

## Yellow Men Sleep

By  
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CHAPTER XI—Continued.

—15—

"Do you dream often?"  
"Often. I do not care for sleep, but it is pleasant to dream. Have you found it so?"

He thought carefully. "Yes, I've always dreamed. It runs in your family, and in mine."

"I come here every day," said Helen.

"The sun must be very hot."

"I am accustomed to it. I do not resist it. There is great life in it."

"It has made you lovely," he said.

"But it was unknd to you," she replied. And a faint, cool smile touched her lips.

Innocence or utter sophistication—from an ultimate degree of one of these opposites she was regarding him. It was a helpless moment for the young man behind the rock. He gazed out for relief over the stinging white sand, where all of yesterday is sacrificed in the drift of today. One horseman dotted out there, not far from the city, a pair of keen eyes that might be able to see through stone.

"I had arranged with Chee Ming," said the girl, "for you and my father to live in peace with us. Now that cannot be, for you have tried to run away. You have wounded his emotions."

"Your father and I expect to get away, but we are coming back soon."

"No," she said. "No man goes from here to tell the world what he has seen. Chee Ming only, of all men, goes and comes, and he tells nothing. The empire must fall when its secrecy is gone."

Con felt the chill of a stone wall. "You are deeply interested in the empire of the Yellow Sun," he said dully.

"It is to bear a wonderful fruit," said the princess.

"It is very cruel," said Lexington.

"I do not agree with Chee Ming about everything."

"You have a merciful heart, a heart that would be at home in America, where this idea of racial fusion, the blending of all into one, has borne good fruit for two centuries."

"I have learned but little of America, except concerning the red men," said Helen.

"Chee Ming has been careful. The red men are gone. It is the New World. I'll tell you all about it. You would not be satisfied with the oppression and thievery of Tau Kuan, if you knew the ways of America."

"Mother used to talk like that."

"You belong in America," said Lexington, scarcely aware of how much he dared in making the statement.

"My father mentioned that yesterday. He is a good man."

"Yes, I love him, too."

"He needs you," said the girl.

"He needs you," returned Con. "America would be a splendid place for you. There are dreams there, too, if you like."

"I am not interested. Here is the heart of the world. This is the center of power, the light of ages to come. Here my will is obeyed, and all the good things of earth are brought before me."

"Most of them from America," added Con. But he was hurt deep. He felt the snare of dominion around her heart. Perhaps she was without a heart. But that did not correspond to her innate kindness. She did not agree with the policy of state.

"I am needed here," said the princess, rather wearily. "There is work, endless work. The desert is a league of cities that have fallen, and those cities must be made to bloom again."

"Why do you plant seeds of poison?"

"You do not understand dreaming. It is unbearable without a dream. I have not your courage."

"Are you happy?"

"I am not happy as a child is."

"And you love power?"

"That is part of my destiny."

"Cruelty, sterility, poison—that is Tau Kuan," said Lexington, watching her closely.

"It need not be so," said Helen, referring to her coming regency.

"Then you are satisfied, happy?"

"Sometimes, but—"

"What is it?"

"I cannot say. Why do you question me? Oh, I seem to miss something I have never seen, something that cannot be in the world! In the evening, I think that in the west where the sun goes may be what I want. But then in the morning, I do not believe it."

"Might it not be worth while to follow the sun westward, and see for yourself?"

"No one departs from here," she said quietly. "And I have seen the maps, and I am not very much drawn."

Chee Ming had planted this preface in perfect soil.

"But what is it you want?"

"Do not question me. I do not know. Chee Ming says I am too young to know. I believe my mother knew when she was eighteen. I am afraid I shall not learn until too late."

Levington sighed, and edged away from the hot boulder. "Your mother could have helped you," he said.

"I come here each day to ask her, and she does not speak."

"Why doesn't the yellow prince help you?"

"I have not asked help of him."

"Perhaps your father will advise you."

She shook her head slowly. Her face was serene, yet filled with a remote pain. Beauty was about her eyes, but something was holding back. Now the fires in Con's own heart would not wait, and he said:

"I wish I could tell you. I have nothing of my own to offer, except America, and I can give that to you. There are books that have been kept from you. The white blood in your veins has been carefully shadowed. Your heart is American. I marvel how well they have made you forget that. You long for your own birthright; that is why you look into the west, and are filled with a desire you do not comprehend. I never knew what my country meant to me until I got away from it, working under its orders in faraway places like this. You are longing for home and your own people. Your soul is sick of yellow faces, your mind is weary with Oriental contact."

