



Throwing Stones

Avery Cockburn

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In a sport where Murphy's Law rules supreme, one slip can mean falling behind—or falling in love.

Oliver Doyle needs to win. After his reign as one of Canada's top curlers is cut short by scandal, he arrives in Glasgow to coach Scotland's next big team to a national championship. All that stands in the way of Oliver's redemption is a band of upstarts led by an infuriatingly cute skip.

Luca Riley needs to chill. Or so he's always believed, crafting a Zen-like serenity to carry his underdog curlers to the edge of greatness. To reach Nationals, Team Riley just have to keep calm and beat their arch-rivals—and their hot new Canadian coach—in one final bonspiel.

Luca and Oliver form an instant, irresistible bond. For the first time, Oliver shares the secret shame that's kept him off the ice for years, and Luca finds true acceptance for who he is. As the tournament races toward a nail-biting climax, Oliver must face his past before it consumes him again. And Luca must choose between the dream he can taste and the man he could love.

Throwing Stones Details

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From Reader Review Throwing Stones for online ebook

Elena says

I avoided this book for a long time, even though I really like the Glasgow Lads series of which this one is a spin-off, because I generally don't look for books with sport and I know nothing about curling. I know something about football (the real football, also known as soccer), I'm not a fan but I know enough to follow, so I didn't have a problem with the original series, but I was afraid in this one all the sport details would go over my head.

Partly, they did. It wasn't a big problem, though, the author did a good job explaining curling in general, what was going on specifically at any given moment and what it meant for the characters, without boring even a reader like me, completely uninterested in sports.

The curling competition was a good setting for this story and it grew on me, but where this book really shines is in the MCs and their interaction.

I liked Oliver and Luca, their humor won me over from the very beginning and I loved how they got to know each other, how they shared their secrets and struggles without some big emotional dramatic moment. It happened fast but it didn't feel rushed, just natural. There was a moment toward the end when I wasn't completely happy with their choices, in particular when Luca did something a bit overly dramatic that seemed to come out of nowhere, but he was out of his element and taken by surprise, so I cut him some slack.

Especially since he gave me one of the best quotes I've ever found in a book:

"I don't know yet, honestly." Luca frowned. "People toss about words like 'asexual spectrum' and 'gray ace' and 'demisexual', and I'm not sure any of them fit me precisely, but maybe I'm...somewhere in there?"

Hollis says

It's been less than a year since I last read a book by Cockburn but somehow it feels like so much longer. While **THROWING STONES** is the first book in her crossover series with *Glasgow Lads* it brought me such joy to know I was coming back to her world and seeing a few familiar faces.. but also meeting so many new ones, not to mention the setting and theme of curling being oh so different from the footie series.

Curling is the hardest easy-looking sport in the world.

For fans of the author's first series, this book will feel lighter in steam, subject matter, and politics. Also word count. And yet none of that detracted from my enjoyment whatsoever because it absolutely suited the story and the characters.

"Team Boyd's coach drinks decaf in the morning, like some kind of depraved supervillain."

"Maybe that's why he was chucked out of Canada. He broke the Tim Hortons Act of 1938, which famously forbade antemeridian consumption of non-caffeinated beverages."

Oliver Doyle is trying to find success after the disappointment of a career cut short and the scandal that still dogs him. A top athlete in the world of curling, he accepts a job as a coach, leaving Nova Scotia, Canada, for Glasgow, Scotland. His work VISA is dependent on leading Team Boyd to Nationals.. and it's just bad luck he finds himself instantly attracted, and interested in, the top rival's team skip, Luca Riley.

"I love your arse."

"Uh.. yours isn't bad either.. I guess?"

*"My what? No, I said your **R**s. The way you pronounce the letter **R**."*

"Oh jeez."

Luca is all about being zen. His team is lovingly referred to as Team Smiley because he and his lads are all about enjoying the game and having a good time, unlike their more intense competition. Competition who just so happened to have hired a man Luca can't resist flirting with. He wisely backs off his pursuit of Oliver, knowing it's a conflict, and instead tries to just be friends. But it's hard for Luca, who identifies somewhere between demisexual and asexual, to ignore a connection with someone when he so rarely feels one.

"What, this guy you fancy is a footballer? I thought you hated the sport."

"I do. It's so uncivilized compared to curling."

"Tea with the queen is uncivilized compared to curling."

