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Bear, Elizabeth. The White City

In a loose sequel to Bear's alternate history-cum-mystery *New Amsterdam*, we are taken from the New World into the depths of the old. Immortal vampire detective Don Sebastien de Ulloa seeks rest and healing, both for himself and for the human members of his court, the inimitable forensic sorceress Lady Abigail Irene and the lady author, Phoebe Smith. The trio travel to the depths of Russia, to the White City of Moscow—a place Don Sebastien has not visited in many years. While he seeks respite, what he finds is only more death. Visiting an old friend, he finds instead a cooling corpse and no trace of the lady he seeks. A mystery he thought was done and gone has re-emerged from hiding, embroiling Don Sebastien and his court in the dangerous jealousies and ancient rivalries of Moscow's vampire community.

The mystery here is hardly the point. While the motivations are realistic and the crimes dramatic, what readers will find most fascinating are Bear's characters: the ascerbic Abigail Irene, the unprepossessing Phoebe Smith hiding unexpected depths behind her smile, and, most of all, the ancient, conflicted, and decidedly post-human Don Sebastien. Bear's vampires definitely do not sparkle, but they captivate nonetheless.

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