



## Lessons for Idle Tongues

*Charlie Cochrane*

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**Lessons for Idle Tongues** Charlie Cochrane  
*Cambridge, 1910*

Amateur detectives Jonty Stewart and Orlando Coppersmith seem to have nothing more taxing on their plate than locating a missing wooden cat and solving the dilemma of seating thirteen for dinner. But one of the guests brings a conundrum: a young woman has been found dead, and her boyfriend is convinced she was murdered. The trouble is, nobody else agrees.

Investigation reveals that several young people in the local area have died in strange circumstances, and rumours abound of poisonings at the hands of Lord Toothill, a local mysterious recluse. Toothill's angry, gun-toting gamekeeper isn't doing anything to quell suspicions, either.

But even with a gun to his head, Jonty can tell there's more going on in this surprisingly treacherous village than meets the eye. And even Orlando's vaunted logic is stymied by the baffling inconsistencies they uncover. Together, the Cambridge Fellows must pick their way through gossip and misdirection to discover the truth.

## Lessons for Idle Tongues Details

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Author : Charlie Cochrane

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# From Reader Review Lessons for Idle Tongues for online ebook

## Polo Loneragan says

Fair warning: I jumped into this series with no prior knowledge of it beyond a quick skim on Goodreads because I love murder mysteries and I've never read one with queer protagonists.

The main characters in Lessons for Idle Tongues are smart, funny, and work well together. Jonty and Orlando are amateur sleuths and romantic partners in a time when that was not acceptable. It is refreshing to see them accepted by their nearest relations when this is so often skimmed over. How did partners in that time survive together?

Although the characters and their relationship make this book enjoyable, the plot is less than stellar. It is good and interesting, yes, but it is also a little predictable. If you pay attention in the first couple of chapters for the obvious hint the story plays out exactly how you would expect. Perhaps I'm spoiled by my love for classic mysteries by stars such as Agatha Christie but I like plot twist in this genre.

That said, it's still worth a read. It's not perfect but it's a lot of fun and it's mindless enough that you can take it anywhere without losing what was happening. It's a fun and slightly fluffy mystery that has made me consider buying the earlier books.

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## Sara Andrea says

I have read many books in my life (thousands!) and easily over a hundred mystery books (maybe several hundreds) but I have never felt that the characters are real people like I do with Jonty and Orlando. I can literally hear them in my mind talking, not only when reading the books but in all kind of different situations. So reading a new book is like reuniting with old friends, always a gay occasion! :D

This story was fun and interesting as they always are. One of the "light" ones (meaning not too sad/dark). It's amazing how well Charlie Cochrane keeps the tone of the books and the personality of the characters according to the point in the timeline the stories are set (she doesn't write/publish them in chronological order). That shows a deep knowledge of her characters and their universe which I think it's part of the great quality and charm of her books.

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## Stevie Carroll says

Back to the pre-War days for the boys this time, and while it was great to have some gaps filled in to their story, I didn't warm to the case as much as I usually do. Possibly I just couldn't like any of the guest players in the story enough, possibly having a gap in the middle while the boys went off on holiday, possibly not getting to see what they were doing on that holiday, possibly a combination of the three: whatever it was, this wasn't my favourite of the series. On the other hand, a less favourite story in this series still beats an awful lot of other books I've read this year.

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## **Sophia says**

I welcome each new installment in this series like I do the chance to enjoy my favorite dessert. It's a treat that I both relish and draw out the experience as long as I can because I will be sad when it's over.

The series really should be read in order, but I suppose in a pinch this one would work as a standalone.

In this story, Jonty and Orlando are in London visiting Jonty's parents before heading to Italy for their summer holiday. Mrs. Stewart is consternated by the unlucky number of thirteen guests for dinner. This leads the menfolk to help by first suggesting they borrow a local hotel's wooden cat used for just such occasions even while they cover their bases by also contacting a Cambridge friend they know to be in London.

This leads to a quick mystery of solving the disappearance of the missing Montgomery, the wooden cat, and then the human last minute guest providing them with a second even more intriguing case. They are commissioned to discover whether a murder was done when a young lady suddenly dies and the family acts strangely afterward even barring her fiancée from the funeral.

Jonty and Orlando work the case. Clues are light on the ground and hearsay runs rampant. More and more, they wonder if there really is anything in it beyond people keeping the usual amount of secrets and acting oddly. But they can't shake that feeling that something is truly amiss.

The stories are delightful for the fun mysteries to solve, but what really sets them apart from the pack are the characters and the setting. The stories occur just before the dawn of WWI and the last innocent genteel days. The scenes are the academic world of a Cambridge college, London, and English countryside. And then there are the endearing characters of the teasing, sweet Jonty who works by intuition and the broody, slightly eccentric Orlando who propounds order and method. They are colleagues, detective partners, and tender lovers. Their relationship advances and matures throughout the series and that is definitely my favorite part.

The mysteries in this one are only a little twisty, but still a challenge to work out. I cottoned to the answer early on even though I didn't have the motive worked out until much later when all the facts were gathered.

