



# CLIO GRAY

## AWARD WINNING AUTHOR

Clio Gray was born in Yorkshire, and after a childhood spent by the sea in Saltburn, studied Philosophy and History of Art before going on to qualify as a librarian, working amongst the books that she had always loved. Moving to the Highlands of Scotland in the 1990's, where she still lives and works, she was inspired by the stunning landscapes and unique Nordic connections to write. Learning the craft first with short stories, she won a number of prestigious prizes including the Harry Bowling First Novel Award in 2004 and The Scotsman Orange Short Story Competition in 2006. Some of these can be found in a Collection, *Types of Everlasting Rest*. From Italy's volcanoes to the Russian steppe, to the fate of Boy Scouts in Czechoslovakia during the Second World War, these short stories are filled with intriguing historical backgrounds, and the fascination of the macabre. Laden with sumptuous detail, each story leads the reader directly into the compelling, and sometimes bizarre, inner worlds of her fascinating characters.

She was commissioned by Headline to write a series of four, *Guardians of the Key*, *The Roaring of the Labyrinth*, *Envoy of the Black Pine* and *The Brotherhood of Five*. Set in the Napoleonic era, the main protagonist, Whilbert Stroop, is a finder of Missing Persons and, whilst compiling a unique 'Sense Map of London', is often called upon to find persons in weird and wonderful landscapes peopled by bizarre and unusual characters across these islands and beyond. These met with critical acclaim.

*Deadly Prospects* and *Burning Secrets* are historical murder mysteries, set in the Highlands of Scotland, whilst *The Legacy* is a unique adventure murder mystery, linking the foundation of the first scientific society in Europe to the Irish Uprising of 1798 and the wilds of Scotland with Deventer in Holland.

Her most recent novel, *The Anatomist's Dream*, is a bizarre tale of Philbert, who, born with a 'taupe', is abandoned by both parents, and eventually finds refuge and companionship in a travelling carnival as it makes its annual migration across Germany bringing entertainment to a people beset by famine, repression and revolutionary ferment. He embarks on a dark and perilous journey that will have far-reaching consequences for a whole nation. *The Anatomist's Dream* was nominated for the Man Booker Prize in 2015 and was also long-listed for the Bailey's Fiction Prize 2016.

Clio is the founder of HISSAC, a short story competition to foster talent from up and coming writers world-wide. She was also one of the founding committee members of Bloody Scotland, Scotland's first Crime Writing Festival, now an established annual event.

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## REVIEWS

*The killings are violent and cold-blooded, and the suspense is maintained right until the end...  
Gray has an exceptional eye for detail, and her characterisation is superb...  
Not for the faint-hearted."*

Lucinda Byatt, Historical Novels Review

*Weird and truly wonderful, Envoy of the Black Pine excites, terrifies and amuses.  
A fantastically different read by a fantastically different writer*

Barbara Nadel, author

*Clio Gray is a master of atmosphere and sensuousness. Reading her is like being at a sumptuous  
feast in a palace, just before it is stormed...[she] has an incredible flair for atmosphere, imagery, setting  
and description...There is a strangeness and originality about her work that absorbed me...*

Alan Bissett, author

*A new novelist with a startlingly original voice...*

The New Writer Magazine

*Written in elegant, intelligent prose, Gray reclaims the historical crime novel from those practitioners  
content to serve up bland plot and blander writing...Stroop has the makings of a great detective in the  
cerebral Holmesian tradition...*

Calum Macleod, Inverness Courier

*Gray has a distinctive voice and the subject matter and themes of these stories are out of the ordinary...  
the mood is dark,occasionally shot through with flashes of lightning...an uncommonly interesting writer.  
One wonders, expectantly, what she will do next...*

Allan Massie, The Scotsman

*Guardians of the Key...A first novel from Clio Gray and an astonishingly assured one..It has power and  
excitement, brutality and tenderness, and a whole fistful of character so vividly drawn that you find  
yourself willing them on...*

Val Javin, Huddersfield Daily Examiner

*Gray is a writer you can rely on not to write quite like anyone else... ..more Mervyn Peake  
and Gormenghast than Jane Austen and Sense and Sensibility...*

Lesley McDowell & Colin Waters, Scottish Sunday Herald

Clio Gray can be contacted through her Literary Agent, Laura Longrigg of MBA - [laura@mbalit.co.uk](mailto:laura@mbalit.co.uk)  
or through her publisher, Matthew Smith, Urbane Publications [matthew@Urbanepublications.com](mailto:matthew@Urbanepublications.com)

For more information contact [info@cliogray.com](mailto:info@cliogray.com)