



The Knowledge

Martha Grimes

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With their signature wit, sly plotting, and gloriously offbeat characters, Martha Grimes's *New York Times* bestselling Richard Jury mysteries are "utterly unlike anyone else's detective novels" (*Washington Post*). In the latest series outing, *The Knowledge*, the Scotland Yard detective nearly meets his match in a Baker Street Irregulars-like gang of kids and a homicide case that reaches into east Africa.

Robbie Parsons is one of London's finest, a black cab driver who knows every street, every theater, every landmark in the city by heart. In his backseat is a man with a gun in his hand—a man who brazenly committed a crime in front of the Artemis Club, a rarefied art gallery-cum-casino, then jumped in and ordered Parsons to drive. As the criminal eventually escapes to Nairobi, Detective Superintendent Richard Jury comes across the case in the Saturday paper.

Two days previously, Jury had met and instantly connected with one of the victims of the crime, a professor of astrophysics at Columbia and an expert gambler. Feeling personally affronted, Jury soon enlists Melrose Plant, Marshall Trueblood, and his whole gang of merry characters to contend with a case that takes unexpected turns into Tanzanian gem mines, a closed casino in Reno, Nevada, and a pub that only London's black cabbies, those who have "the knowledge," can find. *The Knowledge* is prime fare from "one of the most fascinating mystery writers today" (*Houston Chronicle*).

The Knowledge Details

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From Reader Review The Knowledge for online ebook

Marjorie says

As David and Rebecca Moffit exit a cab in front of an exclusive club/casino/art gallery called Artemis, they are tragically shot to death. The shooter then jumps in the cab, points a gun at the cab driver, Robbie Parsons, and tells him to drive.

Det. Superintendent Richard Jury becomes involved in the murder case due to the fact that he had met the victims two days before their death and felt an instant bond with David. He's determined to find the murderer as the investigation moves from London to Reno, Nevada to Tanzanian gem mines and even to Africa.

While I don't often read cozy mysteries any longer, Martha Grimes is one author that I always return to. I've read each of her books and it was quite a pleasure to once again spend time with her unique, eccentric characters. This book also introduced us to a gang of young children, particularly the clever Patty Haight, who were all delightful. Ms. Grimes' books are character and humor driven and are unlike any other mystery series. From Richard Jury to his aristocrat friend Melrose Plant to dear Wiggins, Marshall Trublood, Carole-Anne, Diane and Vivian and even the mischievous cat Cyril, all such beloved characters. I did miss Aunt Agatha in this particular book. Logic and believability may be lacking in the mystery department but her books more than make up for it in the character department.

Recommended as are all of Martha Grimes' books.

This book was given to me by the publisher in return for an honest review.

Judy says

The quirky cab drivers in this book were such a treat! I always like a new Richard July mystery and this one was a fun read. Early in the book a couple is killed in front of an exclusive casino/nightclub. A cabbie, Robbie Parsons, had driven the couple to the venue and a man with a gun jumped into his car and told him to drive. Robbie drove around the London and finally dropped the man at Waterloo Station.

A bunch of kids who were friends of Robbie tracked the man to Heathrow where he boarded a plane. Patty Haigh, age 10 (my favorite character in this book) actually finagled her way onto the plane to continue following the man. Richard Jury is, of course, brought in to investigate the murders and he had actually met and liked the man who was killed. The hunt is on to find the killer and some interesting information develops.

The Knowledge is a bar for Black Cab drivers only. It is a secret place and the secret is carefully kept by the cabbies. It is not on any map and many people have tried to find it.

I enjoyed this mystery and loved the quirky characters. The writing is clever and flows well. This story is a fun one because of the characters and the intricate plot.

Thanks to Martha Grimes and Grove Atlantic through Netgalley for an advance copy of this book.

Betsy says

I love Richard Jury and Melrose Plant, but I am not fond of the way many of the books in the series have gone recently, in particular the author's seeming need to thrust children as main characters into every novel. This one has a pip named Patty Haigh, who is so unbelievable as to be just this side of nauseating.

On the other hand, it did have some reminiscences about other cases and other pubs, none like THE KNOWLEDGE however. Most of the usual characters are included as well although I wish Jury would leave off matchmaking since it is almost as boring as the insufferable Carole-anne Palutski.

