

The Lady of the Night Wind

By VARICK VANARDY
Author of "The Two-Faced Man,"
"Alias the Night Wind," etc.

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THIS STARTS THE STORY

A week-end house party is being held at the country home of Katherine and Bingham Harvard. Among the guests is one Conrad Belknap. Katherine discovers him cheating at cards and orders him to leave at once. He refuses to do so scornfully. He seems to exert a peculiar influence over her. Convinced that he is concealing his real identity and that he is there for some ulterior purpose, Katherine determines to ferret out the mystery. She has formerly had experience as a police headquarters detective and has been known as Lady Kate of the Police. She intercepts a telephone call of Belknap's to a woman and learns her full name and address. Realizing that he is suspected by Katherine, Belknap threatens to expose the fact that Katherine's brother, Redrick Maxwilton, who is believed by his parents to be dead, faces a term in prison. Bingham Harvard, who once bore the title of the Night Wind, becomes suspicious of Belknap and of Katherine's attitude toward him. Belknap's confederate, Roberta, or Roberta, appears on the scene under the name of Senorita Cervantez, a pianist who is to entertain the guests. She pretends to be dumb and writes her words on a pad of paper. Her action mystifies Belknap. Harvard attacks Belknap one night after he has received notes from both Katherine and Roberta from a balcony of the house. Belknap does not recognize his assailant.

AND HERE IT CONTINUES.

HER lips parted as if to speak, but she remembered in time and closed them. She was groping for her tablets with wandering, uncertain fingers when Katherine put her arms around her and drew her into a close and fond embrace. "It doesn't matter who you are, dear," she said. "Whether you are a Maxwilton or a Keese or if the wonderful resemblance to the old portrait is only an accident, the fact remains that you are here and that we are both fond of you; that I am certainly. And," she added, with another thought, "I am not going to let you go away Monday, as planned. I will see to that."

Roberta let go of the tablets which she had found and grasped. She whispered into Katherine's ear:

"I—I don't know anything about it, Mrs. Harvard; nothing at all. It is all a mystery to me. I am dazed, excited, speechless, thoughtful. It is all so wonderful—so overwhelming. May I—may I go to my room now? And I may I take the likeness with me, please? I want to study it; I want to think about it. Please let me take it."

Katherine repeated the substance of what she said to Betty.

"Of course, you can take the picture," Betty announced; and then they both kissed her good night, and she left the room.

"What does it mean?" Betty demanded of Katherine after she had gone.

Katherine shook her head. "I don't know," she replied. "I will ask my father about it. He has got the entire Maxwilton genealogy tucked away in his head, ever ready for instant reference. He will be likely to know; or, if not that, he'll be more likely to know how to make guesses about it than we are."

Betty kissed Katherine good night. She started for the door and stepped half-way to it.

"Katherine?" she began.

"Yes? What now, Betty?"

"Do you think that Mr. Belknap might have known the senorita somewhere, sometime, before he met her here?"

"What a question! Why?"

"I have heard that when people walk in their sleep they follow out ideas that were predominant before they went to sleep. And—and, honestly, Kitten, I believe he was asleep any more than I am now."

"Why, Betty?"

"You just wait a moment. I saw him before I came into this room. I was on my way to find if you were still up and to show you that picture. I saw him in the hall and dodged into the room that Bingham reserves for Mr. Chester."

"I believe he was asleep any more than I am now."

"Why, Betty?"

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"Was any one here with you?" he demanded

them. Katherine reached out and punched the black button of the electric switch, extinguishing the lights in the room; then she darted across it to the window and out upon the balcony—for she was convinced that the sounds proceeded from without the house, and believed that they were not far from her window.

Betty Clancy seized upon the door, opened it, and sprang into the hall—for she was equally convinced that the sounds came from within the house; that is to say, both acted upon the impulse of the moment, without thought.

