

Lighted Windows

By EMILIE LORING

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THE STORY SO FAR: Janice Trent runs away from wedding Ned Paxton, rich, but a gay blade. Disguised as a tubercular youth, she becomes camp secretary in Alaska where Bruce Harcourt had been made chief, replacing Joe Hale who had been going down hill. Janice keeps out of sight of Bruce, who knows her. But one day, while visiting the cabin of the Samp sisters, who run the Waffle Shop, he sees her asleep in a chair. Jimmy Delevan, the secretary, is the very Janice whom he had on his last visit to New York impulsively advised not to marry Paxton. He decides camp is no place for a woman, but Tubby Grant, his assistant, insists it's hard to get a good secretary in the wilderness. Janice tells Bruce her story. Mrs. Hale is attracted to Bruce. Hale treats her badly. Hale suffers a stroke and they can't leave as scheduled. Hale calls Janice to take some dictation. Now continue with the story.

CHAPTER VI

Janice wondered what Tubby and Bruce would say about her going.

She had a sense of breathlessness as she pushed open the door of the Hale cabin. Joe Hale was seated in a wheel-chair near a window. He would have been good-looking had he lived decently, Janice told herself in that first glance.

"Good of you to come, Miss Trent, particularly as I now have no claim on your time. Feel like a boob not to bring up a chair for you, but the doctors won't let me take a step. Tyrants Mrs. Hale ran over to see the Samp girls fifteen minutes ago. Seized this chance to get an outline made for a codicil to my will. Not that I have the least intention of passing out, but, I've had a tap on the shoulder."

Curious that his explanation left her with the same sense of uneasiness which had seized her as she entered the cabin, Janice thought. Was smoke coming from that pipe laid on the mantel? Had Mrs. Hale been gone fifteen minutes? Would tobacco keep hot that long? If she were away and Hale himself couldn't move, who had put it there?

He selected a paper. "Here is the memorandum of what I want to dictate. You look as though you could keep a secret, Miss Trent. Beautiful women as a rule are dumb; I'll bet my gold nuggets you're an exception. I kiss your hands—in spirit."

She had heard that caressing inflection before too, she told herself, with a bitter little twist of her lips. If he wanted to impress her with a sense of friendliness, not in the manner of Ned Paxton should he approach her. She responded in her crispest voice.

"A secretary is supposed to be a machine, not a person when taking dictation, Mr. Hale. Ready."

She tried to remain indifferent to the meaning of the codicil she was transcribing, but it was startling. Plop! Plop! Plop! Plop! Plop! The sounds came from behind the screen. Small revelatory crashes that meant but one thing. A broken string of beads. So, Mrs. Hale was at home. Listening. What was the big idea?

"What was that?"

Was it imagination or did Hale relax?

"Buttons. That nitwit dog of Millicent's has upset her work-basket again."

A brilliant blue bead rolled soundlessly across the rug and stopped behind his chair. Janice brought her teeth sharply into her lip to keep back an exclamation. Tatima! Tatima was behind the screen.

Hale's suave voice broke into her reflections. "So, you ran away from marriage. Kiss and run type, yes?"

Janice's blood sang in her ears from fury. She managed to keep her voice steady.

"Go on with your dictation, Mr. Hale. I have left important work at the office."

"Where were we? I remember. That's all." He pulled a thick roll from his coat pocket. Peeled off a ten-dollar bill. "Take this. I've no right to your time."

Janice rose. "Thank you, no. I will type the material at once and send it for you to look over."

"Efficient, aren't you? I'd thought of letting the deserted bridegroom know where you were, but, we need you here."

She looked steadily back at him as she snapped the rubber band on her note-book.

"May I suggest that you mind your own business?"

The force with which she closed the door behind her relieved her overcharged spirit. In her dash from the cabin she collided with Jimmy Chester.

"Someone told me that you were here. What do you mean by coming when Millicent is at the Samps?"

For an instant Janice stared incredulously. Then she twisted her-

self free. She vented the remainder of her fury on him.

"What business is it of yours why I went there?"

"I'll make it my business," he answered savagely and pulled open the cabin door.

Millicent Hale stood in the doorway. Under one arm was her toy Pekinese.

"I know that I'm breaking rules, your rules, coming to the office, Bruce, but I'm desperate. I—I—" she bit her lips, clenched her frail hands as though with all her being she were holding back a flood of emotion.

"Tubby Grant told me that you and he were to air-trot tomorrow, were to scout out a place on the river from which to start the road toward the new bridge. That after that you would fly to the city. Take me. I'm fed-up on myself, on everything in this terrible wilderness. I haven't left our cabin for more than an hour since Joe's break-down, my nerves are on edge. If I go I can get some things he needs. Mary Samp promised to look after him. Why not take Miss Trent, that is if Argus of the Hundred Eyes will let her go."

"If Miss Trent will come. Care to go air-trotting, Miss Trent?"

Fly! Janice throttled her imagination, attested fervently:

"I'd love it."

"Then it's a date. Be sure you're ready on time. The plane starts the

minute the sun pokes its rim above the horizon, passengers or no passengers."

With eager assurance of a prompt appearance Millicent Hale departed.

"And by the way," said Bruce, "I'll suggest that you go slow with Jimmy Chester."

A little demon of contrariness took possession of her.

Janice indulged in a delicately regretful sigh. "He is fascinating even if his eyes are tragically old."

Harcourt left his desk, loomed over her. "Attractive! Jimmy's a corking engineer, but he's pulp where girls are concerned. The war left his eyes old and his temperament slightly twisted. You might as safely play with high explosives. He's the type who would do something desperate if he got the wrong slant."

