



The Trouble With Charlie

Merry Jones

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Elle finds the body of her soon-to-be-ex husband, Charlie on her sofa, stabbed to death with her kitchen knife. Elle's close friends stand by her through the difficult funeral, but Elle alone must face the loss of the man she'd loved. Except that the loss is not total--Charlie is still around. Elle feels his presence, smells his aftershave. Hears him accuse her of killing him. And even though she doesn't believe in ghosts, she argues with him, asserting her innocence. Oddly, Elle has a gap in her memory; she can't account for her activity during the time of his murder. As she tries to clear herself by finding out how Charlie died, she discovers that she had plenty of reason to kill him. Charlie had secrets. Infidelity. Unsavory business associates. Involvement with an international organization of sex abusers. The more she learns, the more danger she faces. As unscrupulous people begin to fear she'll expose them, Elle races against time to avoid arrest, fight off attackers, solve the murder, and make peace with Charlie's spirit.

The Trouble With Charlie Details

Date : Published February 5th 2013 by Oceanview Publishing

ISBN : 9781608090747

Author : Merry Jones

Format : Hardcover 280 pages

Genre : Mystery

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From Reader Review The Trouble With Charlie for online ebook

Cindi says

4.5 stars

A well-written murder mystery with a touch of paranormal thrown in.

Elle's soon-to-be-ex husband, Charlie, is stabbed to death in her home... while she is at home. She keeps hearing the voice of her dead ex asking her why she did it. She has a tendency to lose blocks of time that she cannot explain. Did she kill her husband during one of these times and she doesn't remember? 3 friends, a magician, a bimbo, horrible in-laws, a tough police detective, a ghost and international sex crimes make for a very interesting story. There are clues scattered throughout the book... glaring and obvious clues. So obvious that Elle is practically slapped in the face with them. Elle not seeing what was directly in front of her (constantly) is the only reason I am giving it 4.5 stars instead of a full 5. Otherwise, a very good read.

Full review can be found at [On Top Down Under Book Reviews](#).

This book was provided by Net Galley and Oceanview Publishing in exchange for a fair and honest review.

Sue says

Chilling, suspenseful, couldn't put it down. Elle has spells where she doesn't remember things/spaces out. She and her husband, Charlie, are in the midst of a divorce; he's moved out. Her friends are encouraging her to start dating again, so she goes to a bar with one of her girl friends but is uncomfortable and goes home. She smells Charlie's Old Spice, feels a kiss on her neck, but can't find him anywhere in the house. Finally, she goes into his study and he's sitting there. Only he's dead - a knife in his back. Did she kill him? Multiple events follow, making her unsure of what's what. Charlie keeps popping in to talk to her. His investment firm partner wonders if Charlie left anything for him at her house, but she hasn't seen anything. What's going on? Intriguing - horrifying. Highly recommend!

Barbara Mitchell says

I don't want to short the murder mystery factor here, but this is a very funny book with quirky characters that will have you laughing out loud throughout. The quirkiest of all is Elle, through whose eyes we follow the story. She and Charlie are nearing a divorce when Elle finds him dead on her couch in the study with a knife in his back. That's the main trouble with Charlie although there are other issues as well; he's a very troublesome dead man it turns out.

The other main issue is Elle's problem. She tends to sort of space out when things get hairy. She imagines herself floating to the ceiling and watching whatever is happening to or around her. She has three bosom buddies who have their own oddities and they are determined to protect her at all costs. They have been close friends for years and know when she is "pulling an Elle" so they band together to make decisions for her - and she lets them. The results of making decisions by committee are mixed at best. However, one of the

friends, Susan, is a lawyer and she immediately takes Elle's defense.

The spouse of course is the most logical suspect in the murder, especially in the midst of a divorce when the victim is also found in the wife's house bleeding all over her couch. There are plenty of other candidates though, and in a departure from comedy, some of the suspects are involved in some pretty disgusting and criminal behavior. A lot of questions revolve around Charlie's business partner for instance. Elle is in very real danger because of these suspects and the suspense is enough to have you madly turning pages.

There are times when you want to slap Elle up the side of the head because she's so dense, but then she or her friends have you laughing too hard to stay irritated. All in all I loved these characters, and really hated the bad guys. This is a terrific story, perfect for reading by the pool this summer.

