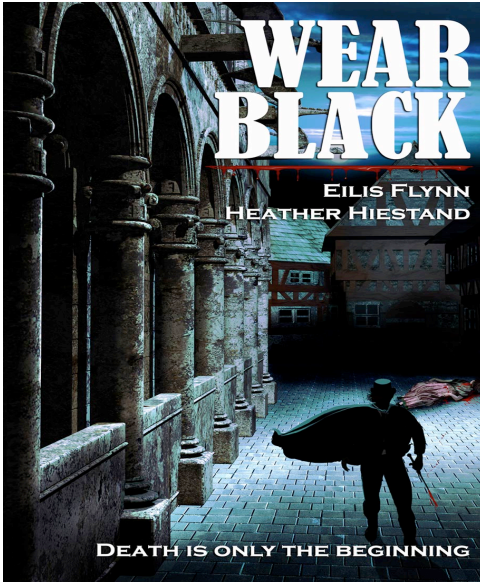


The Newsletter for
Heather Hiestand,
Eilis Flynn, and Anh Leod

Featuring Eilis Flynn and
Heather Hiestand. For more
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On sale for \$3.99 at Amazon, BN.com,
Smashwords and other online retailers!

Wait, there's more!

UPCOMING RELEASES

- July 4, 2013: *The Marquess Of Cake* by Heather Hiestand
- Late 2013: *A Taste of Scandal* by Heather Hiestand
- Late 2013: *Dreaming Beauty* by Eilis Flynn

APPEARANCES

- "Ghosts Along the Silk Road," workshop, Carolina Romance Writers, May 6-20 (This is Eilis!)
- "Vampires Along the Silk Road," workshop, Futuristic Fantasy & Paranormal RWA chapter, May 13-26 (This one's Eilis, too, but not ->)
- Coffee Time Chat with Heather and Eilis, June 18!

Victorian Vampires!

Heather and Eilis have been working like crazy since the last newsletter. So much has happened! Heather has a Victorian romance coming out in July from Kensington. More details about that in our next newsletter! And just to make sure that your appetite's properly whetted for that, Eilis and Heather have published something that's a little bit Victorian steampunk, a little bit romance, and a whole lot of fantasy! Like action? Like adventure? Like a whole lot of fun stuff? Of course you do!

A while ago, we were musing over a project we could work on together. Now, Heather/Anh has written historical romances, and Eilis has always been a fantasy romance kind of writer (she worked on Wall Street for thirty years, so reality has been scarce in her working life), so when Heather mentioned steampunk as a possibility, we started to consider what kind of story. Eilis has always been of the opinion that vampirism could be a scientifically induced condition, so we decided that would be a fun place to start—and so, *Wear Black* was born! Here's a little bit of the story:

Death did not end his service to the British Empire

Beneath Windsor Castle, a shadow network of immortals keeps the British Empire safe. Army captain Lucas Fitzrobbins becomes one of them when the cure for his mortal wound turns out to be a vampirism potion. He is abruptly inducted into the secret St. George Protector Society...and it's not long before the Society's newest recruit discovers it has dark mysteries as well...

Marked as a target

Hampering Lucas's efforts to adjust to his after-life is *An Tighearn* operative Nellie Clifton, a beautiful and enigmatic assassin, who has marked Lucas as her latest quarry. But then...

Secrets are threatened to be revealed

A brutal killer stalks the seamy underside of London. Protectors and assassins alike must leave the shadows to find the fiend before their existence is revealed to the world. Tasked with the job of tracking down the murderer, Lucas discovers that the crazed butcher may have connections that go to the heart of the British

ON SALE NOW

HEATHER HIESTAND

- *Holiday In The Heart*
- *Cards Never Lie*
- *One Juror Down*
- *Gunshot Grange*
- *Two On The Hunt*
- *In Flight*
- *Looking Forward, Looking Back And Other Stories*

• *The Bachelor*

- "Victoriana Adventure"
- "Captain Andrew's Flying Christmas"
- "Captain Fenna's Dirigible Valentine"
- "Captain Gravenor's Airship Equinox"

• *Wear Black*

EILIS FLYNN

- *The Sleeper Awakes*
- *Festival of Stars*
- *Introducing Sonika*
- *Echoes of Passion*
- *The Riddle of Ryu*
- *Static Shock*
- *Wear Black*
- "30-Day Guarantee"

Nonfiction articles:

- "Snappy Comebacks" (*RWR* 11/08)
- "Two Worlds, United By Anime"

(*Japanification of Children's Popular Culture*, Scarecrow Press)

ANH LEOD

- "Lucky Number Seven" (digital, print) in *Even Naughtier Nuptials*
- "Aphrodite's Necklace"
- "Bijou's Bonds"
- *Recreating John Doe* (digital, print)
- *Claudia's Pleasure*
- *Cherokee's Playmates*
- "Ex Factor" (in the anthology *Some Like It Sweet*)
- "Playing Lycan Games"
- *Holly's Pledge*
- "Aphrodite's Tattoo"
- "Christmas a Go-Go"
- *Fire Wolf*
- *Clockwork Captive*

Empire. One thing is certain:

The Queen must never know!

