

Weird Tales

REGISTERED IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE



A MAGAZINE of the

BIZARRE and UNUSUAL

VOLUME X

NUMBER 6

Published monthly by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company, 2457 E. Washington Street, Indianapolis, Ind. Entered as second-class matter March 20, 1923, at the post office at Indianapolis, Ind., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies, 25 cents. Subscription, \$2.50 a year in the United States; \$3.00 a year in Canada. English office: Charles Lavell, 13, Serjeant's Inn, Fleet Street, E. C. 4, London. The publishers are not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts, although every care will be taken of such material while in their possession. The contents of this magazine are fully protected by copyright and must not be reproduced either wholly or in part without permission from the publishers.

NOTE—All manuscripts and communications should be addressed to the publishers' Chicago office at 450 East Ohio Street, Chicago, Ill. FARNSWORTH WRIGHT, Editor.

Copyright, 1927, by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company

Contents for December, 1927

Cover Design	Hugh Rankin	
<i>Illustrating a scene in "The Infidel's Daughter"</i>		
The Eyrie		724
<i>A chat with the readers</i>		
The Saturnienne	Clark Ashton Smith	728
<i>Versé</i>		
The Infidel's Daughter	E. Hoffmann Price	731
<i>Landon built a ziggurat in Feringhistan that he might aspire to the Hundred and One Strange Kisses of Sarpanit</i>		
The Sword of Jean Lafitte	W. K. Mashburn, Jr.	753
<i>The shade of the old pirate returns to wreak vengeance upon the last descendant of his enemy's family</i>		
The Swooping Wind	Wilford Allen	764
<i>A strange little tale about a scientist who was the sport and creature of the winds, and under their protection</i>		

(Continued on Next Page)

(Continued from Preceding Page)

- The Witch-Baiter** ----- **R. Anthony** 769
A torture-tale of the witchcraft craze in Holland—a Dutch zealot, fanatic superstition, and a day of reckoning
- The Devils of Po Sung** ----- **Bassett Morgan** 775
A creepy, powerful tale of brain transplantation—a pirate story of the South Seas
- White Lilies** ----- **Josie McNamara Lydon** 788
Verse
- The Canal** ----- **Everil Worrell** 789
Through the night flapped evil shapes, vampire-things of loathsome aspect—a shuddery horror-tale
- The Jungle** ----- **Cristel Hastings** 802
Verse
- Bells of Oceana** ----- **Arthur J. Burks** 803
A gooseflesh story of the sea by the author of "The Invading Horde" and "The Ghosts of Steamboat Coulee"
- Folks Used to Believe**
The Dragon and His Kinsmen ----- **Alvin F. Harlow** 812
The dragon, the griffin, the wyvern and the hippogriff
- The Dream** ----- **Maurice Rothman** 813
A peculiar story is this, a fantastic tale about a dreamer whose dreams were more vivid than reality
- White Orchids** ----- **Gordon Philip England** 819
The extravagant passion for rare flowers led to a weird and grisly adventure, and disaster
- When the Dead Return** ----- **Percy B. Prior** 826
It is sometimes unpleasant to have a husband return from the grave, especially if the widow is married again
- The Sleepers** ----- **August W. Derleth** 829
A five-minute ghost-story—the passenger was annoyed at finding his berth occupied by a specter
- The Time-Raider (Part 3)** ----- **Edmond Hamilton** 832
A four-part serial story about an entity that sweeps back through time to seize its victims
- Weird Story Reprint**
Dracula's Guest ----- **Bram Stoker** 849
This story was originally intended to be part of the book, "Dracula," but was excised before the book was published

For Advertising Rates in WEIRD TALES Apply Direct to

WEIRD TALES

Western Advertising office:
YOUNG & WARD, Mgrs.
360 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, Ill.
Phone, Central 6269

Eastern Advertising Office:
GEORGE W. STEARNS, Mgr.
Flatiron Building
New York, N. Y.
Phone, Ashland 7329

"The DREAM"

by MAURICE ROTHMAN



"The twilight atmosphere was tense with romance."

