



VOWELS

A Steam and Spells Steampunk Encounter

Mikala Ash

ENCOUNTERS

Changeling Press

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Genteel poverty, a landed estate, a title, and a dastardly bargain with her father. Miss Angelina Haselton's future would appear to be beyond her control. Until fate, that fickle bastard, offers up new hope -- in the form of a deck of cards, a knock on her door, and a small slip of paper.

Vowels

Miss Angelina Haselton was awakened from an uneasy sleep by insistent knocking at the inn door. Her pretty mouth strained into a wide yawn. She stretched her slender arms and winced at her complaining muscles. The bed had been decidedly uncomfortable.

“What is it?”

“Pardon, miss.” It was the inn’s diffident servant. “But there’s a gentleman downstairs who begs your attention.”

“A gentleman? Who?”

“Dunno, miss. Lord sumthin’.”

“Good gracious. What can he want with me? Tell Mr. Lemming to meet him.”
That said creature was her fiancé.

“I’m sorry, miss. Mr. Lemming is not here.”

“What?”

“He didn’t return last night.”

Angelina sighed. Though she’d only known her future husband for little more than six hours, the duration of their journey from her home, she’d appraised his character at little above worthless. When he’d heard of a card game at the local Squire’s, he’d left with hardly a word. Not for the first time she cursed her father for selling his only daughter to a title hunter like Mr. Lemming.

“Tell his lordship I’ll be down directly.”

“Yes, miss.”

When she entered the downstairs parlour, she found a tall impossibly handsome man dressed immaculately in tight travelling breeches and coat.

“Miss Haselton, I presume.” He gave an elegant bow. “Lord Rankin, at your service.”

She returned a deep curtsy. “How may I help you, sir?”

He held up a piece of paper. "I've come to collect on these vowels."

"Vowels? I don't comprehend your meaning, sir."

He handed her the paper. Though the writing was almost illegible, its import was clear.

*I, Mr. Peter Lemming, owe Lord Rankin
the sum of one thousand pounds,
a steam coach, an automaton footman, and
one fiancé, namely,
Miss Angelina Haselton.
Signed, T.B Lemming*

Angelina's stomach churned. Her face flushed, and her legs trembled. Determined not to swoon she took a deep calming breath. "It seems you've had a profitable night, my lord."

He scowled. "I don't need the money, and what will I do with a second steam coach and a damned automaton?"

"You're forgetting the fourth item on my fiancé's IOU."

"I have no intention to make good on that particular article," he said.

She bridled at that. "And why not, may I ask?" She twirled about, her skirts raising enough to show her ankles. "Is there something wrong with me? Am I an inferior prize than Mr. Lemming's automaton?"

"Don't be absurd. Come. I'll take you home."

"Oh, no you won't," she snapped. "I demand you honour the IOU."

"Madam. I have no intention to do so. It would be dishonourable to take advantage of you in that despicable manner. It's simply not done!"

"Then leave me here."

"In the hands of that appalling bounder?"

"My fiancé."

He pointed at the paper she still held. "Not any longer, according to this."

"I thought you were not going to honour it."

His black eyes flared. "Madam. Give me the vowels and I'll tear them up."

"I insist you honour it."

"Are you mad?"

"Dispossessed more like it. By the look of your apparel, you are a gentleman of some rank. Do you intend to leave me, a defenceless female in the hands of a ... what did you call him? An appalling bounder? Hardly the act of a gentleman."

He rolled his eyes. "I intend taking you back to your home, and I'll put you over my shoulder if I have to."

"My father will only give me back to him. He needs the money to save the estate."

"I hold the paper."

She waved it in his face. "At the moment, I do."

"This is impossible!"

"On the contrary, it's easy, my lord. You honour the vowels, take me to Gretna Green, and we'll plight our troth over the anvil."

"Good God! You are mad!"

"You're not married, are you?"

"Of course not."

"I thought not. Why else would you take me as a stake in a game of chance?"

"To keep you out of Lemming's oily clutches. You... "

"I what?"

"Any woman deserves better than that scoundrel."

Through the window came the sound of a chugging steam engine. Their eyes locked. His jaw tightened, and with three long legged strides he crossed the room, took her by the hips, and hoisted her over his shoulder.

Angelina squealed. He took a moment to balance her slight weight before flinging open the door. He hastened down the hall, and to the horror of the cook, into the kitchen.

While Mr. Lemming came in the front door, they left by the back and around the side to where Lord Rankin's steam coach was waiting. Without ceremony he threw her

inside and slammed the carriage door. He leapt up to the driver's seat, and set off at a cracking pace.

Inside Angelina hung on for dear life as the carriage sped away. Fear was tinged with relief as she thought deeply about Lord Rankin. Two hours later they stopped at a small inn. "Where are we?" she asked as he climbed in. He pulled the door shut and closed the curtains.

