

## ERNIE'S LONG NIGHT

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)

## ERNIE'S LONG NIGHT

Melbourne 1926

FIVE MONTHS had passed since seventy-two-year-old Ernie Perryman, turned the calendar page over to 1926. He was given the job of Cape Shank's only Lighthouse keeper. He had broad shoulders and a tough exterior. He wore a large anchor and a woman's name, 'Rosie', tattooed on each forearm. Standing five-foot-ten, he made claim to living through many a mighty storm.

Fearful of nothing, old Ernie would tell to anyone who wanted to listen to his tales of the sea.

Under grey bushy eyebrows, Ernie reviewed the charcoal sky through the back window of his two-room weather-beaten cottage.

“The stars won’t be out tonight,” he mumbled. Concern swept his wrinkled face.

Several small black clouds had arrived hours ahead of the main storm front. They warned the land dwellers of things to come.

The storm front, scudding across the sky towards the coast from the South extinguished the last shards of the mid-afternoon sun. Only a solid black angry sky remained.

Unexpectedly the storm picked up its pace. Arcs of lightning were countless. Some blue flashes remained flat. Others were vertical. Blackness stretched across the land like a blanket.

Deep rumblings in the heavens scattered every living thing on the land. The once peaceful tepid sea looked treacherous, smashing twelve-foot white crested waves against the near vertical cliffs directly underneath the Lighthouse.

A ship traveling parallel to the shore, smoke billowing from its only smoke stack, disappeared directly in front of Ernie. Before the ship was completely camouflaged by a wall of hail and rain, he noted her name; ‘Yorston,’ Australia’s newest merchant vessel. She was launched six months earlier from the shipyard in South Australia. She resembled a ghost ship moving through the rain.

She had been expected at the Williamstown docks the previous morning. Her cargo of tobacco, herbs, medicines and building materials from England would be safe provided the lighthouse light remained shining.

Ernie’s wrinkled brow deepened. He didn’t want the rocky outcrop of submerged rocks to claim another victim. There had been too many shipwrecks and lives lost along this stretch of coast over the last one hundred years.

“This storm’s the season’s first,” he whispered. “Fear is escorting this storm. I can smell it. I can feel it. Could it be the mother of all storms?”

His thoughts, more turbulent than the wind, tumbled over one another in his mind.

A sailor’s life, a girl in every port, wasn’t for him. Ernie only ever wanted one woman; her name, Rosie. He became a lighthouse keeper five years ago after losing her. Forty years of wedded bliss and he lost her to a storm. He sees her every night in his dreams or at the bottom of an empty whisky bottle, wearing her favorite long yellow cotton dress with a white collar. She would wear it only when he came home from the sea.

The wind rattled the glass windows, making his legs ache and his face twitch under his long grey beard.

Ernie knew he might have only a minute at best to reach the lighthouse door before the heavy rain drenched the cliff top plateau. He turned from the window, walked across the room, swiping an old kerosene lantern and a glass bottle from off a small wooden table.

Wearing black trousers and matching shoes, Ernie pulled tight a worn brown cowhide cap over his head. With no coat over his black and red long-sleeved flannelette shirt rolled up to his elbows, he opened the back door, stepping outside into the howling wind. Already the wind had started to throw debris through the air.

Without a walking stick, Ernie started to hobble the short distance to the lighthouse door on bent knees and buckled legs hoping not to be hit by overhanging branches being tossed about by the wind. The lantern’s small flame danced wildly inside the protective glass dome. Ernie stared at the sky, cursing the storm for dealing an all-nighter.

The lighthouse door was located on the wayward side of the storm. Ernie estimated the wind had to be close to eighty knots. His thoughts brought a sea dog smile to his thin, dry, quivering lips.

He easily opened the lighthouse door, stepped inside and quickly slammed the door shut, happy to be out of the wind. Looking through dim hazel eyes, he lifted his head to gaze up the hollow tapering shell towards the top of the lighthouse.

Ernie muttered in a dry whisper, “Good, the light’s still shining.” He placed his left foot on the first step, groaning, “102 steps to go.”

He pulled a match from his pocket, scraped it down the wall to light his pipe. He inhaled the loving smell of the smoldering tobacco. The scent reminded him of his dearly beloved Rosie, God rest her soul. Together they’d watch the stars on warm summer nights. He’d smoke his pipe and stroke her long cinnamon colored hair while she lay on his lap singing a love song.

Tears formed in his eyes, threatening to drop. Until his life’s end, he’d guard his tough exterior. He blinked the tears away.

Ernie exhaled a smoky sigh then stood for a moment watching the grey smoke start to rise up the metal twisting staircase.

Gripping the pipe between discolored teeth, lantern in his right hand, a large glass bottle of 'Old Number Seven' in the other, he commenced his climb.

Ernie knew the whisky would keep him warm and help refresh his memories of Rosie on this long cold night.

It always did.

Dear reader,

thank you for reading my short story: Ernie's long night. 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 Troglan 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 where-a-bouts. 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.'