HE WAS a mild-mannered, self-conscious young man. He talked in a steady, low-pitched voice, as one who is inordinately anxious to be understood. As he talked, his body moved and twitched nervously. Quite unconsciously he shifted his weight frequently from one foot to the other; and with more frequency a mellow pink glow suffused his face and neck. He was dressed shabbily and wore glasses.

"You see," he said, "I am quite perplexed. I am not sure whether I am at this moment in the world of reality, or whether I am talking to you in a dream. There is a half-chance that I am dreaming, and if I am, it will be impossible for you to carry my story further, so I can afford to be more expository.

"I live in a white stone mansion just this side of Morristown: it is on the highway, and lies a quarter of a mile east of Morristown, on the north side of the road. There is a yellow, corrugated brick wall that runs for about three hundred yards facing the road. The wall is about seven feet high and effectually isolates the estate from the road. On the top of the wall runs a short cast-iron grille about a foot high with nude, winged maidens pinioned on black fleurs-de-lis every six feet or so. At first I thought their exposed, rounded breasts vulgar taste, but they are small figures and quite eight feet above the ground, so not easily observed from the road.

"I have been away from home a long time. Mother and Kate are prob-

ably worrying sick over my absence. It may sound queer, but for the life of me I can not find the yellow brick wall with the nude iron maidens. Oh, I have been to every police precinct, but they smile as they assure me that they are searching—then they lead me to the door.

“At present I live in a dark, stuffy flat on Broome Street. Mother and Kate are there, too.

“Oh, do not be alarmed. Please listen to me: I am sure I shall make myself clear. You see, either the house on Broome Street is a dream and I am dreaming now, or the estate near Morristown is a dream and my present status is reality. I am quite confused. This afternoon I shall go again to hunt for the yellow corrugated brick wall with the cast-iron grille. . . .

“You see, I have always been what is generally known as a day-dreamer. After one of my daily trips to the *News* office I was walking slowly homeward. I walked slowly because the atmosphere at home was not an inducement to increase my speed, and because by walking slowly and looking downward I could lose myself facily in the current dream. I could go home with a clear conscience because the *News* had contained nothing suitable. I squelched a light qualm about the position as book-keeper at Reid’s because I was quite certain that the young men on wheels would be there long before I could walk there. I had no carfare.

“As I said, I was walking slowly, looking downward. The mental vista that presented itself caused a pleasurable flutter about the heart. Dressed in the trappings of a general, I was seated on a white horse. From my perch on the hill-top, I could see the drilling thousands. My subordinates snapped sharp commands that were mechanically obeyed. A multitude of civilians watched in silent awe. The city officials stood on each side

of me and felt important because of the juxtaposition.

“About face! Forr-rrd march! Charge!

“It was an awe-inspiring spectacle, the steel glistening and scintillating in the noonday sun. The ‘Baby General’s’ soldiers were the best trained and most loyal in the world. I was whelmed with pride and importance. I was quite young, hence the appellation ‘Baby General.’

“I was beginning to feel annoyed with myself. The scene on the hillside began to stale. Let me see, it began with the World War in the daily papers back in 1917. There was a probability of my going. Engendered in the World War, the dream was woven, ramified and exploited until I arrived at the crux, the scene on the hillside. I felt thwarted, frustrated. Nights I would toss about in bed searching for a possibility of continuity. It was futile. The scene on the hillside confronted me. I felt smug on my white charger. The multitude offered their meed. . . .

“You must bear in mind that the ‘Baby General’ dream continued for about six months—the first three months being creative. Toward the end of the period I was searching frantically for a new dream. In the meantime I held tenaciously to the scene on the hillside, or, as is more probable, it held me.

“It is a cruel axiom that with poverty the baser instincts rise to the surface. If I am not dreaming at present, then I must admit that I can not feel anything more for my mother than the prescribed solicitude of a son. After I have searched the highway near Morristown for the yellow face-brick wall with cast-iron grille bearing the nude maidens, I shall return to my flat on Broome Street to face a tirade that has assumed the character of the perennial murmur of a brook. Now when I pass a brook, its chronic ranting maddens

me. My mother, I am forced to admit, does not present an esthetic appearance. Her face is florid and patchy, and it rests squarely (with no vestige of a neck) on a short, squat body.