Highly recommended

Source: Oceanview Publishing through Partners in Crime Book Tours

Frederick Allen says

Having received this novel through Goodreads' giveaways in return for an honest review, and having had some good luck with the books that had been sent me, I was 50/50 on my entrance to this particular novel. First, I'm not a huge mystery fan if only because so often the plots are paper thin and you want to strangle the protagonist for being a moron - I prefer Hard Boiled Detectives and Classic Mystery (Christie and such). Second, I was due for some less than stellar books from the giveaways. However, luckily for me, it was not some book that I regret reading (see my review of Ghost by John Ringo), just a run of the mill story with some good, some bad and some forgetful elements.

SPOILERS

The book opens with the main character, Elle, reading the Obituaries - something of a morbid hobby, which is not entirely, or satisfactorily explained - and then we're at dinner with her friends who strike me as an annoying, gossipy click that keep Elle around if only because she gets to be the low woman on the social hierarchy totem poll of girl groups. They are jokingly discussing the best way to murder Elle's soon to be Ex-husband Charlie. The off to a night club where we are introduced to a character named Joel who is immediately the guy that you peg to be the murderer. We are, of course, wrong if only because Mrs. Jones, the author, doesn't give us enough information to solve the main plot, but not necessarily because we're actually wrong; and this leads us to the crux of my issue with this book.

Elle, as we find out, suffers from a Disassociative Disorder, which may border on Schizophrenia - she certainly seems to hear the voice of her dead husband a lot in the book - and is why we, like her, are left in the dark about things that happened and hence, the mystery. However, there are a large number of instances where she isn't suffering from repressed memories, or lacks critical, need to know information, and yet still does the most inane things.

In addition, in a book that seems to be a fairly serious affair, we have a moment towards the end of the book where we have to wonder if Elle's 'Ghost' of Charlie isn't just in her own head because there is a moment when the killer may or may not be confronted by the spirit of the deceased. Of course, this could be because Elle is crazy, but it's hard to be taken out of the story by the sudden inconsistency in the narrative. Otherwise, this book isn't bad, just not really my cup of tea. There was one thing that the author did that annoyed me

throughout the book. One of Elle's friends would say things like Wow you're such a SB, and then Mrs. Jones would add an aside which explained SB. SB - Stupid Bitch. This is okay once, maybe twice, but not over and over again.

So, in the end, I'd recommend this for fans of the author, and maybe those who like a Soft Boiled novel that has a twist. Otherwise, steer clear.

Barbara says

This first book in the 'Elle Harrison' series - set in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania - is a fun cozy mystery with a touch of the paranormal.

Even before her husband Charlie was killed, second-grade teacher Elle Harrison liked to read the obituaries every day - perhaps compelled by her secret wish that Charlie was dead. Having learned that Charlie was a liar and adulterer who had stolen her sizable inheritance, Elle had given Charlie the boot, and their divorce was about to be finalized.

Elle had even joked about murdering Charlie with her three best friends: Susan, a defense attorney; Jenny, a wealthy housewife; and Becky, a kindergarten teacher. Susan had advised an overdose of blood pressure medicine - so it looked like an accident; Jenny had suggested shooting - so it looked like an RGB (robbery gone bad); and Becky had advocated poison.....because that wasn't too violent. In the end, Charlie was stabbed in the back.

Elle discovered Charlie's body in her house, a few days after the jocular 'how to murder Charlie discussion.'

Elle had gone to a club, where she'd sipped a few drinks and flirted with an amateur magician named Joel, who'd given her a red rose. Upon arriving home, Elle smelled Charlie's 'Old Spice' cologne in the house and felt a light kiss on the back of her neck, but - turning around - didn't see anyone. Elle even heard Charlie murmur her nickname, 'Elf.'

Elle called out repeatedly and strode from room to room, convinced that Charlie was playing a bizarre joke....especially when the red rose moved from the kitchen counter to the kitchen floor to the bedroom. Frustrated, angry, and getting a headache, Elle went to the study to get a drink.....and found Charlie's dead, blood-soaked body on the couch, where - according to an autopsy - it had been for HOURS.

Of course Elle became a suspect for the murder since she was the victim's spouse, and Charlie was killed in HER house with HER kitchen knife. Unfortunately, Elle was hazy about her movements on the night of the murder, both because she'd been drinking AND because she had a habit of 'spacing out' when she was bored or stressed - a behavior her friends called 'pulling an Elle.'

So - for all she knew - Elle might actually have stabbed Charlie!

After Charlie dies, a number of odd events occur.

