

# a marrative of METROPOLITAN LIF CHARLES KLEIN ARTHUR HORNBLOW ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAY WALTERS

#### SYNOPSIS.

Howard Jeffries, banker's son, under the evit Influence of Robert Underwood, televe-student at Yale, leads a life of issipation, marries the daughter of a sommed by his father. He tries to get word, merve and it will all be over." The strongest swimmer must go under some time. I've played my last card and I've lost. Death is better than going to jail. What good is life any-way without money? Just a moment's merve and it will all be over." Dening the drawer in the desk, he to kee the place and the adverted the place and to kot ut he revolver again. He turned to diver in his hand and regarded fear-fully the polished surface of the in-strument that bridged life and death. He had completely forgotten Howard's the advantage of his intimacy with the had completely forgotten Howard's were lengues away. Like a man woh is drowning, and close to death, he saw with surprising distinctness a the denies him the house. Alties, to downing, and close to death, he saw with surprising distinctness a

"It's no use battling against the tide. The strongest swimmer must go under

kaleidoscopic view of his past life. He gone mother, the happy home where he spent his childhood. Then came the association with bad companions, the first step in wrongdoing, stealing out of a comrade's pocket in school, the death of his mother, leaving homewith downward progress until he gradually drifted into his present dishonest way of living. What was the good of regrets? He could not recall his mother to life. He could never rehabilitate himself among decent men and women. The world had suddenly become too small for him. He must go, and quickly. Fingering the pistol nervously, he sat before the mirror and placed it against his temple. The cold steel gave him a sudden shock. He wondered if it would hurt, and if there would be instant oblivion. The glare of the electric light in the room disconcerted him. It occurred to him that it would be easier in the dark. Reaching out his arm, he turned the electric button, and the room was immediately plunged into darkness, except for the moonlight which entered through the windows, imparting a ghostly aspect to the scene. On the do, he halted in painful suspense. other side of the room, behind the The door opened and a man entered. screen, a red glow from the open fire (ell on the sleeping form of Howard and as the latter was to see him. He Jeffries.

He thought he had heard a woman's down the first staircase when he voice-a voice he knew. Perhaps that are an arrived and and was only a dream. He must have

been asleep some time, because the man! Stop that man!" lights were out and, seemingly, everywhat the noise which started him all the faster. He leaped down four could have been. Suddenly he heard steps at a time in his anxiety to get a groan. He listened intently, but all away. But it was no easy matter dewas still. The silence was uncanny. scending so many flights of stairs. It

ard cautiously groped his way about, main floor. trying to find the electric button. He had no idea what time it was. It aroused. Telephone calls had quickmust be very late. What an ass he ly warned the attendants, who had was to drink so much! He wondered promptly sent for the police. By the what Annie would say when he didn't time Howard reached the main enreturn. He was a hound to let her trance he was intercepted by a mob sit up and worry like that. Well, this too numerous to resist. would be a lesson to him-it was the Things certainly looked black for

scrape or other.

He was gradually working his way lookers. He had taken his usual Sun-It was a man lying prostrate. Stooping, he recognized the figure.

claimed. At first he believed his classmate was asleep, yet considered it strange aroused his suspicion. He hurried into that he should have selected so un the apartment and found his master comfortable a place. Then it occurred lying dead on the floor in a pool of

to him that he might be ill. Shaking him by the shoulder, he cried: "Hey, Underwood, what's the matter?

No response came from the prostrate figure. Howard stooped lower, to see better, and accidentally touching Underwood's face, found it clammy and wet. He held his hand up in the moonlight and saw that it was covered with blood. Horror-stricken, he cried:

"My God! He's bleeding-he's hurt!"

What had happened? An accident -or worse? Quickly he felt the man's pulse. It had ceased to beat. Under wood was dead.

For a moment Howard was too much overcome by his discovery to know what to think or do. What dreadful tragedy could have happened? Carefully groping along the mantelpiece, he at last found the electric button and turned on the light. There, stretched out on the floor, lay Underwood, with a bullet hole in his left temple, from which blood had flowed freely down on his full-dress shirt. It was a ghastly sight. The man's white, set face, covered with a crimson stream, made a repulsive spectacle. On the floor near the body

saw with surprising distinctness a evident that Underwood had never face, they whispered one to another: bed. The shooting had saw himself an innocent, impulsive curred either while the angry dispute precinct. He's a terror. It'll go hard school boy, the pride of a devoted was going on or after the unknown with any prisoner he gets in his visitor had departed. The barrel of clutches! the revolver was still warm, showing that it could only have been discharged a few moments before. Suddenly it flashed upon him that Underwood might have committed suicide. But it was useless to stand there theorizing. Something must be done. He must alarm the hotel people or from Ferris to the white-faced Howcall the police. He felt himself turn hot and cold by turn as he realized the serious predicament in which he himself was placed. If he aroused the hotel people they would find him here alone with a dead man. Suspicion would at once be directed at him, and it might be very difficult for him | to establish his innocence. Who would believe that he could have fallen asleep in a bed while a man killed himself in the same room? It sounded preposterous. The wisest course for