Each of them was, in part, right. Katherine, as cool as ever she had been in the old days of her police experiences, was quickly outside on the balcony, and bending over the rail of it, peering eagerly this way and that; and she saw—or thought that she saw—not being entirely certain—the outlines of a human figure as it darted into entire obscurity beneath the shadows of the trees at the edge of the lawn. And that was all.

Betty, as she literally jumped into the hall from Katherine's room, saw nothing at first. But doors were pulled open, timid and shrinking guests appeared as if by magic, frightened figures of women and the startled and questioning visages of the men, materialized from every direction, for the alarm had been one that was not to be ignored. It was not the sort of thing that one hears vaguely in sleep when one wonders even more vaguely about the cause and rolls over into sleep again; it was of the character that compels a person to sit up and take notice.

Bingham Harvard came into Katherine's room from his own just as she reappeared from the balcony. He snatched the lights while she crossed from the window toward him, and she noticed instantly, but without betraying her surprise because of it, that save for the fact that he was without a coat, he was dressed precisely as he had been at dinner that evening.

His quick questions also surprised her.

"Was any one here with you?" he demanded.

"Betty was here. We were—"

"Anybody else?"

"No, not just now, when we heard the shots. The senorita had been here earlier, but she had gone. Why—there is Betty now?" For Betty had reappeared at the door.

"Come!" Betty called to them from the doorway. "Oh, Bing! I'm so glad that you're here. They say—out there—that it came from Mme. Savage's room."

"Well, dear?"

"While I am on the subject there is something else that I want to say: Tom doesn't like the man, and I don't, either. Tom has put Rodney Rushton out his track, and—"

"What?" Katherine cried out.

"Well, what of it? He has, anyhow, whether you like it or not. Tom thinks that—"

A wild cry like the screams of a banshee, instantly followed by three pistol shots in rapid succession, interrupted her, and both young women stood spellbound and frightened.

"They came from outside—from the gardens—didn't they?" Katherine asked breathlessly.

"I wonder," Betty said, "if Belknap went back to the senorita's room to wait for her?"

The wild scream and the pistol shots that followed it momentarily paralyzed every nerve that Katherine said Betty possessed, coming upon them as they did at the moment when they were about to part for the night.

But the effect on them lasted only for a moment. Both of the young women recovered their self-possession instantly, and each of them was courageous, resourceful, and quick to act.

They were close to the door into the hall when the cry and the shots started

Bingham and Katherine followed Betty into the hall.

They found that a group had already collected in the corridor near the entrance to the suite occupied by Mme. Savage and her maid, and that a hush had fallen upon those who were gathered there.

The cause of it was at once apparent, for the unmistakable sounds of a woman sobbing could be heard from beyond the door, and mingled with it were the sharp tones of Madame's deep voice, almost masculine, in timbre.

Harvard tapped upon the panel, and Madame's voice bade him enter.

The old lady was sitting up in bed, and she held in her right hand a small automatic pistol, with which she had been gesticulating while she talked to her frightened and sobbing maid, who stood facing her across the footboard, grasping it with both hands.

Mme. Savage was a very old lady, it must be remembered; a very young-old lady, with eighty years or thereabouts to her credit, but as youthful as ever she had been, in spirit and thought, and in her outlook upon life. Now was she one who had resorted to artificial devices to keep herself young; her natural buoyancy, and her ardent love of being in the middle of "something doing" had done that.

"Come in! Come in!" she called out when she discovered the group at her door, headed by Harvard. "I'm not a bit afraid to be seen in bed by all of you. I don't wear a wig, nor do my face and neck in an emulating mask when I retire. My goodness, Bing, did I wake up the whole household?"

"Naturally. Have you been practicing at a target, Madame, or were you shooting at your maid? And, if I may be so bold as to ask, where did you get the pistol?" Harvard was smiling as he put the questions, for he was reassured. It had only been a scare after all, he was thinking.

Madame replied to the last question first.

