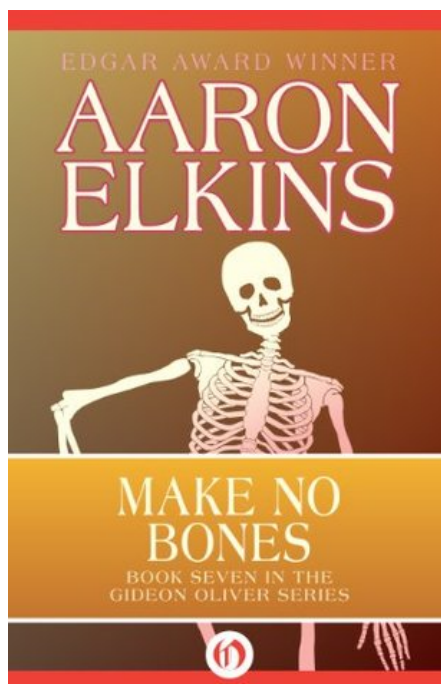




Make No Bones

Aaron Elkins

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There is not much left of the irascible Albert Evan Jasper, dean of American forensic anthropologists, after his demise in a fiery car crash. But in accord with his wishes, his remains a few charred bits of bone are installed in an Oregon museum to create a fascinating if macabre exhibit. All agree that it is a fitting end for a great forensic scientist until what is left of him disappears in the midst of the biannual meeting (a.k.a., the bone bash and weenie roast) of the august WFAA the Western Association of Forensic Anthropologists in nearby Bend, Oregon.

Like his fellow attendees, Gideon Oliver the Skeleton Detective is baffled. Only the WFAA attendees could possibly have made off with the remains, but who in the world would steal something like that? And why? All had an opportunity, but who had a motive?

Soon enough, the discovery of another body in a nearby shallow grave will bring to the fore a deeper, more urgent mystery, and when one of the current attendees is found dead in his cabin, all hell breaks loose. Gideon Oliver is now faced with the most difficult challenge of his career unmasking a dangerous, brilliant killer who knows every bit as much about forensic science as he does. Or almost.

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Make No Bones Details

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From Reader Review Make No Bones for online ebook

Karen says

Gideon and Julie drive to Oregon where Gideon is presenting/attending a conference for forensic anthropologists. He's looking forward to seeing his colleagues, learning new things in his field, getting away from gray and rainy Washington, and spending some quality time with his wife. He certainly didn't expect to find a skeleton buried next to the hotel, nor did he expect the skeleton to be linked to the first meeting of the forensic anthropologists' group many years before. With Julie and John Lau's help, Gideon has to shift through lies and evidence to get to the truth.

Karin says

Mr. Elkins was back on form with this one. Very enjoyable.

Karla Huebner says

An enjoyable enough reread. The idea of a mystery set at an academic conference has a certain appeal to it, although I can't say that in my field I ever end up at small rural conferences populated by cremains and corpses as well as academics.

Sandra Strange says

This book in the series doesn't disappoint. Solving the satisfyingly convoluted mystery revolves around forensic science practiced by the protagonist, Gideon Oliver, as it usually does in this series. His relationship with his wife is as sweet as ever, and the humorous look at scientists and scholars and their relationships continues to delight.

Matt says

Elkins impresses readers with another North American locale case, full of anthropological tidbits and forensic treats. While attending a biannual anthropology convention, Dr. Oliver and Julie discover that the mentor to many of the original attendees in 1981 was not killed in a bus crash, as they were led to believe, but actually murdered. A body found buried at the convention site (same as the inaugural one a decade before) leads to more questions and has Oliver showing some of his skills to a bunch of his colleagues. After one of the anthropologists is murdered in his cottage, it's clear that the murderer is on site and one of the academics. Will Oliver and his trusty FBI friend Agent Lau be able to point the finger at the correct suspect before more bodies pile up? Elkins keeps the reader waiting until the very end to find out.

Elkins paints quite the picture in this installment of the series, using Oliver's skills and those of the other anthropologists to deduce what might have happened. Keeping the story fresh and interesting, Oliver remains the bumbling academic, but in this novel he has much company to help mute his skills. Elkins surely draws

on some of his past academic experiences to narrate the tale and sells its authenticity throughout. Well done and thoroughly entertaining for a series regular reader, but also the one-off novel experimenter whose interest would surely be piqued with all found herein.

Kudos, Dr. Elkins on this highly entertaining piece of fiction.

Amanda Lee says

Based on the reviews of the Gideon Oliver books here on Goodreads, I picked one up at my local used bookstore. I am pleasantly surprised and relieved - the community here has, indeed, helped me find a book I want to read.

What sticks out in my mind most after having finished reading Make No Bones is that Aaron Elkins has Agatha Christie's talent for creating warm, pleasantly rounded characters, especially middle-aged and older ones. He also has the same knack for making his characters distinctive enough from each other that he can gather a large group and not confuse readers. If I were rating on character alone, I would give this book 5 stars.

The mystery is a solid 3.5-4 star mystery, complex enough to hold my attention and not seem childish, simple enough for me to follow and understand why people are interested in answering the questions they're interested in, and with a solid twist at the climax of the story. I can't give 5 stars because the resolution was rushed and under-explained.