“‘And you—you call yourself the man of the family! Your poor sister Kate standing for insults from old Mr. Brabin so she could keep her job—bringing in a measly sixteen dollars a week with which I am expected to run a household! You’re a jelly-fish, nincompoop, lazy ne’er-do-well! I suppose it would give you great pleasure to see me go out to scrub floors to feed your moon-calf body. Wake up, fool! Oh! if your father were alive now! Oh! if——’

“My sister Kate would come in, throw a dull look at me and flop into a chair by the table.

“Tonight, after supper, I shall leave the inimical atmosphere of the stuffy, greasy kitchen, throw myself on the folding-bed in the parlor (it is seldom folded) and lose myself in thoughts of Ruthie. Ruthie has become too real to be called a dream character. I must tell you about Ruthie. She is a slim, lovely creature who has plighted her troth to me so often that I’m beginning to worry about its repetition. Ruthie has deep brown eyes and a mass of brown curly hair. She is always dressed in white fluffy things that seem to attest her purity. We love each other in a pure and noble way. In fact our love is the epitome of true love for all time. There is a crux to the Ruthie dream also, but I am working assiduously at ramification. I am beset with a horrible fear that I can not ramify it in any way. I can not remember under what circumstances I became acquainted with my beloved. As I throw myself on the folding-bed, the scene that I shall conjure will be of Ruthie and myself parting. I am leaving to go to war. I feel self-conscious because of the scene Ruthie is

creating at the railroad station. But the feeling at my heart is too golden and beautiful to be likened to anything on this earth.

“I don’t want you to become impatient. I shall come to the purpose of my story very shortly.

“I went about writing Ruthie on every occasion that presented itself. In dust, in earth, in snow, on paper.

“Perhaps you can suggest a way to prolong the Ruthie dream. Good God! I am afraid I have arrived at the end of the tether. The scene at the railroad station is becoming tiresome. You can picture the scene on the station platform. It is mid-afternoon of a sunny day. The soldiers have all boarded the train; the train has begun to move. Ruthie’s beautiful eyes are tear-filled as she holds tenaciously to my arm. I drag her with me as I move toward the train.

“I assure you I would never tell you this if I were certain you are real. You appreciate the nature of my position? You must understand the character of my day-dream before you could understand the dilemma that I am confronted with. I do not know whether I am dreaming now and my stay in Morristown was real, or whether this is real and my home in Morristown was a dream.

“You see, Ruthie does not possess what is generally conceived as feminine beauty. No, she is not beautiful like the calm of silver moonlight irradiating an expansive lake; she is not beautiful like the evening sun in a color riot over the ocean; she is not exotically beautiful like a ponderous yellow moon cooling the scorched Arabian desert sands. Ruthie is pretty and fluttery and ingenuous. Her beauty is like the silver tinkle of little bells—like the perennial drip-drop of a fountain in a garden on a clear, moonlit night. She is not glorious and riotous like the sun, or mellow and serene like the moon, but rather like a tiny, scintillating

twinkling star—the queen of the stars. . . .

* * * * *

WHEN I came to my senses I lay a long time staring at the window. The cream curtains stirred listlessly under the gentle pressure of the garden-scented breeze. The evanescent odor of garden flowers pervaded the room. Through the curtains I could see diaphanous white wisps of clouds forming exotic patterns in the blue sky. As I turned my head to study my room, I felt a sharp pain at the back of my head. My mind was too busy with other thoughts to dwell long on that pain. I noticed, for one thing, that the rectangular mahogany table with the Chinese joss book-ends on it was familiar. The rich carpet was decorated with nondescript floral patterns: the carpet was familiar—every object in the room was familiar. A quiescent, soothing thought pervaded my being: this was my room—my home. I entrenched my body deeper into the softness of the white bedclothes, and drew the silken cover over my chin. I sank my body deep into the cool fragrance—and purred.

“Have you ever watched a cat purr when you stroked it gently along the spine? I had often wondered if a human could feel the spontaneous beatitude a cat feels when it purrs. Well, when I became sensible that my slummy home on Broome Street was a horrible nightmare—and I would never again see my mother blowsy and dirty—that my sister Kate was in reality prim, neat and vivacious; that, in short, this luxury and beauty was reality, the nerves in my body tinglingly purred.

