be true! I'm trying so hard to His touring car was within fifty elieve but all the while I know it | yards when they first were aware of can't be true!"

guence of his lips . . .

"Tell me again that you love me!" she prayed. "Promise me you'll never let anything come between us. Promise me, Alan -promise me you'll be kind to me always, dear!"

"Can you doubt I will be kind?" he murmured reproachfully. "How could I be anything else, lov-

"I am afraid . . ." "It isn't that,

afraid." "Of what?" "Of losing you."

"But that can never be!" were to find you'd been mistaken?" running-board. She caught her breath and added

"Oh, that's ridiculous!"

ing you as I do?"

"I can't be sure. Nothing in life is the same breath Alan had flung wide The sound spelled safety as well as | permanent. What is love? Illusion of the senses! What is happiness? will-o'-the-wisp! What is life?

wrought. You don't know what you're of the cab, and fell heavily to the pated in the putative elopement from saying. You can't mean what you're street saying. . . But say that it's so-Vigilant for any indication that their that life is all make-believe. Then driver deaf to the hails of innocent if "Oh, but I do, I do!

caught the will-o'-the-wisp-only for a ber of loafers lifting Marrophat to his follow. And chance brought them to

She closed her eyes again: "Yes." she breathed, "you are right. Let's make-believe it's all true for a little longer . . . and forget .

He could by no means account for this strange humor; but he did his best to comfort her, none the less tenderly because of his mystification. And for a long time she let illusion blind her, resting quietly in his arms, making believe . . .

Only on approaching the Twentythird street ferry they must needs rouse and sit apart constrainedly for fear some one might glance through the window and surprise their secret.

As if one needed the evidence of a their trials . . . Barring accident! | watched warily from the window.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Ring. Theirs was the last vehicle to swing between the gates before these last of an unsavory-looking tenement, bewere closed.

And this was quite as well; for Alan, rising for one last backward glance through the rear window, started involuntarily and choked upon an exclamation when he descried a power- gloomily. no longer able to refrain from disturb- the ferry-house, its one passenger half rising from the front seat, beside the "Rose!" he begged again, closing a driver, and exhibiting a countenance saw his car barred out of the carriage er, and the taxi lurched perilously.

> Quickly sensitive to his emotion, the dejectedly to the curb. girl caught nervously at Alan's hand. "What is it, dear?"

"Marrophat," he snapped

She uttered a hushed cry of dismay. another cab-while the other assessed "Don't be alarmed, however," he hastened to comfort her. "He's lost the race: the gates are shut—even the this last reported sympathetically. "It a company spotter somewhere near by. for the gateman is virtuously refusing the usefulness clean out of that shoe. to be bribed by a roll of money as thick as my wrist!"

At that instant the taxicab rolled aboard the ferry-boat; the deck gates were closed; a hoarse whistle rent the roaring silence of the city; winches rattled and chains clanked; and the boat wore ponderously out of its slip. "So much for Mr. Marrophat!" Alan crowed, sitting down. "Foiled again! He can't stop us now!"

"Perhaps . . . " "Why that perhaps? Why that tone?" he demanded sharply, struck by the foreboding her accents con-

fessed. "This isn't the only ferry. There's the Pennsylvania and the Lackawanna -and by hard driving he might even manage to catch the boat that connects with this from the Christopher street ferry of the Erie!"

"Impossible! I don't believe it!

"Let's not," she agreed. "But Alan

"Promise me-if he should manage to catch up with us-you won't let him talk to you. I mean, don't let him-" "No fear of that!" he asservated

hotly. "If he tries to exchange one word with me-I only wish he would!" She seemed satisfied with that; but the incident had served appreciably to chill their spirits. They accomplished the remainder of that voyage in a silence that was no less depressed beyou. Nothing can possibly break the cause they sat hand in hand through-

> Nor was their taxicab three minutes out of the ferry house on the Jersey shore—though the chauffeur, stimulater by Alanjs extravagant promises speed laws and escape arrest-when that Marrophat had indeed found so way to make the crossing without

volver over the windshield and fired. "It | great delay." it; and Marrophat, standing on the preciate the viciousness of the scheme. you stand!" He converted a skeptic with the running-board, was shouting inarticulately and flourishing an imperative hand; while the distance between

IDEAL THEATRE On Mondays And Tuesdays them was momentarily growing less

As Marrophat's car drew abreast Alan nodded and said quietly: "Don't be alarmed; I can attend to this gentleman single-handed."

