

# Naomi Bellis

## Notes and News Spring 2007

### DRAW DOWN THE DARKNESS Coming in April!

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"A powerful new voice in paranormal romance"  
- Mary Jo Putney

The next book in the *Darkness* series will be released from Signet Eclipse on **April 3, 2007**

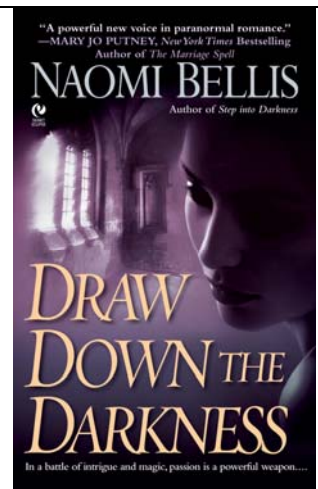
*In eighteenth century London, England's most talented spy risks his honor – and his life – to rescue the one woman who could heal his heart*

In order to save his family from ruin, Nicholas Saville, Viscount Redfern, secretly pledges his sword to King George's spymaster. Espionage suits him well, except that his duties take him far away from England and his betrothed.

Heartbroken by her beloved's long and unexplained absences, Helen Barrett breaks off their engagement. Soon she is courted by a powerful earl, a man well-versed in both magic and treason. He inspires Helen's utmost distrust until he gives her a stunning sapphire necklace – a gift that traps her under his dark spell.

Redfern's mission is to stop the murderous Hellfire League, but he will risk that and more to save – and win back – the woman he adores...

**In a battle of intrigue and magic, passion is a powerful weapon...**



ISBN 978-0-451-22095-0

"A satisfying potion with a strong bite."  
- Publishers Weekly

Read an excerpt at:

[www.NaomiBellis.com](http://www.NaomiBellis.com)

NaomiBellis@islandnet.com

*Dark Adventures in Historical Romance*

## Win Helen's necklace!

The design of this beautiful, authentic sapphire and gold necklace is inspired by a Georgian antique. Handcrafted by artisan Diana Friesen of Crystal Cave, this piece captures the style and spirit of the pink sapphire necklace Lord Waring gives Helen Barrett in *Draw Down the Darkness*. Sans the magic, of course. This item is guaranteed to be free from any evil enchantments.

How to Enter:

In the course of the story, Lord Redfern quotes a poem to Helen. Correctly identify the poet and the name of the poem. Email your name, address, and answer to [NaomiBellis@islandnet.com](mailto:NaomiBellis@islandnet.com). The winner will be drawn at random from the correct entries on August 31, 2007.

Fine Print:

Winners will be notified by email and their address will be confirmed at that time. Thirty days will be given for the winner to respond to this email. If there is no response, another name will be drawn. Once the winner's address is confirmed, the prize will be shipped by courier.

Watch our web sites! The contest links go live with the release of *Draw Down the Darkness* on April 3, 2007.

[www.NaomiBellis.com](http://www.NaomiBellis.com)

[www.crystalcave.ca](http://www.crystalcave.ca)



**News bites:**

- ❖ *Step into Darkness* was voted the best historical romance of 2006 by the *Parkersburg News and Sentinel* (Parkersburg, West Virginia)
- ❖ Check out my blog at Live Journal! <http://naomibellis.livejournal.com/>
- ❖ Watch for Gabriel's story, coming in early 2008!

**"A sparkling new voice in romance"  
- Jo Beverley**

## STEP INTO DARKNESS

### The reviews are in!

Bellis debuts with a high-adventure romance that showcases her talent for creating a powerful conflict and a unique plot tinged with magic. Strong characters play out their roles against a tumultuous and dangerous backdrop. This book is for all adventure lovers.

- Kathe Robin, Romantic Times BOOKreviews

This is definitely one of the better romance novels that I have read in quite some time. The author has done a wonderful job of telling a tale full of alliances and betrayals, love and hate, loyalty and the need for revenge. ... This entertaining novel has earned a spot on my "keeper" shelf and will definitely be read again in the future.

- Jezebel, Book Fetish

STEP INTO DARKNESS is an action-packed Georgian espionage romantic intrigue . . . fans will enjoy this enchanting historical.

- Harriet Klausner, The Best Reviews

This fast paced adventure has something for almost every historical fan: romance, adventure, a trace of magic, secrets, and espionage . .