In summary, this easy-paced mystery was utterly engaging and left me eager for the next installment. I would recommend this book/series to those who enjoy m/m historical mysteries or romantic suspense.

My thanks to Riptide Publishing for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for an honest review.

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

This book is the 11th in a series of historical mysteries solved by amateur sleuths, Dr. Jonty Stewart and Dr. Orlando Coppersmith. While they all have recurring characters, each can be read as a standalone.

Jonty and Orlando are lovers, on the down-low because there are no openly gay men in 1910 London. They are professors at Cambridge and have excellent relations with Jonty's parents--who know and accept their relationship. Often Jonty's parents get involved in the solving of the mysteries, either by societal connections or interviewing witnesses/suspects. They have a minimal role in this book, which centers on the mysterious death of a young woman.

Jonty and Orlando are asked by an acquaintance to investigate his friend's love's suspicious death. Lucy was meant to meet Mr. Joyce, for a clandestine stroll, as her family did not accept him as a suitor, but instead, she was found dead of a presumed brain hemorrhage. And, Mr. Joyce was made unwelcome at her funeral. He has other secrets, however, which include the suspicious circumstances of Lucy's brother's death--who was Joyce's close acquaintance in school.

The more that Jonty and Orlando scratch at this issue, the more connections seem to be drawn to other mysterious deaths in the locale, with serious gossip being bandied regarding Lucy's neighbor, the reclusive Lord Toothill. The level of scurrilous gossip seems to stymie the investigation, until they begin to realize, it is the gossip which is the biggest part of the case. As with previous cases, the answer always lay close to home.

I do enjoy these cozy-type mysteries. They are always well-written and have interesting insight, plus I adore the realistic historical settings and details. I wish there was a bit more loving on the page, but I am satisfied that Jonty and Orlando are loving, supportive partners who do the best they can within their societal constraint.

I received a review copy of this book via NetGalley.

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### **Suze says**

More Jonty and Orlando - they are always great fun and the writing style is as always, very evocative of the period.

A bit of early amusement whilst looking for Montgomery the cat in a cricket pavillon, with all the disguised hiding areas though it does have tenuous links through the murder investigation.

Jonty's love affair with cakes continues unabated and I was delighted to see the author managed to get 'orlando' and 'bloom' in the same sentence!

The murder I figured out what had happened early on but the family and evil neighbour and gossiping locals all served as great red herrings, though Toothill still remained a mystery.

I shared Jonty's frustration at the reason behind all the subterfuge but families are strange things. At first I was worried that the story was only going to be OK, but it builds nicely, drew me in and the characters are so great they could talk cake all book and I'd probably still read!

I enjoy the gentle nature of these stories, when university professors were worried about the state of cakes!, it all seems a much different era now but I do enjoy them. Going through the freebies on the author's website at moment. And sad that I only have one full story left.

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### **Helena Stone says**

I received my copy from Riptide Publishing through NetGalley and rated it 4.5 stars.

From the moment I started this book I couldn't get over how charming – and I mean that in the best possible sense of the word - Lessons for Idle Tongues is. The setting, the characters and the story seduced me from the first paragraph. I think it's fair to say I've been a fan of mysteries for almost as long as I've been able to read, and to discover a new (to me) series is always a pleasure.

Lessons for Idle Tongues was no exception to that rule. This is the 11th title in the Cambridge Fellows series although it was my first introduction to Jonty and Orlando. I was delighted to discover that I could thoroughly enjoy this book without having read the previous instalments. It is quite possible I missed one or two in-jokes or references to earlier mysteries, but if that was the case I can't say I noticed it.

There's a lot to love in this book. The dynamics in the Stewart family, Jonty and Orlando – both separately and together –, the mystery of the wooden cat and the mystery of the dead youngsters, the period the story's set in, the beautiful language, the pompous yet time-appropriate manner of speech.... I could go on but will limit myself to saying I read this book with a huge grin on my face.

I love how the author managed to convey that Jonty and Orlando's relationship is illegal without making that a huge plot point. The characters and therefore the readers too, are well aware they'd be up to their necks in trouble should their relationship become common knowledge and act accordingly, but this is a minor detail and not something that motivates either the story or Jonty and Orlando's actions.

Since this is a mystery – as well as an utterly charming story – I should mention that both mysteries in this book were intriguing, cleverly investigated and solved in a very satisfactory manner.

I'm not entirely sure what else to say about Lessons for Idle Tongues without giving too much away, except maybe to repeat that I thoroughly enjoyed it. It is wonderful that I have ten previous titles in this series to peruse at my leisure. Jonty and Orlando have found themselves a new fan.

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## **Misty says**

**\*\* 4.5 Stars \*\***

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## **Andrea Goodell says**

So this is book 11 in the series, and no I've not read any prior, and I could follow along mostly.

My problem was, with this being so far into a well established series all the bonds, connections, friendships, courtships I enjoy seeing built are already in place which lead to another issue I had, because everyone knew each other, the little banters and inside jokes were lost on me.

The opening chapters of the book were quiet entertaining, not allowing 13 at the table, and proceeding to borrow a cat. Fun. Of course as the story unfolds the real danger and mystery comes to light

And while the book itself was a murder mystery with only a touch of MM romance, I liked how both main characters played off each other to get the job done. The secondary cast was well placed, to keep this from being completely doom and gloom.

