

## FACE IN THE WINDOW

Mark Stewart

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Thank you for respecting the hard work of this author.

Edited by: Rosemary Cantala

Other novels Mark Stewart has written

The Kendal chronicles (crime)

Fire games

Heart of a spider is the second book in the series

I know your secret is third in the series

Romance

Kiss on the bridge (series)

Kiss on the bridge (2)

Kiss on the bridge (3)

The perfect gift

Blood red rose (Vampire romance adventure)

Blood red rose two

Blood red rose three

Legendary Blue Diamond

Legendary Blue Diamond two

Legendary Blue Diamond three

Planet X91 the beginning (series)

(Plus fifty more)

## FACE IN THE WINDOW

“THIS POOL party is wild,” yelled Nick Somerton.

Seventeen-year-old Nick Somerton needed to yell over the dance music. His brother Mason had introduced him to Gabby, the tall, long legged sixteen-year-old shapely girl wearing the shortest shirt he'd ever seen. Gabby's shorts and high heels helped to make her lengthy legs appear extra long.

"I'm happy my Aunt decided to go overseas for a couple of months," screamed Doreen. She flashed Mason a seductive grin.

"Mason, be sure you treat Doreen properly," warned Nick. He sent his younger brother a wink and slipped his arm around Gabby. "Hey Bro, thanks for introducing me to Gabby. What a babe."

"I'm happy Melbourne has put on a hot night," said Mason.

"The weather is nowhere as hot as this chick. Bro' if you want a happy ending with Doreen, go find a quiet place for half an hour. Which reminds me, got a couple of cigs I can borrow, I'm fresh out? After what Gabby and I are about to do, we'll need a cig."

Mason pulled out his new packet and palmed a couple to his older brother. He watched him walk off kissing Gabby while he steered her towards the spa room.

Mason politely thrust the opened cigarette packet at Doreen.

"Those things will kill you," she warned.

"So, the experts keep preaching. What do they know?"

"I like to taste a man who has fresh breath," grumbled Doreen. Looking at someone over Mason's left shoulder she sent him a cursory grin. "I've just spotted a friend I haven't seen in years."

Mason watched Doreen walk out of his life. Feeling numb, he raised his beer glass to her back.

"To what could have been a great future together?"

Sculling the amber liquid to dowse his sorrow, Mason heard a female's voice calling his name.

"Can you spare a couple of cigs?"

The perfect tone of the girl's voice hovering in the air easily forced Mason to turn around. He displayed a widening grin. The girl he was gawking at looked gorgeous. Her long black hair and perfectly shaped hazel eyes sent a shiver down his spine. The feeling settled in the nook of his back and stayed. He estimated the girl couldn't be any older than seventeen. Her mini skirt and light pink button up shirt easily made him excited.

"Hi there. I'm Mason."

"Hello back, I'm Cassandra. "How about that spare cig?" she asked.

"Sure," replied Mason. He thrust the packet at the girl. Reaching for a cigarette, her moves were poetic.

"These things will kill you," whispered Mason. He rolled his eyes. He wanted to kick his ankle at the lousy opening line.

"Probably," chirped the girl. "I really don't care."

Mason's follow up line sounded worse than his first line. "What do the experts know anyway?"

Cassandra lowered her head slightly waiting for Mason to light the end of the cigarette. Mason quickly completed the act. He watched the girl inhale a lung full of smoke then exhale a love heart into the air.

"How did you do that?"

"I've had plenty of practice. Mason, it's getting late, what would you say if I asked you to escort me home?"

"Where's home?" he asked.

"Not far. In fact, I live on the next street. If you agree to walk me home I can guarantee it'll be a rewarding experience."

“I’d have to say a mighty yes. A pretty young girl like you shouldn’t be walking the streets alone in the dark. There are a lot of men out there who would love to take advantage of a gorgeous girl.”

“I’m quite capable of taking care of myself,” growled Cassandra. “However, I would love to have some friendly company tonight if you understand what I mean.” She lifted her thin black eyebrows to signal it’ll be a nice way to end a great night.

