



## Noble Metals

*L.A. Witt*

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*(Publisher's Note: This book was previously published by a different press; it has since been edited extensively and expanded by over 10,000 words.)*

Ever since Robert Belton gambled away the money to stake his claim in the Klondike gold fields, he's been stranded in Seattle working as a prostitute. When an attractive customer needs help hauling provisions to the frozen north, Robert eagerly volunteers.

Dr. John Fauth is only searching for one thing, and it isn't gold. He needs platinum for the prototypes of his revolutionary inventions, and if he doesn't find it in the Klondike, his university career—and his research—is over.

Getting to the Klondike is a grueling, dangerous journey, and just hours after leaving Seattle, John and Robert find themselves in over their heads. John is carrying an invaluable device that his competitors will do anything to get their hands on. And as the cold nights and mutual desire pull John and Robert closer together, they discover that they have much more to lose than gold or platinum.

## Noble Metals Details

Date : Published July 14th 2014 by Riptide Publishing (first published January 2nd 2012)

ISBN : 9781626491441

Author : L.A. Witt

Format : Paperback 186 pages

Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Science Fiction, Steampunk, Historical, Adventure

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## From Reader Review Noble Metals for online ebook

### Christelle says

#### \*3.5\* stars\*\*

Last year, I discovered steampunk romance (thanks to Karen for that) and once in a while, I'm trying to read a book in this genre. And when I saw that LA Witt did a steampunk story, I had to try it, of course. And, thanks to "**Frosty the nonexistent snowman**"'s gift during the 2017 SS exchange, this was on my kindle.

It was an enjoyable read : the kind of fast one that it's appreciated during a lazy Sunday, curled up in the blanket, with 2 MCs that are adorable and made me go all gooey for a few moments, falling for each other during an adventure set in the cold winter at the frontier between US and Canada, looking for gold and platinum and braving the harsh weather conditions and the greediness of gold diggers.

It's fast-paced, full of nice sentiments and of weird artefacts and machineries that are the signature of steampunk. It's not as steamy as one can be used from this author, but the few sex scenes were hot, as can be expected.

It was entertaining and it's always good to read something a bit different than what I'm used to. Only 3.5 stars because it was not as great for me as the "Gentlemen brothers" series from James Cox, but a nice quick read nonetheless.

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### Val Kovalin says

Just for fun, plot in 6-words: **Prostitute and scientist travel steampunk wilderness.**

Very enjoyable. Characters are wonderfully three-dimensional. Robert - young, down-on-his-luck prostitute stranded in grubby logging town of Seattle. He's vulnerable, yet capable, innocent, yet sexually over-exploited. John - slightly older scientist, sophisticated, yet rugged, take-charge yet deeply caring.

The two throw their destinies together after a hot, secret night of pleasure. They attempt a dangerous journey to the Alaskan gold rush area, complete with steampunk touches such as a guiding a huge, mechanical spider loaded with supplies up and over an icy pass. Danger is everywhere, chiefly among other prospectors who hope to steal the scientist's "platinum detector," which can also identify where gold is.

Story is told first-person through Robert's viewpoint, alternating with a smattering of first-person diary entries from John.

The novella is only 39,500 words but it develops its complex story just fine. Some very hot sex scenes, permeated with yearning, and an unusual sense of tenderness between the lovers make this an emotionally satisfying read.

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## **Jayhjay says**

**This review was originally posted on my blog Joyfully Jay.**

Robert Belton is working as a prostitute in a Seattle saloon, stuck in the city after he and his brothers lost all their money intended for the Klondike Gold Rush to gambling and whoring. Although his brothers returned home, Robert couldn't bear the idea of going back to Montana and instead is making ends meet selling his body to men traveling through the city on their way north to the Yukon in search of gold.

One day a handsome stranger comes in clutching a box he won't let out of his sight. Dr. John Fauth buys Robert's services for the night, and Robert is immediately drawn to him even though he should be just a client. When Robert finds out that John is on his way north and looking to hire an assistant, he offers to go along for half pay, looking for a chance to finally get out of Seattle and have an opportunity to seek his fortune.