Their resistance only lasts for so long and when they do give in, secrets find a way of coming out. Luca's conflict over winning or keeping Oliver, a man who accepts him, ends up affecting his play, and Oliver hates the spot he's put Luca in, believing once again that he's made the wrong decision and having to add it to the tally of awful wrong decisions that have haunted his life.

The Atlantic Ocean wasn't big enough. Planet Earth wasn't big enough. His mistakes were a part of him now, and he couldn't shed them any more than he could shed his own bones.

Each have their struggles, each saddled with things that make them different and maybe difficult for others to accept, and it's all down to one final game between Team Boyd and Team Riley. One game that will determine who wins, who loses, and whether their love can survive no matter the result.

I have to admit : I know nothing about curling. Which is a national shame I have to live with day in and day out. But at least I'm a Tims drinking hockey fan, eh? So when I say that I enjoyed this, please know you don't have to love, or even understand, the sport to enjoy this book. Each chapter header comes with a delightfully cheeky factoid about the game terminology, and she's included a glossary at the back if you want to learn more, but she goes even a step further to make the story fun. She also includes non-fans, specifically the *Glasgow Lads* Warrior players who make cameos, and have them interject all sorts of 'wtf even' commentary for the confusing sport. It was total delight. That combined with all the Canadian cracks, the vocabulary comparisons.. seriously, this was just so entertaining.

"Siri, what's the percentage of Canadian men circumcised?"

"Skies are fifty percent cloudy in Ottawa tonight, decreasing to thirty percent tomorrow."

"She'll never understand our accent."

But the real story, more than the highstakes games and championships, is with the characters. Characters I loved for what they represented, what they did, and how they made me laugh. Oh how they made me laugh. I had to put the book down for a solid five minutes because the scene with Siri had me in stitches.

"What if he is circumcised? I've never seen one like that in person. I wouldn't know what to do with it."

"It's a penis, Luca, not an alien."

If you want a sweet romance between two men who have more than earned finding their someone, want a good emotional thread woven into a story surrounding the most polite sport on the planet, and something to make you grin and feel good about, you should pick up this book. And then go back and read all of Cockburn's other books because honestly why haven't you already done that.

I can't wait for more from this spinoff and I am equally (if not more!) excited to hear news about the next *Glasgow Lads* book coming -- hopefully -- before the end of the year.

4 "when Canadians say, 'sorry', do they always mean it? or is it just a word" stars

Mónica BQ says

2.5 stars rounded up (¿?)

Well written, but ultimately **lackluster**.

I appreciate 100% the romance centred story. There's always on-page interactions between the main characters and the plot is completely driven by obstacles that need be overcome for them to be able to keep a relationship. **And this is the only reason I didn't rate this book a flat one star.**

And the curling was incredibly interesting to read about. I still don't understand half of it. But I did like it.

And that's it.

The shift in tone from the previous Cockburn books is noticeable and not for the good.

There's an overuse of "shadows in his eyes" and shit like that, that I can't stand.

A lot of it reads like a YA book (teen angst), when really both protagonists are complete adults and that's just silly.

I'm getting tired of the secret, mysterious, exaggeratedly obscure backstory of the MCs (*cough*Evan*cough*).

I really miss the feel of the original Glasgow Lads books. For me the story of Fergus and John in the first book was a one time wonder that Cockburn hasn't been able to reproduce again.

Those books were passionate, political, ambitious, with complex characters and complicated backstories. But all the last books have been run-of-the-mill romances that are ok for an afternoon and I won't remember much about them the next day. Or the only thing I'll remember is that I'm fucking annoyed with the ridiculous plots (*cough*Evan*cough*).

Line says

Realistically this was a 3.5 and not a clear 4, **BUT** I loved the setting, the banter, the language and Luca's

team!

I used to live in Scotland and the expressions used here, brought back so many great memories, but was not always completely clear for the uninitiated.

I did not care for Luca's sister at all (what a freaking bitch) and the technical explanations of curling got too much at times.

There was also little to no heat, and that's not a problem as such, but for people looking for smexy times, look somewhere else.

Also the '*conflict*' felt a wee bit manufactured, but yeah...

All in all, it wasn't bad and I am curious about the next one. Hopefully the amount of curling expressions and explanations will be cut down a wee bit, though.

I'm sure the sport is immensely technical and demanding, but the excitement didn't quite translate for me on page.

