



The Fleet Street Murders

Charles Finch

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The third book in the Charles Lenox series finds the gentleman detective trying to balance a heated race for Parliament with the investigation of the mysterious simultaneous deaths of two veteran reporters. It's Christmas, 1866, and amateur sleuth Charles Lenox, recently engaged to his best friend, Lady Jane Grey, is happily celebrating the holiday in his Mayfair townhouse. Across London, however, two journalists have just met with violent deaths--one shot, one throttled. Lenox soon involves himself in the strange case, which proves only more complicated as he digs deeper. However, he must leave it behind to go north to Stirrington, where he is fulfilling a lifelong dream: running for a Parliamentary seat. Once there, he gets a further shock when Lady Jane sends him a letter whose contents might threaten their nuptials. In London, the police apprehend two unlikely and unrelated murder suspects. From the start, Lenox has his doubts; the crimes, he is sure, are tied, but how? Racing back and forth between London and Stirrington, Lenox must negotiate the complexities of crime and politics, not to mention his imperiled engagement. As the case mounts, Lenox learns that the person behind the murders might be closer to him--and his beloved--than he knows.

The Fleet Street Murders Details

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Brackman1066 says

It's refreshing to find a series with a detective who is quiet, intelligent, and decent. Don't get me wrong; some of the detectives who are alcoholic, anti-social, shell-shocked, miserably partnered, devastatingly widowed, etc. are well-drawn and engaging. However, as Jasper Fforde so mercilessly showed up in *The Big Over-Easy*, characterization by quirk has been overdone, and Lenox is a good antidote. In fact, Lenox is almost a challenge to the axiom that the detective has to be some kind of outsider. His reserved demeanor itself fits him into his Victorian society, and engages the reader, in part because of Finch's prose. Admittedly, the sidekick in this series has some of the "usual" qualities listed above, and I hope Finch doesn't go overboard with that. Add to Lenox a well-written cast of supporting characters (most of whom are at their best in book 2, although still strong in book 3), and one has a series that I'm going to stay devoted to.

Laurel Hicks says

Finch's mild-mannered Victorian mysteries are a refreshing addition to our century.

Dorie says

The third book in this series was wonderful from start to finish. Charles Lenox is at his best in this book, besotted with his fiance Lady Jane Grey, campaigning for a seat in Parliament while simultaneously trying to solve the double homicide of two journalists. Some of the story takes place in Stirrington (a smallish town north of London) where Charles is trying to win over the people to gain their vote and represent them in Parliament. Unfortunately for him he is going up against a local businessman, and much is made of his "outsider" status by the opposite party. It's going to take a lot to win over the populace, but if anyone can accomplish this it would be Charles Lenox! I enjoyed reading about his campaigning and his debates with the opposing candidate. Charles has a great deal of wit and charm, which makes any book featuring him a joy to read. The murder mystery was clear and interesting, complex without being too complicated, and I was unable to guess the ending although it made sense in the end. The twist at the end of the book I saw coming, but to be honest I would have been unhappy if it had not occurred. Very recommended for anyone who likes Victorian mysteries.

Bonnie says

The third book in the Charles Lenox series takes place at Christmas , 1866 in London and finds the gentleman detective in an heated race for a Parliament seat. In Britain, the person vying for the seat doesn't have to be from a district to represent the area. He is also trying to solve the murders of two journalists who have met with violent means of death. One shot and one throttled. Lenox needs to leave for Stirrington when he is opposing a native of the city. He has a local man trying to help him, but the strongest help comes from his butler who has traveled with him. He has recently become engaged to Lady Jane Grey, a lifelong friend he has realized he loves. He receives a letter from her saying she would like to postpone the marriage until

the following year which greatly disturbs him. Yet, he cannot leave Stirrington as he must vie for the seat in Parliament.

In London, the police apprehend two murder suspects , but Lenox has doubts about the culpability of the two men. Racing back and forth between London and Stirrington, he must navigate the complexities of crime, politics, and his relationship with Jane. As he learns more about the murders, he realizes et;he person behind the murders is closer to him and Jane then he could have imagined.

Cheryl says

Charles Lenox tries to solve the murder of two journalists as he campaigns for a Parliamentary seat in the town of Stirrington. The political part of the story was a little less interesting to me, but the murder mystery made up for it. As is usual for this series, great characters and a feeling of being totally immersed in Victorian London society. An enjoyable read.

Jerry says

This one didn't do anything for me.

