

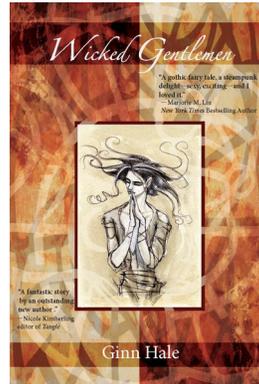
2008 Gaylactic Spectrum Awards
Best Novel

Winner

Wicked Gentlemen

by **Ginn Hale**

Blind Eye Books ISBN: 0-978-98611-3



Some people question why the judges for the Gaylactic Spectrum Awards give so much time in their review process to works published outside the major, traditional genre publishing houses. After all, if it couldn't cut it in New York, it can't be good, can it? Look no further than *Wicked Gentlemen* to understand the answer to that question. *Wicked Gentlemen* is that most marvelous of things, a book that defies easy categorization yet manages to offer something to please everyone. A book that offers a mature, and complex GLBT relationship, without making that relationship about its GLBT nature. It's a book with intriguing characters, original ideas, and a compelling story. It's also a book that traditional presses would have a hard time marketing, and so would be unlikely to find a home there. There are hidden gems to be found outside the major houses, and the Gaylactic Spectrum Awards judges found one in *Wicked Gentlemen*.

The short novel, actually two connected novellas, revolves around Belimai Sykes, a Prodigal with some supernatural talents due to his fallen angel ancestors and an addiction to Ophorium, and Captain William Harper, a priest/detective who may not question his faith, but does question the political machine which is his Church. Mixing the fantastic with steampunk, and a Victorian era atmosphere with murder and social commentary, author Ginn Hale displays a keen understanding of human nature and relationships. The level of maturity and complexity of emotion in the relationship that develops between Sykes and Harper is remarkably real. These are not two dimensional lovers, but flawed souls recognizing their own and each other's limitations and struggling to establish a small island of respite in the dark world they inhabit.

Inhabited by angels and demons, humans and monsters, Hale's city of Crowncross will resonate with fans of writers like Gaiman, Mieville and Peake and her writing will leave you anxious for more.

2008 Gaylactic Spectrum Awards
Best Novel

Short List

***Daughters of the North* by Sarah Hall**
Harper Perennial ISBN: 0-061-43036-6

In this tense and touching political dystopia, Sister – we never know her real name – leaves the “comfort” of the controlled society to take up with a women’s cooperative. As she peels away layers of complacency she comes to discover passion and a burning rage to remake the world she lives in through violent action. The book asks – what does it take to turn an ordinary woman to violent action?

***Ha’Penny* by Jo Walton**
Tor Books ISBN: 0-765-35808-5

A thrilling combination of alternate history, murder-mystery, and political thriller. Britain made peace with Nazi Germany and is slowly-but-steadily going fascist. A prominent Shakespearean actress and a young British naval officer are blown up while attempting to make a home-made bomb; and a young aristocratic actress becomes embroiled in a conspiracy to assassinate Hitler during his upcoming good-will tour of London. While investigating the bombing, a closeted gay Police Inspector becomes aware of the conspiracy and also learns of a secret Government cover-up that threatens both his life and the future of democracy in Britain.

***Hex* by Darieck Scott**
Carroll & Graf ISBN: 0-786-71764-4

Journey to the not-so-distant past and a strangely magical future as Langston Fleetwood and friends search for a vanished friend. Scott uses the metaphor of a book of spells that belonged to Damien’s father to show us that the concatenation of the past and present is way more than coincidence. The result is a fascinating lesson about friendship, gay culture, the Black Panther Movement, life in post-Castro Miami, and magic.

***Lady Knight* by LJ Baker**
Bold Strokes Books ISBN: 1-933-11075-2

A well-written fantasy set in a consistent and realistic medieval society. The lives of three very different women come together in a story of love and intrigue and warfare and magic. Rhiannon (an outcast female knight) falls in love with Eleanor (a wealthy, noble widow). Meanwhile, Aveline (a powerful priestess) is intent on provoking a holy war; and she plans to use Rhiannon as an important pawn. So Aveline is plotting within the royal court to cut off the budding romance between Rhiannon and Eleanor.