And this he proceeded to demonstrate with admirable ease. "I am afraid . . ." she whispered. though called upon to do so far sooner than he had thought to be-thanks to Marrophat's hair-brained precipi tancy. For, failing to influence the "Why should I be unkind to you?" Taxi driver by shouted demands or threats, or to gain the least attention from Alan, Trine's first lieutenant abruptly and surprisingly took his life in his hands and in one wild bound bridged the distance between the two "You can't be sure. What if you flying cars and landed on the taxi's

Stop!" he screamed madly. "Stop, hastily-"That you didn't really love I say! You don't know what you're doing! Let me tell you-"

He got that far but no farther. In the door and was at the fellow's throat. There was a struggle of negligible A duration; Marrophat was in no way his antagonist's match; within three "Dearest!" He held her more close seconds he threw out both hands, "You are nervous and over | clutched hopelessly at the framework

The taxi sped on without pause, its

fore the cab took a corner on

"Not seriously injured, I fancy," he

But it seeemed that he was to have

told the girl in response to her eager

look, "Worse luck!" he added

greater cause than this to complain of

his luck, before that ride was ended.

hesitated, slowed down, and limped

Alan and the chauffeur piled out in

the same instant, the one standing

guard-with an eye out as well for

"Nothing for it but a new tire, sir,"

something like that-it sure did rip

"Go to it," Alan advised him terse

"But if another cab comes along

ly; "and if you make a quick job of i

I'll stand the cost of the new tire."

while you're at it you'll lose us

quick as a wink. Here's my card, in

case we have to desert you in a hurry;

you understand this is a matter of life

and death, and I'll have no time to

settle up with you. But you can call

at Mr. Digby's office and he'll fix

The man took the card and after a

"All right, Mr. Law," he agreed;

The rapidity with which he com-

pleted the change of tires proved him

an excellent chauffeur, an adept at his

craft; but the delay was one disas-

trous for all that. It worked together

with what Alan pardonably described

as the devil's own luck to bring the

touring car in sight at the precise mo-

ment when the chauffeur was cranking

up and Alan on the point of re-enter-

ing the cab. And though they were

off again before Alan could close the

door, the attempt was hopeless from

And yet-whether or not because

been too convincingly demonstrated-

the touring car for the time being

contented itself with trailing about

fifty feet in the rear, while the taxi

fled the tenement purlieus of the Ho-

boken waterfront and found its way

into the broader streets of an unpre-

Not until they were well into the

suburbs, with few dwellings near and

no pedestrians to interfere, did Marro

hat's purpose become apparent. Then

lowever-and it happened while Alan

drew in swiftly and easily and Marro-

hat, rising in his seat, leveled a re

was looking back—the touring

tentious suburban quarter.

Alan's distaste for interference had cry.

"anything you say." And forthwith

glance at the name touched his hat

things up to your satisfaction."

with more noticeable respect.

got to work.

hoped to stop the taxicab by depriving it, in course of time, of its fuel. And with this in mind he was presently surprised, as the cab took a corner. to see Marrophat's car stop at that corner and Marrophat himself get down. The brow of a hill intervened. shutting off sight of the blackguard as he knelt and lit a match. It was the girl who gave the alarm, suddenly

dow to scream at Alan:

"He's fired the gasoline! It's flaming along the street, following the line of the leak-and catching up with us!" Without pausing to put his hand to the latch, Alan kicked the door open. "Jump!" he cried. "For your lifejump! As soon as that flame catches

up with the tank-" Simultaneously the chauffeur, over-

hearing, shut off the power. The three gained the sidewalk bare ly in time: the tiny trail of flames, almost imperceptible in the sunlight, was not a yard from the jet that spurted through the bullet hole in the tank. In the flutter of an eyelash the explosion followed. Had the cab been loaded with nitroglycerin its destruction could have been no more absolute.

