

Weird Tales

REGISTERED IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE

Volume 28 CONTENTS FOR JULY, 1936 No. 1

Cover Design	M. Brundage	
<i>Illustrating a scene in "Red Nails"</i>		
Necromancy in Naat	Clark Ashton Smith	2
<i>A strange and curious tale about the maiden Dalili, and the dead men who dived in the sea</i>		
Hagar	Edgar Daniel Kramer	15
<i>Verse</i>		
Red Nails	Robert E. Howard	16
<i>The tale of a weird roofed city and the strangest people ever spawned</i>		
When the World Slept	Edmond Hamilton	36
<i>A thrilling weird-scientific story about a catastrophe that put the whole world to sleep</i>		
Death	Alfred I. Tooke	48
<i>Verse</i>		
The Unborn	Ronal Kayser	49
<i>A vivid story of a weird pursuit that dogged a man's footsteps with doom inescapable</i>		
Loot of the Vampire (end)	Thorp McClusky	60
<i>An eery novel about a monstrosity that was dead, yet lived a ghastly life in death</i>		
Lost Paradise	C. L. Moore	75
<i>A fascinating tale about Northwest Smith and a weird love on another planet</i>		
Dream Sepulture	C. A. Butz	91
<i>Verse</i>		
The Return of Sarah Purcell	August W. Derleth	92
<i>Even in death she could not be happy without the doll she had loved in life</i>		
Kharu Knows All	Renier Wyers	97
<i>A brief tale of the retribution that struck the ghoul who preyed on a woman's love for her dead husband</i>		
The Kelpie	Manley Wade Wellman	101
<i>What was the hideous thing that rose up out of the little aquarium?—a short tale of horror</i>		
The Snakeskin Cigar-Case	Bodo Wildberg	105
<i>An unusual story about a dread experience in the tropics</i>		
Weird Story Reprint:		
The Ring of Thoth	A. Conan Doyle	109
<i>An eldritch tale of an Egyptian mummy, by a noted British author</i>		
The Eyrie		123
<i>Our readers exchange opinions about the magazine</i>		

Published monthly by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company, 2457 East 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 rates: One year in the United States and possessions, Cuba, Mexico, South America, Spain, \$2.50; Canada, \$2.75; elsewhere, \$3.00. English office: Otis A. Kline, c/o John Paradise, 86 Strand, W. C. 2, 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 840 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill. FARNSWORTH WRIGHT, Editor.

Copyright 1936, by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company.

COPYRIGHTED IN GREAT BRITAIN



WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH

When the World Slept

By EDMOND HAMILTON

A thrilling weird-scientific tale about a catastrophe that put the whole world into a strange slumber

NO COMPLETE history of the great catastrophe can ever be written, it is certain. The thing was too colossal for that. Only a partial account of its workings can ever be recorded, and I am the only man in the world who can do even that.

For I, Jason Lane, am the one man in the world whom the disaster spared. By a sheer, wild freak of chance, I escaped. When the rest of Earth was stricken, I was not, and so my eyes alone looked on those things which this world had never seen before, and which, God willing, it will never see again.

When the thing struck, in the spring of 1942, I was twenty-four years old. I was living alone in an old inherited farmhouse in the woods country north of Albany. For a year, after my graduation from my scientific school, I had been carrying on in this lonely old house certain bacteriological researches.

It is enough here to say that my studies were of an unusual nature, embracing an investigation into dormant germs found in meteorites that had fallen on Earth from outer space. I had been studying these alien germs for a year, and had succeeded in reviving them and growing cultures of two different species of them.

But when I came to test these different germs, I found my labors fruitless. Culture One I injected into a rabbit, and it had no effect whatever upon the animal. Then I injected it into myself, but it had no effect upon me either.

The other species of germs, Culture Two, had no more effect on the rabbit

than the first. Again I tested it on myself, injecting this culture also into my veins. Again there was no result whatever. In black anger at my failure, I flung the tube of Culture Two out into the yard, smashing it against a tree, and then brooded during the next few weeks upon my failure.

If I only had had any suspicion during those weeks of the doom that was slowly spreading over the Earth, unknown to me! But how was I to know what was going on in the outside world? I lived alone, had no relatives or close friends to visit me, and the nearest house was several miles away.

I did notice vaguely, during those brooding weeks, that the woods around my old house had become unusually *silent*. There did not seem to be any whistling or piping of birds, nor hum of insects or stir of small animals.