Mason and Cassandra slipped away from the bright lights and the loud music. They rounded the corner at the end of the street and started walking up the hill to the crest. The moment they finished smoking the cigarette they stopped and lit a second. Mason noticed the wind blowing the tips of Cassandra’s hair. That and the erotic look she was displaying, again made him excited.

“Is this where you live?” asked Mason.

“Only in the summer,” replied Cassandra. “I don’t like it here in the winter. The cold wind blowing in from the sea chills my bones.”

“So where do you live in the winter?” asked Mason.

Cassandra stepped closer. She lifted her hand to swipe the dark hair away from his eyes. Cassandra sniffed his aftershave. Moving both hands behind his neck, Cassandra’s shirt bulged at the buttons. With a seductive grin, she leaned in and kissed Mason on the lips. He in turn, returned her kisses.

For a long time, they stood at the wrought iron fence surrounding the dark three storey mansion. Mason felt Cassandra push her body harder against his. He could feel the cast iron gate digging into his back. He longed to get inside the house so he could let loose the erotic thoughts flowing through his mind.

As if by some miracle the gate hinges creaked and groaned. The noise sounded eerie. Ghost like. He opened his eyes and watched the gate slowly open of its own accord.

“That’s weird,” he croaked.

“Come on inside the house so we can finish what we started.”

“How did the gate open?” asked Mason.

“My sister looks out of the upstairs attic window. She sees everything. She’s been expecting me.”

“Did she see us kissing and used a remote to open the gate?”

“Something along those thoughts,” replied Cassandra. She giggled and started undoing the top two buttons of her overstuffed shirt. “I promise you one thing; my sister loves to meet boys.”

Mason grinned as he watched Cassandra undo another button and smirk seductively at him.

“The old dark mansion looks cold,” said Mason, tearing his gaze from Cassandra. He gave the external walls a cursory glance.

“On the contrary, the interior of the home is grand. My sister sees to everything.”

“I hope she’s much older than you. I have a rule. I don’t kiss girls who are younger than sixteen.

“Stop with the interrogation,” giggled Cassandra. “To put your mind at ease; the three of us will have a good time. I can divulge the fact my sister is older than me by one minute.”

“She’s your twin?”

“Yes.”

“Where’s your mother, father?”

“Do you want to come into the home or just stand here and ask questions?”

Mason pushed his arm around Cassandra’s waist and prompted he’d refrain from any more questions by starting to walk towards the front door.

Halfway to the front door, Mason glanced up at the third-floor attic window. Looking down at him he saw a face in the window. The face appeared to be a mirror image of Cassandra.

Mason was grinning when the front door opened. He slipped his hand around Cassandra’s and followed her inside the home.

Four steps into the mansion; the front door swung shut behind Cassandra and Mason. Before he could turn around the overhead chandelier rattled and sparkled. Sixty thin beams of light danced on the walls. The music box in the corner opposite the open fire started playing a romantic tune. The small flames amongst the dry logs inside the fireplace lengthened and danced in time with the beat of the music.

“I told you the interior of the house looked inviting,” whispered Cassandra.

“Yes, you did,” replied Mason.

“Sit on the couch, I’ll call my sister.”

Mason watched Cassandra walk towards the stairs. Mason took out a cigarette and placed the almost full pack on the coffee table.

Instead of sitting, Mason decided to place another log on the fire. He stepped back intrigued at seeing the number of embers shooting up the solid brick chimney. The moment he heard the distinct sound of stilettos descending the spiraling staircase, he turned to face Cassandra.

Mason’s jaw dropped open at seeing the twin girls strolling seductively towards him. He quickly threw his lit cigarette into the fire. He started to walk across the floor.

“Well hello there, I’m Mason.”

“Good evening, I’m Cassandra’s sister Charlotte.”

The twins strolled towards Mason. Charlotte seemed to have a more luring smile than Cassandra.