Squatted cobbler-fashion on the cot bed in her cabin Janice regarded herself in the roughly framed mirror above a dressing-table fashioned from a packing-box.

She barely breathed as she met the mirrored eyes. Who was that girl really? What was she?

Dishes were rattling in the Waffle Shop. That meant that supper preparations were going forward. She'd better slip into her gown. Miss Martha would be sending a tray into the living-room shortly. The Samp sisters would not permit her to step foot in the Shop when the men were eating there.

Kadyama was filling the wood-box in the living-room, she could hear him shuffling back and forth. Regular as clock-work. One could tell the time by his coming and going. A curious character. Sardonic. Taciturn. She avoided him when she could.

What was that sound? Coat half off, she listened. Something running round and round like mad. Blot having a fit?

She thrust her arm back into the satin sleeve, dashed through the passage, stopped on the threshold of the living-room. Overturned chairs waved legs in air as though in exercise of their Daily Dozen. Spools rolled on the floor from the over-

turned work-basket. A slammed door cut a terrified "Meow!" in half.

Blot! Blot had been kidnaped! By Kadyama? Hadn't Bruce said that the natives feared the cat as they did the Evil Spirit? It would break the Samp girls' heart if anything happened to their pet. Could she rescue it?

She jerked open the door, ran in pursuit of a bent, scurrying figure hooded in a brilliant Yakutat blanket. The tip of a lashing black tail hung below it. Where was the Indian taking the cat?

Janice's breath came unevenly, the wide, full trousers swished about her feet, the strap of one parchment-kid sandal snapped. He had passed the Waffle Shop without being noticed. To the kennels? They were back of the office. Surely someone there would see him. What was the kidnaper's idea? He didn't intend—he did! He did!

Her shout of protest cracked in her dry throat—for all the world as though she were shrieking for help in a nightmare—as a struggling, kicking, spitting black ball was flung with terrific force into the yard where a dozen or more slant-eyed, ruby-tongued huskies were yipping and yelping and rollicking. They stiffened to rigidity as they regarded the motionless black heap. A trimly built Siberian broke the spell with a joyous yelp. He nosed the stunned cat, tossed it. A husky with baleful yellow eyes caught it, sent it whirling back. Like a shuttlecock it flew from dog to dog to an accompaniment of barks and growls.

For a split second Janice hesitated as imagination projected a picture of herself being torn to ribbons. The kidnaper had vanished. Then she fumbled frantically at the gate. They would kill Blot. Where was the trick latch? She had it. She dashed into the midst of the excited tormentors, caught the black cat in the air, held it high as the dogs sprang for her. Gleeful yelps deepened to menacing growls. She backed toward the gate. Two or three huskies, she couldn't tell how many, sneaked behind her. Her heart pounded in her throat. She didn't know much about dog psychology, but she knew enough not to run.

Claws ripped at her dahlia jacket, at her satin trousers. She lost a parchment sandal. The slim gray Siberian carried it off, worrying it as he went. She backed cautiously, saying over and over, soothingly:

"Nice boys! Down! Down!"

Her lips were too stiff to voice command. The husky with the baleful glare stalked toward her in a sullen wolf-walk, lips lifting in spasmodic snarls. Suddenly he reared. His gold-flecked eyes were on a level with hers, his wrinkled nose bared yellowed fangs. Sneering at her, was he? Would she ever get outside that fence? Miss Martha would say, "There's a gate in every wall, my dear." There was in this one if she could only make it. The wolf-dog was leaping—

"Drop the cat! Good God! Drop the cat! At him, Tong!"

Janice was conscious of a tawny shape flashing by her, of the impact of bodies, of a yelp of pain, before an arm was flung about her shoulders. She looked up into eyes blazing in a face, livid, lined. Bruce! Of course. Hadn't he appeared at the exact psychological moment to pick up her black slipper? She still clutched the cat as he drew her outside the gate.

She looked over her shoulder. Tong, his brush hanging straight, fangs bared, beautiful head lowered, glared at the dogs cringing away from him. She controlled a shiver.

"Come on."

She looked up at Bruce Harcourt whose fingers bit into her arm.

"I'm going as fast as I can with one sandal. This ground isn't a trotting-park."

She glanced down at her silk-stockinged foot, regarded incredulously her shredded pajamas. She laughed, sobbed, laughed again.

"Stop it! You'll have hysterics in a moment."

Her voice caught treacherously in the midst of indignant denial. Without warning, Harcourt picked her up in his arms. She tried to free herself.

"Stop wriggling. You're heavy enough as it is."

"I can walk. It's absurd to carry me."

Breathing hard, he set her on her feet in the living-room of the Samp cabin. He closed the door and backed up against it. His face was darkly red as he demanded:

"Don't you know better than to run round this camp dressed in those things? I saw you from the office window. Couldn't believe my eyes. Look at yourself."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

AROUND THE HOUSE

A little honey in fruit cake helps to keep the cake moist.

Save your scraps of soap, melt them together and use for washing clothes.

It's better to wash soiled woolen garments through several sudsy waters instead of just one. It is easier on the garment.

Cook carrots in just a little water so you won't have to drain off any of the minerals and vitamins before serving.

One teaspoon of onion juice or half a sliced raw onion added to mashed potatoes gives them a different flavor.

Wash your dish towels daily and dry them in the sun to keep them white and free from odor.

When setting the table for guests, allow from 24 to 30 inches of space to a person. This makes for comfortable seating and serving. A crowded table is uncomfortable and somewhat confusing to both hostess and guests.

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