- Charlie's business partner, Derek, claims Charlie took something from the firm, and asks Elle if he can search her house. (She refuses.)
- Charlie's employee, Sherry, confronts Elle at the funeral and makes outlandish accusations. Sherry then proceeds to stalk and harass Elle.
- Elle finds evidence that Charlie and his friends were involved in an unsavory, illegal enterprise.

Elle's lawyer friend Susan represents her, and warns the schoolteacher to lay low, but Elle doesn't listen. In an attempt to solve the case herself, Elle bumbles around, finds more dead bodies, and almost becomes a victim herself. Along the way Elle does some very foolish things, like destroying A LOT of evidence and neglecting to tell the cops about someone she spots near a crime scene. In fact Elle's behavior invites the observation 'there's a village somewhere missing its idiot.'

In any case, Elle's friends are supportive; Charlie's ghost (or Elle's subconscious) is accusatory; and there's plenty of action....and a lot of laughs.

In the end, the crimes are solved and all becomes clear, except whether or not Charlie's ghost is real or a product of Elle's imagination. I vote real. ?

This is an enjoyable start to the Elle Harrison series, recommended to fans of cozies.

You can follow my reviews at <https://reviewsbybarbsaffer.blogspot....>

Maureen DeLuca says

Actually, the trouble wasn't with Charlie; it was with Elle. (Charles wife)

The plot was unrealistic and the main character (Elle) was portrayed as a completely ridiculous woman incapable of making a rational decision.

Having said all that - I wanted to like this book- I needed some 'brain candy' and sometimes when I attempt to read a cozy mystery I wind up with an ice - freeze on my brain - and OUCH that hurts!! (of course not ALL COZIES DO THIS!)

Anyway- having said all that- there were many- and I mean many 4-5 star reads from our pals here from Goodreads- so you may (or may not) want to take a 'stab' at it.

Literati Literature Lovers says

Title: The Trouble with Charlie

Author: Merry Jones

Rating: 4.25/5 Stars

Genre: Murder Mystery

Publisher: Ocenview Publishing

ISBN: 1608090744

Synopsis

Elle finds the body of her soon-to-be-ex husband, Charlie on her sofa, stabbed to death with her kitchen knife. Elles close friends stand by her through the difficult funeral, but Elle alone must face the loss of the man shed loved. Except that the loss is not total—Charlie is still around. Elle feels his presence, smells his aftershave. Hears him accuse her of killing him. And even though she doesn't believe in ghosts, she argues with him, asserting her innocence. Oddly, Elle has a gap in her memory; she can't account for her activity during the time of his murder. As she tries to clear herself by finding out how Charlie died, she discovers that she had plenty of reason to kill him. Charlie had secrets. Infidelity. Unsavory business associates.

Involvement with an international organization of sex abusers. The more she learns, the more danger she faces. As unscrupulous people begin to fear she'll expose them, Elle races against time to avoid arrest, fight off attackers, solve the murder, and make peace with Charlie's spirit.

The trouble with Charlie is that Charlie is dead, as a doornail. The mystery intrigue starts off with a phantom game of hide and seek and continues with a squish, as Charlie is found dead by Elle, his soon to be ex-wife and narrator of the book. Prior to his death, Elle and Charlie had been in the middle of divorce proceedings and he was not living in the home. So what was Charlie doing in Elle's house uninvited? That's what the cops want to know too. The cops don't say Elle is a suspect but having your dead soon-to-be ex in your den, bloody from a stab wound, makes her a good suspect in my book.

Problem is poor Elle has major gaps in her memory that just happen to coincide with the time of the murder. What's a girl to do when she can't remember and her memory had more holes than Swiss cheese? Make up an alibi of course! Only problem is while she was at home doing mundane things, like she tells them, the time frame coincides with that of the murder. YIKES! A murder I might add, that took place in her home and with a knife from her kitchen. Tsk Tsk Elle. Elle also has a bandaged cut on her hand from cutting an "orange", hmm "orange" or Charlie? Besides dealing with the death of her soon-to-be ex, Elle also contends with a few paranormal incidents in her quest to clear herself: find out who killed Charlie and even discover who Charlie really was. The paranormal event being that Charlie is still hanging around. Is Elle bonkers? Does Charlie just not want to leave or are his appearances Elle's guilt screaming at her?

The Trouble with Charlie was a very enjoyable murder mystery written by Merry Jones.