“The nightmare seemed to have endured for long ages—the misery of existence under impoverished conditions had seeped into my body as water is drawn into a sponge. I had been bloated with wretchedness. Now

the sponge felt supple and clean. I let my body relax. I could feel my body purring and gurgling as under the gentle strokes of some soothing influence.

“I should have known better than to take the dream seriously. The thought of my unfilial attitude toward my mother nettled me. That there should have been such lack of sympathy between us even in a dream was annoying.

“I sensed a presence in my room, and turned to look. A clean, glorified Kate—my own sister Kate—was observing me solicitously. She moved silently over to me, and stooped to stroke my hair. A faint, evanescent odor of perfume emanated from her. Her dress came open at the bosom, revealing soft, pink flesh. I noted that she was beautiful—large blue eyes, well-formed features, small soft nose with sensitive, quivering nostrils. Strange, but I felt contrite for mistreating her in a dream. I took her hand in mine and squeezed it.

“‘Feel better now, Danny boy?’

“It seemed ages since I had heard her say anything sympathetic to me. I felt moved almost to tears.

“‘It was a nasty accident,’ my sister continued, ‘but it is not serious. You will be out of bed by tomorrow. We had Dr. Briggs.’

“‘I must confess,’ I managed to say, ‘but I don’t know what happened to me. Enlighten me, Katie dear.’ I held her hand tightly.

“‘Oh,’ she said, ‘Rankin misjudged the distance between a car coming our way and a tree. You went kerplop clear out of the car. There was a slight cut under your left ear—that’s all. You’re all right, Danny boy.’

“‘We were in the Locomobile?’

“‘Yes, of course, didn’t you remember that?’

“‘Our Locomobile is a light tan?’ I persisted.

“ ‘Certainly, foolish boy, you should know that by this time. We’ve had it almost a year. Rankin looked so utterly dejected, Mother kept him.’

“ ‘I shut my eyes, letting my body seep in a feeling of wondrous content. I felt my chin quiver and my eyes fill. When I opened my eyes I saw Kate observing me quizzically.

“ ‘Tell me, Danny——’

“ ‘What?’ I wondered if I should.

“ ‘Tell me everything, Danny boy. You’ve had a bad dream. Tell me all about it.’

“ ‘Well——’ I fell silent.

“ ‘I held her left hand tightly. With her right hand she soothed my forehead with slow, methodical strokes.

“ ‘Tell me everything, Danny boy,’ she persisted.

“ ‘Well, here goes,’ I said. ‘Don’t let it shock you too much.

“ ‘I dreamed that we lived in a miserable, slummy flat in Newark. It was very realistic and caused me a great deal of pain. Mother was blowsy and naggy. You bristled with silent antipathy. Our impoverished condition evolved an atmosphere of dull, chronic antagonism. In the perennial struggle for existence, I felt unfit and misplaced. I tried, Katie, I tried. Early mornings I made the rounds of factories, and waited with other dull-eyed applicants for the employment manager. They always seemed to pass me by. By 1 o’clock I was sitting with the crowd at the *News* office—and oh, Kate, there was a sudden joy, when after a few futile attempts at job-hunting, I found myself walking slowly away from the downtown district—free to dream for the rest of the day. I fabricated beautiful visions of dream-texture.

“ ‘I came home to Broome Street one day, my mind aglow with a dazzling inspiration. The steps and halls were filthy with dust and spittle—and the bare boards creaked and sagged under my weight. On the third floor I pushed the door of our flat

open. Mother was wiping her coarse red hands on her apron. You were lying on the kitchen lounge, sobbing. The scene was not unfamiliar, so I rushed, unheeding, into the parlor, found paper and pencil, and began to write. I wrote hurriedly, feverishly, with no thought of the commercial value of my fantasy.

“ ‘Wearing sandals and loin-cloth, I was running with long, joyous strides along a forest trail. Perhaps I was an Indian runner. I felt lithe and carefree. Twigs and dried leaves rustled and snapped under my feet. Stooping to avoid overhanging branches, brushing insects from my face, I ran. The twilight atmosphere was heavy and tense with romance. I drank deeply of the wine-scented air. In a clearing two figures were dancing. Perhaps they were Pierrot and Pierrette. The air hung motionless, perfumed and tense. I found myself merged into the dance. Ruthie was in my arms, lissome, soft and smiling. We were the only two in the clearing. Perhaps *we* were Pierrot and Pierrette. We moved in wild fantastic swings. Neither of us had spoken. A big round moon came out to bathe us in a silvery glow.