Also I noticed that under the trees near my house lay quite a number of birds and large insects, dead, as I thought then. But in my black and bitter moodiness, I was not sufficiently interested to examine them closer.

Several weeks had passed before I awoke suddenly to the fact that I was almost out of canned goods and other food supplies. A storekeeper in the nearest village had had an agreement with me to deliver supplies to me every fortnight, but he had missed coming the last two times.

It was necessary, therefore, that I drive to the village myself for the supplies. So on a sunny May morning I got into my

"This is a waste of time, Roselle. Every soul here is sleeping, just as in New York."



little car and started along the rough dirt road through the woods. I little realized that I was beginning such an odyssey of epic horror as no man had ever gone forth upon before.

As I drove through the sun-dappled woods, I noticed that along the road, as around my house, lay more birds apparently dead. Blue-jays, grackles, robins, flickers—there were scores of them. And nowhere in the woods stirred one living bird!

This aroused my interest despite my brooding moodiness. I stopped the car and got out to look at the dead birds. But when I picked one up, I discovered that it was *not* dead. Its little feathered body was slightly warm, its heart and lungs were operating very slowly, and it seemed wrapped in weird suspended animation.

I tried to revive it but could not break its strange sleep. I soon discovered that all the other birds were wrapped in the same unexplainable slumber, and noticed a chipmunk and a field-mouse that were

also sleeping. Butterflies and dragonflies were sleeping too, with closed wings. Even ants lay unmoving by their hills.

"What on Earth can have happened?" I asked myself, bewildered. "It must be some contagious form of suspended animation."

As I got back into my car and drove on, I wondered how great an area the thing was affecting. The hush of unwonted stillness in the woods was depressing. No piping and whistling of birds, no buzzing of insects, no barking of distant dogs. Only utter and unnerving silence.

I saw a sleeping red fox along the road, evidence that larger animals too had succumbed to the contagion of sleep. I was glad when I emerged from the woods into the open farm country north of Horton village.

A muddy automobile was parked along the road a little ahead. I pulled up behind it, for I wanted to ask its occupants how far this sleep-zone of animal life extended. Two men were sitting in the car, an elderly, red-faced farmer and a gangling youth in overalls.

I stuck my head into the car and asked them, "Have you noticed that all the birds and animals are asleep?"

The men did not answer or turn toward me, and a strange chill ran through me like a cold breath from the unknown. I shouted to them, my voice high and shrill now: "*Have you noticed that everything is asleep?*"

Still they did not move, and I saw now that their eyes were closed. They also were sleeping.

I must have stared frozenly at them for minutes. Then I shook them, shouted at them, yelled at the top of my voice. It was all useless—nothing could awaken them. They had been stricken by the sleep contagion exactly like the animals and birds. They were still living, but

their vital functions were incredibly slowed, held in suspended animation.

MY MIND was a churning horror as I got back into my car and drove on. Soon I came to other motionless cars along the road. But the people in them were all sleeping too. Some of the cars had run into fences, indicating that the sleep had come quite suddenly.

What in God's name, I asked myself wildly, could have cast this weird state of suspended animation over all life that I had seen so far? And by what chance had I escaped it, when the birds and other life around my house had succumbed to it? And over how great an area did the sleep extend? Surely, I told myself, it could not reach far; surely not as far as the village of Horton. I found myself muttering an inarticulate prayer as I drove on toward Horton.

But as I entered the village, I uttered a groan of despair. For no life moved in its neat streets. Cars were jammed together at several corners, their occupants all sleeping. People lay sleeping on sidewalks, in stores and houses, just as they had fallen.

I went into a drug-store, pulled a sleeping man out of the telephone booth, and tried to call Albany. There was no response from the operator. The line was dead.

There was a radio of the battery type in that drug-store. I turned it on and twirled the dial frantically. No announcer's voice came over the ether, not one sound to break the deathly silence.

I got back into my car and headed south toward Albany. By now my mind was in indescribable chaos. My one thought was that I must get out of this region of sleep, however far it extended.

I was in an unprecedented mental state as I drove south toward Albany that day, for I seemed the one wakeful person in

the whole sleeping countryside. Every village I passed through, with its sleepers cluttering sidewalks and doorways, its utter silence, added to my crushing horror. I fought hard to retain my sanity.

It was when I drove into Albany in the early afternoon that I began to lose the last shreds of hope. The city was as wrapped in slumber as every place else where I had been. The downtown streets were choked with sleeping crowds and cars that had collided when the sleep seized their drivers.

