

# Lighted Windows

By EMILIE LORING  
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CHAPTER XV

Ned Paxton looked stern. "What do you know of my scheme of living? I want a woman at the head of my house, for the mother of my children, who has an infallible instinct for the fine and beautiful things of life and the courage to go after them. And I'm going to get her. You must have thought me an easy mark when we met at the hotel. I was dazed by the news of your marriage. As the day wore on I grew suspicious. Asked a few questions. Discovered that you married Harcourt after you met me that morning. Why did you do it?"

Janice had almost liked him again, trusted him as he confided his ideal of family life. The savage contempt of his question hardened her heart. "Continue sneaking. Find out." "I have it on rather good authority that Harcourt was not in love with you. I suspect it was a case of knight-errantry on his part. Girl announces that she is married to him. What could he do but come across with the ring?"

"You will have to answer that question yourself, Ned. But, after all, how can you? What do you know of the ambitions, struggles, sacrifices, self-discipline which lie behind what you call knight-errantry? You see. You want. You buy."

His face was dark with anger. "You said that once before. I don't like it. I'll prove to you that I can earn one thing I want—that's you. Think I don't know that this marriage stuff is a bluff to save your face? He drew her close. She protested sharply:

"Ned! Let me go!" The kitchen door banged open. Tong dashed into the room. Head lowered, brush drooping, one corner of his lip snarled to reveal a fang, baleful eyes watchful, he stood as motionless as a creature in bronze.

Paxton released Janice. His laugh showed a tinge of strain.

Pasca shuffled into the charged silence. "Tatima in kitchen with deesh. Mees Samp seesters send her."

"Aren't they coming?" Janice's voice dripped disappointment. "Tell Tatima to come in, Pasca." Grant entered by the front door. "Tubby, I'm glad you have arrived to swell the list of those present, it looks as though my party might be a frost."

"Says you. How are you, Paxton? Where's Mrs. Hale? Well, what d'you know! See who's here!"

Tatima had come in from the kitchen. "Mees Samp seesters send plate. They say, sorry they can't come to party."

"Tell them that I am terribly disappointed." The girl lingered, twisting her bracelets in conscious expectancy. "I never saw so much lovely silver jewelry. Something tells me you've had a present."

Tatima assumed indifference. "Who, me? Kadyama geeve to me. He geeve me much more. I marry on him. He chief's son. Some day I beeg chief's squaw."

There was a thread of excitement in Grant's laugh. "Kadyama's struck pay-dirt, has he? Where's his gold-mine?"

"He noding like gol' mine. Money owe him long time for card game. Yesterday man pay. Kadyama buy silver from Ossa."

"Who's the rich stranger? I'd like to get up a little game with him myself."

Tatima sniffed scorn. "Stranger! Pasca pay heem. Pasca have beeg fat roll of money, Kadyama say."

Coming aboard Ned Paxton's boat had set old memories twanging unbearably. Janice reflected uneasily. Mary Samp's eyes were big with wonder. She perched on the edge of the seat like a plump pigeon on a ledge ready to take off at the slightest warning. Millicent Hale, in a deck chair, had removed her black hat. Her fair hair seemed fairer in contrast to her sombre frock.

Janice sniffed. Why had the fragile woman in black such power to hurt her?

Was Ned Paxton intrigued by her? Admitted that it was a glorious day, that fact did not explain her presence on this boat. Tubby Grant had been responsible. That was unfair. She alone was responsible for what she did. She was white, free and considerably over twenty-one, quite old enough to make her own decisions. Had it all been Tubby's insistence, or had she been glad of the chance to be away when Bruce returned? After supper last night, Tubby had held her up outside her Waffle Shop—had begged her to second his efforts to have Millicent Hale away from headquarters when the Commissioner and Harcourt arrived the next afternoon. From the fact that his name had not been

mentioned in the radio message, there was every reason to believe they were bringing Jimmy Chester. He had asked Paxton to co-operate by inviting a party on his yacht for a nearer view of the erupting volcano.

Grant's plan had seemed sound. Now, on thinking back over the conversation, she wondered that he had not referred to Tatima's startling disclosure as to the source of the money which Kadyama had lavishly expended on silver jewelry. Where could Pasca get so much cash so suddenly? Was it part of that taken from Joe Hale when he was shot? It would account for Bruce's revolver having been used, for Pasca's absence from the squawdance.

A ship's bell struck. She counted. Eight bells. Was it possible they had been sailing three hours? Tea time. She joined the group under the awning. Paxton rose.

"You stood so long staring over the rail, we decided that you were making up your mind for a swim."

"Not in this icy water. I was wondering if we could approach the volcano near enough to get a picture. I brought a movie camera."

"I'll talk with the Captain and the native pilots. We have two aboard."



Janice waved to those on the boat.

Meanwhile, will you show Miss Mary the interior of the boat? You know every crack and cranny of it, though you haven't seen it since it had it re-decorated—for you."

The last words were so low that Janice wondered if anyone but herself heard them. Miss Mary admitted:

"I'd like real well to see it."

Mary Samp's eyes shone, her cheeks reddened with excitement as they passed from one part of the yacht to another. The silver and blue, black and rose and gold of the staterooms reduced her to a state of thrilled speechlessness. On the threshold of the main lounge she clasped ecstatic hands.