?? Michaeelle says

4.2 Stars

Lovely low-steam book (compared to Avery's other stories) but completely appropriate given Luca's self-described "grey ace" sexuality. Less contentiously political as well, but still touched on some important emotional and psychological issues.

Some might find all the Curling lingo and plays a bit overwhelming but I loved that aspect of the tale...even though I still don't see how a local team can win its way to be the official representative to the National title. That's just...I mean, I guess I get that the sport is not only about the competition but the camaraderie...it's just, like in creating the National team for Hockey, or Basketball, wouldn't it make more sense to have the best player in the country play each position? IDK. This game is weird. Fun to watch, but weird.

(#Points! to Luca for commenting on how Oliver's mental image of each ring as progressively having more exciting/destructive obstacles would be more entertaining & improve Curling's viewership; I feel something similar for Baseball.)

Ami says

A slow-burn romance, a light-side of steamy level and a character with (what I assume) falls within the asexual spectrum. Finally, another **SOLID** 4* read. Hey, if I can't find a book worth my 4* for more than 3 days, I consider that a book slump, okay? So I'm ecstatic!

Curling is the hardest easy-looking sport in the world

I still have no idea what curling means -- I even tried to find a video on YouTube to see it visually, but it didn't help me at all. It doesn't matter, though, because the sport is just a channel for Luca and Oliver to form their relationship. With Oliver as a Canadian coach hired by Luca's opponent team's skip (who happens to be

Luca's own brother-in-law, yes, it's complicated *laugh*).

I love these two SO MUCH; I love the additional details that Cockburn adds to the characters. Like Luca's job is to edit medical books (I don't think I've encountered characters with such job!), he meditates, he's the *Zen* part of this book, which makes so interesting when he gets a little intense in the end. Or Oliver, who has (view spoiler) as well as a big chip on his shoulder after (view spoiler).

These two compliment one another and it is a **JOY** for me to read.

I cannot wait to read more books in this series!!

Linda ~ chock full of hoot, just a little bit of nanny ~ says

I have no idea what curling is and honestly it always looks boring as hell in the Olympics, but it's Glasgow Lads! I'm in!

Update:

And now that I've read this, I still don't understand curling, LOL, except to say that it is a lot more complicated than it looks. The author is kind enough to include a crash course at the end and she gave detailed play-by-plays during the competition sections, but as I've never even watched more than a few minutes of any game - and that was years ago - I had a hard time picturing what was going on. Still, Ms. Cockburn was very good at making the stakes clear at all relevant points and that's what really mattered more than anything else.

Anyway, this is another great story from Ms. Cockburn, and we even get a few cameos from the main series. Oliver is an ex-curler from Canada trying to start over in Scotland as a coach for Team Boyd. Luca is the leader of Team Riley, the rival of Team Boyd. He's also the brother-in-law of Team Boyd's leader, Jack. Oliver has ADHD and Luca lives a Zen lifestyle on and off the ice. They appear polar opposites on the surface, but they click immediately and their stories end up paralleling each other in interesting ways.

This is a little insta-love since the story takes place over a week, and it seems especially quick since Luca identifies somewhere on the ace spectrum though he's not really sure where. So the quick pace was a little off but in the end didn't bother me too much since we actually get ample page time of the two getting to know each other since they initially agreed not to start anything because of the conflict of interest. Of course, that doesn't last long - and for those of you who need steamy sex, you're going to be disappointed. There's one sex scene and it's vague on details, focusing instead on the emotional components, which means it was right up my alley. :D

Oliver and Luca have their own baggage and challenges, and some of their decisions, especially Luca's, were frustrating but in a realistic way. I don't need my MCs to be infallible, and these two definitely aren't. I do need them to learn and grow, and Luca and Oliver do that by spades.

Cadiva says

Just as good as her footie books

A romance about curling shouldn't make me cry but oh my lordy I came close on at least three occasions reading this beauty from Avery.

Her Glasgow Lads series is one of my favourite MM series' because she manages with consummate skill to marry her romances into the important issues taking place not only in Scotland but the wider community as well.

This one's focus is a bit more personal though, on living with ADHD and how it turns every action someone makes into a potential bomb waiting to explode into their life.

I loved both the MCs, two men who'd grown up in the curling world but with vastly different backgrounds. Oliver was looking for a new direction but his life had lots of pain, so that was me tearing up the first time!

Luca just made me smile, I loved him so hard, his clown phobia (I'm with him there) and his mindfulness and the friendships with his teammates.

