

# The Lady of the Night Wind

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"Alias the Night Wind," etc.

## THIS STARTS THE STORY

A house party is being held at the country home of Katherine and Bingham Harvad. Among the guests is one Conrad Belknap. Katherine discovers him cheating at cards. 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 to a woman confederate named Roberta, and, in turn, speaks to the woman, revealing that she is suspected by Katherine. Belknap threatens to accuse a crime her brother, Roderick Maxwellton, who is believed to be dead, Bingham Harvad, who once bore the title of the Night Wind, becomes suspicious of Belknap and tries to reveal to her toward him. Roberta's attitude toward him, however, is not so favorable. Katherine 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. Katherine, hidden in Roberta's room at midnight, witnesses a quarrel between her and Belknap in which he accuses Roberta of deceiving him.

## AND HERE IT CONTINUES

One Quality of Fear  
BELKnap released Roberta's hand and started toward the door, but he stopped and turned to face her again before he touched it. Katherine dropped out of sight a second time, but was conscious of a touch of sardonic mirth in Belknap's voice when he spoke; she could picture that wolfish smile of his which she had no doubt he was employing.

"I wonder if by any chance you are jealous of the beautiful Katherine," he said.  
"I might be jealous for her," was the quick retort from Roberta. "If I thought that you so much as—"  
"Touche," he interrupted, and laughed. "Rest easy, my lady of the claws and teeth. The charming character of Mamee does not concern me. It's her money that I want, not her exquisite self. One or two of her jewels, maybe—one that she wore during the evening, for instance, but not Katherine herself."

Roberta did not reply; he left the door and returned to the chair.  
"On the level, I wouldn't give the nail of one of your little fingers for a dozen Katherine Harvads," he said, and then Katherine heard the sounds of quick motions and a gasp from Roberta, and a low, chuckling laugh from Belknap.

"Gasp, you haven't it?" Katherine heard him say, and she ventured to peek once more over the chair back.  
He had seized Roberta's wrists and was holding them while he bent forward with his face close to hers.  
"I've got you so you can't bite or scratch, so don't struggle. It won't do any good. I am going to hold you till I have said something that I want you to hear. It's—"  
"Let go of my wrists," Roberta demanded of him coldly, and without a sign of an attempt to free herself. "If you don't—"  
"She did not complete the sentence, but he seemed to know what she would have said.

"I won't let go until I have finished with what I want to say when I turned back from the door, just now," he told her. "It's this: you seem to be the only person of my acquaintance who has the power to exasperate me to the limit of endurance. You are the only person alive who can madden me to the point of losing my temper. I who never lose it! And I don't know whether it is because I love you or because I hate you."

She interrupted him.  
"It is neither," she said coolly.  
"No," he chuckled again, still holding her hands.  
"No," Roberta repeated after him. "It is solely because you know that you are not my master. It is because I defy you—because you cannot make me your slave—because there is an element within me that is so utterly beyond your control that you are mystified. But, after all is said, C. B., those are only idle reasons. The real reason is—"  
"I exasperate and madden you at times is—"  
She stopped, gazing frankly into his eyes; and while she did so he slowly released her hands and stepped backward, away from her—and it was noticeable that he had been so if another could have seen Roberta just then; Katherine did not dare to lift her head above the top of the chair back that she did not move away from him. She had forced him to become the one who put more distance between them.

When she paused in her speech, he demanded:  
"Well, what is the real reason? I would like to know it."  
She replied to him slowly, and with quiet emphasis:  
"Because, deep down in your heart you are afraid of me. Because I am the only person in the world that you are afraid of; and because the experience is so strange to you—so entirely apart from your regular scheme of things—that although you know it to be true, you will not permit yourself to believe it. You won't admit that it's so."  
Belknap laughed softly, showing his teeth wolfishly.  
"You are afraid of me?" Roberta said again. "You know that I carry around with me the power to kill you as surely and as quickly as the lightning strikes and kills. You know that I carry with me wherever I go the means of ending my own life as suddenly, and you know that I have the will to use that means—against you or against myself. You know, too, that there is one thing that keeps me from using it—that makes me withhold my hand, and it all resolves itself to the one fact that you are afraid of me. You are in constant and deadly fear lest you go a step too far, and so—"  
"She stopped. He had withdrawn as far as the door; Katherine realized that when he spoke again, his voice was low, his speech deliberate and filled with menace.  
"Some time," he said, "you will take the step too far. Some time you will force me to take the step which will compel you to act; but, when I do take

it—don't forget this little fact, Berta—you will be the victim, not I. You will take your own life, not mine."