I had to leave my own car, indeed, at one of these impassable traffic jams. On the other side of the jam I selected a big blue touring-car that had run into the curb. A smartly dressed youth and girl were sleeping in the front seat. I lifted them out into a store, took the car, and drove on through Albany.

There was not a waking person or animal in the city. I was tired and faint from hunger, I began to realize; so I found a restaurant. I selected a meal from the cold foods in the kitchen and sat at a table eating it.

Strange meal, with sleeping people at the tables all around me, and sleeping waiters in the corners! Many another such meal I was to eat, and grow accustomed to it, but that day it seemed that I dined in a company of ghosts. I was glad to get out of the place.

I drove my blue phaeton into a service station, and with some trouble got the pumps working enough to fill my gasoline tank. Then I drove out, and after making several detours to avoid bad traffic jams at corners, I found myself headed south through the spring afternoon toward New York.

All that afternoon I kept telling myself, "There'll be someone awake in New York. There must be!"

But all the afternoon an insistent

voice in my brain kept whispering, "But suppose there *isn't*?"

I fought to suppress that thought. I would find somebody awake before long. I must!

But all the way from Albany south, those prosperous towns of the Hudson River valley were towns of sleep and silence. Nowhere in them moved one wakeful thing, and at no time did a sound break the unholy hush. Twice that afternoon I had to abandon my car and take another one, where the roads were impassable with traffic jams.

THE sun was sinking as I drove down through slumbering suburban cities toward Fort Lee and the west end of the great George Washington bridge.

The bridge was impassable to my car, its approaches choked with jammed cars whose occupants all slept. I started across on foot, through the deepening dusk.

Across the river lay New York, its mighty towers rising like dark pinnacles into the thickening twilight. It was that hour when lights should have been blinking forth in thousands of windows, when the shimmering glow of Broadway should have been flung on the sky.

But New York was dark—dark. Not one light gleamed from that mighty mountain range of buildings. Solemn and still they rose into the dusk, like a city of the dead.

I think I was weeping as I stumbled across the long bridge in that fateful twilight. I know that I looked down through the shadows and saw no movement of shipping in the dark waters of the harbor, save for some tugs that seemed idly drifting with the tide.

It was completely dark by the time I entered the city; dark as New York had never been before, a shrouding pall broken by not one gleam of man-made

light, and relieved only by the pale, in-curious glimmer of the stars.

I walked through the sleeping streets in a daze, not knowing where I wandered. The sleep appeared to have struck New York in the early morning, when its thoroughfares were crowded with pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Now the nighted streets were choked with automobiles and trucks, many of them that had crashed into one another; though, as I was later to notice, there had been few fatalities from this cause, since when people felt the sleep coming upon them they had apparently jammed on their brakes.

But the sidewalks! I could not walk in them, so crowded were they with sleeping forms, men, women and children of every class and degree. I had to walk along the curb, or when I was forced to the sidewalk by traffic jams, I had to step upon sleeping people.

I found myself in Times Square, even more crowded with sleepers than the side streets. I raised my voice in a frantic cry.

"Hello! Is anybody here awake?"

"Awake!" drifted a whispering echo through the stillness, but the thousands around me slept on.

The sight of the RCA tower raised a hope in my mind that from its top I might be able to see, somewhere, a man-made light. The elevators were not running, of course. And a weary, eery climb it was up the dark, unending stairs to the observation platform at the top.

There were a few sightseers up there, and a uniformed attendant, sleeping sprawled against the rail. I ignored them, peering out over the city with beating heart.

Dark—all dark! North, east, west and south only unrelieved blackness, and silence, and the all-enveloping sleep.

I do not now remember descending to the street, but I must have done so soon.

For I remember, soon after, searching along the sleeping streets for one of the latest newspapers issued before the sleep had come, and reading it frantically by the light of matches to see if it would throw any light on the cause of the gigantic disaster.

But the newspaper had nothing much to tell me. A front-page story told of the cessation of communication from the country northward, a few hours before, "apparently due to failure of the wire and wireless systems." There was no intimation that the same silence and sleep were shortly to seize New York, and so people had gone about their business as usual until unexpectedly the sleep came.

That, I was to find later, was the common experience. The sleep had not spread so very swiftly; yet everywhere when it did come, it had come without warning. For from the regions it had already seized could come no warning, but only puzzling silence.