“You and Cassandra are definitely identical.”

Charlotte walked over to the open fire, squatted and picked up a small log. All the while she placed the log on the fire, Mason couldn’t take his eyes off her arse and long legs. If her mini skirt was any shorter he knew he wouldn’t be able to contain himself.

The ember sparks erupted as Charlotte dropped the log on the flames.

Charlotte dusted her hands by rubbing them together. Seeing Cassandra place her arm around Mason’s waist, Charlotte strolled across the floor to mirror her sister’s move.

Over the next half an hour, the girls kissed and playfully hugged Mason. He mauled every part of the girls. They, in turn, peeled Mason’s shirt off. Unexpectedly Charlotte dressed and strolled back to the stairs, leaving Cassandra lying on the floor looking seductively up at Mason.

He leaned on his elbow to watch Charlotte leave.

From the bottom stair, Charlotte displayed a scolded look.

“Have I done something to upset you?” Mason asked.

Switching her stare to her sister, Charlotte snarled. “Sister, I thought I made myself perfectly clear I don’t entertain boys who smell of cigarette smoke. Please escort Mason to the front door.”

Cassandra jumped to her feet, dressed then grabbed hold of Mason’s hand. She walked him to the front door. They stepped out into the warm night.

“I’m sorry to tell you the night is over. Go back to the party.”

“I was actually enjoying the company of you two gorgeous girls in a private party just for the three of us,” moaned Mason.

“It’s time for you to go.”

Cassandra walked back into the house and slammed the door shut. The house again looked cold and dark. When Mason reached the wrought iron gate it automatically opened. Walking away he heard the gate slam shut.

Mason marched off in a huff. He walked past the next house located halfway down the hill. Seeing an old woman watching his every move he stopped in talking distance.

“Is there something wrong?” he called.

The old dear shuffled over to her low red brick fence. Mason decided she must have celebrated her ninetieth birthday a few years back.

The old woman spoke for the first time when she stood almost nose to nose with Mason.

“Heed my warning. Stay away from the house on the crest of the hill.”

“Why?”

The old woman stared at Mason as though she'd seen a transparent ghost. She began to back step away from the fence. Her grotesque expression etched on her face sent ice shivers down Mason's spine. The sharp needle points made the hairs on his arms stand military style.

"Stay away from the girls," growled the old woman.

"Why should I?"

"They aren't what they seem."

"I'll have you know I think both girls are simply gorgeous. One day in the near future I can see me marrying one of them."

"Impossible," croaked the old dear. "Neither girl is the marrying type."

"I disagree. In fact, I just left the house five minutes ago. At this early stage in our relationship, it is difficult to choose which one I might want to marry. The three of us had such a wonderful time."

"You saw them?"

"Yes. I've never had the privilege of enjoying the company of two horny sisters before. Another few minutes and I reckon they'd have begged me to jump their bones."

Leaving her frailty behind her the old woman reached out and grabbed hold of Mason's shirt. He tried in vain to break free.

"Old woman what's got into you? Let me go."

"Stay away from the house. You have been warned."

"I'm not going to and you can't make me."

"From the attic window the ghost belonging to one of the girls watches who comes and goes from the mansion. She hung herself from one of the rafters in the attic after the one who used to smoke cigarettes died of cancer. The disease ate her face. The whole house stinks of rotting flesh."

"It does not!" growled Mason. "I have already told you I left the house not more than ten minutes ago. Both girls looked fine. Speaking about smoking a cigarette, you've put my nerves on edge." Finally managing to pull away from the old woman's vice-like grip. Mason started patting his pockets. He snarled, looking at the woman. "I left my cigs on the coffee table by the fire. This is a good thing. To prove you're wrong about the girls I'm going back to get it."

The old woman watched Mason trot up the hill. She gasped when he shouldered the old wrought iron gate. Boldly Mason marched up to the front door and knocked.

Whisperings coming from inside the mansion again sent an ice-cold shiver down his spine. A cold breeze blowing down from the mountain made goose bumps erupt on his bare arms.