“ ‘Then a voice from the kitchen, harsh and sibilant, cut into my consciousness:

“ ‘ ‘ ‘Mother, I tell you I won’t stand it much longer. Brabin grabbed me around the waist and kissed me. The touch of his horrid lips on mine was unbearable. I’m going to quit. I’ll find another job——’

“ ‘ ‘ ‘Gawd, and what’ll we do in the meantime? Tomorrow’s the first—Gawd, we’ll be put out——’

“ ‘ ‘ ‘Oh, Katie, it was horrible, horrible——’

“ ‘Silently, Kate continued to soothe my forehead with steady, soft strokes.

“ ‘Suddenly I sat up, a-quiver with determination.

“‘Kate, tell Rankin to get the car—the Locomobile—I’m all right. The only thing that’s the matter with me is the dream. I can’t shake it off. It may seem queer, but I want to go to Broome Street. Perhaps the old house is there: if it is, I’ll know it.’

“‘To what purpose—this trip?’

“‘To cement me to my present mode of living. The dream took hold of me in an eery way: I can’t shake it off, I tell you.’

“‘Very well,’ Kate assented. ‘Perhaps it is best.’

“**K**ATE left me alone. I became sensible again of the throbbing pain behind my left ear. I pondered on the route we would follow after we got to Newark. We must find Kinney Street—then left on Broome to Court Street. Yes, I would know it. What a wild adventure—searching for a house I had dreamed about!

“My thoughts were interrupted by my mother hurrying to my bed.

“‘Poor Danny!’ she gasped out of breath. ‘Kate just told me.’

“She was stout, but it added to her dignity. She carried her weight gracefully and withal made a charming and prepossessing matronly appearance.

“No, I would not be diverted. My mind was made up. Yes, she could come along—and Kate too. We could be back for dinner. It was final.

“It required some effort to dress. My clothes, patently of a fine texture, looked strangely unfamiliar. My mental equilibrium seemed to be turned slightly askew by the dream—drat the dream!

“By and by we were rolling noiselessly along the drive. The lawn shimmered rich green in the afternoon sun.

“Arrived at the gate house, we waited for Hare to open the massive doors. The yellow brick wall appeared formidable. Old Hare came hurrying rheumatically.

“‘And how is Mister Daniel?’ he asked deferentially, as we rolled out.

“I chafed as we sped along the countryside. Mother and Kate were obviously humoring me. We reached Newark, and Rankin found it necessary to shift gears frequently in the traffic. He often turned his head at an inquiring angle.

“‘Yes, straight ahead, Rankin.’

“I sat tensely erect, my emotions screwed to a high pitch. My heart beat clamorously.

“‘Now, to your left, Rankin. This is Broome Street. Why, everything is quite familiar!—that drug-store—that tenement—the next corner—now stop—stop—this is the house—this is it! I’m sure of it.’

“People collected, evidently attracted by the expensive make of car.

“In my excitement, I sprang up, pointing over the collected heads. ‘This is the house, Kate—Mother!’

“Then the devil got into the crowd and they began to laugh. They pointed horny fingers at me; and laughed. They leered. Some colored boys started to jig, pointing at me and laughing at the same time. I felt sick and foolish. I turned to Mother and Kate. Good God! they were laughing! Mother, Kate and Rankin—pointing fingers at me—laughing.

“You see, something strange must have occurred. Now, I am looking for the white stone mansion with the yellow brick wall. On top of the wall runs a short cast-iron grille about a foot high with nude winged maidens pinioned on black fleurs-de-lis every six feet or so. I am sure I shall find it. Mother and Kate are worrying over my absence.

“Perhaps you think I have never lived in a white stone mansion. Oh! I can prove it—I can prove it! I can show you the scar behind my left ear.

“Look—look closely. I am a little confused: perhaps it is behind the right ear. Do you see it?”