Yes, it was possible, and no, I wasn't shocked in the sense of too many clues pointing a different way. I believed the solution that was set out. I simply didn't fully understand it, and it lacked a gravitas I'm accustomed to enjoying in a murder mystery conclusion. Agatha Christie and Rex Stout both have the knack of creating a solution in which the reader can see and feel in retrospect there was no other way for the characters' lives to go: the murder was inevitable, inescapable. Aaron Elkins, at least in this book, doesn't capture that feeling.

Besides a few stylistic hiccups, like putting too many qualifications/job titles/physical description details in one sentence, I enjoyed Elkins' writing.

Overall, a solid 4 stars, and I will definitely read another Gideon Oliver book.

Rodney says

I enjoy these books. Entertaining reads. Educational. That said, there was a lot of build up leading to a relatively quick resolution. Other than that, good read, as always. Who knew my finding book 5 at a yard sale would have me reading the entire series 15 years later?

Betsy says

An OK mystery. I thought there was a little too much of one character explaining his reasoning to another character when it seemed that the second character was plenty smart enough to follow the reasoning on his own. I know I was.

Kamas Kirian says

Before Kathy Reichs, before Jefferson Bass, there was Aaron Elkins. Another stupendous installment in the Gideon Oliver series. The more I read of it the better it gets. The series has certainly solidified as it has gone on. The author has definitely improved his craft over the years.

Of course Gideon, Julie and John are all wonderful. And the story specific characters are all pretty well done as well. I did tend to get Les and Leland confused with each other, and they probably could have been combined into one character as neither one brought much to the table. And I thought Callie was a little too touchy-feely for the time, but certainly would fit in with today's academia, so perhaps she was just a portrayal of the sort of persons that Dr. Elkins saw coming up through the ranks at the time. Callie was certainly someone that I think of as a bane to good education. It took about half, maybe two thirds, of the book before I felt I knew who the culprit was. I was initially a little confused over who the actual victims were. And the motive seemed a little fuzzy to me.

The story was paced well. Unlike the some of the other novels (The Dark Place and Icy Clutches specifically) the setting didn't play much of a role, it was much more character driven.

The eBook had some formatting issues, but they may be Nook specific. There were several odd line/paragraph breaks, and most of the dashes came up either as a blank box or a box with a "?" inside it, depending on which font setting was chosen. When viewing the eBook through other eReader programs like Calibre, ADE, Sigil or online it didn't have these rendering problems.

Rogue Reader says

Aaron Elkins' 7th Gideon Oliver mystery, this one set in Bend, Oregon. Who can resist the thrall of this high desert retreat, the academic intrigue and the bodies - old and new- just waiting for what The Skeleton Detective can evoke. Aaron Elkins, on tour in Salem, Eugene, Roseburg, Klamath Falls and Ashland, Oregon beginning in Salem, Oregon on Wednesday Aug 11, 2010. <http://www.ashlandmystery.com>

Honor Kelly says

Elkins's Gideon Oliver mysteries are always reliable, cozy, forensic, non-gory fun. This one is no exception. If you like Kathy Reichs, but prefer a little less blood-and-stress, this is a great series. Oliver is pleasantly non-neurotic for a sleuth, has a loving relationship with his intelligent wife, and loves to teach. That positive approach gives us a fast-moving story that never gets bogged down in angst, quick and clever dialogue, and fascinating lessons about forensic anthropology.

Jim says

This was a pretty good book. I liked the plot and the characters and the way the principal characters were involved in the story. About the only negatives were that there were a few loose ends that went unanswered and a couple of characters that were not developed enough even though they were good potential suspects. But these are minor quibbles.

The writing style is not my favorite, but the mystery itself was good and well-presented. It didn't knock my socks off but it was a good, solid mystery.

Sara Van Dyck says

Elkins mysteries are such fun. Lots of forensic detail - which I assume is accurate, since he's a forensic anthropologist himself. What I like is that Elkins doesn't give us a lot of graphic violence, at least not in the present, and the blood and gore tend to be old. These are "old-fashioned" mysteries, skipping sadism, with the emphasis being on careful scientific sleuthing.

Cat. says

Dr. Oliver goes on an awful lot of conferences where people end up dying. I can see why the FBI gets nervous when he calls.

In this story, he and his wife are attending a conference during which the organization holding the discussions is going to install the bones of one of the founders in its museum. That all goes swimmingly, except that immediately after the official museum unveiling, those bones are stolen. Soon thereafter, another skeleton is discovered.

There is much confusion, a great deal of discussion of dental records and blowfly population and a murder before everyone figures out that the original bones don't belong to the person everyone thought they did. This means that everything that follows, all the suppositions that have been made about the second skeleton and the murder are all wrong.

Good. Elkins has taken a big jump in skill here.

Ellen says

"Make NO bones" by Aaron Elkins.

I love this series because it is more than just another mystery to be solved. Gideon Oliver take me, the reader, step by step into the mind of the killer...that is unless Gideon himself has been duped by the killer.

That's exactly what happens in this excellent who done it. The ending will have you on the edge of your seat

(to use a cliché)with your eyes glued to every word on the last 3 chapters.

I enjoy the banter between John Lau and Gideon and have become accustom to expect their relationship to perk up many conversations. Gideon's wife, Julie, brings out another side to Gideon's personality that's most welcomed.

Need I say more? Get this book and become a Gideon Oliver enthusiast.