I remember, after I had read that newspaper, of roaming frenziedly through the slumbering metropolis for hours before dawn, hallooing wild and unanswered calls, sobbing and cursing.

When the eastern sky turned gray, I was staggering drunkenly on Park Avenue, tripping over the sleepers on the sidewalks, my mind cracking. I saw the distant towers of the Waldorf Astoria against the chill dawn and I stumbled thither, found an empty bedroom and slept.

Very strange I must have seemed, had there been anyone to see me, sprawled sleeping in that luxurious room while all around me the mighty city slept too in slumber it would not wake from.

It was afternoon again when I awoke. I lay, dully turning the thing over and over in my mind.

I told myself, "Jason Lane, even though you are the only wakeful man in

this city, you must not give way to horror. You must search for some way to revive the others."

So I went out with a faint spark of hope in my heart. First I went to a great medical center, where I found a fine laboratory, cleared the sleeping scientists out of it, and started investigation.

All that day and night, and the next day, I toiled madly, experimenting on sleeping men and women, trying to awaken them.

I tried every sort of drugs, electric and X-ray stimuli, chemicals, and all without result. They slept calmly on, until I gave up in despair.

Now the awful nature of my position was clearer and clearer in my mind. I could not wake the others—they would sleep on and on, unendingly, a terrible doom that my hand had released on them.

Yes, unendingly! I had thought at first that all these sleeping people must soon die, since they would be attacked, as I thought, by various bacterial diseases that would destroy their bodies. But my investigations had now disclosed to me that even the ordinary bacteria of Earth were also wrapped in strange suspended animation, also asleep! The sleeping people would sleep on but would not die; for not even disease germs were left awake to harm them!

I LEFT the medical center in the afternoon of the second day, exhausted, hopeless, brain and soul numbed. I wandered with wild aimlessness through Manhattan's slumbering streets until I finally sank, weak and exhausted, on a bench in Central Park, near the Fifth Avenue side.

I stared through the sunlit silence at the tall apartment towers on the avenue. Dully I told myself that I must leave New York, that not here would I find anyone awake but that somewhere else

might be someone who had escaped the sleep.

Then I noticed a sleeping girl on the end of my bench, slight-bodied, with a little gray hat and gray tailored suit, her head nodding over a book she had been reading when the sleep struck. She was shyly beautiful in sleep, little curls of soft black hair straying from beneath her prim hat, long, dark lashes lying on her cheek, her soft face trusting.

Her leather purse was in her lap. I picked it up, and found inside a card—"Miss Roselle Adams."

"Roselle," I said aloud to her, and thought the name pretty on the ear. "Well, Roselle, I am Jason Lane, and I wish I had met you before this happened, for you look like my kind of girl."

I found a little relief from the black weight of horror in talking aloud to someone, even to this sleeping girl.

"What I am going to do if I find all Earth is sleeping, I don't know, Roselle. Go mad, I suppose—I can't believe that I can live long in this slumbering world and keep my sanity."

So I talked to her, voicing my wild, despairing thoughts, until the hushed afternoon waned into the solemn, silent dusk.

I got up and started toward the avenue, then. But something made me turn and look back at the girl, and she sat slumbering so trustfully, head nodding so childishly, that I came back to her.

I told her, "Since you're the one person in this sleeping city I know, I'll take you with me, Roselle. God knows it's better to have a sleeping comrade, in all this loneliness, than no comrade at all."

So I picked her up, soft and faintly warm, and her head lay so confidently in my arm that I was moved to bend and kiss her fragrant lips, with a wild hope she would awaken. But she did not. I found it awkward to carry her, though,

as I moved through the twilit, slumbering city, and a sudden idea made me go into a hospital and return with a wheel-chair. I put her in the chair, she sitting up in dainty, sleeping dignity, and wheeled her thus.

I slept that night in a great mid-town hotel, giving Roselle the room next to mine and covering her carefully. For already she was somehow dear to me, and a small comfort in my ghastly loneliness.

And next morning when I had my breakfast in the imposing hotel dining-room—a meal I cooked myself on a small wood fire I kindled out in the kitchen—it pleased me to have Roselle sitting opposite me at the table, calm in the chair where I had put her.

It was my humor to talk to her in a confidential undertone, making remarks about the other sleeping diners in the room.

"Don't look now, Roselle," I told her, "but I think the gentleman at the next table is flirting with you. He certainly has been staring steadily at you for the last five minutes." And, "Do you see that lady at the corner table, Roselle? Her companion looks more like a gigolo to me than a husband."