Together they're sweet, and emotional and sexy and funny. There's a fab set secondary characters and we're gifted with a few select appearances from two of my favourite Avery characters Colin and Lord Andrew.

All in all this is just a pure fun read.

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

Price drop to \$0.99 at Amazon US, 10/28/18!

✿ Irish Smurfétté ✿ says

Q: It seemed that this connection they'd formed, the one that felt like it could turn the very wind around, must have been obvious to even a casual onlooker. /Q

Turn the very wind around... that made me pause, and sigh, in the best possible way. Oh how I've missed this author's writing. She knows how to turn a phrase, this'n. And the humor had me chuckling, snortling, and cackling. She idn't too shabby with them emotional type things, either.

And it's she makes it so easy to see and hear all of her characters. I have abso no difficulty in picturing Luca or Oliver yelling "haaaaaaaaard!" ;)

Q: Vice or vice-skip: The second in "command" after the skip. Usually throws third and is often the best all-round shooter. A vice does several important jobs which the skip can't be arsed to do, such as writing definitions to introduce book chapters once His Excellency has finished the glamorous bits. /Q

I cackled.

Uh huh, each chapter has a heading, some more closely related to the sport of Curling than others. It's an entertaining way to begin a new chapter and provide a wee spot of education about the sport around which these characters spend their lives, and their love.

I'm with 'em on that! I looooove Curling. All the great things about good sportsing are here: strategy, luck, surprises, drama, and more.

I also love Glasgow where this tale weaves its winning ways. It's a regular ol' town, Glasgow is, with fantabulous people, good eats, and loads of things to do within walking distance from wherever you begin your ambling.

Q: "So you don't know if he's cut."

"If he's cut what?"

"If he's circumcised, ya loon."

"Oh!" Luca stopped marching. "It never occurred to me. You think he could be?"

"Most Americans are, but I don't know about—hang on." Garen pulled his phone from the pocket of his tracksuit bottoms. "Siri, what's the percentage of Canadian men circumcised?" After a long pause, Siri replied in her BBC-robot voice. "Skies are fifty percent cloudy in Ottawa tonight, decreasing to thirty percent tomorrow."

"She'll never understand our accent," Luca said.

"One day she will. Until then, I'll Google with my thumbs, like they did in Victorian times." /Q

I mean, c'mon, who here hasn't asked one AI or another something just as giggle-snort inducing.

All of the characters are well-drawn, with Garen being one of my faves. And not just for this. ;)

Luca and Oliver have their own weighty bags they're hefting around, and they both have emotional obstacles they're working to overcome... sorta. Yeah, not so much, actually. One's been playing the avoidance game with one's self, and the other is all about the self-punishment. Despite these things, it becomes clear early on that these two share chemistry, and more.

The author includes some characteristics about each of these guys that had me cheering, as they are rare portrayals in books. Even better, they're treated as **one of** the many things that make up their whole as a person, not the single thing that defines them as that whole in the eyes of the rest of the world.

This story hit a number of sweet spots for me, as you've now read. I cannae wait for more from this bunch, incluuuuuding Luca and Oliver. We're only at the beginning!

Oh and yes, some of the characters from her footie series make some cameos. ;)

Kaje Harper says

This curling series has some of the same strengths as this author's soccer series - realistic characters with issues that don't get solved in an instant, sporting moments with tension but that don't overwhelm the story, a flavor of the Glasgow location, and a slow-burn relationship. Oliver's past has enough emotional punch to keep this from being too light, and the way Luca is torn between all the factors pressuring him feels real. I'll be happy to read the next one.

MaDoReader says

Lo siento por la autora que es de mis favoritas, pero, para mí, no ha funcionado :/

Ariana says

3,5 stars

I loved the Glasgow Lads series (and not only because of the Scottish theme!), so I was really looking forward to this one. And I did enjoy it, because ...

- .) Oliver and Luca are great, very cute and sympathetic MCs.
- .) the pull it/ push it of their developing relationship was really well done.
- .) the curling background was rather fascinating (if somewhat elusive to understand ...)
- .) the boys actually spoke to each other about their feelings openly and honestly.
- .) the Glasgow accent made me chuckle (although it may have been overdone on some occasions)

However, I wasn't sure about that:

- .) Topping Oliver's problems with Luca's felt a tad too much for me.
- .) I did not understand why both guys assumed that Oliver would have to leave. (view spoiler)
- .) Luca's issue is only touched upon. I was left wondering how things would pan out in the long run.
- .) Finding out more about curling was fascinating, but left me totally confused. I simply did not get it. (That is nobody's fault but my own, LOL. I really really tried but I guess I would have to watch the sport at least once to get an inkling...)