Kirsten says

The Charles Lenox mysteries are truly wonderful. They are smart but with elegance and lightness of touch. There are characters you like and really care about.

Poor Charles Lenox is in love, but at least he's engaged to his darling, Lady Jane. In the meantime, he is running for Parliament when a murder pokes its head up demanding to be paid attention to.

All the clues are there, there is a lot of to-ing and fro-ing, as well as little window into how a 19th century political campaign was run. (Not very honestly, as it turns out.)

LJ says

First Sentence: It was late in the evening, and a thin winter rain beat down over London's low buildings and high steeples, collecting in sallow pools beneath the streetlights and insinuating its way inside the clothes of the miserable few whom fate had kept outside.

Amateur sleuth Charles Lenox is recently engaged to his best friend and neighbor, Lady Jane Grey, and is running for parliament in the small town of Stirrington, north of London. However, two important Fleet Street journalists are murdered on the same night at nearly the same time but one mile apart. Lenox becomes involved in the investigation but must do so remotely while he works on his election.

Finch brings Victorian England to life taking us from the residences of London society, to a small working town, to Newgate Prison making each real. The characters are diverse and real as the settings. I like that

Charles and Lady Jane are not young, with Charles being not quite fifty. Graham is Charles friend and butler, their friends who suffer a miscarriage, the young son of a noble house who Lenox is trying to save from a life of dissipation by teaching him investigation and many others.

I love British historical mysteries and authors who seamlessly incorporate people, events and places into their books, such as Dickens drinking at the Fleet Street Pub, Ye Old Cheshire Cheese; a pub still in operation today. Even Finch's narration conveys the decorum of the time, "...their conversation devolved into all the endearments and stolen kisses and long laughs that belong to any new love—and that scarcely need to be repeated here."

Following Lenox through his campaign was fascinating and very much, I'm certain, still the way of campaigns today, perhaps even down to buying votes although one hopes not. Balanced against that is the unfolding of the investigation, much of which he has to conduct remotely and with the help of others.

The various story lines are very well constructed, seamlessly blended and each as interesting as the other. The story builds to a very exciting chase and an unexpected twist.

My fondest wish is for many more Charles Lenox books to come.

THE FLEET STREET MURDERS (Hist Mys-Charles Lenox-England-Victorian/1866) – VG+
Finch, Charles – 3rd in series
Minotaur Books, 2009, US Hardcover – ISBN: 9780312565510

Robin says

This third in the series had a few twists and surprises in store. I'm enjoying these books more and more as I go along. Good historical mysteries!

Megan says

I would go to the bookstore very often and every time I would pause at this book until finally I picked it up and bought it. I wish I would have known that was the third in the series but glad I could read it out of order. I really enjoyed this book. It is very similar to a Sherlock Holmes book except with a more personable character as the detective. There is a character similar to Watson, Moriarty, Mycroft, and even Lestrade. It had enough differences though that it didn't feel like a total Sherlock Holmes knock off. But maybe it is but I love Sherlock Holmes so any book that has a similar feel to it I will love.

When I read a lot of the reviews for this book some people felt that there was too much of the political aspect and some felt that there was not enough or not enough of the crime. I felt like the book had a very good balance between the crimes in Fleet Street and Lenox running for a seat in Parliament. Even though I really wanted more of the crime aspect I still enjoyed the political aspect at the book that I didn't miss it too much.

I really liked the main character Charles Lenox and his relationships with all his friends. I especially enjoyed how his butler was one of his best friends and liked the conversation that went between them. The case itself

was interesting and I found the conclusion intelligently pleasing.

All in all it was a classic murder mystery story similar to a classic Sherlock Holmes story. I would say that anyone who loves Sherlock Holmes like I do will really enjoy this book.

Cherie says

I listened to the ending of the story twice to make it last a little longer. Lady Jane, Charles, Edward, Robert, Toto and Graham all feel like an extended part of my family now. I can't wait to meet them again.

I am grateful to the folks at the Dundee, Illinois Public Library for the InterLibrary loan of this book on CD so that I could listen to it.

I will try to think about the wonderful ending and surprise that was revealed while I wait patiently for the next story to reach my library. (view spoiler)

My favorite part of the story was Edward being there for Charles after the election in the country.

James Langdon, your voice transports me. Thank you and Tantor Audio making it possible. Charles Finch, thank you most of all for your wonderful stories.