This remark touched off my unsteady mind into a loud guffaw of laughter. But when the echoes of my laughter died away, nobody in the room had stirred, and it was all so *silent!* I sprang to my feet, all that agony of horror strong in my soul again, at once.

"There *must* be people awake somewhere!" I cried, tortured. "I've got to find them—I've got to!"

And so with all my freakish humor gone, I spent that morning in deadly earnest scheming my search, resolved to comb the whole sleeping world if necessary.

It was soon evident that I would make

no progress by automobile, since the roads and streets were so choked at places with traffic. Trains were out of the question. Also these would not serve to take me across the oceans to Europe or Asia. And single-handed I could sail only the smallest of boats; so ships too were not to be thought of.

It was here that my university hobby of aviation came to serve me. I was a fairly good pilot, though out of practise, and airplanes would take me on my search with far greater swiftness, and to other continents too, if I chose route and weather carefully.

I PUT Roselle carefully in her wheel-chair, first putting on her a warm coat I took off a sleeping woman in the hotel lobby, for it was raining slightly outside. Then I wheeled her to the street, and through the fine rain toward the Washington bridge.

When we reached the New Jersey side, I had to go on foot almost all the way to Newark, for automobiles were useless to me in this traffic-choked section. It took hours to reach the airport.

There I soon found what I wanted, a big metal passenger airplane that had apparently just been on the point of departing when the sleep struck; for pilot and passengers were in their places. As I hauled them out of the ship, it struck me for the first time that every airplane that happened to be aloft must have crashed when the sleep came. And indeed, I was to notice more than one such wreck.

I put Roselle into the co-pilot's seat and stowed the wheel-chair in the cabin. Then, at the pilot's controls, about three-thirty in the afternoon, I guided the roaring ship across the field and took to the air in the first lap of my desperate search. My intention was to look first in Chicago and the coast cities, and if I

found no one awake there, to work south into Latin America.

On the way to Chicago that afternoon, I dipped low and circled over every large city I passed, peering downward. In not one of them was there any sign of life or movement. Finally I gave it up and flew straight on toward Chicago. We reached it after dark, but I had flown there before, had a good idea where the airport was, and brought the ship down on the unlighted field in safety.

That night I slept on a couple of blankets in a corner of the airport station, giving Roselle a couch that was there.

Next morning, after a sketchy breakfast from tins, I put Roselle into a car and drove into town. I had to abandon the car while still a mile or two from the central section, because of traffic jams. With some difficulty I located a wheel-chair and so went on, on foot, wheeling my companion.

I soon deduced that the sleep had struck Chicago early in the afternoon. As I wheeled my comrade along the windy, gusty sidewalk of Michigan Avenue, I said, "This is a waste of time, Roselle. Every soul here is sleeping, just as in New York."

We were passing the entrance of a great bank, and sudden crazy curiosity made me leave Roselle in her chair on the sidewalk and venture into the place.

There were a half-dozen shabby men sleeping in the vestibule — apparently they had been sheltering there from cold winds when the sleep came. I went on into the great marble rotunda.

At sight of the neat piles of currency and coins over which the tellers nodded slumbering, a fancy seized me. Carefully I took a half-dozen packets of thousand-dollar bills and put one into the hand of each of the homeless men in the vestibule.

"You are richer in sleep than you ever

were awake," I told them, grinning, as I went out of the building.

But outside a shock of terror hit me that congealed the blood around my heart. The wheel-chair and Roselle were gone! I stood gasping, utterly overwhelmed by the thing, and then emitted a strangled cry. "Roselle!"

Then I saw her, still calmly sleeping in the chair, a half-block farther along the street. The strong winds had blown the wheel-chair that far, while I was inside. But that scare was so strong in me that I performed no further foolery, and instead hurried back with Roselle to the airport, and resolved then and there not to leave her out of my sight again; for I knew now how desperately my mind clung to her company in this awful, sleeping world.

WE FLEW southwest from Chicago, toward the southern California cities, after I had refueled the plane. Illinois and Missouri and Oklahoma all were sleeping, in the hushed silence. Over eastern New Mexico the ship's motors gave trouble, and I made a forced landing.