I was given a copy of this in exchange for an honest review by Crystals Many reviews

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## **Riina Y.T. says**

Lessons for Idle Tongues by Charlie Cochrane was brilliant!!! I adored every page of it. Engaging and lovely written, with characters that will warm your heart. Yep, this was yet another wonderful installment in the lovely world of Orlando and Jonty.

In this story we meet Jonty and Orlando on their way to Italy on a stop in London visiting Jonty's parents. Jonty and Orlando are faced with an intriguing mystery that starts with the disappearance of a wooden cat and as usual ends with a murder investigation.

Highly recommended to everyone who loves historical mysteries.

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## **Janis Hill says**

I would like to thank Riptide Publishing for providing me with an ARC of this book via Netgalley for an open and honest review.

Sadly this is a DNF book for me as I couldn't get past the first few chapters due to it being part of a series I'd not read before. Unfortunately Netgalley doesn't always show when a book is part of a series and, if I'd known, I wouldn't have requested reading a copy.

I'm not going to score this book as I don't want to give it a bad score - as I don't feel it deserves one. Nor do I want to give it a high score for the same reason.

Basically, this book was not for me. There is nothing wrong with the writing or the story; I just couldn't get into it. If I came across the first book in this series in my library catalogue I'd actually pick it up and read it as I am interested by this series and I did find the writing quality good. But I'm a cheapskate and wouldn't actually buy it to see if I liked it. Terrible of me I know!

In summary: Me not finishing this book does not make it a bad book, and I really want to emphasise this. Despite not liking it and not being able to get into it, I did see potential and I did see a good writer. I, the reader, and this book just weren't matched and I refuse to mark it down because of my own faults. :-)

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## **T.M. Smith says**

Super Sleuths and secret lovers, Jonty and Orlando, continue their crime fighting spree through London in the early 1900's in this eleventh book in the series. In this installment they are trying to solve the mystery surrounding the death of a woman, and of course once they take on the case, more bodies start coming out of the woodwork. Mr. and Mrs. Stewart, Jonty's parents, are once again tagging along to lend a helping hand.

Young Lucy sets off to meet her beau, Mr. Joyce, but winds up dead instead. Jonty and Orlando agree to investigate as a favor to a friend and immediately something seems off to them. Mr. Joyce is barred from the funeral and then questions begin to arise about the nature of Lucy's brother's death, who was a friend of Mr.

Joyce when they schooled together. Throw in a reclusive Lord and the plot thickens. Was Lucy's love responsible for hers and her brother's deaths? Perhaps all the whispers about Lord Toothill are more than just idle gossip.

I always enjoy the historical feel to the stories in this series. The clothing, the props, the scenery even the language is all very old Hollywood and it's mesmerizing. I do wish that Jonty and Orlando would have more intimate moments on the page though. I can appreciate Cochrane might be trying to remain true to the absolute necessity of secrecy of the time; two men simply did not have close personal relations at that time. But I'm not reading YA stories, so I need a little more than suggestions and innuendos at what just happened between them falling into bed kissing, then being sweaty and spent in a tangle of legs and limbs. Just sayin.

Overall, I enjoy the backdrop of the era and the character development. It reminds me a little bit of Columba, if he were the Odd Couple with a gay storyline. Hope that makes sense. If you are a fan of cozy mysteries and historical MM romance, then you'll enjoy this series.

\* I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review through <http://mmgoodbookreviews.wordpress.com> \*

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### **Curtis says**

Jonty and Orlando are academics who have taken up sleuthing in their spare time and have enjoyed success and fame as a result. But most people don't know they are partners in more than just investigating, something they must keep secret because of the time. What starts out as a case of finding a missing wooden cat quickly turns into a homicide investigation when a guest at dinner alerts them to the mysterious death of a young woman. While the initial consensus is that she wasn't murdered, they learn of several questionable deaths in the area and rumors about a local recluse that cause them to give this more than just a second look. What they find is a puzzle even they're not entirely sure they can solve.

While this is part of a series, it can certainly be read as a standalone. It's only the second of these I've personally read, and I had no trouble following the events of the book at all. This is a complex and confounding historical mystery with just a dash of m/m romance to give it some interesting twists. Orlando and Jonty are a great crime solving team, and I enjoy Jonty's parents just as much--they provide some excellent comic relief in what is generally a lighthearted book (despite the criminal/potentially murderous elements). This is definitely worth a look for anyone that has an interest in any of the subgenres represented here.

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### **Sarah says**

3.5 stars. I've read this entire series and really love the characters. The characters were, as always, delightful. Jonty is cheerful, Orlando is grumpy, and Mr and Mrs Stewart delightful. Already knowing some of what happens in the future, it was bittersweet to have Mr. and Mrs. Stewart back in the picture. I felt like the mystery itself could have had a more satisfying conclusion. I would have liked to witness consequences for the French family, Lucy and Naismith. And unless I missed it, we never really learned how Ariadne Sheridan figured out the mystery around Lucy's "death."



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## Line says

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