One thing I wish Grimes would clear up is in what year all this mystery takes place? It gives the impression that it's the 21st century, but Jury's non-knowledge about tanzanite is bizarre. I knew about its scarcity years ago, and I'm not a Detective Superintendent. He seems a trifle too naive in this one as well. And just exactly how old is he? All those references to his mother would seem to make him older than he would appear to be.

As I said, I like the Jury/Plant series, but I wish Martha Grimes would simplify her plots. She's got two of the best characters so she doesn't need to pile on so many others, who only seem to muddle, not clarify, the issues.

Kathy says

I read all the Richard Jury books I was able to find in another era, usually finding them at used book sales. This latest addition to the series came after a rather long piece of time and I found I was unable to embrace the Jury group of odd friends. There were also people holding important parts of this plot that were truly unbelievable and did not amuse for that reason. If I describe it would spoil book for others, I have a shelf of these books that I think I may have to pass along to other readers as I now realize I have no desire to revisit the books. Time to let go.

Chris Conley says

Ahhhhh...another adventure with Richard Jury, Melrose Plant, Marshall Trueblood and the entire cast of characters. The crime at the heart of this one hits Jury particularly hard. The ensuing solution is vintage Jury. I do love these books.

Lou says

Martha Grimes is what you call a prolific producer of excellent crime fiction having released a book (sometimes two) annually for the past 25 years! Now that's dedication! Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, United States, where her father was the City Solicitor. Her mother owned the Mountain Lake Hotel in Western Maryland where Martha and her brother spent a substantial period of their childhood. Later, Grimes earned her B.A. and M.A. at the University of Maryland and put them to good use writing page-turning tales that have been described as falling into the mystery genre and into the "literary mystery" niche sub-genre.

Her stories place emphasis on well-written character-driven aspects and less on violence. In 1983, Grimes received the Nero Wolfe Award for best mystery of the year for "The Anodyne Necklace". In 2012, Grimes was named Grand Master by The Edgar Awards Mystery Writers of America.

"The Knowledge" is the 24th(!) book in the critically acclaimed Richard Jury series, and features Jury as an inspector with Scotland Yard and his friend Melrose Plant, a British aristocrat who has given up his titles. A little known fact is that each of the Jury mysteries is named after a pub and this one is no different - named after the extensive testing cab drivers go through in order to gain a licence. Some of her other books include the Emma Graham quartet of novels and the Andi Oliver duology. She is also a passionate animal activist and donated two-thirds of her royalties for "Biting The Moon", the first book in the Andi Oliver series released in 1999, to animal abuse organisations.

Although I haven't had the pleasure of reading all the previous 23 novels in this wonderful series, the ones I have read have lead me to having extremely high expectations as Grimes writes such unique books and I would say she is certainly a masterful writer within this genre. There are so many authors writing very similar stories yet Grimes can write an inordinate amount of titles without resorting to "borrowing ideas" from others. I am blown away by how intriguing each story is and how engaged I was from the beginning right until the conclusion.

This is an authentic British mystery that keeps you enthralled and excited and manages to do so without using violence at the every turn, something that takes a lot of skill to achieve. Her characters are exceptionally drawn, especially Mr. Jury who has to be one of my favourite and most enduring characters in modern literature. There are some delightfully curious details that you won't find elsewhere and one of my most loved elements - the prose, it's simply spectacular and pulls you into the book immediately. All of these aspects combine to create a magical reading experience.

I do hope that Grimes continues to publish the Richard Jury series as it has swiftly become a favourite of mine. I plan to go back and read the rest of the books that I haven't read yet and also delve into her other titles. Jury is an eccentric and loveable character that I would surely miss should this series come to an end. Brilliant, just brilliant!

Many thanks to Grove Press for an ARC. I was not required to post a review and all thoughts and opinions expressed are my own.