"Where did I get it?" she retorted. "I've always had it. Not this one, of course, but a pistol of some kind. I'm not used to this new-fangled contraption yet, and I shot three times when I only meant to shoot once."

"But, my dear lady, what did you shoot at?"

"A man. There were two of them, or a man and a woman. I think that I must have winged one of them at that. You see—"

Betty interrupted impulsively.

"But the scream!" she exclaimed.

"That came before the pistol shots."

"Oh! That Nistine is a ninny; she is always scared at her own shadow. It is what I was scolding her about, and why she is sobbing now, just like a scared child."

"But, Madame, how did it happen? What did happen?" Bing asked.

"I was reading myself to sleep—I always do that, you know; it's a habit I've had for sixty years; and Nistine was sound asleep in that chair by the window. I heard a noise and looked around and saw Nistine jumped over her feet; and there was a man—I could just see his head and shoulders—climbing in at the window. He had a handkerchief or something tied across the lower part of his face. You see, only this reading-light was turned on, and he must have thought that I was asleep with a night-light burning, or he wouldn't have tried to climb in."

"Well, anyhow, Nistine let out that scream you heard and jumped, and when she jumped she caught her foot in something and fell. But in the meantime I was reading under my pillow for this. When Nistine fell and was out of the way I let drive at him, and the thing went off three times instead of once. I guess maybe that night-prowler didn't know that my father and my husband were both out-lying kings in the South-west, and that I learned how to use a gun at the same time I learned to read in my hand-book with my book and lace-needles when I travel."

"It's the habit of a lifetime; and, besides, this isn't the first effort that burglars and porch-climbers have made to get my diamonds away from me."

"That's the whole story, so—No it isn't, either. I jumped out of bed and went to the window, and I saw two figures disappear among the trees, and one of them either wore a long raincoat—which isn't likely for it's not raining—or was a woman and wore a dress. That is all. I didn't shoot again because they got out of my sight too soon. But I'll tell you this much; one of them, the one that I'm sure was not a woman, acted as if I'd wined him, and I've seen too many men shot and dead after my diamond-ropes were strung. You do me the favor to send all of these people out of my room? Those burglars had probably heard that I was down here at your place and figured it out that it would be a swell chance for them to get my jewels. They've been hot-foot after my diamond-ropes ever since that foolish Sunday newspaper printed a picture of it and told what it is worth. They won't get it. Ping Harvard! Not while I'm alive, and I expect to be on earth a good many years yet. And Bingham, come nearer. I want to whisper to you. Now, listen; I think—I don't know, but I think—that I could make a good guess about that man that I did not hit. He moved just like—r—somebody I know. But I'll tell you about that in the morning."

"The next complete novelette—"

"Down the Long, Long Road."

(CONTINUED TOMORROW.)

DAILY NOVELETTE

"BUDDY GETS A DOCTOR"
By Eva Goldberg

PREPARATIONS were being made at "Idlers' Lodge" for the invasion of "The Jolly Ten," Polly French, their president, left on an earlier train than the other members, with plans for dressing up the crude bungalow and replacing isolation by a homelike atmosphere.

Buddy Moore, her acquaintance of half an hour, she already adopted as camp mascot, and the little fellow proved his worth by running errands in the locality so unfamiliar to the newcomers.

While Buddy ran out to gather some wild flowers for her vase, the industrious girl undertook to repair a broken rocking-chair. Missing her aim, the hammer boldly struck her finger.

"My, but that hurts! What a fierce blow! And was the hand swelling? So it seemed. In her loneliness and distance from home she commenced to feel frightened; besides, the ugly look of the wound was enough to cause her uneasiness.

"I'm sorry you're with an armful of fresh posies, romped in to distract play them. Excited, Polly glanced at herself in bungalow attire, then at Bud.

"Sunny, do you know where I can get a doctor? See what I've done! Oh, it aches so!"

"I don't know, Miss Polly," he ventured to say in a hesitating way, "but I can go to the village and find out."