If you like your novels steamy, be aware there are very few sexy times here. Which in a way is not surprising as these two guys have only known each other for two weeks and neither is into hooking up for the sake of it. So what happens is totally in character, but after all the heat in the Glasgow Lads, I admit to be looking for more...

Still, I love the way Avery Cockburn writes and will look out for the second book.

Elsa Bravante says

Una lectura muy difícil de evaluar, ha tenido cosas que me han gustado mucho y me han recordado a la Avery de los Lads y otras que no me han convencido nada.

La historia de amor de Luca y Oliver comienza y se desarrolla en torno al curling, uno jugador de un equipo y el otro entrenador del equipo rival. Tal y como nos tiene acostumbrados la autora hay mucha química entre los protagonistas, me han gustado mucho ambos, me han enternecido y he suspirado feliz cuando les he visto conseguir su final feliz. Igualmente, se rodean de muy buenos secundarios, prácticamente todos, un apoyo imprescindible para la historia.

Ambos protagonistas tienen dificultades que superar en su vida, aunque las de Oliver parece que pesan más. Oliver tiene (view spoiler) y Luca tiene una sexualidad que se me mueve en (view spoiler), conozco por mi trabajo más lo primero que lo segundo, pero en ambos casos creo que está muy bien retratado.

Por lo tanto, tenemos un libro bien escrito, con buenos protagonistas, agradable... ¿Por qué tres estrellas cuando lo normal para mí con esta autora son cinco?:

-El curling. En los libros de su serie con los lads y el fútbol el romance está muy intrincado con otros temas, dependiendo el libro, religión, política y desigualdad social. La historia de amor no se podía separar de estos temas y cuando cerrabas el libro la sensación que te quedaba es que además de vivir un amor romántico, emotivo y pasional, has aprendido muchas cosas, cosas interesantes. Aquí, todo está vinculado al curling, y estoy segura de que habrá muchos lectores que disfrutarán este aspecto. Desgraciadamente, yo no. Lo digo con todo el respeto, a algunos nos gusta el fútbol y a otros no, pues lo mismo pasa con el curling, a mucha gente le gustará, pero a mí no. Me he metido en su mundo con los ojos cerrados, sin ningún prejuicio porque no lo conocía, y he visto varios videos para enterarme bien de lo que leía. Pero, no lo he terminado de entender, y en general me ha parecido aburrido. Con lo cual, ha habido tramos del libro en los que entendía poco y me aburrían. He leído muchos sport romance con deportes que no me gustan como el baseball o el fútbol americano, pero no hay tanta presencia del deporte, aquí hay mucha. Y lo entiendo, es natural, pero no es lo mío... No es culpa de la autora, ni del libro, es una cuestión de gustos.

- El sexo. Me da un poco de rabia mencionar esto. Yo soy de las "rancias" que se queja de las excesivas escenas de sexo, que se salta muchas y que pide que el autor no se entreteenga en contar cada blowjob de los protagonistas. Jamás veo si un libro tiene sexo explícito o no, me da igual, de hecho muchos de mis favoritos no tienen sexo en página. Pero, en este sentido, la serie de los lads es de mis favoritas, pocos autores consiguen escribir escenas de sexo tan eróticas y a la vez con tanta fuerza emotiva como Avery, nunca sobran, siempre tienen su lugar en la historia. Entiendo que aquí la historia es distinta, las circunstancias no son iguales por los personajes, pero me habría gustado que se hubiera entretenido algo más en Luca, en su cabeza, en entenderle, en ver la diferencia que supone Oliver y su pasión con él, en lugar de un fundido en negro. Sinceramente, ha sido un tanto decepcionante. Pero aquí, otra vez, es una cuestión de mi gusto personal.

- La historia se desarrolla en un espacio de tiempo muy corto, a veces da la sensación de que es todo muy precipitado, y me habría gustado ver más de los protagonistas porque sus interacciones son realmente buenas.

No me ha llegado a convencer, y quizás me esperaba más, pero no es un mal comienzo para una serie y con seguridad leeré el siguiente.

Tess says

4 stars

If you're trying to understand curling (and it's culture) as you're watching the Olympics, this book is a great place to start!