***Spaceman Blues* by Brian Francis Slattery**
Tor Books ISBN: 0-765-31614-1

In this post-modern science fiction mystery. Wendell Apogee searches for his lover, Manuel Rodrigo de Guzman Gonzalez, but finds instead that his world is much wilder than he’s ever imagined. And he’s no naïve young thing. This New York City is filled with immigrants with secrets, religious cults with calendars for a different kind of end time, a whole underground city mirroring what’s up top, alien assassins riding saucers, and lots of parties.

***Whiskey and Water* by Elizabeth Bear**
Roc Books ISBN: 0-451-46149-5

In this 2nd book of Bear’s Promethean Age series, featuring Faerie and the secret society of Promethean magicians in contemporary New York City, her engaging cast of characters includes the poet Kit Marlowe, returning to the world above after centuries entertaining Lucifer in Hell, a sexy female Merlin, Morgain, and the queens of Faerie. In addition to Marlowe’s antics, the novel also features a fully developed intersexed character and other complex, urban kids dealing with everyday questions of good and evil in their mundane (or only seemingly mundane) relationships.

***Dust* by Elizabeth Bear**
Ace Books ISBN: 0-441-01431-3

In the distant future the inhabitants of a spaceship orbiting a dying star have made gods out of the ship’s many artificial intelligences and created feudalistic kingdoms where augmented humans rule. When Sir Percival, an Exalt, is kidnapped and has her wings cut off, it sets off events that may lead to war unless Rien, a serving girl, can prevent it. If not, the dying star may destroy them all.

***Hero* by Perry Moore**
Hyperion Books ISBN: 1-423-10195-2

A coming out and coming of age story for Thom Creed, a high school basketball player and the son of an ex-superhero father growing up in a working class, single-parent home. This young adult novel takes place in a world where heroes with superpowers race to save the world. As a developing superhero, Thom is teamed with other unusual heroes to save the world through the power of planning and teamwork. Along the way, he falls for a mysterious lone superhero, who may be someone Thom knows.

***Ink* by Hal Duncan**
Del Rey ISBN: 0-345-48733-9

In this sequel to Vellum, the timeless battle between good and evil spreads across generations and cultures, mythologies and histories - mixing global events and personal moments of heartbreaking intimacy and betrayal. Duncan boldly challenges our deep-seated beliefs about the politics of power and sex. If you’re looking for a quick easy read, don’t even open the cover because once you step into the book -- well, you know how it is in the Vellum...

***New Amsterdam* by Elizabeth Bear**
Far Territories ISBN: 1-596-06163-7

Set in an alternate colonial New Amsterdam at the turn of the 20th century, these interconnected mysteries pit the vampire Sebastian de Ulloa, the Royal Investigator and magician Abigail Irene Garrett and others against the forces of tyranny. Questions of patriotism, breaking social barriers, and the need for both making a personal difference and bonding with others are mixed in with great magical mysteries and a cast of characters of varying sexuality and gender.

***Vintage* by Steve Berman**
Lethe Press ISBN: 1-590-21053-6

A gay teen living with his aunt meets a strange boy in the middle of the night who, moments later, disappears. The strange boy is a ghost, a mysterious dead boy from the 50s. Soon he finds himself strung between his attraction to the ghost, Josh, and the more real attraction to his best friend’s brother, Mike, and conflicted by death and the ghostly world where ghosts can impose their last moments upon him, feeling and all.

2008 Gaylactic Spectrum Awards Best Short Fiction

Winner

***Ever So Much More Than Twenty* by Joshua Lewis**
From: So Fey Prime Books ISBN: 0-809-57346-6

What happens when we leave magic behind in youth to chase what we think the world expects of us? What happens when we have a chance, later in life to revisit the magic places and moments of our youth? What does it take to realize that the wisdom of our years is its magic and its own enticement for love and passion? In this uplifting and beautiful story, Lewis challenges our assumptions of what is attractive, shatters the myth that only the young can find true love, and reminds us that second chances are possible. A man who once shared his youth with a fairy of the wood, returns to his old home with his daughter only to discover that he may yet have something to offer to – and learn from – his old love.