Stop that 'Murder! Stop thui! There was a rush of feet and hum body had gone to bed. He wondered of voices, which made Howard run

Now thoroughly frightened, How- took him several minutes to reach the By this time the whole hotel was

last time he'd ever touch a drop. Of him. As he sat, white and trembling, course, he had promised her the same under guard in a corner of the enthing a hundred times before, but this trance hall, waiting for the arrival of time he meant it. His drinking was the police, the valet breathlessly gave always getting him into some fool the sensational particulars to the rapidly growing crowd of curious on

along the room, when suddenly he day out and on returning home at stumbled over something on the floor. midnight, as was his custom, he had C. W. MERTZ let himself in with his latchkey. TO his astonishment he had found this "Why-it's Underwood!" he ex- man, the prisoner, about to leave the premises. His manner and remarks were so peculiar that they at once

> blood. In his hurry the assassin had dropped his revolver, which was lying near the corpse. As far as he could

see, nothing had been taken from the Both Phones apartment. Evidently the man was disturbed at his work and, when suddenly surprised, had made the bluff that he was calling on Mr. Underwood. They had got the right man, that was certain. He was caught redhanded, and in proof of what he said, the valet pointed to Howard's righ

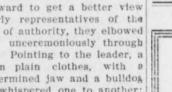
hand, which was still covered with blood. "How terrible!" exclaimed a woman bystander, averting her face, "So

young, too! "It's all a mistake, I tell you. It's all a mistake," cried Howard, almost panic-stricken, "I'm a friend of Mr Underwood's.

"Nice friend!" sneered an onlooker "Tell that to the police," laughed another.

"Or to the marines!" cried a third. "It's the chair for his'n!" opined a fourth

By this time the main entrance hall was crowded with people, tenants and passersby attracted by the unwonted commotion. A scandal in high life is always caviare to the sensation seeker. Everybody excitedly in quired of his neighbor:



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highwayman. Discovering his true char-sector she denies him the house. Alleta receives a note from Underwood, threat-ening suicide. She decides to go and see him. He is in desperate financial straits. Art dealers for whom he has been acting the cannot make good. Howard Jeffries underwood for \$2,000 and is told by the latter that he is in debt up to his eyes. Howard drinks himself into a maudin condition, and goes to sleep on a divan. A caller is announced and Underwood draws a screen around the drunken steeper. Alleta enters. She demands a promise from him that he will not take his He, pointing to the disgrace that would attach to herself. Underwood re-fuses to promise unless she will renew ther patronage.

### CHAPTER VII .-- Continued.

"I don't believe you intend to carry out your threat. I should have known from the first that your object was to frighten me. The pistol display was highly theatrical, but it was only a bluff. You've no more idea of taking your life than I have of taking mine. I was foolish to come here. I might have spared myself the humiliation of this clandestine interview. Goodpight!"

She went toward the door. Underwood made no attempt to follow her. In a hard, strange voice, which he scarcely recognized as his own, he merely said:

"Is that all you have to say?"

"Yes," replied Alicia, as she turned at the door. "Let it be thoroughly un derstood that your presence at my house is not desired. If you force gourself upon me in any way, you must take the consequences."

Underwood bowed, and was silent. She did not see the deathly pallor of his face. Opening the door of the spartment which led to the hall, she again turned.

"Tell me, before I go-you didn't nean what you said in your letter, did rouT

"I'll tell you nothing." replied Unlerwood doggedly.

She tossed her head scornfully.

"I don't believe that a man who is his has the courage to carry out his hreat." Stuffing the letter back into ser bag, she added: "I should have hrown it in the waste-paper basket. mt on second thoughts, I think I'll eep it. Good-night."

"Good-night," echoed Underwood sechanically.