The journey north is incredibly hard. Even with the aid of their "mechs," giant machines that walk and transport their supplies, the men must still walk hundreds of miles through bitter cold and difficult terrain. But their biggest threat turns out to be other fortune hunters. John is one of the few people making the journey not seeking his fortune in gold. Instead he is looking for platinum to build a semiconductor, and in his box he protects so diligently is a device to help find it. However, once the other travelers learn that the device can also help find gold, the men become a target for every thief along the way looking for an advantage in the gold fields. In addition, John's research rival has sent a team after him also looking to steal the device in hopes of beating John to his ultimate invention - a machine that allow people to communicate across lines that would allow them to both hear and see one another.

Despite the dangers, John and Robert are determined to keep going. Long hours on the road together lead to friendship and ultimately love. But while they have each other, the question remains whether they can ever make their journey safely. And once they do, whether the university researcher and former prostitute can ever find a way to make a life together.

This was a really interesting story and had a different feel to me than much of Witt's contemporary work. There are some steampunk elements with the mechs and John's research, however at it's heart the book really feels like a historical. The story takes place in the late 1800's and I loved the setting and time period. I haven't found many m/m books that focus on the gold rush and the detail Witt provides about the journey and the harsh environment was really fascinating. The idea of walking hundreds of miles on foot through bitter cold just seems so daunting, but the promise of gold was a big enough lure to get thousands to try it. I really liked the portrayal of the harsh day-to-day struggles combined with the thrilling aspects of trying to survive against the thieves out in the wilderness.

I also enjoyed the relationship between the two men. Both Robert and John had a quiet determination and bravery to go forward despite enormous risks. I enjoyed them together and thought they were a good match. I appreciated that John could see past Robert's prostitution and realize there was an intelligent and caring man underneath. And Robert never wavers in his dedication to John, even at great personal risk. This book wasn't quite as steamy as we often find from Witt's stories. The bitter cold makes it a bit difficult to have a lot of good sexing and there is more focus emotional connection than the physical (although never fear, we get some juicy physical stuff too!).

I had a few issues though. First, the story is told primarily in first person from Robert's POV, but we also get

John's viewpoint from his journal. The nature of journal writing led to a lot of narration and exposition in his passages as he is explaining in detail his feelings or events that transpired. I felt this slowed things down a bit for me and sometimes felt like too much telling and not enough showing. It was useful to get John's feelings about Robert, but I would have liked it to have learned these things without so much narration.

I was also sort of mixed about the steampunk element. I liked its incorporation into the story, but I felt like there wasn't quite enough of it. The book felt more like a historical with a few steampunk elements thrown in. I guess I would have liked to see it taken a bit farther.

I definitely enjoyed this story however, especially the setting and historical elements which I found quite fascinating. If you are looking for a historical or steampunk set beyond the typical Regency era, I would definitely recommend Noble Metals.

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### **?♥? Cocky™ Michaelle &♥? says**

3.8 Stars

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### **Ami says**

I am never a huge fan of historical (even if steampunk genre intrigues me) AND I have hits-and-misses history with L.A. Witt's stories. This one though, it is one of the hits; even if it's a historical/steampunk story.

Right from the beginning, when Robert Belton, the young whore sets eyes on the inventor/scientist Dr. John Fauth, the story grips me and takes me to the end. I love the chemistry and relationship -- but most of all I ENJOY the thrill of the adventure, along with the threats and built-up romance, as John and Robert set their mech to go find platinum at Dawson's City.

Though I'm not familiar with some of the vocab (English is NOT my first language) but I can imagine the scenes just okay, and the danger that these two men face along the way. I LOVE Robert's loyalty to John and John's tender feeling for Robert (even if the young man is a whore). Love how John claims Robert as his ...

...

*“You’re no one’s whore, Robert,” he whispered.*

*“Not anymore.”*

*“Not anymore,” he said softly as he stroked my hair. “Now you’re just... mine.”*

...

Oh, some technical information ... the story is written mostly in 1st point of view with Robert as main narrator. However, there are a couple of chapters written by the way of John's journal as he talks about his feeling for Robert and the device that he's invented.

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### **Barb ~rede-2-read~ says**

I really enjoyed this love story. Historical romances and steampunk are pretty low on my list of favorites but the depth of the character development in this one overcame my hesitancy and I loved each MC, both individually, and as a couple.