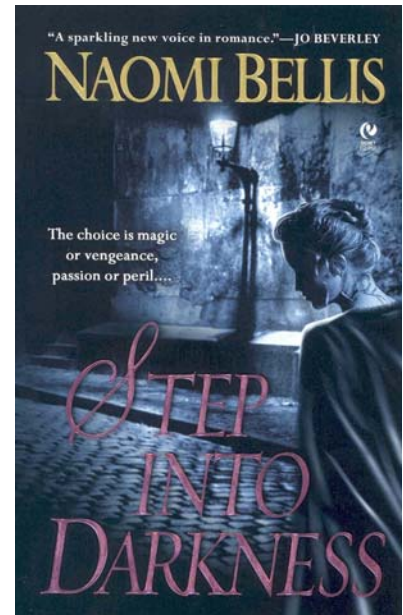
- Amanda Kilgore, Huntress Book Reviews

With a slight twist of the paranormal, this tale is not like many stories set in this era. Adding this little bit of the supernatural makes this novel an enticing read. With danger lurking behind every corner, this novel will keep you guessing on many levels. Naomi Bellis knows how to keep her readers in suspense ... - Joyce, CK2S Kwips and Kritiques

For a story that will captivate from the first page to the last, grab a copy of STEP INTO DARKNESS and prepare yourself for a thrilling read.

- Terrie Figueroa, Romance Reviews Today

STEP INTO DARKNESS is the breathtaking debut ... Danger, passion, intrigue and magic combine effortlessly to produce a vibrant and spectacular read. - Melissa Fowler, The Romance Readers Connection



ISBN 0-451-21938-4

**“Romance, adventure ... and a touch of magic. A spellbinding combination.”**  
- USA Today Bestselling Author Kelley Armstrong

## History of the Hellfire Clubs

*Draw Down the Darkness* introduces the Hellfire League, a group of magic users who have abandoned the principles of the Circle and set out to use their powers for darker ends. The League is very loosely based on the Hell-Fire Clubs that existed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The most famous of the Hell-Fire Clubs was founded by Sir Francis Dashwood (1708 – 1781). The Friars of St. Francis of Wycombe was decidedly one of the stranger phenomena of the period. Gentlemen's clubs were common during the era and served both a recreational and networking function. Some centered around gambling, others—like the Beefsteak Club—around food. “Hell-Fire Francis” chose orgies and blasphemy as his theme. He was even said to drink brandy laced with sulphur, calling it “brimstone.”

He led the inner circle or twelve Superior Members of the club in Black Masses, himself taking the lead role in the proceedings. There were also forty to fifty Inferior Members who participated in elaborately staged parties famous for debauchery and drunkenness. The “friars” were joined in their revels by “nuns,” who seemed to be not only prostitutes but women from the members' own families. The first permanent site of the club was the ruined Abbey at Medmenham, built in 1160. Later, Dashwood had a network of caves dug and outfitted for use near his estate at Wycombe, thirty-three miles northwest of London.

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the club was its involvement in the politics of the day. The Friars of St. Francis were not only rakes, but men of intellectual and professional clout. One of the prominent members was the Earl of Bute, who was influential in the life of the young George III. On his ascension to the throne, George appointed Bute Prime Minister, Dashwood the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Earl of Sandwich (yes, the same one who invented the sandwich) as the First Lord of the Admiralty. Along with John Wilkes, known for his support of popular causes, these men were influential in many important events, including the American Revolution. Others who were thought to be members of the club included the artist William Hogarth and perhaps even Benjamin Franklin, who visited Dashwood in 1772.

One of the most famous stories about the club relates a prank played by Wilkes on his fellow “friars”. One of the club members went to India as the Governor of Bengal and sent a baboon to the abbey as a gift. Wilkes was there alone when the creature arrived. Costuming the baboon in a devil's suit, he hid it in a chest. Later, during a dramatic moment in the Black Mass, Wilkes released the animal. The baboon leapt to the altar, shrieking and frightening the wits out of the robed and half-drunk members, who thought they had indeed raised Satan in their midst. Cries of short-lived repentance filled the air. As the saying goes, the Friars of St. Francis should have been careful what they wished for.

Sadly, the records of Dashwood's infamous club were burned. No doubt too many careers were at stake to let such papers survive. As a result, historians have to sift through much hearsay and conjecture to compile an accurate account. Evidence about the club is re-interpreted by each new scholar.

In some ways, the details are less compelling than the fact such clubs existed at all. Perhaps they arose because the age was not only one of enlightenment but also extreme social tensions and philosophical re-evaluation. During the eighteenth century, the world changed. Democracy was battling tyranny, industry fuelled new wealth, and science called old creeds into question. This sense of insecurity led to both extreme conservatism and an outpouring of radical arts and letters. Among other developments, the School of Terror was born as writers like Horace Walpole and Monk Lewis developed that interesting new genre, the paranormal novel.

*My main sources of information on the Hell-Fire Clubs include Daniel P. Mannix, The Hellfire Club (New York: ibooks inc, 2001) and Geoffrey Ashe, The Hell-Fire Clubs: A History of Anti-Morality (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2000).*