Elle has three girlfriends to rely on and the camaraderie between them is engaging and funny. Elle's nature to check out in social situations made it plausible that she could check out in stressful situations too. Her attempt to find the killers (or killers) was a series of her bumping into walls instead of following an analytical path. Elle is tied in emotional knots for a good part of the book and who wouldn't be considering the stress she faces. I suspected everyone in the book! I felt as if I better not trust a soul given the narrators lack of memory and her emotional state. Yes, I even suspected Elle as she wasn't a reliable witness to events. Poor girl. I wanted to shake her and yell, "Snap out of it! Your life is on the line!", but if she could have thought clearly she wouldn't have ended up in the situation she had.

The characters, in The Trouble with Charlie, both living and dead are engaging and the dialog is crisp and fun to read. The running dialog in Elle's head is enough for me to recommend this book. The twist and turns of Elle's adventures gave me whiplash and I was caught up in the puzzle that was Charlie's death. My heart and brain were thumping and buzzing with adrenaline as I joined Elle in her quest. I sympathized with Elle, who didn't know which way to turn or whom to trust, as lies and murder made for one sticky situation. This mystery thriller was a tantalizing adventure and I highly recommend it.

Sue says

Wow!!!

The Trouble With Charlie had me gripped right from the start. I began reading this book quite late one night, reluctantly fell asleep half way through, and just had to finish it the next morning!

The book tells the tale of Elle, who finds her soon-to-be-divorced husband dead in her house. Elle has no recollection of what she was doing for a couple of hours the afternoon Charlie was murdered and she almost convinces herself that she must be the killer.

With the support of her three friends and a shrink Elle begins to piece together the story of that fateful afternoon. I found myself trying to work out who the murderer was, and have to confess that I even believed it might be Elle at one point.

A well written, gripping novel that you just won't be able to put down. A must read!!!

Highly Recommended.

***** 5 stars

Ruth Hill says

I am grateful to be able to recommend another mystery to my readers. Mysteries have become the most difficult "good books" for me to find lately, and I was pleased that this one turned out better than I thought. I could have done without the profanity--that is honestly my only complaint. I was relieved to discover that the book ended the way it should have--too many mysteries don't that are written in this day and age.

The author is to be commended. This book is written completely from the perspective of Elle. This makes the story sometimes very confusing because her mind tends to wander in stressful situations. I found myself wondering what was real and what was not. I wondered if she was hallucinating or dreaming or what. It was this writing device that kept me reading and quite intrigued.

I am also glad to report that there was no gratuitous violence. I grow tired of mystery books that are full of blood, guts, and gore. The descriptions in this book are what you would expect from a mystery book. There is blood, but no guts and gore. And at least the "hardcore profanity" only comes from the "bad guys."

If you are looking for a mystery that will keep you hooked and possibly even a little frazzled from the beginning, I would definitely recommend this book to you. The author does an excellent job of getting into Elle's brain, and there is a good chance that you will find yourself second-guessing yourself and wondering what exactly is happening. And I believe that is what the author wants you to feel and think.

I was sent a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review. I was not financially compensated, and all opinions are 100 percent mine.

Linda says

I received an uncorrected digital galley of The Trouble With Charlie by Merry Jones from NetGalley.com in return for my honest review.

Despite the fact that second grade teacher, Elle, found her soon-to-be ex-husband, Charlie, stabbed to death in her den seemingly without her knowledge, was the number one suspect in his death, conversed with her husband though he had been killed, was at the scene of several other murders, was kidnapped, as well as finding herself engaged in a variety of other outrageously, unrealistic scenarios, this novel was pure fun and provided hours of enjoyment for this reader.

Maybe it was the friendship of the four ladies, Elle, Susan, Jen and Becky that made the book so endearing (and could be the beginning of a new series) or quite possibly it was the relationship between Elle and Charlie, and the feelings that they still had for one another notwithstanding the heartache he caused her.

In spite of the outlandish circumstances, the story felt real. It was engaging, exciting and I highly recommend it.

Wall-to-wall books - wendy says

I LOOOOOVED this book! Now let me admit to you I am not a huge fan of mystery, its not that I don't like them. Its just not my favorite genre. But if all mysteries were like this one... I would be an instant fan! This book was perfect (for me, LOL). I can't find any faults with it. I was in love with it after only 20 pages. I think this is going my list of favorite books of the year.

This book was fun, quirky, interesting, had great characters, and a great mystery that kept me guessing and on the edge of my seat! This was like a mystery/chick-lit. I just loved the characters so much. Elle and her friends are hilarious! And of course... there is a ghost! Oh how I love ghost stories, especially fun ones. I don't think it is possible but I would love to see this as the start of a series! I am not ready to say goodbye to Elle and her girlfriends.