"What are we doing?"

"Taking on coal."

"Where are we going?"

"To my sister's estate. It is not fitting that we stay anywhere unchaperoned."

"It's too late for that. Every hour alone with you ruins me, my lord." She blessed him with a coquettish expression that stirred his animal nature. "Gretna Green is the only way to save my honour."

"Ha! I should've known."

"Known what?"

"This is a base dodge, isn't it?" he challenged. "You and he are in cahoots, aren't you? Tricking me into a black scheme. What will it be? A thousand pounds and you'll keep silent?"

"How dare you!"

"Well, my sister's husband is a magistrate. He'll know how to handle your kind!" He studied her horrified expression. His lips curled into a smile. "If that's your game I shall oblige. Let's see if you are worth a thousand pounds."

He took her in his arms and planted a passionate kiss on her lips. Angelina squirmed for a few seconds then surrendered.

After a moment he withdrew. "Well, now's your chance."

"What?"

His expression became serious. "I apologise. You are clearly too naïve to undertake such a vile hoax."

She stamped her foot. "Naïve? How dare you!" She grabbed his shoulders and

pulled him closer. "I'll show you naïve!"

Her lips worked hard against his while she searched his lap and fumbled with the buttons.

"Are you sure?" he asked.

"For God's sake, ravish me!"

Lord Rankin took control. He lifted her skirts above her waist exposing her crotchless drawers. He licked two fingers and introduced them to her cunny and the sensitive nub at its head.

With his free hand Lord Rankin opened his pants. Angelina gasped at the size of his member which sprang forth as if it had been on a spring. He positioned himself between her outspread legs, and rubbed the head of his manhood along her now lubricated quim.

"Do it, my lord. Do it."

Slowly but forcefully, he pushed inwards. The resistance when it came was slight but Angelina yelped. He paused, but locking her ankles behind him she urged him forward. After several delightful minutes of thrusting and grunting on his part, moaning and calling the Almighty on hers, Lord Rankin groaned, and she welcomed the hot gush at her very core.

"I've never been ravished before," she said when she'd regained her breath.

"I didn't hurt you, did I?"

"A mere pinch. On the whole it was nicer than I expected."

He looked at her expectantly, an amused smile on his lips.

"What, my lord?"

"I'm waiting."

"I don't understand. Is there more I can do for you?"

"Not at the moment, though ask me again in twenty minutes and I'll furnish you with a different answer."

She was lost for what to say, and after kissing her he left her alone. She quickly fell asleep, and didn't awaken till she found herself tucked up in a nice warm bed.

Frustratingly she was left in the sole care of automatons for two days. "I've met with your father," Lord Rankin announced on his return. "We'll be married in a week."

"I will not."

"Why, may I ask?"

"It is my turn to be honourable. To have a husband who wed me without love to simply to save my reputation would be an anathema. It will not do."

He swept her into his arms. "You little fool. I wanted to marry you five minutes after we met."

"You did?"

"I swear."

"It took me only a minute." Angelina drew herself up and stood on tip toe to deliver a passionate kiss. A dozen heartbeats later she looked dreamily into his eyes. "It seems I am to precede you in everything, my lord."

He gave her a wry smile. "Indeed, my lady." Then he kissed her most thoroughly indeed.

Warrior Queen (Empire of the Sky 6)
A Steam and Spells Steampunk Adventure
Mikala Ash

Selena Whiteheart
Something more than lust

Harry Kincaid was the embodiment of concentration as he drove his cock into me. Beads of perspiration dotted his forehead, with the occasional drop falling on my cheek. His eyes were closed, his forehead creased, and his jaw had a determined set. He was focussed on giving me the maximum pleasure for which I was very appreciative.

I owed my detached acknowledgement of his efforts to the fact that he was my Home Office overseer. I, and my businesses, the airship *Fortuna*, the empire's most prestigious gambling venue, and a number of society whorehouses which attracted clientele from the top of the upper classes of both here in England and the continent. Sooner or later the political and economic leaders of the world found their way to my establishments, and that made me valuable to the Home Office for espionage purposes.

I wondered if Harry saw me as a mere tool, albeit a willing one. I could have used magic to read his mind to see what he thought, but I didn't want to leave even the minutest trace of my trespass for the resident Home Office witch to detect. I restricted myself to his aura. It was predominantly lusty colours, which most men displayed in my presence, but little real affection was in evidence.

Was he only fucking me out of duty, as well as satisfying his lust? If that was the case, then I was greatly vexed, as any woman would feel. He did like me, I suspected. The fact that he would spend his spare time with me demonstrated that, but it seemed to be the lack of anywhere else to be rather than a conscious need for my company. I'd had him under surveillance, and poor Harry had nothing in his life beyond his work -- which happened to be me.