Diane S ? says

It has been almost four years since the last Richard Jury has been published. As soon as I started reading this I was reminded just how much I enjoy this series, these characters, like catching up with old friends. This story includes a murder of a wealthy married couple in front of an exclusive gambling establishment, two people who Jury had just met a few days before. Of course he is drawn in to the case, and he enlists his two friends, Melrose Plant who he send to Africa, and Trusvlood, who he establishes as a black jack dealer in the gambling venue. Without his knowledge a small group of intrepid children, including the eleven year old Patty Haigh. This young girl is unbelievable, not a person to mess with, funny, fearless and quite enchanting. The Knowledge itself is a place that only those cab drivers who drive black cabs are able to find. Not even the police can find this place. Someone does though and who it is adds a bit of whimsy.

This is a series that is entertaining, has some great characters and an intriguing mystery that has ties to Africa. Some of what happens is probably unbelievable but it makes for a good story. Love the interplay between the characters, and appreciate the steady pace and the many turns this story takes.

Love this series and hope this time there is not as many years before next in series.

ARC from Netgalley.

3 no 7 says

“The Knowledge” by Martha Grimes is book twenty-four in the Richard Jury series. The story begins in London on Friday, November 1, and traverses across the city and several continents at a frantic pace. Grimes reaches out and pulls in the reader right from the first line.

“He was a dead man and he knew it.”

Robbie Parsons drives a prestigious Black Cab, but he was shocked when shots ring out and the killer jumps into his cab. A fast-paced frantic chase through London ensues with the cabbies and the assistance of unusual “extra” helpers, local street children. After a frenzied drive seemingly nowhere, the passenger, and murderer of two people, abruptly puts the gun away, pays the fare, and gets out.

Meanwhile, Detective Superintendent Richard Jury, New Scotland Yard CID, is shocked when he reads the newspaper headline: Couple Shot Outside Trendy London Club. He had met this couple a few nights earlier at a local club. As the city police and Scotland Yard scramble to find the killer, the challenging question is “Why were they killed?” Money? Revenge? Love? None of the usual motives seems to fit this bizarre murder. Even Jury is muddled. “Superintendent, you have a way of speaking in riddles.”

Jury, however, is the consummate investigator, digging for truth and answers, question and requesting everyone.

“What? I didn’t tell you everything? You think I was lyin’?”

“Not at all. But no one ever tells us ‘all he knows’ because you don’t know all you know.”

Occasionally a bit of humor is thrown in at the expense of TV. “We should have a murder board, sir. We’ve been through all of that, Wiggins. And it’s a whiteboard. Don’t talk like we’re a TV cop show.”

The story is not linear, and the action moves from one place to another, from one perspective to another, and from one time to another. As details about the couple come out, the conspiracy moves across continents from the United States to Africa. Flashbacks fill in the background and details, and each chapter is identified with the date and location.

All the characters are well developed and interesting. Everyday details and ordinary happenings are interspersed throughout the book. Casual conversations set the tone and give glimpses into their personalities. Characters are real, believable, and readers like them.

London’s black cab drivers play a key role in the resolution of the mystery, and they provide the title of the book. Since London is complicated to navigate, black cab drivers must pass a rigorous geographic test, claimed to be one of the hardest in the world. It was called “the knowledge.” That was also the name of a hidden hangout for cab drivers, and one that NEVER allowed non-drivers access. Well, maybe there will be an exception.

One especially interesting and unique character is Patty Haigh, one of the “child assistants” involved. The children “informers” do present some “social” incongruities. Patty is extremely well prepared for sleuthing, especially for a ten-year old child, and adept enough that that she traverses international airports, sneaks into

foreign countries, talks her way into luxury hotels, and returns to live on the streets of London without some sort of social service intervention.

I was given a copy of “The Knowledge” from Martha Grimes, Atlantic Monthly Press, and NetGalley. I loved every word. I could not put it down. This book is every bit as engaging as the twenty-three before it. It was as easy to read and seemed as if it were reading about an old friend. Oh wait, I was!

Mary Lins says

Holy Cow! Hang on to your socks – this new Richard Jury novel, “The Knowledge”, by Martha Grimes – starts out with a BANG! We are introduced to Robbie Parsons, a highly skilled London Black Cab driver, and his merry band of cohorts (fellow Cabbies and assorted pick pockets and grifters), as he witnesses a double murder and then is kidnapped by the murderer and told to “Drive!” It’s Robbie’s quick thinking, knowledge of the streets of the City, and his coded messages to other drivers, which sets us off to an amazing cinematic chase scene!

