



## Of White Snakes & Misshaped Owls

*Debra Hyde*

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A dead body in a back alley means little to the rough streets of 1880s New York City—until Charlotte Olmes, woman detective steps onto the scene. Crime-solving on behalf of her female clients, Olmes eschews decorum and ventures into places forbidden to the fairer sex, sleuthing after clues hidden, elusive, and often distasteful.

When the exotic Miss Tam pleads with Charlotte to find the man to whom she's secretly married, Charlotte ventures into the dark and dangerous crannies of the city with her partner and passionate lover Joanna Wilson at her side. Soon, what appeared to be the random misfortune born of Chinatown's opium dens reveals itself as a vicious gang-related murder—and Olmes and Wilson find themselves wedged between the ethnic and political forces that collide where Chinatown borders the Bowery.

Penned by Lambda Literary Award winner Debra Hyde, *Of White Snakes and Misshaped Owls* recasts the classic eccentric detective genius in ways never before seen. Passions both criminal and carnal come alive in vivid and exacting detail in what promises to become the hallmark of the Charlotte Olmes Mystery Series.

## Of White Snakes & Misshaped Owls Details

Date : Published December 25th 2013 by Riverdale Avenue Books (first published December 1st 2013)

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Author : Debra Hyde

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Genre : Mystery, Historical, Romance, Historical Fiction, Lgbt, Fiction, Glbt, Lesbian



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## **From Reader Review Of White Snakes & Misshaped Owls for online ebook**

### **Kathryn says**

Against the setting of a New York City run by Tammany Hall, Charlotte Olms is a woman of means gifted with keen deductive skills. Following the disappearance of a pharmacist, Charlotte sets out to solve the mystery with companion Joanna Wilson in a manner befitting of Holmes and Watson. A great read for those who enjoy historical fiction, mystery, and moments of eroticism.

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### **Isabella Johns says**

Well written, intriguing, and oh so very hot. If you like a classic, period piece, murder mystery--true in language and spirit to the grizzled lower east side of New York City during the late nineteenth century, and simmering with sexy, sophisticated passion between our lady detective and her female sidekick--then this novella is for you.

Can't wait for Volume Two.

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### **Renee W. Tyler, Battery Operated Book Blog says**

When I first was asked to read and review this book I truly did not know what to expect with it. I have to say that I was really amazed at how well I liked it. I read mostly your traditional romances. Boy meets girl, girl meets girl, boy meets boy, with the contemporary or erotic type of romances. Well as you can see this book was neither, but I found myself wondering what was gonna happen.

Debra Hyde not only wrote a book that was a historical mystery, but she managed to write it with two female lovers. This book was brilliantly written to keep you in suspense and also with a good love story mixed in. I was amazed at how she was able to write these two lovers together and allow them to fit in and be accepted within a society where they typically would not have been allowed together. The story flows smoothly and kind of reminded me of a Sherlock Holmes story. I like how she made you feel as if you were really back in time with the characters on their hunt for clues to solve the mystery and get the answers that their client so deserved and how Charlotte was able to go about getting the information that she so desired.

I have to say that I was pleasantly surprised at how well this book was put together and how well it held my attention. So much so that I was able to finish it in one day, which is unusual for me. I was also impressed with how well the lovers fit together and even had a touch of BDSM included into the story to spice it up a bit. For a lesbian romance it was very well written and was not just your typical story of two girls meet, sleep together, move in together and then have a huge fall out and split with a lot of drama. Mrs. Hyde actually made these characters act and live as an everyday couple would for the most part. Nicely done Mrs. Hyde.

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## **Claire says**

This book has good things : It's well written and the speech mannerisms of 1880 are well done.

But...

The plot is a little weak. And...

Mild spoiler -----

I just can't stand BDSM.

Had I known that every sex scene was S/M, I would never have bought this book !

-----End of spoiler

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## **I.J. Miller says**

I first suspected that *OF WHITE SNAKES AND MISSHAPED OWLS* might be different from your average genre novella after seeing the elegant and tasteful cover, artwork that tells a story itself, of a rough and tumble New York City, and a sexy but elegant connection between two women. Charlotte Olmes and Joanna Wilson are delightfully entwined by their desire to aid others, and not only solve the crimes they've been asked to examine, but give insight into the mysteries of life and the connection of women in the throes of passion for each other. They are, literally, bound to each other in so many ways: witty, intelligent, amorous, and always sexy.