"The village—bless your heart—that's half a mile down. You're an angel. Aren't you afraid to go all alone?" she inquired. "You can read a doctor's sign, of course?"

"Sure I can," he assured. "It says M. D., don't it? I can read—I'm never now—in the second grade—we read hard books and write with ink, we do."

"All right, dear, then remember—the first sign that reads M. D.," she shouted as he ran toward the door.

The little chap was half way down to the village when he passed a house whose brass doorknob attracted his eye. On it was displayed in large black lettering:

M. D. CLARKE PROPRIETOR, SUNRISE STUDIOS

Spying the initials, and without attempting to decipher the rest, which was beyond his power, the youngster rang the bell and summoned the owner of the long title. Seeing an appearing young man approached him.

"Miss French says for you to come right over—she's hurt herself and it aches dreadfully," the boy announced without any ceremony.

Mortuo D. Clarke was in a quandary.

"I'm artist followed the speedy little footsteps that led to the road which introduced 'Idlers' Lodge' where the patient was now in severe pain.

"Oh, doctor," she explained, upon meeting the hatless, breathless stranger. "I would have called at your office only that I am not acquainted with this town. I could not hear a sound of any kind come to my strained ears."

I crept back to the sidewalk and walked toward the taxi. A sickening thought flashed through my ever-excited brain—suppose that awful silence meant something had happened to Duke—suppose Stantburg had discovered him there and—I gave a little horrified shudder as my imagination pictured Duke lying in the stillness of death on the floor of that dark and silent building. The deserted street, the dark evening and the peculiar nature of my mission were playing tricks with my nerves and it was with relief that I finally reached my taxi and saw the driver half asleep in his seat. I pulled myself together, and, picking up grip number two, left the comforting reassurance of the taxi and the glaring lamp post and once more strode into the gloomy street.

With beating heart I tiptoed to the open window. To my great relief I saw the first sign resting on the grass under the window. Without hesitation I dropped bag number two through the open window and went to pick up bag number one. Then I discovered it was full of something very heavy, for it was all I could do to carry it. For a second I stopped to listen, but no sound came from the mysterious gloom of that empty building. So, with shoulder pulled down by the weight of the bag, I struggled to the taxi.

Sixteen trips back and forth from the taxi to the silent dark building did I take before my work was done. Then, with a heavy load of something, I knew not what—I was soon carried to the heart of Brooklyn, over Brooklyn bridge to the city hall.

For an hour I sat there waiting for her. That hour seemed like a year. The scene from the taxi was most familiar. The postoffice, city hall, the Woolworth Building—all the big things which I had passed hundreds of times—yet sitting in that taxi with my precious mysterious load, waiting for Duke and wondering why he did not turn up, gave me a feeling of loneliness. I felt apart from the familiar surroundings, and that the everyday business world they represented had nothing to do with the life in which I had been engaged for Miss Maitland her \$25,000 had so suddenly and dramatically thrown Bruno Duke and me.

Suddenly the door of the taxi opened and I gave a startled jump as Duke quietly and quickly closed the door, and with an amused twinkle in his eyes remarked:

DREAMLAND ADVENTURES—By Daddy

"THE MERMAID IS KIDNAPPED"

(When the mermaid says she cannot marry the Prince of Dollars because he is rich and because she is plighted to Blacksmith Joe the animals attack her, and Baily Sam carries her away. The prince fights to save her from the animals.)



He dashed away for Lovers' Knoll

The mud pond into which the prince had booted him when he tried to butt the prince in the back.

The three animals rushed forward together and the prince seemed in for a hard battle.

"We will help you," shouted Billy and Peggy, running to the prince's aid. But before they could get to his side the animals played a sharp trick. Johnny Bull made a grab at the prince's leg and the prince kicked at him. Lonesome Bear rushed forward, Billy Goat butted the prince from behind, and the brave youth went flying right over Lonesome Bear's head, landing on his slinky back. Then Lonesome Bear did just as Baily Sam had done with the mermaid—he dashed away for Lovers' Knoll, with the prince clinging to his fur and tail.