Knocking on the front door a second time, Mason stepped back to view the upper windows. He spied a shadow in the attic window watching him as it paced back and forth. When it vanished, he saw Charlotte's face watching his every move. Mason smiled and waved. Lifting a boney hand Charlotte beckoned him into the house.

Mason turned the brass door knob and opened the door. He walked down the hall towards the lounge. His footsteps echoed off the walls. The chandelier hanging from the roof failed to brighten. The closer he got to the lounge-room with the open fire the stronger an odor he'd never smelt before filled his nostrils.

Standing on the bottom stair he saw Charlotte. She had changed into a long white dress. It swayed about her ankles. She didn't look happy.

"Hello," said Mason.

"Why have you come back?"

"I forgot my packet of cigarettes."

Charlotte appeared to float down the stairs, closing the gap between her and Mason by half.

"I hate kissing a bloke that smells of cigarette smoke."

"The way you got up and left the room when I reached for a smoke had me guessing that might be the reason. I had a great time. I can tell you and Cassandra did too."

"If I were you, I'd forget the packet and leave this house immediately," urged Charlotte.

“Why?” Mason probed.

“You’ll discover the reason near the fire.”

Mason walked over to the cold fire place. The black ashes covering the bricks told him a fire hadn’t been started in years. Cobwebs covered the two blackened logs, the walls, and the chandelier. Soot had fallen from inside the chimney and spewed onto the thick dust covered floor.

Mason walked up to the couch. Lying prone looking at a cold fire he saw the figure of Cassandra lying under a blanket. Seeing his cigarette packet buried under half an inch of dust his eyebrows angled to a point.

“What’s going on?”

Charlotte floated across the room to stand at the bare feet of her sister. She swept the air with her boney hand. Mason saw the blanket move away from Cassandra’s chin. Mason’s eyes widened. Fear gripped his brain. If his feet weren’t frozen to the floor, he’d have run away from the house and never looked back. Staring into Charlotte’s empty eye-sockets, Mason tried to yell.

Charlotte reached out and touched Mason’s lips with a boney finger. She pointed at her sister.

Mason’s eyes widened. He didn’t want to, but he looked at the girl lying on the floor. The same one he’d just finished kissing and groping.

Cassandra’s flawless skin and high cheek bones appeared to be shedding its skin. Holes were appearing and growing larger by the second. Her long blonde hair was falling away from her head and piling on the floor. Ever so slow, Cassandra moved her head so she could look directly at Mason. Seeing the girl’s nose slide down her cheek and bang onto the floor Mason could feel bile rise up in his throat. He wanted to vomit on the dust covered floor. When he heard one of Cassandra’s eyeballs splotch into the dust Mason managed to lift his feet and started to back step away.

“This can’t be,” he croaked. “I see it yet I can’t understand any of this.”

Cassandra moaned, clawing her way to her feet. Her clothes fell away revealing skeletal remains. The bones took a step towards Mason. The jaw dropped open. A haunting high-pitched scream filled the room.

“Get out and don’t come back,” Charlotte moaned in a long haunting monotone voice.

The curtains over the windows blew inwards, whipping up a dust cloud that covered Mason. The front door swung wide open. The chandelier Mason stood under danced and clanged wildly. Images of black shadows filled the room. Their arms were reaching out trying to grab hold of Mason. More haunting laughs followed Mason as his legs moved at speed, carrying him out of the mansion. When he was outside the solid front door slammed shut. The old brass door knocker in the shape of a lion’s head banged loudly seven times then fell silent.

Mason saw the wrought iron gate swing open. He sprinted off the property and onto the road. Hearing the gate swing shut, Mason bravely looked over his shoulder at the house. In the attic window staring at him, he saw Charlotte’s face. She didn’t smile or wave, she just floated above the floor staring directly at him through black hollow eye sockets.

Mason sprinted away from the house. He needed to get away. Never again would he ever go anywhere near the derelict mansion on the crest of the hill.