Here are a few quotes from the book that I loved -

"The best revenge against a man who breaks your heart is to celebrate your life without him." ~ amen!

"She's just groggy."

I was. Very groggy. I liked the word, too. Groggy. But it confused me. If foggy meant full of fog, did groggy mean full of grog? What was grog? I inhaled Jen's exhaled air. It was warm, secondhand. But, being full of grog, I didn't care." ~ hahaha oh my gosh, I giggled so much when reading this.

"Susan poured Jen a cup of green tea. Well, it wasn't actually green, more of a yellow. Maybe chartreuse? I'd never understood what color chartreuse was." ~ this whole book kept me in giggles.

If you are a fan of mysteries and even if you are not - you will love this book! I can not recommend it enough! To me reading is all about fun and enjoyment and this certainly covered that!

Lelia Taylor says

Finding a novel of suspense that delivers the goods is always a pleasure and *The Trouble with Charlie* is no exception. The whole idea behind suspense, for those of us who love to read mysteries, is to keep us wondering about one or more things in particular. Frequently, it's about whether the lead character will survive but, in this case, we don't have to worry about that; since the protagonist is the past tense narrator, she obviously does. We do get to wonder about who is going to be killed and who is going to do the deed(s) and there is no shortage of possibilities. We also get to wonder about motives and, as the story progresses, there are more and more options.

What sets this book apart a bit is the author's use of amnesia. Sometimes we mystery readers think amnesia is a much too convenient excuse but, here, Merry Jones has added the issue of a long-term psychological disorder and we're left completely baffled by what Elle is really seeing, hearing, smelling, remembering and what is hallucination. Even the fact that she has conversations with her dead husband is puzzling—is he a ghost or is his presence all in her mind?

I also have to commend Ms. Jones for her characterizations. Nearly all these people are vivid and easy to identify even when they're in a group. Whether they're likeable or not, you understand their essence.

Unfortunately, there's a significant TSTL factor at play and that's a real shame because Elle is a likeable person. True, she has a lot on her mind but some of her behavior is just beyond rational explanation. I also found it puzzling that she is so very weak when it comes to standing up for herself when she's face-to-face with people whose personalities are stronger than hers. Despite all that, I did find *The Trouble with Charlie* very entertaining and I kept right on reading because, well, it's a darn good story.

Reviewed by Lelia Taylor, April 2013.

Nancy Brady says

Full disclosure: I received this novel as a Goodreads First Reads giveaway, but that in no way affected this review.

A suspenseful thriller from page one, Elle Harrison stumbles upon her soon-to-be ex-husband Charlie dead in her home (formerly their home) with a kitchen knife in his back. In particular, it is one of her kitchen knives and a loss of memory for that time when he was killed.

Added to that, she is experiencing Charlie in various manifestations (smell, voice, etc.). The police suspect her of murdering him, but her friends don't. Frankly, she isn't positive of anything as she does what her friends (Jen, Susan, and Becky) call "pulling an Elle," which is drifting off into space, losing track of time. A new man, Joel, in her life complicates things as well.

While she tries to prove herself innocent (even Charlie is asking why she killed him), more bodies pile up and more surprises about Charlie emerge. Did she kill him? Does her memory loss cover up murders? Does what she finds out about Charlie play into his murder? And why does she hear Charlie even after she has

buried him? Will she get back her memory to solve the murder, or will she end up in prison?

Lots of twists and turns make for a creepy, but satisfying read. Suspenseful to the last page, and recommended for all who enjoy thrillers. This is the first of this author read, but looking forward to checking out more by her.

A more extensive review to be posted on www.pedometergeek.wordpress.com (personal review site) by 8/8/16.

Juli says

3.8, almost 4 stars. This mystery grabbed me. It's a light, easy read and leaves you wanting more. The friendships between the women in the book remind me of my own. The main character comes off weak, but in her own way of dealing with the things that happen to her, she shows strength. Looking forward to book #2 in the series.

Cathi says

I should have read this book before reading the second in the series. "Child's Play." They can be read as stand alone novels, but reading this book first gives you a better background into the main character of "Child's Play." I liked the author Merry Jones so much that I had to read this book. It was full of twists and turns and surprises. The ending was not something that I expected at all. I really liked the characters in this book and would love to read more stories about them.