He watched her go down the long allway and disappear in the elevator. hen, shutting the door, he came lowly back into the room and sat at there motionless, his head bent ms deep silence, broken only by Howrd's regular breathing and the loud ag of the clock.

Slowly, deliberately, Underwood raised the pistol to his temple and appearance was rather that of a servfired.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Hello! What's that?"

slumber by the revolver's loud report, ty. Howard sat up with a jump and loftily: rubbed his eyes. On the other side of the screen, concealed from his ob- sir." servation, there was a heavy crash of you a friend of Mr. Underwood's, sir?" oward enough to write a letter like a body falling with a chair-then all was quiet.

> dimly make out outlines of aesthetic swered foolishly: furniture and bibelots. Ah, he remembered now! He was in Under- think anything is the matter?" wood's apartment.

Rubbing his eyes, he tried to recall "It's late. I'm going." how he came there, and slowly his be-

body came. Quickly he picked up his hat and made for the door. Just as he was about to lay hand on the handle there was the click of a latchkey. Thus headed off, and not knowing what to He looked as surprised to see Howwas clean-shaven and neatly dressed. yet did not look the gentleman. His ant. All these details flashed before Howard's mind before he blurted out: "Who the devil are you?"

him would be to get away before any-

The man looked astonished at the question and eyed his interlocutor Startled out of his Gargantuan closely, as if in doubt as to his identi-In a cockney accent he said

"I am Ferris, Mr. Underwood's man, to a police sergeant at his side, he Suspiciously, he added: "Are said: He might well ask the question, for Howard's disheveled appearance and Scared, not knowing where he was, ghastly face, still distorted by terror, Howard jumped to his feet. For a was anything but reassuring. Taken moment he stood still, trying to col- by surprise, Howard did not know lect his senses. It was too dark to what to say, and like most people discern anything plainly, but he could questioned at a disadvantage, he an-

What makes you "Matter? No. Brushing past the man, he added:

"Stop a minute!" cried the man me! own at his desk. For ten minutes he fuddled brain began to work. He reservant. There was something in look at the dead man." membered that he needed \$2,000, and Howard's manner that he did not like. prward, every limb relaxed. There that he had called on Robert Under- Passing quickly into the sitting room, wood to try and borrow the money. he called out: "Stop a minute!" But Yes, he recalled that perfectly well. Howard did not stop. Terror gave Some men are born rich, some Then he and Underwood got drinking him wings and, without waiting for achieve riches and some enter the po-"It's ail up," he muttered to himself. and talking, and he had fallen asleep. the elevator, he was already half way litical arena.-Harvard Lampoon.

"That's Capt. Clinton, chief of the Followed by his uniformed myr-

midons, the police official pushed his way to the corner where sat Howard. dazed and trembling, and still guarded by the valet and elevator boys. "What's the matter here?" demanded the captain gruffly, and looking ard. The valet eagerly told his story:

"I came home at midnight, sir, and

found my master, Mr. Robert Under-

wood, lying dead in the apartment,

shot through the head." Pointing to

Howard, he added: "This man was

in the apartment trying to get away.

You see his hand is still covered with

Capt. Clinton chuckled, and expand-

ing his mighty chest to its fullest,

licked his chops with satisfaction.

This was the opportunity he had been

looking for-a sensational murder in

a big apartment hotel, right in the

very heart of his precinct! Nothing

could be more to his liking. It was a

rich man's murder, the best kind

to attract attention to himself. The

sensational newspapers would be full

of the case. They would print col-

umns of stuff every day, together with

his portrait. That was just the kind

of publicity he needed now that he

was wire-pulling for an inspectorship.

They had caught the man "with the

goods"-that was very clear. He

promised himself to attend to the

after. He'd see that no tricky lawyer

got the best of him. Concealing, as

well as he could, his satisfaction, he

drew himself up and, with blustering

show of authority, immediately took

command of the situation. Turning

"Maloney, this fellow may have had

an accomplice. Take four officers and

Conviction was what he was

blood."

rest.

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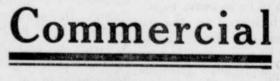
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watch every exit from the hotel. Arrest anybody attempting to leave the building. Put two officers to watch the fire escapes. Send one man on the roof. Go!" "Yes, sir," replied the sergeant, as he turned away to execute the order.

Capt. Clinton gave two strides forward, and catching Howard by the coltar, jerked him to his feet.

Now, young feller, you come with We'll go upstairs and have a (TO BE CONTINUED.)

Thrust Upon Them. Some men are born rich, some