Katherine heard the click of the lock as he turned the key. He pulled the door partly open, and closed it again. His cool snuavy manner had returned when he said:  
"It is Sunday morning now. Tomorrow will be Monday, and I shall see to it that an occasion is made for you to make use of your skill at cards. Do you get that, Berta?"  
"Yes."  
"I will keep the letter that you wrote for Lady Kate to read in case you did not return. I have found it interesting."  
"You can do what you please with it; I can easily write another one, if need be."  
"You will not write another one," he retorted carelessly. "There will be no need of one. Our useful friend, for whom you sent to come here, did not make his appearance; and he will not appear to you, so very soundly asleep, as if the burden she bore was almost too much for her."  
He pulled the door open, passed out, and closed it after him.  
Katherine kept very still in her hiding place in the big chair, but she sighed deeply, as if the burden she bore was almost too much for her.

Her attitude, now that Belknap had gone, was one of dejection.  
Katherine's impulse was to make her own presence known at once, and so her police training assured her that it was much better that she should not do so. She kept very still, withdrawing into the chair. She knew that it was quite likely that Roberta would presently discover her, and just as likely that she would not. In the one case she intended to argue to the very soundly asleep, and in the other she would wait until she was until Roberta slept, and then steal silently out of the room.  
After a time that seemed interminable, so long did Roberta remain in that attitude of thoughtful dejection, Katherine could no longer stand on any more lights, nor appear to have any thought of preparing herself for bed. All that she seemed to do—for Katherine could only hear, and not see—was to walk slowly up and down the room, and each turn that she made she sighed deeply, as if the burden she bore was almost too much for her.

Katherine was in a dilemma. More than once she was at the point of making her presence known; she had, in fact, determined to do so, and had partly lifted her head in the beginning of the night, as if the burden she bore was almost too much for her. She had reached a guiding position, she moved the chair, went swiftly to the window, and stepped out upon the balcony.  
Katherine could see her peering with apparent eagerness this way and that, as if she searched the darkness with her eyes for somebody she hoped to see; and when she saw no one, she returned to the room, crossed it swiftly without seeing Katherine, and went out, closing the door softly behind her.  
Instantly Katherine slid from the chair to her feet.  
At all hazards, and notwithstanding her earlier attitude, she knew that it was her duty to follow for Roberta had said to herself, whispering, as she crossed the room:  
"I will look again. Possibly he was detained. He may be there, now, waiting for me."

A Man in the Open  
KATHERINE was not to leave the house that night on the track of Roberta in precisely the way she planned, although she did go out into the darkness by another means than the door—by one that was forced upon her, which she would not have attempted, nor, indeed, believed possible of accomplishment had she not been compelled to it, and if she had not been transformed by the scene she had just witnessed into a more self-addressed Kate of the Police, to the Lady of the Night Wind who had dared so greatly and accomplished so much, long ago, when she had taken upon herself the task of clearing her husband of the framed-up charges against him.

When Roberta went from the room after making those self-addressed whispered remarks about her going, Katherine became suddenly alert and eager.  
She was again the shrewd, resourceful and skillful detective of her "Miss Maxwellton" days at headquarters, unafraid, self-confident, and competent. She became, on the instant, the skilled operative of bygone times.  
It did not matter to her then that she was in negligee, Senatoria Cervantez, the Roberta of the midnight conversation over a telephone wire, the confederate of Belknap in his schemes, had just gone into the night second time to meet somebody who had sent for and was expecting—somebody who was minimal to Belknap and his plans—somebody whose identity Katherine vaguely, very vaguely, suspected—and Katherine was bound to discover who and what that somebody might be; for she was determined to find out there were any grounds for her faint but insistent suspicion.

She had what Tom Clancy would have called a "hunch."  
She guessed that in the conversation

she had just overheard, Belknap and Roberta had both referred to her brother Roderick—and yet—and yet—  
She darted to the door and pulled it a little way open without a jar or sound.  
There was the possibility that Roberta had paused just beyond it; that she might have changed her mind; so Katherine was extremely cautious—and it was well that she was so.  
She peered into the hall, which, although dimly lit, was lighter than the room behind her.  
Instantly she withdrew her head, reclosed the door, and turned the key in the lock, fastening it. Then, almost holding her breath, she waited.  
What she had seen was startling enough.  
Roberta had already disappeared—much more quickly than Katherine had believed she could; more than likely she had run to the stairs and down them, but Belknap was returning.  
She had caught sight of him at the moment he turned around the post of the balustrade coming from the floor above, where his room was located; she had seen him—and she feared that he had caught a glimpse of her. Not enough to have recognized her; she was quite certain as to that, but his eyes had evidently been on the door when she had thrust her head outward, which had started forward with quickened pace, and—  
The knob of the door turned; then when it would not yield, the knob was shaken gently.  
Katherine made no response whatever. She stood very still, listening.  
Belknap, at the opposite side, tapped lightly against it. Then Katherine heard his voice raised barely above a whisper.  
"Let me in, Berta," he said. "There is something I forgot to say, and there is no knowing when there will be another opportunity like this one. You haven't addressed, yet, I'm sure. Open and let me in. I won't stay five minutes, I promise."