There was a roar . . . and then a heap of smoking ruins. Without waiting to admire the spec-

indignant bystanders. Alan pulled tacle, Alan caught the arm of the girl himself together and looked back just and hurried her up the street, at the lifted the receiver to his ear, and crashed to the floor, its glass well "And make-believe for a little we've in time to catch a glimpse of a num- same time calling to the chauffeur to spoke in musically modulated accents. breaking and loosing a flood of kero-

less, hove into view. Promising its

driver anything he might ask, in or

out of reason, Alan gave him the ad-

If Marrophat pursued Alan could see

no sign of him. The second car made

better time than the first, Unhindered,

and as far as could be determined,

without being followed, it covered the

brief remaining distance in a grate-

friend, the Reverend Mr. Wright.

Embarrassment worked confusion

ith the young man's perceptive facul-

when two should be made one who had

gone through fire and flood, literally

as well as figuratively, for each oth-

er's sake, incredulity drew a veil be-

nished minister's study; of two wit-

womenfolk of the minister's house-

as a benevolent voice rolling sono-

rously forth from a black-clad pres

ence; of the woman of his heart stand-

ing opposite him; of questions asked

and responses made; of a ring that

was magically conjured from some

store apparently maintained against

hand that took the hand that was to be

clumsy and witless bungling with the

And then he was aware of a door

that banged violently in the hallway;

of the sound of a man's voice making

some indistinguishable demand; that

Rose's hand was suddenly whipped

away, before he could fit on the ring;

that the study door was flung open and

that this animal of a Marrophat had

He opened his mouth to protest-

and Marrophat silenced him with a

precipitated himself into the room.

dith Trine, you idiot-not Rose!"

Blankly Alan turned to the girl.

rophat's assertion. And as if this were

as never could have been brewed in

Rose's gentle nature.

of his sweetheart's hand

precisely similar emergencies; of

as in a glass, darkly.

As this moment approached

dress, and helped the girl in.

fully short lapse of time.

"That Woman is Judith Trine, You Idiot-Not Rose!"

inclined to believe that Marrophat | chance to move aside, but seized him | surprise had gained the closed door so flercely by the wrists that he instinctively lifted to protect himself, stay him. and she fairly threw him half a dozen feet from her. He brought up with a crash against the wall even as the door slammed behind the girl.

When Alan, the first to recover, gained the sidewalk, she was already in the taxicab. Whatever reward she had promised the man, he whipped his withdrawing her head from the winsudden death.

on the minister's heels, Marrophat leaped into his own car and, as if he the less vaguely recognizable. had not heard her threat or received substantial proof of her earnestness, tore off in pursuit.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

And the Rose.

Taking the dazed young man by the hand, as though he had been a child. the Reverend Mr. Wright led Alan back to his study and established him in a comfortable armchair beside his

dear young friend," he insisted in a soothing voice.

At the elbow of the Reverend Mr. Wright a telephone shrilled impera- the hallway. tively. With a gesture of professional

Mr. Law is already here. I must tell

He checked with a reproving glance for Alan, who was twitching his sleeve | treads. insistently. "If you please," Alan begged, "let

me speak to Digby at once. Forgive Reluctantly the minister surrendered

the telephone "That you, Digby?"

"Alan! Bless my soul, what are you doing over there? Is Miss Trine with you? But how can that be possible?" "Rose? No. What about her?" Alan demanded, stammering with anxiety. "Why-one of my spies has just re-

ported by telephone. He was going on duty this morning when he saw a young woman-either Rose or Judith -wearing a rough coat over boudoir dress-climb out of one of the basement windows of Trine's house. She was apparently in great distress of mind and anxious to escape without being seen from the house; but before my man-whose post of observation is in the third story of one of the houses opposite-could get to the street, she had been caught by several rough-looking customers, who rushed out of Trine's house, seized the girl, and made off with her in a motor-car bearing a New Jersey license number. I am sending men to watch the Jersey

ferries. Call me up in an hour-". Without a word of response, and without a word of apology to the Reverend Mr. Wright, Alan dropped the receiver, snatched up his hat, and fled

that house like a man demented. The suburb dropped behind a maze Rose, escaping from Trine's house of streets where dwellings stood shouloverpowered and made the captive of der to shoulder and dooryards were Trine's lowest creatures—gunmen pos scant. The car swept up to a corner sibly, of the stamp of that animal house of modest and homely aspect. whom Trine had charged with the as Two minutes more, and Alan was exsassination of Alan the night before! changing salutations with and making

