



A Just and Upright Man

R.J. Lynch

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It is 1763. James Blakiston, overseer of Lord Ravenshead's estate and a newcomer to the Durham parish of Ryton, is determined to solve the mystery of old Reuben Cooper's murder - but he has no idea how to go about it. As enclosure threatens to make the poor even poorer, Blakiston follows one misguided hunch after another. The only thing that he can really be certain of is his love for the beautiful and spirited Kate Greener - a love he is determined to resist, for Kate is the daughter of a penniless labourer and Blakiston has in any case not recovered from being thrown over by the woman he believed loved him. The mysterious Joseph Kelly, an Irishman who is not an Irishman, falls under suspicion. But Kelly cannot be found. Then Matthew Higson flees to America, leaving his boyhood love Catherine Robinson behind in his headlong rush to be gone, and the mystery is solved. Higson was the murderer. But when Higson is found, not fled but murdered in his turn, Blakiston's search resumes. As he builds a picture of the history of the murderous Cooper family over three generations, a missing coat also begins to occupy his mind. How did it get from where it was to where it is? And why? A chance remark by Lady Isabella Claverley opens the door to the murderer at last. And Blakiston rejects love. But will love let him go?

A Just and Upright Man Details

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Genre :

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From Reader Review A Just and Upright Man for online ebook

Tracie says

Absolutely nothing I expected

This book is extremely well written. The historical accuracy of the time is indeed a great credit to the author. The story as well, it is not a story I could have predicted in any way. The story has it all mystery, intrigue, death, love, money. It also has a lot of sadness, darkness, detailed in it's darkness where it does offend. Many people would say that if it's accurate then no one should be offended. I am however. That is my own opinion. I feel the book would lose nothing of importance had those particular scenes been written differently. This is not an easy or calm read. But it is a good book.

Kate says

"I received this book for free through Goodreads First Reads"

An enjoyable book, that I found to be a well-constructed and thought out mix; combining historical facts, murder, forbidden love interest and the daily living of both the upper and lower classes. The characters and setting for this book have been matched well together, in that you could imagine that this really did take place in 1763. Lynch has also left the potential for other books to be written in the series, as a couple of the characters head to America for a new life. So it will be interesting to see if other books will follow. One thing I do like is that actual facts were researched and written into the book. I always enjoy being able to think that that person really lived or that place really does exist, so a very nice touch.

Clare Scanlan says

Well written, good characters, great plot. What I most enjoyed about this book was the real insight into what life was like before and after the Acts of Enclosure. A really good background in social history. Well researched. Very enjoyable.

Simon says

I tend to be quite critical of historical fiction but really couldn't fault this. The plot is very intriguing and the backdrop to the story well researched. I read it over a winter weekend in front of the fire and couldn't help but think how things change with time. I think the author did really well to capture the period in which it is set.

Lisa Brown says

“A Just and Upright Man” kept me occupied during the long flight from London to Toronto. Historical Fiction is my genre and I enjoy a good mystery ... throw in a little romance and you have the perfect combination.

I had a bit of difficulty getting into the story but am glad I persevered. I enjoyed the character development of most of the characters, although some of the interactions with a couple of them lacked believability for me. Perhaps it was simply their ages (quite young), but I felt some disconnect with their dialogue and actions, specifically with the romance aspect.

The historical aspect is quite good. At no point did I feel that I was not present in that time period.

The mystery element is where this book shines for me. I am generally quite good at seeing how a book will twist and turn and I must say this one caught me by surprise. I was actually rolling my eyes near the end for the predictable ending I thought I was being led into, but found myself chuckling out loud when Lynch revealed the true ending. For me, that was very well done.

Overall a good read. 4 stars for me.

Paul says

This was an enjoyable book. It combined the mystery of a murder to be solved, a romantic interest developing and the daily living of both the upper and lower class people. With the mention of some characters going to America, it was a good lead into the next book.

Gloria Antypowich says

A Just and Upright Man is a murder/mystery/ historical fiction novel set in Northern England during the 18th century. It gives an interesting glimpse into the different classes of people and their daily lives at that time. It also is rife with the language and idioms of that era which gives it a colorful flavor.