Short List

***A Bird of Ice* by Craig Gidney**
From: So Fey Prime Books ISBN: 0-809-57346-6

Based in Japanese folklore, this fairy tale tells the story of the monk Hideo, whose good-hearted nature leads him to unusual encounters with a swan and a monkey, which lead to gaining much wisdom and a new understanding of the possibilities for human relationships. Beautiful with an exotic setting.

***Charming, A Tale of True Love* by C. Clare & R. deBrazier**
From: So Fey Prime Books ISBN: 0-809-57346-6

Fair princess Ivy must marry the Knight that wins the Three Challenges, but she really pines for the lovely girl she met while riding. All ends happily ever after in this amusing fairy tale.

***Dancing On The Head of a Pin* by Kiernan Kelly**
Torquere Press (torquerebooks.com)

An angel loves a demon, giving him a piece of his soul in the process. The love takes on an erotic tone only after several millenia and pits Hell against Heaven as to whether the demon will remain or return to hell. The angel Malak and demon Cael fight the Horsemen of the Apocalypse while enjoying great sex. True love wins out, but the process is a romp through theology, sexuality, and unexpected twists. The story gives a respectful inversion of the traditional opinions on Sodom and God's opinion on love.

***The Healing* by Leigh Ellwood**
Phaze Books (phaze.com)

Vampire Julian's wife has just dies, and his long-time mortal friend and bandmate Dan is there to comfort him and keep him from committing suicide. But over the course of the next few days, Julian and Dan discover a mutual and confusion attraction. This story takes quite a few unexpected twists on its way to a very satisfying conclusion.

***Prime Suspect* by KS Augustin**
Total-E-Bound (total-e-bound.com)

Heron Meed has been released from detention after 6 years and has traveled to the Castor Xenii Orbital to begin a new life. But the ex-criminal and hermaphrodite knows it will face discrimination in its new home. It lucks into finding a place to room with the widowed engineer Subah. As they begin a relationship, Heron discovers a plot on the station. A nice mystery, with a sexy and romantic relationship between Heron and Subah.

***Side Effects* by M. Decker**
From: Alleys and Doorways Torquere Press

Jordan has finally found a job using his talents to summon magical creatures, but there are unexpected side effects when an unexpected creature shows up. Hilarity ensues as he and boyfriend Will attempt to fix things in this cute, funny story.

***Were* by JoSelle Vanderhooft**
From: Alleys and Doorways Torquere Press

Alex has a problem he just can't share with his friends: sometimes he turns into a giant pink bunny rabbit. He's becoming increasingly depressed until he goes on the track of a nasty dog and finds far more than he bargained for. A really funny story, with lots of enjoyable banter about Star Trek and Doctor Who and other sf in jokes.

***Bittersweet* by Steve Berman**
From: Endicott Studio (endicott-studio.com)

An aptly titled story retelling the tale of the gingerbread boy, but with two boys in love, with the fox being the boy who nearly splits them apart. A lovely modern twist on an old tale.

***The Coat of Stars* by Holly Black**
From: So Fey Prime Books ISBN: 0-809-57346-6

Rafael is a successful costume designer in New York visiting home where he's reminded of his teenage love for Lyle, who committed suicide just before they were run away. In the course of dealing with his sister's abusive boyfriend, Rafael is also reminded of old stories about fairies who he discovers are real. A modern fairy tale about the conquering power of love.

***Dividing the Sustain* by James Patrick Kelly**
From: New Space Opera Eos 0-061-35041-9

This is hard sf at its finest, set during a journey on a generation ship bound for new colonies. Been Watanabe has a secret mission to the colonies that leads him to question much of what's happening around him, and discovering that the ship and its captain are hiding quite a few secrets. To solve those mysteries and succeed in his mission, Been has himself bioengineered to be gay. This story features some bizarre and interesting characters, and an interesting take on the whole nature/nurture question.

