



## Fool's Gold

*Jess Faraday*

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For once, Ira Adler has it easy. He has money in his pocket, a comfortable arrangement with an undemanding young man, and no one's punched, chased, or shot at him in years. Suddenly, an explosion turns everything upside down. Eager to leave London, Ira accompanies his friends to America to settle a family matter. But though a handsome lawman and a trip aboard a luxurious ocean liner provide welcome distraction, Ira soon finds himself embroiled in a plot that stretches from London's back alleys to the dusty dirt roads of California. Before he knows it, Ira is up to his neck in train robbers, rattlesnakes, unscrupulous cattle kings, and persistent young women driven to frenzy by his exotic accent. Just when he's ready to flee back to Britain, Ira gets a fistful of second chances. But London is calling. Will Ira answer? Or will he embrace a new life abroad?

## Fool's Gold Details

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Author : Jess Faraday

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## From Reader Review Fool's Gold for online ebook

### Anthony says

If this is the end of Jess Faraday's series featuring Ira Adler, it's a very satisfying conclusion. I've enjoyed watching Ira grow from naïve kept-boy to independent businessman, his move from the shadier side of life to legitimate. I've enjoyed watching his friendships grow, especially with Tim and Bess Lazarus. Unlike many mystery authors, who don't allow their main and supporting characters to change except in superficial ways, Faraday has allowed all of her main characters to grow over the course of these three books; Ira more-so than the rest. And he continues to grow through the events of this book, as the last vestiges of his naivete (but not his good will) are taken away and replaced with a maturity and world-awareness the Ira of The Affair of the Porcelain Dog could never have possessed.

Of course, even with that increased maturity, Ira is still prone to misunderstandings, often arising from not being able to read the signals other people are sending him. Watching Ira navigate his romantic entanglements has always been fun, whether they end up connected to the larger case Ira is investigating or not. This time there are several such romantic or almost-so encounters, at least one of which is downright humorous to watch so long as you're not the one whose motives are being misunderstood.

Since this is an Ira Adler book, there's also plenty of action, lots of perceived and actual duplicitousness, and more than a fair share of near-death experiences. These have been the trademark of the Adler books, and they are all abundant here. The over-arching mystery is a classic one that I won't spoil here except to say that the plot twists are fun and sensible and the final reveal is satisfactory ... fully worthy of the Great Detective in whose shadow Ira lives.

The previous two Ira novels have taken place in the heart of London. As the book description notes, this time Faraday takes Ira and his closest associates to the United States. Some genre authors would be content with setting such a tale in New York or Boston, cities even then large enough to partially mirror and partially contrast late 1800's London. Faraday drops her urban characters into rural California, and turns her Victorian urban mystery series into a western. A full-blown western, as well, with abandoned mines, shady landowners and not one but two damsels-in-distress. And by doing so, the author shows her remarkable range, her ability to work with the tropes of just about any genre and give them breath and interesting life. If Faraday returns to the world of Ira Adler for future volumes, I'll be happy. But I'll just as happily follow her now to other genres and other characters.

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### Gillian says

I can't say that this was my favourite book in the series....because I have adored them all equally :) I'm pretty sure I laughed more during this one though, despite a rather surprising twist at the beginning that forces Adler to reconsider his current life in London and ends up heading for the Wild, Wild West with Bess and Tim as they deal with a pressing family matter on Bess's side in California. This being Ira, though, there is never a dull moment as he finds himself embroiled in one misadventure after another on his travels. I think this book was the funniest of the three as I found myself laughing out loud on several occasions. Also, it was nice to see Ira growing up, letting the past go and focusing on future with someone special. I've not checked to see if any other books have been planned but I do hope the author revisits Adler in the future. I would love

to see where all his (mis)adventures lead him next. 4 stars

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### **Wendy says**

This story starts with a literal bang, and romps along from there, from London to New York to Wyoming to California. The change of scene does Ira a power of good, and changes his view of a great many things. The sentimental fool is a little slow coming to certain conclusions about the late Cain Goddard, but it's very satisfying when he's finally able to let the man go.

I love a book that teaches me something, and I learned a fair bit about America in 1895 from this one. The author has a deft hand, and research and backstory are part of the story; it's tight and smooth and wonderful to read.