Approaching the old woman’s house, Mason heard her laughing at him. He slowed to a walk and stared sideways at the old woman.

“Mason, I told you to stay away. The house is haunted. The girls will always be waiting and watching for another victim.”

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A full month quickly ticked off. The last day of summer was celebrated by another pool party. Mason walked up to a group of young ladies loitering around the pool. The sight of their bikini clad bodies and light giggles were entrapping.

“Hello,” said Mason. “We met here at the last party.”

“Hello back,” greeted one of the girls. “I’m surprised you remember me, seeing how I turned my nose up when I found out you smoke.”

“I did smoke. I haven’t wanted a cigarette in a month.”

Mason pushed his hand into a pocket of his shorts, pulling out a small plastic container.

“Care for a mint?” he asked.

“Now you’re talking. I do love to kiss a handsome bloke who has fresh breath.”

Mason smiled at his good fortune. He pushed his arms around the back of Doreen’s neck, and he moved in for a long passionate kiss. He wasn’t disappointed.

Wandering up to and through the many party goers, Cassandra’s transparent image slowly floated inches above the ground on her never-ending quest for yet another male victim while her sister looked out of the attic window; watching.

Dear reader,

thank you for reading my short story: Face In The Window. I do hope you enjoyed it. Any feedback is gratefully accepted. The information you, the reader give, helps me to become a more professional author.

My stories are based on the Australian culture. Some of the spelling is Australian. Thanks for your understanding.

Again, thank you for your support, for without you, the reader, I wouldn’t have anyone to read my work.

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Other novels I have written in the way of romance are: Kiss on the bridge. The perfect gift: Legendary blue diamond. Don’t tell my secret.

A vampire adventure is The Blood Red Rose: Blood Red Rose Two:

Planet X91 series (There is over fifty novels in the series)

Crime novels: The Kendal Chronicles.

Fire Games: Heart of a spider: I know your secret.

Children: A Troglia knows and Luke’s cubby house: Malcolm’s cubby house.

Smashwords has various short stories.

Below is the opening page of my novels in order that I have listed them:

Synopsis: Kiss on the bridge. Adventure romance.

How would you react if a tall handsome stranger came up to you on new-years-eve and asked for a kiss?

Kiss on the bridge is set in the year 1974. Cyclone Tracy made land fall in Darwin on 25th December 1974 at 9:55am desecrating Darwin. After Tracy had swept the state there was nothing

left except this story? Out of the ruins love sparked and mushroomed between Anneli and Wade. They were destined to meet and tell their story for decades to come.

Kiss on the bridge two: Set in Australia in 1977. Meredith wakes in a coffin. She has no idea her hero is on the way. They meet and fall in love, but will the emotion be strong enough to keep them together?

The Perfect Gift. Adventure romance. Available Smashwords.

Naomi is twenty-six and doesn't like the way all men mistreat her. She decides a change is needed and applies to be a jillaroo on a cattle station named the Oasis. Its location is in outback Australia. She meets a cowboy, Trent, who is a rodeo champion. They agree on a bet. Eventually both want out, but neither wants to be first.

Through a series of adventures that stretch from the city, to a fast flowing river in the outback where Trent must save Naomi from drowning, love germinates in the middle of a storm.

In her heart, Naomi is a woman who adores the city's nightlife, but as the sun sets on each day, the Australian outback is enticing and the excitement of the city fades. Then she inadvertently saves the Oasis.

Love is growing, then Brandt; Naomi's obsessive ex-boyfriend tracks her down. Can Trent save her one last time?

Synopsis: Legendary Blue Diamond. Adventure romance. Available April 10th 2012

HISTORIANS AND researchers say the birth of the legendary blue diamond originated when the earth was being born. Some say the legend commenced at the union between a man who had skin, the colour of the night sky and a woman who had skin the colour of the sun. Rumour has it that the diamond was no larger than a single carrot. Lately there have been whispers that the deep blue coloured diamond was reported to be in excess of nine carrots possibly even ten or higher. What I believe isn't important, though I assume it lays somewhere in between. There's been bush talk from the Australian Kimberley's to Melbourne; whosoever touches the blue stone will die, for it is cursed by God. I believe it is due to man's greed and the blood that drips from his hands is the truth behind the cursed stone.