Debra Hyde weaves a story line along very familiar territory, mixing the classic case solving of Sherlock Holmes and Mr. Watson, while knee deep in Martin Scorsese territory: the politically corrupt and physically violent world of Lower East Side New York in the late 1800s. Along the way is some masterful writing, language true to the period, and some of the hottest lesbian love scenes since Nina Gershon had her way with Jennifer Tilly.

This book will make you think. It will make you hot. It will make you hunger for more. I look forward to Volume 2. Highly recommended!

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## **Megan says**

Generally, I don't review novellas, but this 27,000-word story is billed as the first part of an ongoing series, and the next book is a full-length sequel. That makes it fair game. The covers of both books are very attractive and the subjects—a lesbian take on the Sherlock Holmes mysteries—are close to my heart.

Charlotte Olmes is a private investigator in New York in the late 1800s. Her live-in companion is a nurse named Joanna Wilson. They have separate bedrooms but often get together for nighttime fun when they are not out sleuthing. In this story, a young Chinese woman asks for Charlotte's help in finding her husband. Wonderful detective that she is, Charlotte simply visits the morgue and her job is done.

Of course there is more to the story and the investigation than that, but by the time you get that far, the Holmesian sheen has quite worn off. The fact is, I don't really like Charlotte or Joanna. Their

conversations—and the author's pseudo-Victorian language—is precious at best and insufferable at worst.

There are typos throughout—way too many for a novella that has been out two years and is supposed to be the lead-in—the lost-leader as it were—for the first full-length novel. The date that begins the story is wrong—1800 instead of 1880. There is even a typo in the Author blurb! And except for the fact that Charlotte is the sister of a diplomat's wife, we know almost nothing about her or Joanna.

And then there is the sex, but in this case the author is not sure whether this is a work of erotica, BDSM, mystery, or just Sherlock fan fiction. The truth is that Charlotte and Joanna like to use the cane on each other's backsides. *"Pain made my cunt grow wet,"* Joanna confides. *"My squeals and cries begged for passion made complete."* Yikes.

In truth, I feel like taking a cane to this story, except that it would probably moan with pleasure. A first book should be interesting and enjoyable enough to make the reader want to go on to the next. This one does the opposite and deserves closer to a 2 than a 3.

Note: I read the e-book edition of this novella, which seems to be the only format in which it is available.

Another Note: See my full reviews of over 250 other Lesbian Mystery novels at

<http://www.goodreads.com/group/show/1...>

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### **Bronwyn says**

If you're looking for some pretty decent erotica then this book is a good read, but overall the plot and the mystery it provides is lacking. At times it is even confusing - some things seem somewhat crammed in because the mystery needed to be explained.

As I said, decent erotica with a mildly interesting plot.

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### **Bert says**

Basically, it's Sherlock Holmes and Watson as a lesbian couple in 1880 New York City. I enjoyed Charlotte and Joanna as the main characters and liked the Victorian prose. The sex scenes are kinky (and gratuitous--not that I mind).

My main complaint is the mystery's fairly anti-climatic, and there's not much suspense. In essence, this is lesbian erotica dressed up as a murder mystery. There's also a few typos.

But it's a fun read, so I plan to read the sequel.

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### **Erzabet Bishop says**

Title: Of White Snakes and Owls

Author: Debra Hyde

ASN: B00HJC0OZ8

Amazon Link: <http://www.amazon.com/White-Snakes-Mi...>

Reviewer: Erzabet

Tags: lesbian, historical, spanking, impact play, caning

Story: 5/5

Kink 4.5/5

Review:

When murder runs rampant through the streets of 1880s New York City the skills of lady sleuth Charlotte Olms are put to the test. Taking on female clients, she meets the beautiful Ms. Tam and tackles the case of her missing husband. Charlotte and her lover, Joanna Wilson go deep into the recesses of old Chinatown to route the killer from the opium dens. What appears to be a simple matter of drugs and money becomes a much deadlier happenstance altogether. Thrust in the middle of a gang war between the Bowery and Chinatown, the ladies must react smartly or pay the ultimate price.