Robert Belton is working as a prostitute in Seattle when professor John Fauth shows up one night. Robert doesn't want to be a prostitute, but when he gambled his grubstake for the gold fields of Alaska away on a foolish card game, he didn't have much choice in what was left for him to do.

John is on his way to Alaska to test his invention – a piece of equipment which can detect noble metals like gold and platinum. But the gold isn't what he wants – it's the platinum. He's inventing a new way of communicating over wires and he's trying to beat Edison and Tesla and be the first to establish this method of communication. But he needs the platinum to perfect his invention and this little piece of equipment will help him find it.

Robert asks to go with John for half-wages and a chance to get to Alaska to mine for gold. John ends up agreeing and though they spend a hot night together before the trip, John doesn't expect Robert to earn his way by being his prostitute. He just wants a companion, a helper who can work with him. The two fall in love along the way, but the hurdles they face are more than those that might appear on the surface. Word has gotten out that John can find gold with his machine and he's not only facing down the other miners who know about it, but also a trio of men hired by a fellow professor inventor to get the machine away from him at all costs.

This was an intriguing story from the point of view of the historical significance, the scientific theories elaborated on, and of course, the romance. The men survived to have their HEA but it was hit and miss for a while, and I spent a few suspenseful hours finishing the second half of the story so that I can rest this evening. I highly recommend this one.

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### **Meags says**

#### **3.5 Stars**

Noble Metals is an M/M historical romance, infused with components of steampunk fiction. The story takes elements of a gold rush history we know and imbues it with mentions of then unknown advanced technologies, making the whole reimagined history a little more unique and remarkable than it perhaps would have been otherwise.

The story follows a young man named Robert Belton, who has been stuck in Seattle working as a prostitute ever since he lost the money he so desperately needed to get himself to the Klondike gold fields. For a year, Robert has been biding his time, saving what money he can, in the hopes that one day soon he'll have the means to go north and seek his fortune once and for all.

Robert's perfect opportunity arises much earlier than expected when an enigmatic newcomer, by name of John, expresses his plans to find able-bodied assistance to help him get his equipment safely to Dawson City. Robert jumps at the chance to get his own journey underway and the two strike up a deal to travel north together.

Their expedition is anything but smooth sailing though. Not only do they face already perilous conditions in the vast and unforgiving wilderness of the Yukon, but John – who soon reveals himself to be a scientist, innovator, and scholar on a mission of a different kind – has nasty folk on his trail, who want a coveted device John holds in his possession and who aim to get it using whatever means necessary. In order to complete their journey unscathed, Robert and John must band together to overcome these threats, natural and not so natural, which stand in their way of reaching their personal goals. And as it turns out, their growing attraction might just prove to be the biggest challenge Robert and John have to face along the way.

I had fun reading this one. It was both sweet and tender, but also exciting and suspenseful at times, ensuring the story flowed well and kept me fully engaged.

Robert and John were very likeable leads. I particularly appreciated the natural way in which their relationship blossomed over the course of their daring and often treacherous journey. Although they felt an instant attraction towards one another and even had sex the night they met, everything that came after was slower in progression, giving the characters (and the readers) time to learn about each other, allowing a strong bond to form before the physical element of their relationship was reconsidered.

I will say though that I was left a bit flat by the ending - this seems like a strange reaction, even to me, because Robert and John end up safe and happy, *together*, which really should be all that matters. Yet, I can't help but feel a little dissatisfied, even though I can't quite pinpoint the reasons why. (view spoiler)

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### Ami says

I read the first edition of **Noble Metals** back in 2012 when it was first released by a now-defunct publisher. I loved the novella – even if it was categorized as historical/steampunk, a genre that was not high on my favorite list. When *Boys in Our Books* was offered to review the re-edited and re-expanded version, and when I saw that the expansion was over 10,000 words, I jumped immediately for the chance to review. I rarely do a re-read but I wanted to see if my initial 4-stars rating would stand the second time around.

So did it? Indeed it did...

Right from the beginning, I felt the chemistry between Robert – the young male prostitute – and John Fauth, a professor and scientist who came to the brothel looking for information to find men to be part of his team. Duly noted that they started their connection physically – Robert was a prostitute after all – but then the romantic relationship was built up nicely and slowly during their travels, they started to get connected more than just physically. They shared stories and Robert could see why John wanted to protect his invention while John was charmed with Robert's loyalty.