We spent that night in a gray little ranchhouse near by, the rancher's family still at the table where they had been eating supper when the sleep came, the father leaning back with a half-eaten peach in his hand and surprize on his face, the others nodding over the table and a small dog slumbering on his back under it. There, for the hundredth time, sitting opposite Roselle and watching her sleeping face in the lamplight, I asked myself: "What if all this search of mine proves in vain and there is not one other wakeful person on the Earth? Can I live out my life so, without ever one waking person to speak to? How *can* I live alone on this slumbering planet?"

Great agony of spirit I had that night,

and desperately I attacked the plane's motors the next morning, and got started again, the awful urgency of my search driving me frantically forward.

Without mishap we reached Los Angeles, and found it sleeping also, and mostly in bed, for the sleep appeared to have struck California late at night.

But in the hotel where I went with Roselle for the night, I discovered a business banquet of some kind going on in a big hall, portly gentlemen in evening dress nodding over a long table, a speaker at the head of it now sprawled on the floor. And it tickled my crazy fancy to take his place and seriously address the solemn banqueters.

"Now is the time to crush our business competition, gentlemen," I told them. "Our rivals are all sleeping, and if we act quickly we can corner the market. Why do you not show your accustomed energy and seize this unprecedented opportunity? It amazes me that you sit slumbering here when a little action will reap for us tremendous profits."

At Los Angeles, the ship's motors again giving me trouble, I discarded it and took instead a big amphibian airplane designed for long distance cruising. In it, without any intermediate stops, I flew south toward Mexico City.

Mexico was asleep. And Panama was asleep. And all the South American east coast, which I followed as far down as Natal, was sleeping. I did not go farther south toward Rio de Janeiro, for well I knew I would find it slumbering also. Instead, after careful refueling and checking of the ship, I flew eastward toward Africa, laying my course for Dakar.

The blue Atlantic dimpled in the sun far beneath our plane, Roselle sitting mighty wisely in the seat beside me. We were still six hundred miles from Africa when a storm caught us which I thought was going to finish us, and so have done

once and for all with all wakefulness on Earth. It grew night-black, and the winds shrieked and clawed at our struggling ship, and lightning split from the lowering sky to the churning waters below.

I fought that storm, fought desperately. And it was not my life that I cared for, but I did not want Roselle's sweet sleeping body to be prey of fishes in the deep below. But the storm passed, the sun blazed serenely forth again, and in a calm and holy sunset we planed down to Dakar's white roofs.

The first thing I saw as we landed in the harbor was a rusty freight ship with a sleeper sprawled on its bridge.

"So Africa sleeps too," I said with dull calm. "Well, there is still Europe."

And then I told myself, "You lie to yourself, Jason Lane. You *know* that Europe will be sleeping too."

So it proved, indeed, when I went northward in the plane, stopping at slumbering Lisbon for fuel and then on north to England.

I SPENT a hot July week in London, wandering through that sprawling place, wheeling Roselle, for I would not now part with her a moment. There was not a wakeful soul in it.

I remember one afternoon when, weary of strolling through the vast silence of the sleeping metropolis, I was struck with a white-hot thought that sent me quivering.

"What about submarines? In them, alone, men might have escaped the sleep-plague germs that diffused through the atmosphere. A submarine that chanced to be submerged when the sleep came would have escaped it, surely."

So much did that wild hope possess my brain that I took Roselle post-haste to our plane and flew in haste toward the submarine bases at Portsmouth and Harwich.

But before ever I reached them, my hope had died. For as my brain calmed, I saw that even had a submarine been below water when the sleep came, as soon as it rose above the surface and opened its hatches, the omnipresent germs of the plague would strike down its men. So I did not even stop at Portsmouth, but flew on across the Channel and came down at Le Bourget field, outside Paris.

Paris I liked, for I had never seen the city before, and very odd I must have looked as I went about it like any gawking tourist, talking about this and that sight to Roselle as I wheeled her, and all unheedful of the sleeping millions to whom I was now accustomed.

In Paris, too, as I passed a big motion-picture theater, the whim seized me to enter with Roselle, and ascend to the projection booth, and tinker with the projectors. The place had generating-equipment of its own, and I got the generators going, and fussed with the projectors until I started one.

But when it threw a jerky picture upon the screen, and shadows of men and women moved there, talking in strident, metallic voices, the clamor of it seemed so horrible and unnerving that I hastily smashed the projector, and hurried out of that place with Roselle. Yet such crazy whims came upon me ever more often; for by then I had, I think, lost all real hope of finding anybody wakeful in the world, and too had lost most of my *interest* in the search.