When I first began reading this story I had no idea what to expect. As I went along, I found myself thinking of the Parasol Protectorate series minus the paranormal. Author Debra Hyde has crafted a sexy foray into the 1880's where women did not openly admit they were lovers. The mystery was well done –think Sherlock Holmes with his sidekick Watson (but change them out for a lesbian couple) and you have the scene set rightly. Scenes of impact play, dominance and submission and some very stimulating behind closed doors activity occupy its pages, leaving me wanting much, much more.

The detail and care the author showed in every scene was apparent, despite a few minor edits here and there. The story captured my attention and I wanted-no- craved more scenes like the caning on page fourteen.

Every breath was noted. Every flick of the wrist and swish through the air. It was impact play poetry and I loved it. The added fear of discovery of the detective and her assistant as lovers in that time added an additional layer of drama to the story that was already fraught with tension.

Bravo Ms. Hynd. I am now an avid fan and shall seek out more adventures with Charlotte and Joanna and I really hope they bring their cane.

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### **Jean Roberta says**

This slim book is a marvel of historical fiction. Told by Joanna Wilson, the “companion” of Miss Charlotte Olmes, detective, it is clearly a lesbian-feminist take on a Sherlock Homes mystery. However, this tale is much more than a trendy type of fanfic.

Even aside from nineteenth-century notions of how ladies should behave, Miss Olmes and Miss Wilson must cope with the corruption of New York City in 1880, when Tammany Hall controls the police force as well as the city government. Chinatown is a “different world,” into which white Americans rarely venture. A young woman of mixed race, Miss Lynette Tam, seeks out the woman detective to tell her that her “employer,” Mr. Keane, is missing. She has good reason to report this to a woman detective, not to the police.

Charlotte Olmes immediately understands much of what Miss Tam will not say aloud, and she learns that Mr. Keane is a good soul who gives help to whoever needs it. Who would want to harm him? In a city seething with crime, gangs, corruption, and racism, who wouldn’t?

Charlotte and Joanna call on their butler, Mr. East, to provide them with masculine companionship as they explore dangerous places at night, and Charlotte disguises herself as his male friend. Charlotte tells Joanna (and the reader) the traditional Chinese tale of Madame White Snake as a way of explaining the cultural

background of the mystery.

The resolution of the mystery is unexpected, yet plausible. Between outings to the morgue, to rough taverns and to a Chinese feast, Charlotte and Joanna seize the chance to free each other from their corsets in the privacy of their home. The sex scenes are startlingly intense, yet because few New Yorkers of the time would suspect two "ladies" of such behavior, they escape detection themselves while investigating the secrets of others. Their own social position reminds Charlotte and Joanna that appearances are usually deceptive.

The story is colorful, true to its setting, and satisfying on several levels. Charlotte and Joanna emerge as three-dimensional characters who are competent and level-headed without being superheroines of fantasy. Their power to right wrongs is realistically limited, but they are determined to find the truth, even if they can't change the world. This reader looks forward to their continuing adventures.

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### **Cats of Ulthar February Weird Fiction says**

Charlotte is one kickin' heroine, both on the investigative trail and at home with her life partner Joanna. She's as "modern" as could be, and tolerates no nonsense. An exciting series debut, for mature audiences only.

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### **Driianne says**

Turned out this was much more erotica and much less mystery than the description suggested. The sex scenes weren't bad (the opposite), but really, really gratuitous. And there was no real mystery involved, which to me means a puzzle where the reader can in some way play along. Nothing like that here. So I wouldn't recommend it if you were looking for a historical lesbian mystery, but fine if you wanted historical lesbian kinky erotica with a mystery dressing.

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### **Highlyeccentric says**

Did someone order lesbian holmes/watson in New York, with spanking? A LOT of spanking? Because that's what this is. It's got its mission and it's ON IT.

I really like all the component ideas here, but the execution leaves something to be desired. The mystery plot itself is a bit thin. The MCs have no backstory (how did Joanna Watson go from being a nurse to Miss Olmes' companion? We just don't know) and no real character development. And... I think this part was intentional, but there's no real romantic or sexual tension. They're in an established relationship; they have all their kinks worked out; the only thing they're developing through the scenes is immediate (tension relief, 'punishing' charlotte for being brusque, etc). Because neither of them exhibit significant character development throughout, the sex scenes aren't playing any part in that, and that's... not really my jam, I guess. If you want spanking and light mystery with no angst, here's what you were looking for!