So Katherine was free from the house, leaving Belknap none the wiser.  
She smiled at the thought of his amazement, if, while he waited beside the locked bathroom door, Roberta should return—and remembrance of Roberta brought to mind her original purpose.  
But a moment of thought convinced Katherine that it would be worse than useless to seek her under the circumstances.  
Roberta had gone out with a definite purpose, and doubtless to a definite place; there was no such thing as a secret where that place might be located.  
Moreover, now that she was in the open air, she needed, and very much wanted, clothing.  
There was no means of re-entering the house at once; she knew that she would have to wait until morning to do that—if she hoped to accomplish it without betraying the unusual circumstances of her being outside, and she had no notion of letting anybody into the secret. It was wholly her own, thus far, and she meant to keep it so.  
She did not know where she could go.

There was always the Nest, her one place of secure refuge from any and every sort of storm or stress. There was everything that she might need; and never yet had there been a time when she was so thankful of its existence—so grateful for that whim of hers that she had to accomplish it, encouraged since childhood, which had induced Bingham to let her build it—never had she appreciated the fact of it so much as at that moment.  
It was her "mystery place," her very own sanctum, and with a smile of content she made her way swiftly along the winding path among the bushes and shrubs toward the artificial lake beside and above which it was located.  
She glided along like a spirit—and with scarcely more noise than one might make—and so came at last to the shore of the little lake, to a path that followed the indentures of it and would lead, presently, to another one that ended at the Nest.  
Katherine was too impatient to keep to the path; the way across was short, and she knew every inch of it even if the darkness was deeper among the towering trees from beneath which every scrap of lesser growth had been cleared away.  
Gliding noiselessly onward, fitting like a sprite from tree to tree, she came to a sudden stop and sniffed the air like a hunting dog that has caught the scent of game.  
It was the unmistakable odor of a cigar that Katherine had sensed, and as she came to a halt and listened, peering eagerly in this way and that, she detected the low murmur of voices in conversation—just the low hum of them, with nothing distinct about it.  
"Roberta!" she thought quickly.  
"Roberta, and the man she came out to meet. And he is smoking. Foolish man! But he could not guess that a regular old-time detective would be out here on his trail."

She smiled broadly at her own face-tiousness while she stood very still and listened intently in order to catch the exact location of the sounds she heard. Then her face took on a serious expression, and as she moved slowly forward toward the sound she murmured to herself:  
"Can it be? Oh, can it be possible that—that he—No, no, I can't believe it. But if it is not that it must be another part of this hideous plot, and, whatever it is, I mean to know about it."  
(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