I have extensively researched a great number of books on the subject looking for a start date to the authenticity of the legend. I think I may have uncovered the actual events, but I have no way of proving if the facts are correct. I have been able to ascertain the legend was born around the mid 1800's AD when the State bank of Victoria was in its infancy. A gold prospector unearthed the diamond. In days he had sold it. The buyer was a man in charge of the bank. The diamond was indeed dark blue in colour, but definitely a one off, stroke of luck find. One cold dark night a bushranger, his brother and a third man came into a small town searching for the blue diamond. They never found it. The banker was tortured for the information of the stone's whereabouts. He took the knowledge of its existence to his grave. Of late a possible theory has been circulating that the man's wife has it in her possession. How she escaped from being murdered was any one's guess.

If you ask me, do I believe in the story, I'll answer you truthfully. I know it only to be a legend.

Synopsis: Blood Red Rose. Vampire adventure romance. Available on Smashwords.

"You can't force me to drink that, I'm innocent," yelled Haleton. "Rose-a-lee what have you done?"

There was no reply.

William Haleton is a normal man looking for love and the good life then the council of four modifies his DNA and uses him as a guinea pig. They transform him into a vampire. Pleading his innocence falls on deaf ears.

Haleton is hungry for the next evil soul, but deep down he has a burning desire for the love of a girl. Her blood is sweet and hypnotic. Her genetic makeup is his perfect match.

Being transported again through time is not an option.

The clock is ticking.

Haleton will do anything to stay by Amber's side, but is it possible for her to love him? Can Craig Benyon, Amber's close friend, be trusted? After all he loves her as much as William Haleton.

If an antidote to the vampire's curse is found in time, will it be successful, or is everything Haleton going through part of the vampire curse?

Synopsis: Fire Games. Crime. First book in the series.

Detective Alan Kendal puts his life on the line to outplay the psychotic arsonist known as Patrick.

Detective Kendal is ordered to team up with Detective Claire Ambroso, whom he's known since school, but she carries a secret and he has a grey past. Which one will come forward to haunt first? Kendal grows suspicious of his new partner when she aims her gun directly at him and pulls the trigger. What's her motive? Is she Patrick's accomplice? If not, who is?

How can Patrick always be one step ahead? Does Kendal have enough time to rescue his kidnapped twelve-year-old daughter, Tegan, before Patrick's fiery finale?

Synopsis: Heart of a spider. Crime. Second book in the series. Available Smashwords.

Detective Kendal is on the trail of a patient who has escaped the mental institution and wants to sever Kendal's life line. The chase is complicated by the visitation of a ghost and the appearance of a supposed vigilante.

Kendal doesn't believe in ghosts, but finds himself having a conversation as he stares at one. His partner, Claire Ambroso has to fight for her life when Kendal is told to meet GP at the wharf when the moon is at the highest point in the night sky.

Confusion sets in at a local supermarket when a robbery goes wrong and someone in Kendal's family is shot.

The trap is set for the person who masterminded the escape and a final shoot out at the hospital reveals amazing results that astounds even Kendal.

Synopsis: I know your secret. Crime. Third book in the series. Available Smashwords.

Everyone has a secret. Some people take theirs to the grave. Some hold their desires inside for a lifetime. Some stew on their secret all their life, and then they get revenge.

I know your secret is a suspenseful crime novel. Melbourne homicide detective Alan James Kendal and his partner Detective Claire Ambroso have to locate a missing teenage girl. The case hots up when he is introduced to a medium. She seems to hold all the knowledge of the case except a few minor details, like, why did Kendal find an empty bullet shell that had a note inside that read, 'I was paid to miss.'