"Well, now! I suppose this is what folks call modernistic!"

Two Filipino boys were bringing the tea things when they returned to the lounge deck. Janice's lips twitched with laughter as she remembered Pasca's high-held tray. That reminded her, where had the Eskimo procured the money to pay Kadyama?

"Janice!" She looked up. Paxton was standing before her fastening a holster belt. "That's better. You were a hundred miles from here. I'll bet you couldn't tell whether you've had tea or not. You have. The tea is running smooth. If you want to get near enough to the volcano to take a picture, the Captain says that it will be perfectly safe for the native pilots to take you in the launch."

Janice's premonition nerves tingled. Darn her imagination. Here was the opportunity of a lifetime. Would she let her fear-complex rule? She would not.

"I'm all excited! Am I to go alone?"

"No. I'll go to make sure that you don't fall out of the boat in your excitement. The sky is not quite so clear as it was, we'd better get a move on. The yacht will follow. We will turn back the moment you say the word."

Clad in the launch, Janice

waved to the two women and the Captain bending over the rail to watch them start. Miss Mary's eyes were troubled, Millicent Hale's inscrutable, the Captain's complacent as he listened to the purr of the motor, rhythmic as a kitten's breathing, observed the skill of the native pilots who had shed their coats and caps, gold braided with the yacht's insignia, and had stolidly wriggled into kamalaykas, which looked like waterproof overshirts with a hood. When at a proper distance, Janice focused the camera on the group on the deck. She cranked until the faces were dim.

"There! I wonder what Tubby will say to that. He is teaching me the motion-picture art. I've even learned to develop films. When I return to civilization I will be equipped to go on the lecture platform."

"Then you expect to return to civilization?"

Apparently absorbed in the intricacies of the black box she held, she answered abstractedly:

"Return! Of course. Then some day we are going to South America to build a bridge."

Paxton laughed skeptically before he crouched down behind the engine to light a cigarette. From whence had that iridescent bit of fabrication bubbled, Janice demanded of herself in dismay. From the rows and rows of Spanish books in the H house? Had those spelled South America to her subconscious?

The launch was running parallel with a green shore from which twin mountains lightly clothed with alders and willows, arid, with volcano ash, rose in a graceful sweep to taper into dazzling white cones. Beyond towered higher peaks like purple shadows. She could make out an abandoned Indian village, its tumble-down huts shining weirdly white in the distance. Were those uprights carved totem poles? She turned eagerly to Paxton as he came aft.

"See that Indian village, Ned. I wish—"

The sentence died on her lips as a rain of tiny rocks showered upon the boat. They burned as they struck her hands, hissed as they fell into the water to float away like dingy snow-flakes. Orange and scarlet flames fired curling vapor, belching smoke, till the sky seemed one frightful conflagration.

"Hol' tight! Hol' tight!" Janice hadn't needed the hoarse shouts of the pilots as a warning. Instinctively she had gripped the side of the launch.

"Come about! Make for the yacht!" Paxton shouted.

Too late. With the roar as of all the thunderbolts forged in Vulcan's workshops let loose, with a crash which rocked the world, the volcano blew up. Fascinated eyes on the spectacle, Janice saw what looked to be the back of a great sea monster rise to the surface. An island being born? Paxton caught her in one arm, clung tight with the other hand. A wave which seemed mountains high rolled toward the launch, caught it as though it had been a chip in a puddle, swept it shoreward with incredible speed. Sweat ran down the bronze face of one pilot as he strained at the wheel. The eyes of both bulged with terror. Overhead feathery, scooting clouds merged. The world which had been all sapphire, emerald and crystal went dreadnaught gray. Stinging white foam flew back in drenching spray. Smoke rolled and twisted like a boa-constrictor in the throes of acute indigestion. The boat climbed a huge roller, lunged sickeningly in the trough, staggered and shuddered when a fresh wave struck it. The sea snarled and hissed under a shower of hot stones. Spray blurred Janice's eyes as she strained them in an effort to see what lay ahead. Another mighty smash and shock of water, greater than its predecessor, lifted the boat like a toy and flung it on the shore.

For a dazed instant she sat with eyes tightly shut. She had thought that last plunge would end everything. Paxton touched her shoulder. "We're safe, Jan. Don't, don't go to pieces now that the danger is over."

"Go to pieces!" She blinked, forced a smile. "I was merely orienting myself, that's all."

The launch was stranded on a pebbly beach. The native pilots were huddled in the bow. Paxton, livid, tense, was standing over them. With a final word he came back to her.

"We'll have to camp here until the yacht picks us up. The men say there is a hunter's shack somewhere on this shore. They are dumb with fright. That was all I could screw out of them. We'd better find it before another wave catches us."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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### The Questions

1. How many stairs to the top of Washington monument?
2. What is a recidivist?
3. The Arc d'Triomphe in Paris was built to commemorate the victories of what ruler?
4. What is the area of Guam Island?
5. What mythological character ferried the souls of the dead across the River Styx?
6. Who was the mother of Solomon?

7. What fictional character trained boys and girls to be thieves—Raffles, Fagin or Macawber?

### The Answers

1. There are 898 stairs.
2. A habitual criminal.
3. Napoleon.
4. Guam Island is 206 square miles in area.
5. Charon.
6. Bath-sheba.
7. Fagin.

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