Bev says

The Fleet Street Murders is the third novel in Charles Finch's series of Victorian-era mysteries starring gentleman detective Charles Lenox. The story begins on Christmas in 1866. It's a pleasant day for Lenox who is still basking in the glow of having recently become engaged to his long-time friend and love of his life, Lady Jane Grey. But the day is not a pleasant one for two journalists across town. Within minutes of each other, Winston Carruthers and Simon Pierce are stabbed and shot (respectively). The police quickly track down suspects, but Lenox and his assistant Dallington believe there must be more to the story than what the police have found so far. Soon, one of the suspects is dead by hanging--meant to appear a suicide, but proved to be murder--and then the investigating officer is killed as well. Lenox becomes convinced that someone is directing the action from behind the scenes--someone with a bigger motive than just removing two bothersome journalists.

The investigation is made difficult for Lenox by several "distractions" in his life. Worries about his betrothal, Lady Jane repeatedly assures him that she does want to marry him--but needs time. Time for what? Worries about his friend Thomas and his wife Toto who have recently lost their unborn child. And worries about his run for Parliament in the northern town of Stirrington. He's got a lot on his mind--and feels guilty taking time for any of his obligations in lieu of any of the others.

And the distractions tell a bit. This story doesn't seem to run quite as smoothly as the first two and it's definitely not as good as the second novel in the series. Finch does have a very firm grasp of characterization and he gives every character from Lenox down to the pub owner in Stirrington their due. You definitely feel like these folks are real people. It makes it a lot easier to overlook the flaws in the mystery plot. Not obvious holes--just the lack of smoothness (with all the rushing about from London to Stirrington and around

Stirrington and then back to London) and the slightly disjointed method of story-telling. But an interesting mystery and a good, solid three star outing.

This review was first posted on my blog My Reader's Block. Please request permission before reposting. Thanks.

Gigi says

Take the detective out of London and what happens? Murder and mayhem still abound, but a new cache of characters enter the story - and what characters! They move the story along nicely, further develop Graham's character (who is fast becoming my favorite literary sidekick), push Lenox into situations out of his control and comfort zone and add to the enjoyment of the reader. Well done.

Matt Schiariti says

Fleet Street picks up shortly after The September Society. While Lennox and Lady Jane are planning their wedding two things happen nearly concurrently. The first, which is what the book is titled, is a pair of near simultaneous murders on Fleet Street. Two journalists are murdered in their own homes. The two murders set the city alight and, as always amateur sleuth Charles Lennox itches to get at the cases. However the death of the man sitting in a Parliament seat up north makes Lennox's involvement in this case next to impossible. The Liberal party, whom you'll remember wanted Lennox to run in the near future, wants him to go to the town up north NOW to start his campaign. Lennox finds himself torn between his need to do good by way of his hobby/passion of detective work and his life long dream of doing the greater good as a member of the British Parliament.

Each of those two situations makes the other more complicated. As the case deepens while he's campaigning up north telegram after telegram from London find him during his long days. Jenkins asks for help from Scotland Yard for fear that Exeter, the lead on the murders, will do his usual unimaginative job and Dallington, Lennox's new protege happens to know one of the prime suspects in the murders and begs his help. This along with some more personal issues between he and Jane as well as some new developments in the lives of their close friends, Toto and Thomas McConnell makes for a very harried and worrisome Charles Lennox!

Some may have a problem with the Parliament campaign portion of the book. In a way it may seem to take away from the main mystery plot of the novel, but I thought Finch handled this well. Not only is it part of a bigger portion of Lennox's life, one not involving his passion for detective work, but it's filled with very well written and interesting townsfolk. It was also interesting to see how Finch used it to flesh out Charles Lennox even more by showing how he truly cares for his country and fellow person regardless of how society would caste them.

The mystery portion of the book is also clever and well plotted. Lennox just CANNOT let the mystery go, no matter how busy his Parliament run keeps him. Other than being journalists how are the two crimes related if at all? Were they random? Is Dallington's friend innocent or guilty? The murders deepen in mystery as

Lennox reasons them out and what he finds will shock even him.

Is this a trilogy or will there be more? As a trilogy it stands well on its own, but I do hope to see these characters come back for some more adventures. I'd surely like to see what other trouble Lennox can get himself into!

Spuddie says

Another interesting story in this historical series in which the main character, Charles Lenox, is running for a seat in Parliament and due to the death of the man who would have retired leaving the vacant seat, he must go north to Stirrington and do a very intense two-week campaign. All this while two murders of prominent newspaper reporters baffle London and Scotland Yard, with Lenox itching to get his nose in and discover the truth.

Enjoyable story, interesting characters and easy-reading style and very much looking forward to the next one.