Prologue: Prince Albert Is Unexpectedly Murdered

December 14, 1861

Dr. Henry Coburg dashed into the Blue Room at Windsor Castle while still removing his greatcoat. His heart froze when he saw his royal cousin struggling for breath. The fever was claiming another victim. One pandemic after another had assaulted the English population since the deadly Irish fever of 1847 raged through the empire.

The room, known unofficially as the castle's death chamber, had been cleared of everyone except the frail uncrowned king on the bed. The prince consort, ever understanding symbolism, had insisted on coming here to die.

Dr. Coburg still hoped to prevent his death. The loss of Prince Albert would be a tragedy, not only for the Queen, but for the empire itself. Though he'd been ailing for the past two years and was mortally ill with Irish fever now, at 42, he was too young to die, so much more to offer.

The doctor and his royal cousin both believed in the empire and would do anything to preserve it and the monarchy. Despite their German roots, they had found a place in England for their considerable talents and vision.

He had been in Brussels doing research when the prince's missive arrived. He left posthaste, fearing the worst as soon as he saw his cousin's spidery handwriting. The dreadful winter weather had delayed his return until it was almost too late.

Coburg stared at the barely conscious, shivering form on the bed, and cursed Nellie Clifton. The Irish actress whose 10-week affair with Prince Albert's son had ultimately caused this illness had a lot to answer for. Albert had had to come to Ireland to retrieve his son, and in doing so had contracted the flu. In a rare fit of temper, the doctor wished her here instead of the prince, sweat dampening her gray face, delirium moving her lips in a steady stream of nonsense instead of his beloved cousin.

Coburg couldn't do much, but...

"I'm going to help you, sir," he whispered. "Hold on a bit longer."

Heart pounding, he opened his black bag and pulled out two stoppered glass beakers, filled with the liquids he had spent so much time perfecting. The prince had paid for him to complete this research, for a cure-all for any mortal illness. If it worked, the potion would save lives and restore the fever-devastated population, something that the country, even all of Europe, needed desperately.

Now, unexpectedly, the prince would be his first test subject. The doctor would have been happy to test it on himself, but he was not ill, and according to his calculations, it would only work on a body that was mortally exhausted.

The ornate clock on the mantelpiece struck 11 times as Dr. Coburg slowly poured the two liquids into a third beaker, his fingers trembling. "Perfect," he exclaimed softly as the two clear fluids combined and began to boil on their own accord. Steam rose and the clear fluids turned a pale translucent green.

The prince tossed his damp head. He moaned, "Victoria!"

"Shh," Dr. Coburg said automatically, as if to a child. He put a hand to the prince's jaw and forced his mouth open. What he saw made him shudder.

The prince's tongue was nearly black. His cousin wouldn't last more than a few hours without this curative. Untested though the liquid was, he had no other choice.

Whispering a prayer to the heavens, Coburg watched the beaker as the liquids swirled and then calmed. The fluid had darkened into an emerald green. It was ready.

Gently, he put his arm under the prince's neck and tilted the barely breathing man's head so he could drink. The fluid dripped onto the prince's tongue, steam expelling from his mouth as it made contact.

"Easy," the doctor whispered. "Easy now." He wished he had an assistant to massage the prince's throat so the fluid would trickle more assuredly to the back of his mouth, but there was no time. "Swallow."

The prince's head moved feebly and the doctor was gratified to see his Adam's apple move. Good. One tiny dose down. Dr. Coburg tilted the beaker again and dribbled more fluid.

With another swallow, the prince coughed. A plume of foul odor, of fetid breath and decay, hit the doctor's face. He winced but continued to hold the beaker to the prince's lips.

The doctor tilted the beaker six more times before enough of the brew went down the prince's throat. Gently, he set his patient's head back on the sweat-soaked bed.

Coburg wiped his face with a handkerchief. If his formula were effective, he would see a change in the prince's condition soon.

Minutes passed. The prince lay as still as death, with only an occasional rattle of breath to indicate he was alive.

Growing impatient, the doctor eased down the prince's jaw again. His tongue was a dangerous gray color, but at least it was no longer black.

As Coburg straightened, he felt something grip his arm. Startled, he tried to step back, but could not. The prince's jaundiced hand was holding fast!

Coburg didn't dare hope. Then his deathly ill cousin opened his eyes and sat up.

The whites of his eyes were ruby red and the irises strangely malformed. His lips moved, emerald spittle forming at the corners as he said, "Victoria," before falling back.

Even before Dr. Coburg found his small mirror and held it to the prince's mouth, he knew his cousin was dead.

What Is Steampunk?

Heather Hiestand says, "It is a form of alternative history literature which involves gadgets, often based on Victorian steam technology. That's the steam part. The other part, the 'punk,' is some level of rebellious attitude. While my steampunk has been based in Victorian England, especially London, Hastings, Brighton, and Cardiff, Wales, writers have taken it all over the universe and all through time. It's the gadgets and attitude that really make steampunk."