A cold urge of vindictiveness overtook me. "Do you want to fuck her?"

He stopped thrusting. "What?"

"Not 'what', but who. Temperance. I've seen you ogling her. I don't blame you. She's very beautiful." Temperance was my majordomo.

"Selena. I swear..."

"I don't mind. Truly. She'd be another feather in your cap. The Home Secretary would be pleased with you."

"Selena..."

"Don't stop fucking," I said as I locked my ankles behind his buttocks and urged him to resume.

He obeyed, but with less enthusiasm. I'd destroyed his concentration.

"She could join us," I suggested.

"What?" He was so shocked at the lascivious proposition he withdrew his cock and crawled away. From the other side of my bed, he considered me with a pained expression.

"Don't be like that. Most men would leap at the chance of fucking two beautiful women at the same time." I noted his failing erection. I reached over and gave it a comforting squeeze. It throbbed into its customary hardness. "I have every confidence that you could satisfy both of us. And Temperance does like you. I've seen her taking surreptitious glances, mostly on the regions of your posterior and crotch."

I knelt beside him and bent my head to take his cock into my mouth. I tasted myself which sent a pulse of lust through my cunny. I looked at him with the head of his cock an inch from my lips. "Think of it. Lying between her silken thighs, this wonderful organ of yours embedded to the hilt, while kissing my nipples. Or better yet, she on her knees with you pounding into her from the rear, and I'm underneath, sucking your balls, and on the outstroke my lips could lick your shaft. And when you've spent, your seed would gush out of her cunt and flood my mouth. You could sit back and watch us kiss, swapping your essence between us."

His cock hardened even more.

"I knew it would appeal to you. I'll ask her, and next time you are free, we can

adore her together.”

“You mean...?”

“Don’t look so shocked. Of course, we’ve already enjoyed the sapphic pleasures many times. How else could two lusty women fill in the long watches of the night?”

“Selena...”

“Enough. It’s settled. You’ll be transported to sensual heaven, I assure you, darling Harry. Now, there’s something I must ask you.”

I squeezed his shaft and took the head of his cock between my lips and explored the eye with the tip of my tongue. He flinched.

“We’ve been together all this time, and you haven’t once mentioned Sir Colby.”

He cleared his throat. His aura pulsed in preparation to lie. “I haven’t anything to tell. He’s still under medical care as far as I know.”

“Can you find out for me?”

Was that a flare of jealousy too? My heart jumped at the possibility. Could there be some smidgen of something more than lust in him?

“I’ll try,” he mumbled. “Can’t promise anything. The security people can be tight-lipped when it comes to him.”

You should know, I thought. I said instead, “And what of Lady Neva Tal... whatever her name is.”

“Talbot-Rhys. Not a thing. She’s completely disappeared again.”

After I’d rescued Kit Colby and given Lady Neva something to think about -- the possibility of returning the soul of her dead lover to a new body -- she’d left only minutes before Harry had arrived to rescue me. “There can’t be too many airships in that lonely part of Scotland. Surely someone saw something.”

“Apparently not. They questioned hundreds of farmers and fishers in a fifty-mile radius of that village, but no one remembers a thing.”

“Lady Neva is adept at hiding her tracks.”

“She surely is.”

“She must have mesmerised everyone,” I mused. “That’s the only explanation.”

He looked as though he was going to scoff at that suggestion, so I cut him off. "Did you pass onto the Home Secretary my fears about the Queen's safety? If Lady Neva can mesmerise people into becoming assassins, like she's done before, then the Queen won't have any warning of who to trust."

"I did pass on your suggestion to the Home Secretary."

"His response?"

"That the Queen is in safe hands. Her security is second to none."

I shook my head. "Did he take my suggestion seriously is what I want to know. It doesn't sound like it."

"Selena, my dear. We've done our duty," he said reassuringly. "The Home Secretary is very appreciative of the help you and Miss Warrington provided in securing Sir Colby's return."

"Was I mentioned to the Queen?"

He shrugged. "I expect so. She keeps a tight rein on these matters."

I couldn't expect more. Things were coming to a head with the return of Nancy Lea, Mon Ilson's ambassador, and I'd been told that my cover as his agent was likely to be exposed so as to bring me closer to the Queen and guide the transition to their dual control of the empire. The next few days would be chaotic, and the last thing Mon Ilson needed was the death of the Queen and the disorder that would ensue.

I pulled his head down and kissed him. "Fuck me."

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Mikala Ash

Aussie Mikala Ash used to be a mild-mannered training & development consultant by day, and a wild sci-fi and paranormal adventure writer by night. Now she is a brazen full-time writer and nature photographer who is concentrating on having among other things, "... bags, and bags of fun!"

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