Leisurely and languidly, I flew across France and Switzerland in our plane, making short flights of a few hundred miles, and generally stopping for the night at some chateau or other pretentious building whose situation pleased me.

In this way I came to Venice, and liked it so well that I stayed there for two months, living in one of the palaces on

the Grand Canal, a dream-like, unreal sort of existence.

I usually spent the afternoons sitting with Roselle on a balcony overlooking the water, fancying what the place must have been like when all these sleeping thousands were awake, and talking to Roselle for long hours on trivial subjects, she demurely listening.

At night, often, I would put her in a gondola and sit beside her, the gondola just drifting through the moon-silvered canals at will, bumping against other craft that had sleeping people in them, some of them lovers in twos like Roselle and myself.

I got to drinking there in Venice, too much, for it was an easy way to forget my loneliness. One whole night I spent in wild drunkenness, talking wildly to Roselle, boasting to her that I, Jason Lane, was the only one on Earth to escape the sleep.

But when I woke in the morning, sprawled stiff in a chair with dull eyes and disheveled clothing, and saw Roselle still sitting facing me, her dainty face turned toward me, shame seized me.

I apologized humbly to her, saying, "You are right to feel contempt for me, Roselle. But I promise you that I will not become a thing like that again. We will continue the search. Who knows, at this very moment other wakeful people in some chance corner of Earth may be wondering if *they* are the only waking ones in the world!"

It seemed to me that her shy face approved. So, all my two-months' lethargy gone, I swiftly refueled our amphibian ship and we soared out of Venice, south and eastward.

Rome slept, and Sicily, and all the isles of the blue Mediterranean down to Egypt. And Egypt too lay slumbering in the sunshine. . . .

Now I have only brief and vividly unreal memories of those strange months following in which we flew eastward across sleeping Asia.

I remember an evening when we landed outside Mecca, near the Arabian coast, and how I ventured into the dark city that night, wheeling Roselle through the hordes of worshippers who lay slumbering thick around their sacred buildings.

I remember, too, at Agra in India, a night we spent at the building called the Taj Mahal, a calm dome, alabaster in the moonlight, I sitting on a marble bench with Roselle's head on my shoulder, watching and marveling.

And I remember another night at Shanghai a few weeks later, when, picking my way with my companion through the slumbering crowds on the Bund, I suddenly asked myself: "What if they should all awake—*now?*"

And the notion threw me into such fevered fits of insane expectation that I was not myself again until I left the place and flew northwest with Roselle toward Japan.

That languid idleness and disinclination to search further took me again there, so that I dwelt two or three weeks in a little temple, surrounded by stunted oaks, in a place called Kyoto.

When I tired of the place, and thought of returning to America, the dangers of that flight daunted me a little. But I finally decided to work up through the Kurile and Aleutian islands to Alaska, and thence south through Canada.

An even more dangerous flight it proved than I had expected, for I ran into terrible fogs in the Aleutians and was near to exhausting my fuel and crashing into the sea before I located the Dutch Harbor naval base.

All there were sleeping, of course. It was now spring again, but still cold in these parts, as I found when I landed for

the night at the little town Sitka, and was beset by bitter storm.

Sitting with Roselle in a small cabin I had taken for us, piling wood into the blazing fire, I heard the winds outside shrieking, seeming to scream my name.

"Jason Lane! The only man in the world who is not sleeping! Why are you not sleeping like the others, Jason Lane?" they seemed to howl tauntingly.

And as I listened to their mocking, and saw Roselle sleeping so sweetly beside me, and thought of all those millioned others I had seen around the round globe, all slumbering in peace; and of myself, the one tortured, restless, waking person on the drowsing globe; when I thought of these things, I leaped up in agony of spirit.

"I *will* sleep like the others, only I will sleep in death!" I said. And once that resolution was made, a calm came upon me that I had not felt in all that year.

I sat, holding Roselle in my arms, telling her what I had determined to do.

"We will go back to my old house in the woods, Roselle, and it is there I will take my life. And there we shall lie together, through all eternity, sleeping like all these sleeping others, and the fever of this vain searching done with."

So when the storm ceased, I flew south and eastward across Canada toward New York. And all my agony of spirit was gone at last, for I knew that soon I would have rest from the horror and guilt that were large in my soul.

ON A bright May afternoon I landed our ship outside Albany. I got an automobile, and with Roselle in the seat beside me, drove back through the city.

