



A Stranger in Mayfair

Charles Finch

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Returning from a continental honeymoon with his lifelong friend and new wife, Lady Jane Grey, Charles Lenox is asked by a colleague in Parliament to consult in the murder of a footman, bludgeoned to death with a brick. His investigation uncovers both unsettling facts about the family he served and a strange, second identity that the footman himself cultivated.

Going into the boxing clubs and public houses, the Mayfair mansions and servants' quarter of Victorian London, Lenox gradually realizes that an old friend may be implicated in the footman's death. Soon a suspect is arrested, but Lenox has his doubts. Desperately trying to balance the opening of Parliament and what he feels sure is a dark secret, he soon discovers that the killer is someone shockingly innocuous—who may be prepared to spill blood again, even a detective's.

In Detective Lenox, Lady Grey, and their circle of close associates, Charles Finch has created a cast of inviting, flesh-and-blood characters. His evolving series, with its keen eye for period detail and razor-sharp plotting, offers readers an unparalleled brand of charm, sophistication, and suspense.

A Stranger in Mayfair Details

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Author : Charles Finch

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From Reader Review A Stranger in Mayfair for online ebook

Donna says

This book was enjoyable. It is my second book in this series (the Charles Lenox Mysteries series) by Charles Finch. I like the characters. They are well drawn and very English. The author writes great dialogue and manages to keep it reigned in. That is always a plus. This book had a few subplots going on and I liked that too. It helped to keep the book in constant motion. It also helped to give the characters depth.

The way the MC goes about uncovering the mystery is really my favorite part. He is so methodical about it and rarely ever makes wild leaps of assumption. This was between 3 and 4 stars.

Laurie Way says

This is a great series. Intriguing mysteries and wonderful characters!

Kay says

New favorite thing: sitting in front of the fire with tea and fruitcake reading about a man sitting in front of the fire with tea and a book of Roman history or Elizabeth Gaskell. American, like Martha Grimes, Charles Finch is the male Anne Perry (Australian), giving us this Charles Lenox series, as sprightly informative of 1850-60s London, as sweet in love, as intriguing and as well written as those by the two women (Pitt works in the 1870-80s and Jury is 1990s into 2007). All best read in order, and as we greet #28 in the Pitt series and perhaps #23 in the Jury, I hope Finch's Six will grow to as long a list (Finch is 42 years younger than Perry and 49 years younger than Grimes, so there is hope). This #4 Lenox is the best so far, I think, with a closer and more intriguing look at political workings (cholera question in Parliament!) and the rocky shoals of post-honeymoon marriage, even when the couple wants nothing more than to be married, and how couples, happy and unhappy, manage. All this is simply presented, easy to follow, and even the murder plot (with sadly mixed-up marriages at the root) is just convoluted enough to trip through easily.

Kirsten says

The fourth book in the very smart and enjoyable Charles Lenox mystery series. Once again in Victorian London, we find Charles newly married and newly elected to Parliament. But, once he gets there, it isn't all it seems, there's a bit of trouble in marital paradise, and he has a new case.

These books are always smart and intelligent, with a lot of historical background (Irish home rule, cholera, etc.) You also get to know the characters and enjoy spending time with them.

DeeDee Rice says

It's a detective story set in Victorian England. This book is the fourth in the series, but I felt like I could still understand the characters. It is a very easy read and the mystery was handled well. Detective Charles Lenox has also been elected to Parliament so you get insight of the workings of this institution as well. I'm looking forward to reading more of this series.

Cherie says

With the exception of the first book, I think this is my favorite story in the series so far!
I was as proud of Charles for giving his first speech in Parliament as his wife was!

This was a great story about having to make choices. Charles wants so much to be a difference in his work in Parliament, and he is missing his old life - not only as an amateur detective, but as a bachelor too.

I am looking forward to see how things turn out in the next books.

Pamela says

I'm very sad that there are no more Charles Lenox books left to read. This latest installment finds Charles and Lady Jane returned to London from their honeymoon and Charles about to begin his first term as an MP in the House of Commons, fulfilling what he always believed was a life-long dream. Unfortunately, like many dreams, this one comes with a price: in donning the cap of a politico he must doff that of detective. Or must he? As he prepares for his first round of committee meetings, a new case arrives literally on his doorstep in the shape of Ludo Starling, a fellow MP whose footman has just been found dead in an alley with a gaping hole in his head.

Upon his arrival in the alley, however, Charles begins to suspect that things are not quite as they seem. Starling, who had fairly begged Charles to take the case, now wants to shake him off. The dead footman has a spartan bedroom with Hegel on his bedside table and tailored suits in the closet. Just as Lenox is beginning to unravel the many mysteries, a suspect is arrested and provides a full confession...but what was his motive? And what secret is the Starling family hiding? Dashing from the Houses of Parliament to an exclusive boxing club to the posh houses of Mayfair (both upstairs and downstairs), Charles has work out the man, means, and motive behind these crimes before the killer strikes again and even more closely to him.

