

# LURED BY THE GHOST RAKE

by Marianna Green

## Excerpt

The chill wind died away, chuckling up chimneys and sighing through the cracks in the windows and doors. Now, Elda's brain was only capable of rambling, disconnected thoughts.

More than anything, she was struck by what a magnificent male specimen Jake was with his lean, strong build, his dark wavy hair tousled by the wind, and his green eyes wide over his high cheekbones as he stared about.

This new series was supposed to be his possible breakthrough as the latest hot male actor. Seeing him now, she thought it insane if it wasn't. Absurdly, she wanted to tell him so, before reporting the minor problems of the painting trying to hypnotise her and setting off that unnatural gale.

He said, "I know there's sodding gale force winds forecast for the weekend, but that's ridiculous."

It was a relief that now he'd seen something strange himself. Now it would be easier to tell him what she had seen and heard.

"It was –" her voice died off as her tongue and lips went on strike.

She couldn't get them to finish the sentence, 'Coming from that picture of Lord Lovegrove'. She tried to say, 'The portrait gallery' but couldn't get that out either.

Was it shock, or had that portrait's seemingly living stare somehow imposed his will on her when her mind swam? She couldn't exactly remember what that disembodied voice had said. It was something about 'Silence' and 'You won't tell your jealous lover'.

Jake gave her hand a sympathetic pat, putting it down to shock. She suspected he was thinking, 'Can't expect her nerves to be as strong as mine.'

Exasperated, she pointed into the room...