I'm sorry to see the end of Ira's adventures, but if this is the last we'll see of him, I'll believe him happy in his new life in a new place with new people. He certainly earned his happy ending. Ira is very much a product of the time and place where he had lived all his life, and yet his decision to stay in America felt right: earned and yet inevitable. I think I felt the same frisson of delight when it occurred to him that he didn't have to return to London if he didn't want to. Ah, freedom!

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### **Joanne says**

Just fabulous. Review coming soon.

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### **Veronica of V's Reads says**

4.5 stars for this historical M/M mystery/suspense adventure.

I will preface this review with the statement that I have not read any of the previous books in this series, and had no trouble jumping right into this one.

Ira Adler is a 30 y/o gay man in 1895 London. He has been an orphan, a prostitute, a consort to a mafia boss and now he's a secretary. He lives alone in a tiny flat, makes a stable living, and has a regular bed partner. He is summoned to the home of his former consort--Cain Goddard--for a meeting of dubious intent. Ira had last seen Goddard when Goddard was beating him to a pulp in a dark alley several years before. Ira and Goddard had had an amiable, loving relationship prior to that--Goddard is in fact the reason Ira is no longer a prostitute. En route to this meeting, Ira has mixed feelings and turns up an hour late. While approaching Goddard's townhouse, the house explodes. The investigation is not legit, and Ira is left with many questions about his former lover--none of which are answered by his inheritance of 250K Pounds.

Grief-stricken, Ira is convinced to travel to California with his good friends Tim and Bess Lazarus to change his pace and to assist settling a land dispute surrounding Bess' mother. Aboard ship, Ira becomes embroiled in a theft investigation that surrounds Col. Wilkes, a war hero whose valet is Ira's long-time acquaintance

(and former prostitute too), Marcus. The travel by rail from NYC to central California is not without intrigue. Think train robbers, thieves, Bison stampedes and unlikely Marshals. Marshal Sutton, the only Black Marshal, becomes a big player in the later plot, and possibly the next book.

Ira gets by on his ingenuity, and helps to foil a plot destined to destroy local native relations. Plus, he finds a new partner with whom he can share true intimacy. I had to laugh when Tim Lazarus (also a former lover of Ira's) remarked about how Ira can't go a week without finding a man to jump into his bed.

I did like the constant motion of the plot. It is clear that there is a LOT of research in this story, shining through the setting and the speech. Having been a resident of the San Joaquin valley, it was fun to experience this post-Gold Rush adventure in Tulare, Visalia and Porterville. The historical context was very compelling, and I will admit to being stunned in the author's notes regarding the whitewashing of the Lone Ranger. Ira seems to be a crack investigator with a curious mind and a pragmatic outlook. He is fully likeable, and a compelling lead. It is not hard to cheer for him to solve the many smaller plot crises that arise.

That said, I was torn regarding Ira's sorrow over Goddard. I wondered if he suffered a bit of battered man syndrome, his conflict was so great. For a gay book, there is remarkably little sex on the page. I did enjoy this caper, but would have liked just a bit more steam. The end is a bona fide HEA, with ample room for Ira's next adventure in sleuthing to begin.

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### **Sofia says**

[ I like the Marshal but I've spent three books thinking that Ira and Cain would work things out, so the Marshal is still such a new 'man' for me to get used to immediately. I had been on and off with Cain for so long that it takes getting used to. Though I think that feeling is the o

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### **Lena♥Ribka says**

#### **4,5 stars!**

Jess Faraday knows exactly how to shock me(at the beginning), to make me forget about a RL(because I can't put her book down), to keep me on the edge of my seat("wtf is going on?!"'), to convince me with her unexpected decisions(yes) and to make me happy at the end(\*sigh\*).

And her writing!.. (\*sigh\*sigh\*sigh\*)

#### Fool's Gold:

\*\* London 1895 vs. California 1895

\*\* Victorian England vs. the Wilde Wide West.

\*\* Sherlock Holmes vs. Bass Reeves. In the best Indiana Jones style.

\*\* Historically accurate researches.

\*\* A main character who grows and develops along with the current of the significant events in his life.

\*\* A very quick pace of the story.

\*\* Surprising twists and turns. UNPREDICTABLE.

\*\* ADVENTURE. You have no idea!..

\*\* Very atmospheric settings.

\*\* Beautiful writing.

\*\* HEA.

I can't recommend this series highly enough!

*Special thanks to my buddy Sofia for a great company through Ira's adventure!*

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### **Jess Faraday says**

The third Ira Adler mystery, in which Previous Questions are answered, and new questions are posed.