I really love this series and am devastated that I have to wait until November for another installment. Lenox is a wonderful, earnest, and engaging hero. [A Stranger in Mayfair](#) finds him even more vulnerable than [The Fleet Street Murders](#), which saw Charles campaigning for a seat in Parliament and for the hand of Lady Jane. There he was out of his element, to be sure, but there is a difference between hoping for something you haven't got yet and getting it and then finding it (or yourself) not all you hoped it would be. Charles loves the idea of Parliament, but is disillusioned by the reality of the compromises and slow pace of government. He loves Jane, but married life, like politics, demands compromise and responsibility. Neither of his new mistresses will allow Charles to go running off after each new lead--does becoming a husband and a politician mean that Charles must give up detecting, his first great love? And what if he and Jane follow the

lead of Thomas and Toto McConnell (at last blissfully happy) and start a family?

Only time will tell. Charles Finch had better hurry up and write another one so I can find out.

Sarah Asp says

In England there is no such thing as Fall, it is and has always been called Autumn. There are no such things as City Blocks either. England was building cities long before formal planning became the norm and therefore it is delightfully higgledy piggledy. You're never going to get 5 stars out of me Charles Finch unless you make these books more authentic. No devilish plot twists or great characterizations can make up for inauthenticity. I think I better go and find out where I can email this guy.

Sandra says

The mystery is good. I knew who dunit way before Charles Lenox, though. :)
But the best thing about this novel is how effortless and vividly Finch brings Victorian London to the reader. Remarkable, really.

Karen Potts says

A lively story which included a complex mystery along with subplots in the lives of Lenox & his wife as well as the arrival of their friends' new baby. The murderer was a surprise to me, & rewards & punishment were meted out properly.

Rebekah says

KIND OF a mess. I'd probably be less annoyed if my copy from the library weren't written all over by some angry copy editor/~scholar of nobility. The Denver Metro Editing Police has a point, though: this needed editing, tightening, fact checking, and a little oomph. I guess similar to the way I don't think about an actor being good until I see an actor who is not good, I don't really think about mysteries being well written until I find one that is NOT well written.

LJ says

First Sentence: "Clara, who is that gentleman?"

Charles Lenox has, at forty, entered a new phase in his life. He is newly married to Lady Jane, for years his best friend and neighbor, and he is newly elected to Parliament's House of Commons. The second of these events necessitates spending less time doing detective work—but not yet. A colleague in Parliament, Ludovic Starling, has asked Lenox to investigate the murder of one of his footman. As Lenox, and his

protégée Dallington, move forward in the investigation, they are met with resistance not only from Scotland Yard but from Starling, who asks them to give up the case. An attack on Lenox stiffens his resolve to find the killer.

Finch has become a favorite of mine and this book, once again, demonstrates why as there were so many levels on which I enjoyed this book.

We are introduced to Lenox and Lady Jane through a conversation held by others, via a prologue which actually works as it allows their back story to be told without it seeming forced or cumbersome. Each of the characters are fully drawn with very brief exposition that brings them to life. One thing by which I am very impressed is how, with each book in the series, the characters lives individually grow and develop. This impacts not only each character but the relationships amongst them. Relationships are something Finch does extremely well, including the awkwardness of a newly married couple and a man making a major change in his career.

Mr. Finch's knowledge of Victorian England is evident in every page and yet, again, so seamlessly incorporated into the plot that it is informative rather than intrusive. Through Lenox's work in Parliament, we learn the concerns of the period and meet historical figures in their proper settings and appropriate roles. Through the birth of a child, we observe the customs and etiquette of the time. Although Finch is American, is studied at Oxford, now lives in the UK and delightfully conveys British humor and understatement, "For an Englishman it was a strange time to be in France....first because of Napoleon's rather uncouth attempt to conquer Europe..." The dialogue has a natural flow but also reflects the speech of the time.

Neither of the above is meant to undervalue the plot. The mystery is intriguing, and full of effective twists. I like that solution is no more obvious to Lenox than to us, the reader. We are presented with numerous possibilities, each dismissed, until the final resolution. Might I have figured it out? Perhaps; but the story involved me to the point where I wasn't deliberately trying.

The only reason I did not rate the book as "excellent" was the use of portents which were completely unnecessary. Otherwise, I thoroughly enjoyed this book and do highly recommend it with the proviso suggestion of starting the series at the beginning.