I read this while having the original format opened on my computer as well, so I could see the differences. I must say that the expansion was quite significant to make the story feel improved and the romance felt better developed. Especially since there were more point of views from John – through his written journal.

I did a personal steampunk challenge a couple of months ago and I realized that I struggled with the combination of historical and technology/futuristic/sci-fi element of steampunk. However, this one felt light and I had no issues at all with the mechanical elements that Ms. Witt brings to this world build. I'm not sure how steampunk loyalists take it though.

So, in conclusion, I loved the improved version probably a bit more than the original one. If you want to read light steampunk with likeable characters, you can try this one. I want to read the next book written in this world, that's for sure.

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*The ARC is provided by the author for an exchange of fair and honest review. No high rating is required for any ARC received.*

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### **Heidi Cullinan says**

Totally loved this. The boys were darling and the sex was sweet and hot at once. And STEAMPUNK.  
\*dances\*

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### **Chris, the Dalek King says**

**John had come this far and faced all these dangers for his work--this was a man married to his work, and he'd all but said himself he'd chosen that work over lovers.**

**Once we'd finished in Dawson City, he'd go back to Chicago. Back to his laboratory. Back to the people who couldn't know about his "immoral conduct." There was no room for me in that world.**

**But that didn't stop me from hoping.**

Robert Belton is a whore. John Fauth is a professor and a scientist. They have little in common—except the desire to make it to the gold fields of the Klondike. What metals they hope to dig up there may be different, but what they hope find is the same: a last chance and a new start. But John's latest invention has brought danger dogging on both their heels, and they will be lucky to stay one step ahead of the scheming mechanisms of an old rival and the bullets of the gold hungry men who share their journey. And even if they find everything they are looking for beneath that frozen earth, it might just turn out to measure far less than what they find within each other.

I have not nearly enough steampunk in my life. It is a tragedy of monumental proportions. Which makes reading this all the more enjoyable. Because not only is it a good story, but the steampunk elements are so very well integrated into the world. It all feels so natural. Well, as natural as an eight-legged, steam-powered, mechanical luggage carrier can get. There is not a huge range of steampunk-esque elements in this story, but

the ones that are there are the ones that needed to be there. In the harsh and deadly environment of the Yukon (think Canada, up near the hangy-on bit we call Alaska), you need something hardy to survive and I found the mechs that prospectors used a great creation and addition to the story.

I had read this story when it first came out, but it has been a while so I am not exactly sure what ended up changing from the first edition, to this one. I will say that this story was very well written, and whatever was added (or subtracted) fit seamlessly into the story. I love both John and Robert. John because I have a thing for clever men. And Robert because, while it is not something I go out of my way to read, I enjoy watching prostitutes fall in love with the men they most definitely should not be falling in love with. And if that isn't a loaded sentence, I don't know what is (just to clarify, I do not actually watch prostitutes. Outside of fiction. But if one was to judge me on what I enjoy in fiction, I do not believe I would be allowed out of my cell—padded or otherwise). The chemistry between these two characters is great, and I love how they grow. How they learn what is really important to them.

I do however wish that the ending was slightly different. I don't want to spoil the surprise for those who have not read this book...but it has always felt like a bit of a letdown. Not to the story, and not to the characters. I think it is in fact the right thing for them. It just felt like it left something undone, at the end. Even if it wasn't, really. I love the choices they made. I love their ending. Hell, I even love how much that ending cost them, even if it ended up giving them everything they needed. But it still...ugh. I guess it was not where I expected it to go. Even when I knew where it was going, since I have read it before.

I loved this new edition, and I am so glad I picked it up to review. I remember enjoying it when it first came out, but this is better. Somehow. I might have to go back and reread both just to find out what changed. Because whatever it was, it was most definitely the right choice. And I am really looking forward to reading the next book in the series when it comes out in a couple months.

4.5 stars

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*This book was provided free in exchange for a fair and honest review for Love Bytes. Go there to check out other reviews, author interviews, and all those awesome giveaways. Click below.*

### **Julio Genao says**

#### **Repetitive, silly, and dull.**

Nice touches here and there, but not enough for me to enjoy this very much.