The first chapter introduces the reader to the rape of a commoner by the son of Lord Ravenshead. The young girl begs him not to do so, but he forces himself on her at the edge of the woods, in the cold of winter, then tosses her a coin, as if that made every alright. Lizzie Greener is devastated and very bitter. Lizzie's circumstances play a major role in the plot of this book. Her desolation changes the lives of herself and her family.

The second chapter opens with the fire that destroys the home of Rueben Cooper and causes his death.

These two events set the stage for much of what happened in the book.

Cooper was despised by the people in the community, and although it was suspected that his death was foul play, most felt he got what he deserved and would have ignored the flames in the middle of the night. However, James Blakiston had other ideas. He ran from door to door, rousting people out to pour water on the flames. Blakiston was the new overseer for Lord Ravenshead's estate, and as such he was seen to have a lot of power in the town. Those who might have wanted to defy him, knew better than to do so, because he could have destroyed them if he chose.

Blakiston was new in town. Before anyone knew he had arrived, he had dressed like poor commoner, and walked into town to get an impression of what it was really like. He had met Cooper, who showed him kindness and gave him food. When he realized that Cooper was the man who had died in the fire, he vowed to find out if he had been murdered. If there was foul play, Blakiston vowed to bring the culprit to justice.

As overseer for Lord Ravenshead, he interacted with the farmers, cottagers and all the small holders on the nobleman's estate. As he took care of Lord Ravenshead's business, he took every opportunity to ask probing questions about Rueben Cooper and who may have wanted to see him dead.

Ugly secrets came to light, but the amateur detective struggled to find proof of what had happened. Blakiston had his own baggage from the past. He also struggled with his attraction to Kate Greener. As a man born of stature, he knew that a relationship with a commoner like her would never be accepted.

Blakiston proved himself to be a "just and upright man" as he dealt with the issues he was faced with.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book and recommend it to anyone who enjoys historicals with a twist of mystery and murder.

Billy Buttons says

This book was recently entered in The Wishing Shelf Book Awards. This is what our readers thought:

Title: A Just and Upright Man

Author: R J Lynch

Star Rating: 5 stars

Number of Readers: 26

Readers' Comments

'A thoroughly enjoyable historical mystery with a drop of romance. Lots of twists and turns, a powerful opening and a satisfying ending.' Male reader, aged 50

'Well researched mystery. I loved the setting: England during the 1700s at the time of Enclosures.

Fascinating. A strong mystery and a number of lustful, fully-rounded characters.' Female reader, aged 34

'A did enjoy this historical novel. There were many aspects I particularly enjoyed: the way Blakiston is so respectful of Kate, the author's understanding of the Enclosure Acts and the way he winds it so well into the story. Fab cover too!' Male reader, aged 44

'The best book in the awards.' Female reader, aged 71

Stats

Cover 10/10

Writing Style 9/10

Editing 9/10

Contents 10/10

Of the 26 readers:

26 would read another book by this author.

24 thought the cover was good or excellent.

14 thought the depth of the author's understanding of the historical setting was the best part of the book.

'An intelligently written mystery. A BRONZE MEDAL WINNER and highly recommended.' The Wishing Shelf Awards

Jessica Powell says

Blakiston, forced to work for a living as a result of his father's squandering of his inheritance, is a driven man, intent on uncovering the murderer of Reuben Cooper, one of his employer's tenants. But for every piece of information he uncovers, a dozen new questions arise...

I really enjoyed this, both as a piece of historical crime fiction, and as a slow burning romance. The intricate subplots kept me turning the pages, and the period setting and detail was spot on - from the harsh realities of the bloody code to the impact of enclosure. I can't wait for the next title in the series!

Danni says

As a fan of historical fiction this hits the mark for me. Great plot, grounded in good research, brilliant characters, which you quickly find yourself relating to and well written. What more can I say, a big thumbs up here!

Melissa ownsbey says

the cover is very beatful
very satafying to the eyes to read
this is a book everyone must read
ive read a few of this authors books and im never disappointed
hes very talnented
this book is very very good

Diane says

This a fine historical murder mystery that captures the time it is set in perfectly. The characters are vivid and the settings really well described with well written dialogue that brings each one to life. A very engrossing read throughout.