As he disappeared into the woods, Johnny Bull sat up on his haunches and howled with laughter. Billy Goat did the same, only instead of howling he bleated: "Ba-ha-ba-ba-ha!"

"How-wow, didn't we fool them fine? They thought we were mad," roared Johnny Bull.

"And weren't you?" asked Peggy.

"Not a bit, even when I got thrown up that tree," howled Johnny Bull.

"It was all part of our plot to get them on Lovers' Knoll together while the Wedding Moon was working its spell."

"What's the Wedding Moon's spell?" asked Billy.

"Come and see; we are missing the fun," bleated Billy Goat.

They raced away until they came to an opening at the edge of a high bluff. Here was a grassy knoll, from which one could look through the shadowy trees far out on the country all round about. And just now the moonlight changed the whole land into a shimmering, silvery land of enchantment. It was a beautiful spot, and made for lovers, and here were the Prince of Dollars and Anita, the mermaid. He held her clasped protectively in his arms, and she clung to him tightly. And every time she tried to draw away, as she had when she had fled from him at former times, Lonesome Bear would growl from the underbrush or Baily Sam would bray, and the mermaid would cling to him tighter than ever.

Now the birds began to sing pretty little love songs and the prince began to whisper to the mermaid, and she listened happily, forgetting to try to get away.

"Hoo! Hoo! All is well! For when the Wedding Moon shines on young folks on Lovers' Knoll they are sure to wed," hooted Judge Owl.

"Hey there, I'm here, too," roared a hoarse voice from up a pine tree, and there looking down through the branches was Blacksmith Joe. "You're plighted to me, Miss Anita, and me you'll wed," he added as the mermaid gave a little shriek and tore herself away from the prince.

(Tomorrow will be told how Blacksmith Joe has an exciting battle in the air and changes his mind.)

BRUNO DUKE, Solver of Business Problems

By HAROLD WHITEHEAD, Author of "The Business Career of Peter Flint," etc.

The Meter Jewel Company Is Robbed

IT WORKED like a charm. At 6 o'clock my taxi was at the corner of the rather deserted street on which stood the little plant of the Meter Jewel Company.

It was a dark but clear evening and I had little difficulty in locating the open window, inside which I dropped the first empty bag. I fell with a bang that rather startled me. The empty building magnified the sound so that it seemed to me that half Brooklyn must have heard that empty bag drop.

I listened, tensely, my heart pounding with excitement. I half expected to hear a whispered word from Duke, but I could not hear a sound of any kind come to my strained ears.

I crept back to the sidewalk and walked toward the taxi. A sickening thought flashed through my ever-excited brain—suppose that awful silence meant something had happened to Duke—suppose Stantburg had discovered him there and—I gave a little horrified shudder as my imagination pictured Duke lying in the stillness of death on the floor of that dark and silent building. The deserted street, the dark evening and the peculiar nature of my mission were playing tricks with my nerves and it was with relief that I finally reached my taxi and saw the driver half asleep in his seat. I pulled myself together, and, picking up grip number two, left the comforting reassurance of the taxi and the glaring lamp post and once more strode into the gloomy street.

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For an hour I sat there waiting for her. That hour seemed like a year. The scene from the taxi was most familiar. The postoffice, city hall, the Woolworth Building—all the big things which I had passed hundreds of times—yet sitting in that taxi with my precious mysterious load, waiting for Duke and wondering why he did not turn up, gave me a feeling of loneliness. I felt apart from the familiar surroundings, and that the everyday business world they represented had nothing to do with the life in which I had been engaged for Miss Maitland her \$25,000 had so suddenly and dramatically thrown Bruno Duke and me.