As it turns out, Robbie’s coterie of “helpers” are children! Nine and ten years old; precocious and “street-smart”. Fans of Martha Grimes know that she writes AWESOME kid characters; what a treat to have them pop up here. The best bits of this novel are the interactions/relationship between Melrose Plant, aka Lord Ardry, Jury’s titled friend and perennial “helper”, and ten-year-old, Patty Haigh. This is a fast-paced novel but I slowed down to savor these passages full of humor and a little pathos.

Thank you, Ms. Grimes, for not phasing out the wonderful ancillary characters that make the Richard Jury series so wonderful, humorous and rich! We learn a LOT more about Marshall Trueblood’s fascinating past! And maybe sense a little romantic movement between Melrose and Vivienne?

Settle in for an engaging mystery with jaunts into the world of tanzanite mining (we go to Africa!), astrophysics and quantum mechanics, and lots of fun facts about the strange and mysterious streets of the City of London and the super-secret pub known only to cabbies, called The Knowledge.

Jane says

I have read, and have looked forward to reading, every book in the Richard Jury series. The characters have been clever, intelligent and amusing. The dialogue crisp and delightful. This book, however, is so disappointing on so many levels. The first is the convoluted plot of tanzanite, smuggling, Africa, gambling, to name a few.

Then there is the matter of ten year-old Patty Haight. The girl who does everything. She manages to: finagle herself aboard planes to foreign countries; cavort across the African countryside; con every adult she meets into doing her bidding. And I repeat-a ten year old? This was absolutely and positively unbelievable. Does no flight attendant ever check her ID or passport? I have more trouble boarding on domestic flights. By the time I finished reading The Knowledge, I was not only confused by all the subplots, I simply didn't care.

Joyce says

5 stars

We begin our story with the kidnapping of Robbie Parsons, a Black Cab driver. After driving around the city with a posh couple in his backseat, he winds up outside of the Artemis Club a casino and art gallery. Suddenly, a menacing man shoots the man and woman and jumps into the backseat of Robbie's cab. Told to drive, he drives all over the city. He finally drops the shooter off at the Waterloo Station. The man is very polite and leaves him a large tip.

We then meet a gang of kids with their pulses on the beat of the city. They track the bad guy for Robbie all the way to Heathrow. They are armed with cell phones and a phenomenal knack for tracking and networking among themselves. Ten-year old Patty Haigh is tracking him at Heathrow and finagles her way onto the plane. But as the plane is about to leave for Dubai, she is in a near panic. She hasn't received instructions and the plane is about to leave. Is she stuck on her way to Dubai? She goes with the man to Nairobi, Kenya.

The book describes the origin and ethos of The Knowledge, a bar for Black Cab drivers only.

Superintendent Richard Jury is glancing at the paper when he sees the story of the two people shout outside the Artemis. He knows them. He met Dr. David Moffit and his wife Rebecca. He was an American teaching at Columbia in New York. His wife had dual citizenship, British and American. They became fast friends over a philosophical talk about theoretical physics over dinner. He has plans to meet up with them again the following Saturday.

Superintendent Jury suspects something is going on at the Artemis Club when he learns of someone shot outside the owner's club in Nevada. Also, he has a large collection of Tanzanite on the premises. He sends Marshall Trueblood to the club to be their new dealer. At the same time, Melrose Plant goes to Africa. There he meets up with the irrepressible Patty Haigh.

Patty and Melrose learn an interesting fact about the mysterious BB, the killer of the Moffit's. When Melrose reports back to Jury, Jury is astounded.

With astute police work and perseverance, the case begins to come together. They have the name of the killer. Or do they just think that they do? Suddenly, the case all comes together.

This book is very well written and plotted as are all of Martha Grimes' novels. It is filled with colorful, delightful and (mostly) likeable characters. The tension in the story begins immediately with the shooting of the Moffit's and the kidnapping of Robbie Parsons, a Black Cab driver. It continues throughout the story as we follow Patty's journey in Africa and Jury's investigation of the crime. The characters are delightful, unique and engaging. Like a meeting of old friends: Jury, Melrose, Wiggins and Marshall, and some new ones: Patty and Robbie, they're all here. It's Martha Grimes at her best. I simply loved the book. I will continue to read Ms. Grimes as long as she continues to write.