He checked himself, for she did not seem to be following well. The distant rider had changed his position, coming nearer. The rock seemed smaller than at first the sun hotter. Silence between them. From the saddle the princess looked afar over the yellow earth. The palace walls were indistinct in the trembling heat. She seemed lost in a cloud of dreams. It was maddening to Lexington, until a great light broke within him. She said simply, without looking at him: "You are making me unhappy."

Even before the full joy of this utterance was clear to him, he was up beside her, forgetful of the sentinel, the sun, the whole world but this. A honeyed fragrance came to him from her nearness. The words that burned his heart stopped in his throat, but his eyes held hers an instant, and tragically her unhappiness deepened; yet it made him glad.

Without speaking, she spurred her mount, wheeled, covering the man who loved her, and then rode for the city gate.

### CHAPTER XII.

#### The Yellow Bowl.

As he returned to the mouth of the shaft, with no thought of caution, even the Gobi seemed familiar and right to Lexington, its purple band of horizon, its scarlet rocks, the mighty pour of the sun no longer inimical, for his

miners. They were little fellows, each with a twisted knee and spine made hideous in childhood. Under the flaring light, Con could not steady a shudder at the picture they made. Half-starved, long-armed, dark creatures, with the eyes narrowed, all humanity drawn from their faces, they peered at the large man in the tunnel before them, and a muted whisper rustled from lip to lip.

"Where is my friend—white man?"

Levington made signs and variously indicated his desire to find March. The eyes turned upon him grew pig-like, and the whisper was repeated. Heads turned back, then toward him. Hostility was like powder to the match. They were blaming him for the taking off of their kin. Con felt that he was a bad omen to them, which was the greater need for finding March and the Arab friend.

Now the little party lined up against one side of the passage, plainly tending the white man to pass.

"That way?"

Con inquired also with his hands if they were directing him to go on. Perhaps they had just come from March. Now they made no response, their stony countenances full upon him in the flickering light. Having small choice, Con nodded his thanks and strode past them. Again the soft crackle of their voices. He turned. They were going on with the torch. Darkness closed about him once more.

His reverie was spoiled for the moment. A touch of the horror of numberless generations was upon him, the burial-fear. He could touch the earth over his head, as in a tomb, and span the walls from side to side. Then he laughed at himself. It was a relief, a necessity. He came back to himself; identity was renewed, another necessity, for new worlds had been flitting through him and he had forgotten much. Confident of locating his friend or the brown-skinned sailor who had gone from Aden to Buffalo in his time, Lexington pushed onward down the tunnel.

He thought of Helen's face—oval, calm, day-kissed, unawakened. Yet each moment she seemed different, for now she was fully awakened, a princess of evening lights and clear wine and music, subtle eastern wisdom—a princess only, a mottled flower. This latter was a form of torture to him whose heart had opened. But always there was the same pale light in her eyes, whether she were learned of kings and princes, or quite innocent. It further troubled him to find that he could not be certain as to the color, if they were lit with the green of the sea at daybreak or the blue of sky at sunset. They could be as steady as jade, pure in their gaze, and their loveliness sent him out upon a tide of yearning. A warm flood seemed to rise when he remembered her slim throat, and it startled him to recall the manner of her breathing. At moments now, with the earthen blackness beating in upon him, Con was almost ready to believe that she was a phantom; that the Gobi had done something to him; that possibly there was no Sha Mo at all, and he was merely coming to the surface after a plunge deeper and darker than usual, to find himself ill with life in a room at the old club; that this Helen was the shadow of his unrealized desires, of all his postponed aspiration, and nothing more. Yet he could hear her voice as if she were just ahead in the darkness, and he had sometimes touched her hand. The delicacy of that moment was still upon him. He shook it off and tried to laugh again, to clear his mind, but this time the happy effect was more elusive.

Direction was an impossible subject and depth another. He reached an intersection, a trying moment for the nerves as his hands went out into soft nothing. He waited, in a tension, and heard a slow thudding, like the tread of giants within the earth. The air of the passages was narcotic. In thinking of the fierce evaporation of the desert this difference was grateful.

Well aware that he was lost, he thought of many things old and new, dwelling strangely upon the possibilities of his own life. The well-rubbed cologne of life had enriched him and he longed to spend. Leaning against the rough walls, scarcely able to see his hands before his face, Lexington discovered the innermost door of himself. Soul-currents that he had touched in boyhood seemed close about him again. Heart's dust cried softly within, a lonely twilight in spring. The air was figured with the memory of Bill the yellow cook, of those tales in a magic tongue, told in the hot, thick evenings to the sway of the ship. Probably Bill's stories had been of Tau Kuan, its piled-up curving roofs; of close-guarded maidens in their misty silks; of the diamonds that spatter from the shaken plumage of a cockatoo at the fountain down upon white and ivory limbs; or perhaps of these choking tunnels where one tiny flayed nerve would set the luckless a-tearing off his nails in frenzy against sandstone walls, the source of the fragrant web of koresi. Lexington smiled a mad, faint welcome to the shade of his princess. He would carry her away, out somehow into sunlight and sanity.

