



## TITLE INFORMATION

### WINNER'S CURSE

*A Lynn Dayton Thriller*

L.A. Starks

Nemaha Ridge Publishing Group LLC (308 pp.)

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## BOOK REVIEW

In this installment of Starks' thriller series, an energy executive finds herself entangled in international corruption.

Lynn Dayton, newly appointed executive vice-president of TriCoast Energy's drilling division, takes the reins on an acquisition. Her late predecessor already had eyes on Bradshaw Energy, attracted in part by its water recycling technology; this top-secret recycling process puts Lynn in unexpected danger. In an apparent bid to compel other countries to buy their liquefied natural gas, unscrupulous Russian officials go after Bradshaw's tech. They turn to Henry Vandervoost, a former TriCoast executive now based in London. He blames Lynn for losing his job, though the gambling debts he racked up all on his own provide the Russians with leverage over him. Vandervoost makes efforts to thwart Lynn's ongoing acquisition deal while sending someone to investigate Bradshaw, whose current owner happens to be Vandervoost's estranged son. The Russians' scheme only grows more sinister as they sabotage gas plants around the world (including the U.S.), and attempt to sully Lynn's reputation ("the fake video me says we're planning layoffs! I never said that! Who would go to all the trouble to do a deepfake of me, and why?"). Starks' fourth outing with Lynn Dayton once again boasts an impressive cast. The women shine brightest: Joining the resilient Lynn are Hannah Bosko, a forensic geologist consulting for Scotland Yard, and Sara Levin, TriCoast's CFO. As Lynn and Hannah investigate energy companies and gas plants, the text incorporates beaucoup technical jargon that, while plainly and intelligently described, gives the story an unmistakably slow pace. Still, obstacles abound in the tension-packed narrative as a person close to Lynn works against her, a killer tries to cover their tracks, and acts of sabotage prove deadly. The author rounds out the story with a potential newfound romance (not involving series lead, Lynn, who has a doting husband and lovable stepchildren at home).

A measured but gripping tale of malfeasance on a global scale.

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