***Medusa's Touch* by Catherine Lundoff**
From: Crave: Tales of Lust, Love and Longing
Lethe Press 1-590-21033-6

TiCara is hired to transport her client to the nearly mythical asteroid Electra where he hopes to find a cure for old age. His aide Sherin Chan travels with them, giving the women a chance to act on their mutual desire. But Sherin has secrets that threaten them all. Nicely done erotica in a strong sf setting.

***The Reflection of Love* by Julia Talbot**
From: Alleys and Doorways Torquere Press

Alain is a sryer, finding people for his clients without asking questions. Until he senses something very special about the man who happens to be with his last target. They fumble towards a relationship as they are both attempting to escape their pasts, and conveniently, their sex magic greatly strengthens Alain's abilities. Dark and fun noir with an interesting system of magic and a complicated and realistic relationship.

***The Steel Anniversary* by Valerie Lewis**
From: Alleys and Doorways Torquere Press

Xana and her girlfriend are having a baby, which forces them to dredge up their suppressed memories of the terrible civil wars in which they fought. The back-story of the rise of the Haruspex and the Underground is disturbingly topical, and the central relationship is touchingly developed.

**2008 Gaylactic Spectrum Awards
Best Other Work**

Short List

52 by **Greg Rucka, Grant Morrison, Mark Waid, Geoff Johns, et al**
(Comic Series)
DC Comics

A special 52 week story arc running across the entire DC Universe of comics. Features strong storylines with the lesbian couple Kathy Kane (Batwoman) and policewoman Renee Montoya.

Battlestar Galactica: Razor by **Ronald D Moore et al**
(Television)
Universal/Sci-Fi Channel

The *other* ship to survive the Cylon attack struggles to survive under the leadership of the uncompromising Admiral Helena Cain. The relationship between Cain and a female civilian – who turns out to be a Cylon – is central to understanding Cain’s motivations and actions in *Razor* and in her appearances in the series itself.

So Fey: Queer Fairy Fiction edited by **Steve Berman**
(Anthology)
Prime Books 0-809-57346-6

A touching and marvelous collection of short fiction dealing with faeries, fairies, relationships, love and identity. Includes the winner of the Short Fiction award and three other Short List titles from our Short Fiction category.

Stardust by **Jane Goldman, Matthew Vaughn et al**
(Film)
Paramount Pictures

Based on the Gaiman/Vess graphic story, the film story of a young man who travels into the world of faerie on a quest for love features a marvelous element not included in the book – a skyboat pirate captain with a penchant for ballgowns and an eye for other men. His gayness is an open secret and becomes a point of honor for his crew.

Y: The Last Man by **Brian K. Vaughn, Pia Guerra et al**
(Comic Series)
Vertigo/DC Comics

Vaughan & Guerra's 60-issue series about a post-apocalyptic world wound down in 2007 (and had only a few issues in 2008 to end the book) but it dealt with both gender and alternate sexualities in a strong and interesting way.

Alleys and Doorways edited by **Meredith Schwartz**
(Anthology)
Torquere Press www.torquerebooks.com

A great collection of GLBT speculative erotic and romantic short fiction set in cities both real and imagined. Includes four stories included on the Short List for Short Fiction.

Buffy Season 8 by **Joss Whedon et al**
(Comic Series)
Dark Horse Comics

Freed from the constraints of special effects, filming schedules, and advertiser whims, Whedon returns to tell the story of *Buffy Season 8* in comic form. *Buffy* features open and prominent GLBT characters.

Socket by **Sean Abley et al**
(Film)
Dark Blue Films/Velvet Candy

In this independent film, a man struck by lightning finds his way into a secret subculture of people addicted to electricity. Creepy and erotic, it features strong GLBT content and an allegorical discussion about addiction and its impact on people’s lives.

Torchwood (episode Captain Jack Harkness and others) by **Catherine Tregenna, Russell Davies et al**
(Television)
BBC

Torchwood in general never shies from GLBT content – every member of the team has had at least one GLBT moment, and the team is led by the openly pansexual Captain Jack. The episode titled *Captain Jack Harkness* is a moving story about the true meaning of courage as the team meets a man named Captain Jack Harkness who they know will die, but who decides the night before a mission to let go of fear and accept his own desire for another man.