



# The Laws of Murder

Charles Finch

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## READING GROUP GUIDE

About the book:

In the newest mystery in this critically-acclaimed, bestselling series by Charles Finch, Charles Lenox is forced to take on a case of terrible personal consequence: the murder of a friend and colleague.

### Discussion Questions

- 1) One of the themes of *The Laws of Murder* is the role of women in Victorian society. How do Charles Lenox's views on that subject change over the course of the book? Who changes them?
- 2) For that matter, what about Queen Victoria's own beliefs? As Charles Finch writes, Victoria herself didn't believe that women should have the right to vote or to go to medical school. How could she have held those convictions while presiding over an empire that covered a quarter of the earth?
- 3) With whom does Lenox have more in common: Wakefield, or Jenkins?
- 4) The Victorian era is often credited with inventing the middle class. In what way is the society of *The Laws of Murder* the same as ours? In what ways is it different? How has our view of money changed or stayed the same?
- 5) What role does sex play in the crimes of *The Laws of Murder*? Did the proper, repressed nature of Charles Lenox's era make it a safer time to be a woman, or a more dangerous one? Or both?
- 6) Several characters in this book have more than one identity, from Polly to Lord Monomark to the criminals behind the initial murders. How do their identities change, and reflect their true selves – including Lenox's?

7) The class system depicted in *The Laws of Murder* is extremely inflexible. Does Lenox defy it? Conform to it?

8) The Victorian period is the last one before the full omnipresence of photography and film – the last time in human history that we can't pull up on youtube. Does being forced to imagine it change how we see it?

### Author Bio



**Charles Finch** is a graduate of Yale and Oxford. He is the author of the Charles Lenox mysteries. His first novel, *A Beautiful Blue Death*, was nominated for an Agatha Award and was named one of *Library Journal's* Best Books of 2007, one of only five mystery novels on the list. He lives in Chicago.

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