Adventure! Romance! Explosions! Buffalo!

And a plot that stretches from the mean streets of Victorian London to the sun-drenched trails of the Old West.

If you liked Porcelain Dog and Turnbull House, you're sure to like Ira's third adventure, Fool's Gold.

Coming in April 2015 from Bold Strokes Books.

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### **Elisa Rolle says**

Fool's Gold by Jess Faraday: <http://reviews-and-ramblings.dreamwid...> 2015 Rainbow Awards Honorable Mention (5\* from at least 1 judge)

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## **Denise says**

This is the third book in the Ira Adler series, which was until now set in the criminal subaltern of 1890s London, so I will admit, after having read the other two previous books in this series I was not at all expecting to read a Western when I picked this up! But, naturally, it's the same time period, and Oscar Wilde even toured the Wild West himself, and I love Westerns! So a nice surprise.

The story begins with Ira, against his best judgement, agreeing to meet Cain Goddard, the crime lord who Ira previously lived with as a kept man. However, (view spoiler) he reluctantly accepts an invitation from his friend Lazarus to come to America with his family. There, naturally, the real story begins.

The book includes some of the thematic elements that make the Western such a distinct genre of historical fiction: learning where your physical and mental edges are and then pushing them, learning when to stand on your own and when to accept help, and a certain mental restlessness that keeps your character moving through the entire book. But it also includes some more challenging emotional content, with untidy romantic resolutions, and worthwhile relationships that take more work than the ultimately empty ones.

The Ira Adler books are one of the rare mystery series out there that includes active character development. So there's no magic end of book reset button on characters and you do need to read them in order! These continue to be an undeservedly under-read series of books with the gay historicals set, and I highly recommend them.

I received a reviewer's copy of this book from the publisher.

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## **Kaje Harper says**

4.5 stars, rounded up. I got into this series here on book 3, and although that can be done and enjoyed, (as you see), I'm going to go back to book one when I can and start from the beginning. The characters carry forward and the hints of past adventures are intriguing. I think it would enrich this book to read in order.

In 1895 London, Ira Adler is a one-time rent boy, one-time crime lord's kept man, now out on his own and making good. He's had a couple of easier years without violence, and has a lightweight relationship with a like-minded young man. But when his powerful ex-lover, the man he truly gave his heart once, wants to meet with him, he can't help going to the man's house. Only to see the place come down in an explosion. Ira is shaken and grieving, more than he ever expected.

So a friend's invitation to come along on a trip to California holds a lot of appeal. A new start, new adventures, good friends to cheer him up. There's no sign that from the first day onboard ship this too will get complicated.

This is a lighthearted adventure, with more adventure than angst. I wasn't deeply touched by Ira's emotions, but I enjoyed his character, the plot, the secondary personages and the historical touches. I've always wanted to see the historical black Marshall who is thought to be the inspiration for the Lone Ranger in a work of fiction, and there he was as a foil to Ira as the mystery builds across America to California. This series is clearly more mystery than romance, although Ira does form relationships for both sex and potentially more. But at the end of the book there is at best a tenuous HFN. I look forward to going and exploring the

adventures that brought Ira to this point, and I hope there will be a book 4.

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### **Claire Simmons says**

The writing in Fool's Gold is absolutely flawless. It is filled with non-stop adventures and very intriguing mysteries. Several new characters were introduced in this book, and as always, I absolutely love their individuality. One thing I particularly adore about this book is the racial diversity, and the references to actual historical people. It was a very fun book to read.

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### **Alison says**

Delightful. I absolutely love this series and this is the third book. The very endearing and very entertaining Ira Adler heads to the wild west of 1895 America and has suitably wild adventures. This book is a lot of fun and I enjoyed it immensely. Ira's sparkling commentary is vivid and often very amusing and his adventures are very entertaining. This is a thoroughly wonderful book.

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### **ConsultingStag says**

**Go back to sherlockian London and meet Ira Adler, trouble magnet extraordinaire.**

#### **3,5 intriguing stars**

The story is initially set in London, in times of tailored suits and corsets. Ira Adler is on the way to meet his former lover and mastermind criminal Cain Goddard when an explosion turns his life upside down. Someone had planted a bomb in Goddard's house and Ira finds himself suddenly rich and grieving more than he would've imagined.