But the old Con Lexington of nerve and sinew would not respond, hanging half-blindly upon a ledge of sandstone, helpless, while the new Lexington was out of command—clear-eyed, able to suffer, yet equally helpless. He had a final glimpse of the dead colorful figure reclined in static delight about the chamber, the fierce, furtive wish to seize Helen in his arms, crush her silks and golden veils to his heart, and bear her away; and then the violence of his emotions seemed to wreck him. He slipped. The world was a purring wind over valves of giant clover blossoms and flowering cinnamon. The universe went black and singing.

Now as an odor like lilies in a sealed room made his lungs tremble for air. The tunnel was ending in a wall or barrier, across the top of which an artificial light reached the wanderer. He could not stop short of the wall; his feet carried him against it. Moments of an unreal clarity came to his brain, in which everything was outlined with indelible severity, inkliness of memory. There was an uncanny view of a certain room in Dory street, long ago, a man sleeping, murmuring as he slept, one hand twitching upon the side of the cot. He was whispering, "I'm going," and the room was surcharged with the warm scent of cinnamon and roses. Lexington gasped, snatching at the wall, and this vision of his father and koresi broke away—only the dark again, with a green glow overhead somewhere, and a great pulsing like seismic threats. Something that was distantly yet truly himself now commanded, and with surprising difficulty Con stretched his fingers up the barrier and began to lift himself. His eyes came level with the top, and he blinked into the glow.

A low altar of rock was sending up the very crystalline sound of smoke, clear as water rising in a spring, or lifting gas in still air. Round about the altar, or reclining against the walls of the low chamber, were figures, motionless, their colored robes and the silken draperies of their couches as lifeless as the sandstone that encased all. The light came from an inverted bowl of jade upon the wall. One couch was higher than the rest, nearer the peak of stones that made the altar, and beside this couch an old woman stood, robed in black. Of all the figures in the chamber, the ancient female alone moved, and her arms, swaying so gradually, the tips of her sleeves drifting, were the essence of stillness. Lexington was gripped cold as he discerned through the vapors that this person was stroking the eyelids of his princess.

Gowned in celestial blue and gold gemmed ankle rings lax upon the cushions, Helen lay as one in death beyond the colorless foot of smoke, and her lover's torture was complete.

From a yellow bowl, the woman in black moistened her fingers and continued the drugged caresses. The haze was proof against the fumes that had dizzied Lexington when he was yet far down the passage, and that drove the souls from the bodies of all the devotees within the subterranean chamber.

Stupidly he observed the gash in the rock behind the bowl of jade from which the flaming gas emerged to illumine the room; he noted the door beyond, and an iron ring in the door. In the crisis he duly observed details—the tangled long mustaches of one waxen face in a corner, the glint of polished nails on a royal fat hand, the silken dragons that stood forever licking the throat of one (male or female, he could not tell), who lounged with a frozen smile on a couch of crimson. Under the weight of agony, Lexington held on stiffly, and had the inept recollection that this was the state religion, a godless and inverted prayer, a blowing upon the senses, soft as the tongues of serpents, deadly as their fangs.

Then came the thought that captured him once more. He heard Helen saying to him, an hour, an age, since, "You are making me unhappy." To forget his words, to loose the tangle he had brought into her life, she had descended to pay this visit to the darker gods. The old hag went on and on, rubbing gently, diminishing more and more the slight rise and fall of Helen's breast. The gas hissed dryly from the wall.

Con felt a murderous impulse, but it did not extend to his muscular system. His eyes narrowed with rage and pain; yet he could not overcome the smother of koresi in the air. He hated the oriental garments of his beloved, hated the jeweled bands on her naked ankles, the chains of jade and wrought gold about her body. These textures and precious things were taking her further from him, and they aggravated the loss of his own bodily control. His mouth opened and certain muscles of the jaw tightened in a laugh of hysterical anger, but his lungs gave forth no cry, and his emotion remained silent. All that he had formerly known to be himself was now but an encasement, a lock, a dry dam upon the real man. He pictured himself in a leap into the chamber, past the cone of rock, up to the side of his princess. He would carry her away, out somehow into sunlight and sanity.