A year had passed since I had been there, yet still the sleepers in its streets and buildings slumbered unchanged. And all the way north to Horton village, nothing had changed except where storm

had wreaked some damage. The muddy cars on the road north of Horton still held their sleeping occupants, and in the woods the birds and animals still lay motionless and dreaming.

A sweet peace was in me as I drove up to my old farmhouse, for I knew my toil and travail were over at last.

I carried Roselle into the laboratory and gently laid her upon the floor. And then I took chemicals from my untouched shelves and calmly mixed the poison that would take my life.

When the beaker of black liquid stood ready on the table, I turned for a last look at Roselle before I drank the draft and lay down beside her. The shy beauty of her slumbering face struck me to the heart. And as I thought of how, if it had not been for this vast catastrophe, I might have met her and she loved me as I loved her—as I thought of this, a wave of wild regret choked me.

I picked up the beaker of poison, and said, "It's not good-bye, Roselle. I will be here with you, beside you, always."

As I raised the poison to my lips, my eyes looked out through the open door for a last sight of the sunlit woods.

Then I suddenly froze! A thrill like an icy shock ran through every fiber of my being as I stared at something that lay at the foot of a tree outside the door.

A few glittering fragments of glass, it was. But as I saw them, I suddenly *remembered*; remembered how, a year before, I had flung the tube of Culture Two, the second species of germs from outer space, out against that tree to smash. And as I remembered that, for the first time in all that long year, the awful truth crashed home to my reeling brain.

God in heaven, it was I, Jason Lane, who had loosed this plague of sleep upon the world!

That tube of Culture Two—those alien

germs—had been germs of the weird sleeping-sickness. My smashing the tube out there in my anger had released those germs on the world.

They had multiplied and spread with immense rapidity, through the atmosphere. All during those weeks I had brooded here, the sleep-germs had been spreading out over Earth and casting all its life into slumber! I was responsible for the most colossal disaster that had ever smitten Earth!

But my horror-numbered mind still could not comprehend one thing.

Why hadn't the sleep-germs affected me, cast me into slumber, like the rest of Earth's life? I, Jason Lane, had been nearest of all men to that smashed tube, I had even previously injected the sleep-germs into my veins; yet I alone had escaped.

Then like a searing flash of lightning across my collapsing brain came the answer.

"The other culture!" I cried, choking. "The other germs—Culture One!"

For I remembered now that before I injected the bacteria of Culture Two into myself, I had previously tried an injection of the other species of germs, Culture One.

And—I knew it, now—the *first* kind of bacteria, Culture One, was an anti-toxin and immunization agent to the sleep-germs, one that had come out of space from the same far world as the sleep-germs. That was why I, Jason Lane, had been the only man in the world not affected by the sleep bacteria. Before experimenting with them, I had unknowingly injected the anti-toxin to them into my veins.

I clawed wildly over the laboratory table for that tube of Culture One, now. If it should have been destroyed—!

But it was there, just as I had left it, sealed tightly.

With shaking fingers, I filled a hypodermic with it. Then tremblingly I injected it into Roselle's arm. *And in a moment Roselle stirred a little!*

"The anti-toxin!" I yelled in mad rejoicing. "The anti-toxin to the sleep!"

I went to the door, hurled that tube of Culture One out to smash like the first one against the tree. And in a moment, the birds lying sleeping around that tree began to flutter their wings slightly, to utter weak chirps.

Then I was sobbing wildly, as the birds wakened in greater and greater number and started flitting through the trees, as small animals began to stir farther off in the woods.

The germs of Culture One, the anti-toxin agent, were multiplying and spreading out through the atmosphere as rapidly as had the sleep bacteria, and were starting to wake Earth's sleeping life.

I turned, still sobbing. "Roselle, the world is starting to awake—to awake!"

Roselle's eyes were open, staring bewilderedly at me. They were brown eyes, just as I had always known they must be, brown and wide and startled, as I knelt beside her.

She said, "Where am I? I was reading in the park a moment ago——"

"That was a year ago!" I cried. "You've been sleeping, the whole world has been sleeping, since then. But thank God, it's starting to awake now."

"But you—who——?" she exclaimed, still amazed by my tight arm around her and the frantic emotion on my face.

"I'm Jason Lane, who loves you, Roselle, who has loved you for a year, and you sleeping."

Her puzzled brown eyes, looking up into mine, softened. And holding her close, I knew that even as I had planned, there would be for us no parting.