A STRANGER IN MAYFAIR (Hist Mys-Charles Lenox-London, England-Victorian) - VG+
Finch, Charles – 4th in series
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Cheryl says

An ok read, but mainly if you've read the previous books in this series. I was a bit bored by this one, and thought the mystery to be pretty weak. (I figured it out early on, and I'm rarely able to do so.) Even the events in the lives of the series regulars wasn't as interesting this time around. Maybe the next book in the series will be better?

Elizabeth says

This fourth book in the series is my favorite so far. The elements of the mystery were perfectly woven and revealed at just the right pace. I did struggle with the addition of considerably more historical details from the time period. I was rewarded with the most satisfying ending.

Katie says

I am sad to report that this book is middling at best. Before I was even close to finishing the book, I had solved the crime, and let's be honest, that is not a good thing since I rarely figure out the mystery (I like to think it's because I read only high-quality, well-written mysteries).

And the whole we-can't-communicate drama between Charles Lennox and his best friend, turned wife is tiresome. Surely, Lady Jane didn't get married and turn into a complainer, distant person overnight. Bah humbug.

Of course, with all of this said, I will read the next installment, hoping that Finch will redeem himself, Lennox, and Jane. They all deserve it.

Christopher Taylor says

This is the first of these books I've read, apparently fourth in a series. I've heard it's not the strongest outing by Finch, and I believe it. The story was fairly engaging, with some interesting inside details on the workings of Victorian Parliament, but the mystery was not particularly mysterious and the detective seems distracted, let's say.

Having your main character as a detective retire from the work and train a less than excellent mind for a replacement while missing the most obvious clues and conclusions didn't impress me with Charles Lennox as a detective mind.

The book is frightfully proper and upper class, which isn't my favorite milieu, shall we say, but I'll try an earlier book in the series to see what I've missed.

Ellie says

A Stranger in Mayfair by Charles Finch is the fourth installment in the Charles Lennox series. I find the series a delight and Stranger in Mayfair does not disappoint. The characters are complex and interesting and the historical information (as far as I have tracked it, and I have checked several facts) accurate. I love entering Finch's Victorian world and hate to leave it.

In this entry in the series, Lennox is beginning both his Parliamentary and marital career. His work is interrupted when he is asked to solve the mystery of the murder of a footman. It rapidly becomes clear that this is no mundane murder. Lennox is torn between following his old love (detecting) and committing himself

to his new career in Parliament, as it appears impossible to do both.

I strongly recommend this series to mystery lovers who enjoy the character-driven story (I did guess the murderer long before the end).

Joan says

A Stranger in Mayfair is another exquisite installment in the Charles Lenox mysteries. Following their blissful honeymoon, Charles and Jane have returned to London to settle into their lives as a couple and combined households. Charles is a newly elected Member of Parliament (MP) into the House of Commons and it seems his amateur detective days are behind him as he settles into the fulfillment of his long-held dream of being in Parliament and married to his lifelong friend and woman he adores.

However, both Charles and Jane soon discover that married life is far more complex and difficult than they anticipated. The couple goes through very realistic growing pains as they tried to adjust to married life, combining their two homes, staff, and lives into one. The reader could feel the tension between Charles and Jane in juxtaposition with the younger, married couple Thomas and Toto McConnell whose married has become stronger following a rough patch.

Charles' elation of being a MP is tempered with his love of being a detective and during his first series of committee meetings, a case is presented to him in the person of a fellow MP, Lodovich Starling, who initially implores Lenox to examine the murdered body of Starling's footman. Soon Lenox is juggling his Parliamentary responsibilities with visiting the scene of the crime and trying to track down leads along with his apprentice, lord John Dallington. Thankfully, he has chosen Graham as his personal secretary who expertly takes to his duties of keeping Lenox prepared.

It is just so wonderful to settle down with a well-written book without fear of running into vulgar language or gratuitous sex and violence. Spending quality time reading about flawed but decent characters is so refreshing that I can just stay in the Charles Lenox and Lady Jane Grey's world for a long while. Finch's writing is so engaging that when historical characters briefly appear in the stories...Queen Victoria, Benjamin Disraeli. But it is the fictional character, primary and secondary, that give this book gravitas and substance. Reading these books are fantastic way to spend my time and money.

? Carol jinx~?? says

Charles Finch! I just love, love, love his characters. Lenox, and Lady Jane in London with a murder, mystery and a bit of mayhem. What more can you ask of a book than to take you somewhere interesting. I can't wait to find out what happens in the next book. I hope one is in progress right now.

Paula DeBoard says

I'm really enjoying this series, and I highly recommend the audiobooks. The stories aren't particularly

complicated, but the characters are so lovable, they absolutely feel like family.