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(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Didn't Want to Miss Anything  
Monday a peddler came to our door and was demonstrating some of his wares to my mother. My mother bought a few articles from him and he started to put his suitcase in order. He finished and was just leaving when Joseph, who is four years old, rushed in and asked: "Oh, mamma, what did the man say while I wasn't here?"

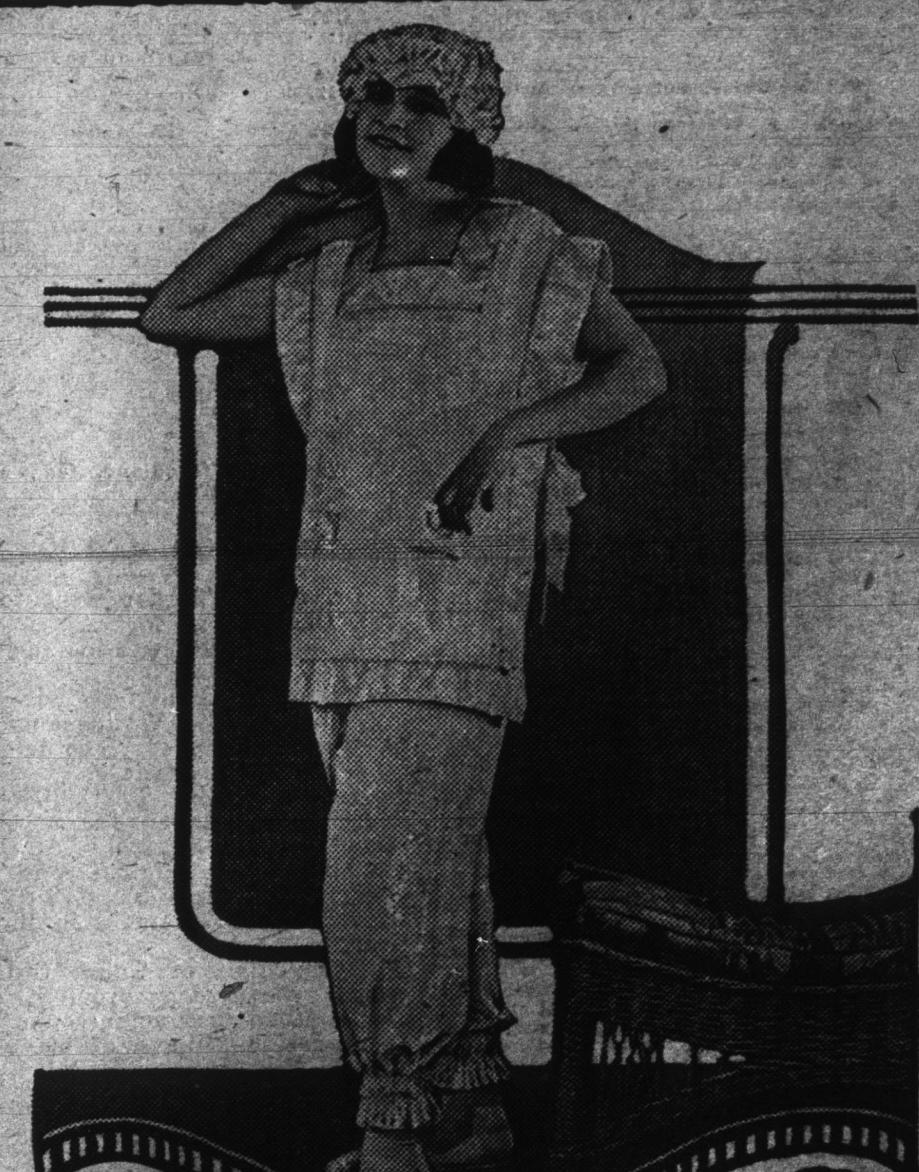
Chicago American.

With some people the entertainment of an idea is an intellectual frost.

## Two Aristocrats Among Coats



## Pajamas as Negligees



PAJAMAS must be reckoned with ribbon in a contrasting color and cut both as negligees and as sleeping garments, for they have made a place for themselves in both directions. Lovely and fanciful interpretations of this garment of unpretentious origin make negligees as alluring as those that are patterned after the kimono but developed in daintiness and rich materials. Even so pajamas have had greater success as practical sleeping garments than as negligees. Here we find them in satin, madras, and other soft cottons and in wash silks, replacing night dresses in the wardrobes of many women.

As negligees they appear in satin or silk and are usually embroidered and bordered with lace, net, chiffon, silk, ribbon and little artificial flowers the most heartening of headwear. They brighten the breakfast table and help one to begin the day right. But the small affair of lace shown with the pajamas makes itself useful as a sleeping cap.

Julia Bottomly