Suddenly the door of the taxi opened and I gave a startled jump as Duke quietly and quickly closed the door, and with an amused twinkle in his eyes remarked:

"Down the Long, Long Road."

Roughing It "De Luxe" in Colorado

We left the train at Lake City for two reasons. In the first place, in that part of Colorado the mountains are high and engineering difficult, so that as far as the narrow gauge railroad had been built, and secondly—but what's the use of giving any other reason? The train was not scheduled to leave on the return trip until the next morning, and the coach was not equipped with sleeping accommodations. Neither was the engine. So we had to get off, even if that particular town had not been where we were headed for.

Passing up the trail from the—where the train stopped, deserted and tumble-down cabins were much in evidence, but a little farther along there were unmistakable signs of habitation. Suddenly we found ourselves in Main street, and then we realized that we really were in a town, for on a corner across the street was a bank building. Nobody's "living" in it now, and you couldn't get a \$5-bill changed there, for the owner had closed it up and gone back to Denver. Business had become too dull, for Lake City, which had flourished in the early eighties as a mining camp, had become one of the "ghost cities" of the West.

Nobody was living on the corner just across the street, either—hadn't lived there for several years, in fact, for the reason that the whole row of saloons and gambling houses that once occupied several blocks burned down one night and had never been rebuilt. The reporter on the Lake City Times, in his account that appeared in the next issue, said that the "origin of the conflagration had not been definitely fixed on any certain person."

So you see, even in a "ghost" city, interest began to develop among our bunch from "back east." Sed had joined the party on faith. He said before starting that he was all fagged out and wished to go somewhere, but didn't

care to know just where it was until he both got. He had his wish, at least geographically.

But I forgot Sloke. Sloke met us at the train, because he knew we were coming, otherwise we might have traveled as far as Main street without being noticed. Sloke pointed the way to the hotel, only a few doors distant—call it the Pueblo house, that's a good western name—and we proceeded thither.

How different from the effete East! And in many respects how much better. No doorman bawling out to your taxi driver. No bellboys nearly upsetting you in grabbing your baggage, and mean your grip or bag, as some folks call 'em. We just went in, and Sloke told us to make ourselves comfortable. It was easy to do, for there was plenty of room and no one to bother us. Presently Helen came in and told us to select our rooms upstairs. Helen spends her vacations with her mother, who is the proprietor of the hotel.

Now, what do you think happened? Doe and Ed had been to Lake City before on mining business, and so sooner had they reached their rooms than they dug up from somewhere high-laced boots, flannel shirts and other garments such as miners wear, and they were soon togged out in real western fashion. My wardrobe included nothing like that, but I didn't propose to be outdone, so I went to Sloke. He fitted me out with high boots, knickerbockers, and a hat, and pretty soon I felt so much like a miner that I was tempted to take a "chew of tobacco" to make it more realistic.

Listen! Just because you shun the beaten path that tourists are wont to follow and go way out to the jumping off place it does not necessarily mean that appetizing food never passes your lips. Far from it! It's true that fresh meat comes to Lake City only once a week, but what of that? It might pass the finicky person, to be segregated from his "tough beefsteak" for a meal or two, but that's where many tourists make a mistake. They go "Roughing It De Luxe," to borrow the title of a magazine article by Irvin Cobb. At the places exploited in the guide books they are astonished to find nearly all their favorite dishes on the bill of fare, and they usually are astonished also at what they find on the "bill" when they go to settle. The result is often unsatisfactory and the "de luxe" frequently overshadows the "rough" stuff.

Nobody "roughs it de luxe" in Lake City, for they don't carry "de luxe" in stock there. It's mostly "de rough," but by that term I do not mean to cast any aspersions on the food. Far from it.

But I'm keeping supper waiting. Helen finally got the gang to the table, miners' clothes and all. Now, I ask you, what's a beefsteak of more or less uncertain texture when you have placed before you a large platter of mountain trout—rainbow trout—done to a golden brown? Don't say you don't care for fish.