I want to thank NetGalley and Grove Atlantic/Atlantic Monthly Press for forwarding to me a copy of this wonderful book to read and enjoy.

sarah morgan says

Net Galley ARC. This was my first Martha Grimes (Richard Jury) mystery. It started out well enough, a husband and wife shot dead outside a posh London casino. And it continued well enough as Robbie, an expert black cabbie, is forced at gunpoint to drive the perp across London and eventually to Heathrow. Then begins a long series of curveballs, requests for suspension of disbelief, I found increasingly difficult to summon, and digressions into minor character's backgrounds, philosophies, and... well, it went on and on.

I have to say the book is well written and there were some quips by Scotland Yard sleuth and the eponymous Richard Jury that made me chuckle, but a pre-teen girl who manages to pickpocket an Emirates boarding pass and get the name changed on it... at Heathrow? Please.

Maybe I'm a curmudgeon and like my mysteries gritty and realistic, but I think this is all too clever and it seems as though the author is asking, how far will my readers follow me? This one is #24 in her Jury series. I won't be looking for #25.

Lindy Schwartz says

This one starts out really strong and then just floundered into flights of "pay no attention to what I am showing you, this is what really happened behind the curtain" which leaves me flat. I like these characters and have followed the series for years but was very disappointed with the muddy reveal.

Kristi Lamont says

Maybe it's not you, Martha. Maybe it's me. But there is asking a reader to suspend disbelief, and there is asking a reader to really suspend disbelief, from the get-go. Especially when it comes to The Precocious Kid Trope. And while some may have found our Jury's jaunts down memory lane enjoyable, I felt like they were filler (and that it was unreasonable to expect such minute details to be remembered years and years and books and books later). I'm bummed that it's come to this; this series has given me so many hours of reading pleasure up until now. Well, here's hoping we get along better next time!

Deborah says

Ten-fifteen years ago, if you'd asked about my favourite book series I probably would have said it was those by Martha Grimes and featuring Scotland Yard detective Richard Jury alongside the aristocratic but diffident Melrose Plant.

All named after a pub featured in the book (kicking off with *The Man With A Load of Mischief* in 1981), they were my comfort reads. I LOVED our main players - Jury himself and Melrose Plant of course. I'd even worked out who should play each in a TV series at one point. (And was later disappointed to see those cast in a German series based on the books - a bit like my response to the UK TV version of the Elizabeth George's Inspector Thomas Lynley series.)

I struggled a little at one point in this series. Jury seemed to constantly be falling in love with women you'd

least expect and it felt as if the story, and our characters, floundered a little. Even now I'm not sure if their lives are really going anywhere. Perhaps Grimes doesn't know where she wants to take them. Indeed, I read somewhere that she'd 'slowed' time between each book in the series to avoid the characters ageing too much.

And in reality they haven't really aged since I first met them 20-30 years ago, which IS a good thing for me. I don't want to read about them as 80yr olds, but would prefer they stay in their 30s, 40s or 50s. (Or perhaps I want them to age at a similar pace to me.... which I'd also like to be slowed down if at all possible?

#Kthnxbai).

There are many things I adore about the series. The characters, obviously. Grimes really nails the voices of her main cast, including Jury, Plant, Jury's colleague Wiggins and neighbour Carole-Anne Palutski, along with Plant's eccentric band of English aristocrats; incidentally, written incredibly well by an American author.

And... I think I've said this before, she writes kids really really well. Many of her Jury / Plant series have featured self-possessed and audacious youngsters all playing well off both main characters. (And then of course there's her Emma Graham series, centred around the series' 12yr old namesake.)

It's no different here as we're dragged from London to Kenya by Patty, a 10yr old street kid. (One needs to suspend disbelief, I must admit, in contemplating how a child could travel on two international flights, roam about Nairobi and eventually run into the one person she needs to. But, #whatevs)

I could easily have read this in a sitting and was tempted to ditch my plans to do so. My original plan involved only starting the book but I kept going, such is the warm enveloping nature of Grimes' narrative.

As always, both of our heroes get their time in the spotlight - I've wondered if she prefers one over the other - and think I was once very much in team Jury camp, but am prevaricating a bit about that (and team-Melrose) as I've gotten older.