Soon, he finds out via a broken nose that the case is more dangerous than expected, but he can't help but dig deeper in order to find out the who and why. He asks his friend Andrews St. Andrew, a detective, for help. His oldest friend, Doctor Lazarus thinks a change of scenery would do Ira good and urges him to go together with his family to America where his wife's family lives.

Unnecessary to say that, when Ira decides his best friend is right and agrees to accompany them to America, trouble is a constant for the party and Ira always seems to be right in the middle of it. And, as coincidence will, the solution of the case Ira is distancing himself from seems to be thousands of miles away from London and every mile added brings him closer to finding out what happened.

I got this book as a free read from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review. The review can be found on my blog as well

In the beginning I didn't even realise that there were two volumes previous to Fool's Gold (which is kind of stupid considering that *it is written on the cover*) and the author does a great job at making you not notice that fact. Honestly, I'm a bit glad that I didn't read the previous books because even though in Fool's Gold Ira and Goddard aren't together I shipped them with all my heart and if I had read a book where they actually were together I probably couldn't bear to read about Ira with someone else.

Goddard reminded me of Moriarty and the whole book I kind of just waited for him to return from the dead. (view spoiler)

Ira Adler is a likable character and Faraday's writing lets you understand every decision he makes. There is neither a 'omg *what is he doing??!*' moment nor a scene where her characters are so perfect that you doubt their existence (haha, pun intended). They are quite human and sometimes they make shitty human decisions or do foolish things, but that's what makes them *real*.

Even if you haven't read the first two books you can read this one without getting confused during some events because you lack background knowledge. So I can recommend this to anyone who wants the faint smell of an interesting whodunit, the taste of adventuring through a new country (at least from Ira's POV) and the overall theme of finding a new path in one's life.

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### **Desertdryad says**

It took a couple of days for me to decide how to rate and review this book, but I'm tentatively giving it a 4.5, based on the author's comment that there is more to come for Ira Adler. I loved the book, but didn't feel that the ending satisfied as an end to the series as a whole.

**HERE THERE BE SPOILERS!!!**

I absolutely loved the first two Ira Adler books. He is one of my favorite fictional people to observe, as he constantly grows in character, knowledge, and experience. *Fool's Gold* was no exception, and it was interesting to see him in a new environment, making use of his unique skill-set while completely out of his comfort zone. Literally, even. But as I said before, I have some satisfaction issues with the ending. Maybe a lot of people will disagree with this, but after the first two books, I was expecting that Cain would reflect and redeem himself in book three, and Ira would take him back as an equal. At the end of "*Turnbull House*", Ira narrated regarding Cain, "He'd not encountered anything, as far as I knew, that would have made him question who he was or how he was making his way through this world." And after being emotionally invested in their relationship for two books, I was waiting for that. You could see small changes occurring in Cain just from Ira withdrawing, and while he was still an amoral bastard in general, as well as an utter piece of something-or-other for the alley incident, I was counting on that question-provoking encounter to change everything. So when his house blew up at the beginning of *Fool's Gold*, I didn't believe for a moment that he was actually dead, and I thought, "Oh, this might be the swift spiritual kick to his head!" But then I was horrified when Marcus showed up with the mystery guy in the wheelchair, thinking "Oh no, please don't let that be Cain, I will not be happy if they are together." (My other initial guess that caused me horror was that maybe the angry mob from book one hadn't been as effective as I initially believed against Acton's vile ass and he was coming after our heroes, which I was relieved to see was not the case.) My unhappiness when I realized that it WAS Cain stemmed from my desire to see him with Ira in the end, without something unpleasant happening with Marcus first to pave the way. Because despite Ira's decision to walk away from Cain on multiple occasions, Ira and Cain still love and long for each other on some level. But now Cain is with Marcus, Ira is with Sutter, and the last conversation between Ira and Cain seems to imply that they will never see each other again. I didn't really cope well with it. Don't get me wrong, I'm all for brave and sexy marshals, and was happy to see Ira in a relationship of trust and equality, but when it comes to Ira's ultimate relationship destiny, the person he stays with in the end, I would need to see a whole lot more of his relationship with Sutter before I could become emotionally invested in them to the degree that I was with

Cain and Ira. So I'm going to wait and see what happens in future writings, hoping in the meantime (probably unrealistically) that the current relationships eventually end with no bad feelings (or death) on either side, and Ira and Cain find a way to be together as lovers, friends, and equals, with Cain finally successful in academia and Ira doing whatever it is that he ultimately wants to do. And not being Cain's secretary.

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