paratus that passed from floor to ceiling in the corner beside the window; then she sat upon the low chair again and began her strange exit from the bathroom.  
She could hear Belknap talking, but she paid no heed to what he was saying.  
She had to force her way head first through the window—there was no other way—but she kept a firm grip upon the towel-ropes.  
Head and shoulders first while she clung with one hand to the rope of towels, she forced her way through the narrow space.  
Katherine was slender and willowy. There was but little impediment of clothing to overcome, as we know.  
It was a tight squeeze, nevertheless; but she made it inch by inch, by squirming and edging her body forward a little at a time, first at one side and then at the other, emerging finally at the opposite side in the position of one who dives into the water.  
When at last she was free from the window casings, she did dive, but she clung desperately to her rope as if she caught her weight and whirled her body upon it.  
The impetus of her fall and the sharp jerk upon the improvised rope proved too much for the knot she had tied around the water pipe; it was not equal to the sharp and sudden strain upon it.  
She went loose, and she fell a few feet only, and upon the soft sod, so that in her quite natural excitement of the moment, and her glee over the escape she had made, she was barely conscious of the shock of it—and the knotted towels fell with her, and she gathered them up as she got upon her feet and sprang into the deep gloom of the night among the shrubbery.  
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Belknap did not, immediately, speak again, but Katherine could hear a faint rustling beyond the closed door; and then she became genuinely startled.  
She heard the click of metal against metal at the keyhole, and Belknap's muttered remark made at the same time.  
"All right. If you won't let me, I'll go in."  
And Katherine understood.  
She knew that he was using burglar-forceps to grip the post of the key and turn it, and thus unlock the door from his side, and she knew that it could be done as easily as if he held the key itself. She knew all about such instruments; she had seen many a pair of them in the museum-cabinet at headquarters.  
It did not at the instant occur to her to seize the key and hold it—and even if she had done so, Belknap would presently have discovered that it was not Roberta, but another, beyond the door—and he might guess who that other person was. Katherine was very far from wanting him to suspect that she had been a witness to the scene that had just happened inside of the room.  
When the forceps clicked against the lock, and she realized what was doing, she darted away, and by the time he had begun to turn the key in the manner described she had fled and locked the door after her—and that time she withdrew the key and dropped it to the tiled floor.  
But there was no other way out of that room unless—She glanced toward the high and narrow window and shook her head—she approached it and stepped upon the low chair that stood beneath it while she pushed wide open the hinged screen to peer into the night outside.  
"It might be done," she told herself mentally. "It can be done. I must do it. That man shall not know that I—"  
Belknap had entered the other room and was rapping softly against the bathroom door.  
"Come out here," she heard him say.  
"What is the matter with you?"  
But Katherine was working with feverish haste and paid no heed to him, for from wanting him to suspect that she had been a witness to the scene that had just happened inside of the room, she was now determined to keep him from knowing that she was there, and she was of generous size.  
She seized upon them one by one and knotted them together until she decided that her improvised rope was long enough, for she had made up her mind that she would experience only slight difficulty in forcing her slender body through the window. She had not a doubt that Belknap, when he became convinced that Roberta would not go out to him nor answer him (for, of course, he could not do that if he were inside of the bathroom), she believed that he would do one of two things—he would either try to force the door—an unlikely thing—or he would calmly announce that he would sit down and wait till she came out, if it took her till doomsday to decide—an extremely likely thing for him to do in his present mood.  
Well, he could wait; but Katherine did not propose to remain where she was to be waited for. Roberta might have done so; she would not.  
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When the forceps clicked against the lock, and she realized what was doing, she darted away, and by the time he had begun to turn the key in the manner described she had fled and locked the door after her—and that time she withdrew the key and dropped it to the tiled floor.  
But there was no other way out of that room unless—She glanced toward the high and narrow window and shook her head—she approached it and stepped upon the low chair that stood beneath it while she pushed wide open the hinged screen to peer into the night outside.  
"It might be done," she told herself mentally. "It can be done. I must do it. That man shall not know that I—"  
Belknap had entered the other room and was rapping softly against the bathroom door.  
"Come out here," she heard him say.  
"What is the matter with you?"  
But Katherine was working with feverish haste and paid no heed to him, for from wanting him to suspect that she had been a witness to the scene that had just happened inside of the room, she was now determined to keep him from knowing that she was there, and she was of generous size.  
She seized upon them one by one and knotted them together until she decided that her improvised rope was long enough, for she had made up her mind that she would experience only slight difficulty in forcing her slender body through the window. She had not a doubt that Belknap, when he became convinced that Roberta would not go out to him nor answer him (for, of course, he could not do that if he were inside of the bathroom), she believed that he would do one of two things—he would either try to force the door—an unlikely thing—or he would calmly announce that he would sit down and wait till she came out, if it took her till doomsday to decide—an extremely likely thing for him to do in his present mood.  
Well, he could wait; but Katherine did not propose to remain where she was to be waited for. Roberta might have done so; she would not.  
She tied one end of her rope around the pipe of the hot-water-heating ap-

paratus that passed from floor to ceiling in the corner beside the window; then she sat upon the low chair again and began her strange exit from the bathroom.  
She could hear Belknap talking, but she paid no heed to what he was saying.  
She had to force her way head first through the window—there was no other way—but she kept a firm grip upon the towel-ropes.  
Head and shoulders first while she clung with one hand to the rope of towels, she forced her way through the narrow space.  
Katherine was slender and willowy. There was but little impediment of clothing to overcome, as we know.  
It was a tight squeeze, nevertheless; but she made it inch by inch, by squirming and edging her body forward a little at a time, first at one side and then at the other, emerging finally at the opposite side in the position of one who dives into the water.  
When at last she was free from the window casings, she did dive, but she clung desperately to her rope as if she caught her weight and whirled her body upon it.  
The impetus of her fall and the sharp jerk upon the improvised rope proved too much for the knot she had tied around the water pipe; it was not equal to the sharp and sudden strain upon it.  
She went loose, and she fell a few feet only, and upon the soft sod, so that in her quite natural excitement of the moment, and her glee over the escape she had made, she was barely conscious of the shock of it—and the knotted towels fell with her, and she gathered them up as she got upon her feet and sprang into the deep gloom of the night among the shrubbery.  
So Katherine was free from the house, leaving Belknap none the wiser.  
She smiled at the thought of his amazement, if, while he waited beside the locked bathroom door, Roberta should return—and remembrance of Roberta brought to mind her original purpose.  
But a moment of thought convinced Katherine that it would be worse than useless to seek her under the circumstances.

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