My overall impression is of wasted opportunity and inattention to detail; the setting should have been almost as much a character in the book as the leads.

I was vexed by problems with logic (every prospector must carry 2,000 pounds of provisions with him into the pass?) and with plot devices that served no purpose whatsoever.

Poorly plotted, indifferently developed, and sloppily edited.

I don't even know why I finished it.

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### **Vio says**

A really good adventure and what an exciting story. I loved the historical/steam-punk angle, interesting and thrilling. Robert and John, the prostitute and scientist have a mission to find platinum, its a tumultuous journey, a gripping one. Both guys are wonderful, I liked them and wanted good things to come of all the danger they faced. The chemistry was bang on too, sweet and romantic.

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### **Mandy\*reads obsessively\* says**

This is my first story of its kind, a historical Steampunk, and I was pleasantly surprised! Robert works as a prostitute in one of the last outposts before a difficult and dangerous trek to Canada. John has invented a device that should help him find platinum, which he needs for the invention he has in mind! ( sounded a lot like Skype to me! Lol) John and Robert have an instant attraction and Robert jumps at the chance to join John in his travels! There are bad guys trying to get the device and a truly difficult trek through snow, ice and mountains. A sweet and exciting read!

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### **Wart Hill says**

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Sometimes when I go into books, I go in kind of blind. I have sort of an idea-ish but not really. This is one of those books. I kind of expected an epic steampunk adventure with a romance background. What it is is the opposite: a romance with a steampunk adventure background. But not in a bad way.

Dr. John Fauth is on his way to a dwindling gold mine in search of a different noble metal to aid his research into semiconductors. On the journey, he stops in Seattle, popping into a saloon/brothel for a drink, which is where he meets Robert Belton, a whore/bartender in the establishment. Robert has been itching to go to the gold mine himself, and he offers to accompany Fauth for half the money any other man would ask.

So Fauth agrees.

He also pays for a night at the brothel, paying enough that others will believe he isn't spending it with Robert, but asking Robert to allow him the night anyway. Extra money for Robert for what he normally does for less anyway, so he takes the offer.

After, they set out north together, trying to stay one step ahead of men who want Fauth's device - both men who followed Fauth from Chicago and men who learn of the device's existence and its possible uses in finding gold while on the road.

On the way, Fauth and Robert develop a relationship that is sweet and hot and, for the most part, well developed.

I say for the most part because I feel like Robert is quick to trust that Fauth really does want him. Robert has been working as a prostitute for awhile before this book starts, and I was a little surprised that he wasn't jaded and distrustful. Granted, he wanted Fauth as well, but I still wish there had been more reticence on Robert's part.

That being said, I love the development of Fauth. He goes from this closed off scientist who's work is the most important thing in his life to a loving, caring partner to Robert and omg it was so sweet. He still cares about his work, but it's not above other things. And despite the quick start to their relationship, I did think it was otherwise well developed.

I enjoyed the steampunk elements - the mechs, the electric lights, Fauth's work itself. Definitely a world I could get lost in again.

I will definitely have to read the next book.

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### **ttg says**

A very enjoyable m/m alternative history/steampunk adventure romance novella about two men journeying from Seattle to Alaska as part of the Klondike gold rush.

I liked both MCs and it was fun to read about their developing relationship, a bond built on sex first, intimacy and trust later. Most of the POV comes from Robert, a prostitute living in Seattle who dreams of getting out and striking it rich in the gold rush. He gets his wish by teaming up to assist a new client--John, a scientist/engineer from Chicago who is traveling to Alaska on a quest to find some specific metals. They begin the long trek north and along the way, learn more about each other, as well as discover that there are some shady characters on their trail.

It's not super steampunk-y, but mostly you see the genre in the vehicles and spider-y robot contraptions that assist the miners in carrying things up the trail.

Witt lived in Seattle before (where I live now) and I appreciated the setting details she included since it really was the starting point for a lot of Gold Rush miners. That was neat historical detail to read.

Overall a fun and very enjoyable book. It's a novella, a little over 90 pages, so a pretty fast read as well, but even though I could have always taken in more since I liked both the characters and story, the author wrapped it up well, and I wasn't left wanting. Recommended if you're looking for something more fantastical with your m/m adventure romance.

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