There was neither a motor-car in his bride-to-be known to Digby's good sight for him to charter nor any time to waste in seeking one. Alan could only hope to find one on his way back toward the ferry. It must have been upwards of an bour before he came into a street which he recognized, by its dinginess and squalor, as that in which he had thrown Marrophat from the running-board of the taxicab.

fore his vision. "He viewed the world And then, as he paused, breathless and footsore, to cast about him for the He was aware of a decently furway to the ferry, a touring car turned a corner at top speed and slowed to a nesses in the guise of unassuming stop before that selfsame tenement of the unsavory aspect to whose sidewalk hold; of the Rev. Mr. Wright himself he had seen Marrophat assisted by the loafers of the quarter. And this touring car was occupied

by some half-a-dozen ruffians in whose hands a young girl writhed and struggled when, immediately on the stop, they jumped out and wrestled her out with brutal inconsideration. Like a shot Alan had crossed the

street-but only to bring up nose to his wife's and placed it in his; of his the panels of the tenement door, and to find himself seized and thrown task of fitting that ring to the finger | roughly aside by a burly denizen when he grasped the knob and made as if to follow in. "Keep back, young feller!" his as

sailant warned him viciously. "Keep outa this, now, if you don't want to ropes. get into trouble." To the speaker's side another ranged, eyeing Alan with a formidable scowl. At discretion he stepped back and turned as if persuaded to mind his own business, then swung on his heel

caught the two in the very act of open-

ing the door, and threw himself be-"You fool! Drop that ring! Stop tween them. this farce! Don't you know whom An elbow planted heavily in the pit They heaved with a will. His feet you're marrying? That woman is Juof the stomach of one disposed of him | the ground, he soared, he caught the for the time being. A blow from the shoulder sent the other reeling to the cease hauling, drew himself up on this Her flaming face, her sullen eyes, gutter. And Alan was in the tene- last, backed a little ways down it and her very pose, from which the man- ment's lowermost hall-a foul and calculating his direction nicely, with ner of Rose had dropped like a cast evil-odored place, dark as a pit the a running jump launched himself out garment, confessed the truth of Marinstant the door was closed, its murk over the street. relieved only by the flame of a keronot enough, Judith confessed it doubly

sene lamp smoking in a bracket near

with a sudden outbreak of such rage | the foot of the stairs. Sounds of scuffling of feet were au- truly toward that window where Rose dible on the first landing. Alan ad- was waiting. Then its force slack-"You devil!" she cried-and threw dressed himself impetuously to the ened. For an awful instant he beherself in front of Marrophat with a staircase, gaining its top in half a lieved that he had failed. But with the spring as lithe as that of a leopardess. dozen leaps, and only in time to see a last expiring ounce of impetus, he was Like red flames, rises to the throng The crack of his weapon was prac- "Take warning now from me: keep door slammed at the forward end of brought within grasping distance of tically coincident with a metallic thud out of my way forever after this—or the hall and hear a key turned in its the window sill. beneath the rear seat of the taxicab. | take the consequences! God knows," lock.

Surmising that the gasoline tank had He was in her way, between her and cleared, but threw himself headlong angrily out of the windows as he He dian't pause to wait for it to be A great tongue of tawny flame licked been punctured by the bullet, he was the open door. She gave him no into their midst, and by dint of the swung her back to safety.

before they recovered and sought to Indifferent to them all, he shook the

knob and shouted: "Rose! Rose!" Her cry came back to him, a muffled scream: "Alan! Help! Help!" Backing away with a mad idea of throwing himself bodily against the door and breaking it down, he was suddenly confronted by a hideous mask of machine away as if from the fear of humanity-face of man all misshapen, bruised and swollen and disfigured And darting from the house hard with smears of dried blood and a dirty bandage round his temples, but none

The words that streamed from its distorted lips drove recognition home. "Gee, fellers, look't who's here! If it ain't th' guy what threw me off'n that girder this mornin'. Stand back and let me kill th'-"

Without the hesitation of a heartbeat Alan swung heavily for the thug's jaw. The blow went solidly home. The man fell like a poled ox.

Pandemonium ensued. Rallying to their comrade, the rufflans attacked Alan with one mind and one intent. "Sit there and compose yourself, my Murder would have been done then and there had it not been for a rotten banister-rail, which gave way, precipitating the lot to the ground floor of

Simultaneously the lamp on the wall patience he turned to the instrument, was struck from its bracket and Yes . . Yes: this is Mr. sene to receive the burning wick. The Not coming? But, my dear sir, trice the hallway was a lake of burning oil, and hungry flames were licking up the rotting wallpaper and eating into decayed baseboards and stair

Still fighting like a madman, contesting every foot of the way, Alan was borne down the hall and out of the front door. A scream of "Fire!" greeted him as he reeled out into the open. It was echoed by a dozen throats.

The doorway vomited men and women of the tenement. They choked it for a time, blocking both egress and ingress. By the time they broke out and left the way clear a solid wall of flame stood behind it. Thrice Alan essayed to pass that

barrier of fire, and thrice it threw him back. Then, struggling and kicking to release himself and try again, he was seized by a brace of able-bodied policemen and rushed fifty feet from the house before let go.

Lack of breath checked him momen

tarily. He looked up, dashing from his smarting eyes tears drawn by the stifling clouds of smoke, and saw vaguely at the second story window a woman leaning out and shrieking for

That it was hopeless to attempt the staircase he well knew. Drawing aside, he endeavored to come to his sober senses, and cast about for some more feasible way to effect the rescue of his Rose.

The tenement occupied one corner of a narrow street. Directly opposite, a storage warehouse stood upon the other corner. Before this last was the common landing stage for truck de liveries, protected by a shed-roof And, suspended from a timber that peered out over the eaves, a hoisting



It was the work of a minute to convince a thick-headed policeman that the attempt was feasible and should be permitted. It was the work of less than another minute to rig a loop in the line and fasten round his body beneath the arms. Volunteers did not lack; a couple of husky longst sprang to the ropes at his first call

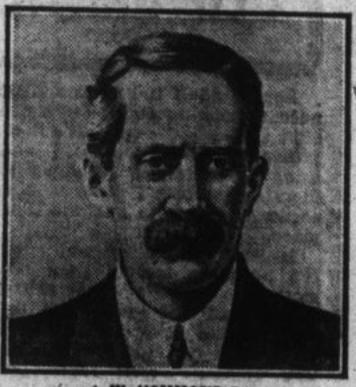
The momentum of his leap carried throng assembled in the street and

Hauling himself up, he gathered her

.s. a. (Continued Next Saturday.)

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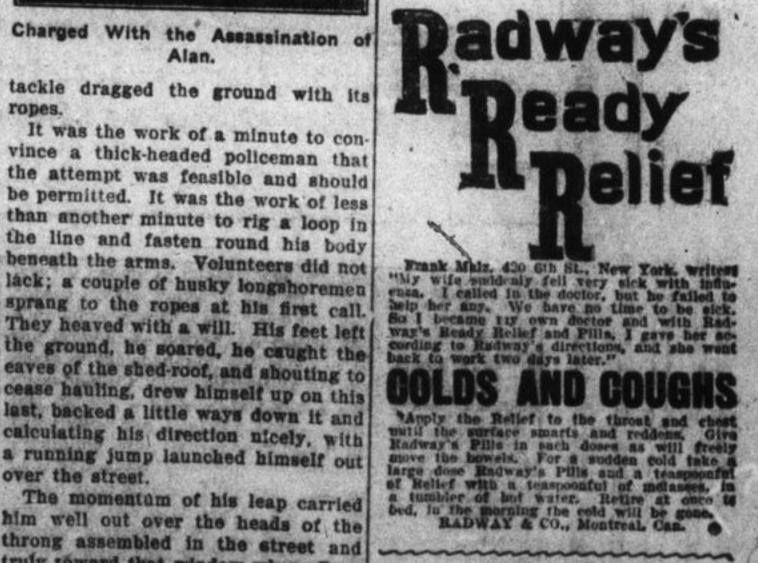
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