



The Old Fox Deceiv'd

Martha Grimes

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Scotland Yard's Richard Jury and his sidekick Melrose Plant converge on a northern fishing village to hunt down a wily killer.

The Old Fox Deceiv'd Details

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From Reader Review The Old Fox Deceiv'd for online ebook

Gerry says

"Sounds a right muddle", said Superintendent Racer after Jury had filled him in on the Rackmoor case' features on page 194 of this book. Never a truer word was spoken and the muddle continues right through to page 308 (the end).

Rackmoor is a north Yorkshire village where a murder takes place on Twelfth Night. The partygoers are all in fancy dress and it eventually turns out that the clue to the murder lies in the costumes and make-up that are worn. But it is a long and weary road to that conclusion with all sorts of seemingly unrelated incidents and pretty boring characters along the way. All of which make this a tedious and uninteresting read - I finished it just to see what was going to happen ... I needn't have bothered.

Sorry Martha Grimes but it was not for me.

Sarah says

i couldn't find a copy of this book at any of my local libraries so i ended up listening to it on tape (read by tim curry who did a FANTASTIC job and caused me to seek out other books read by him...i'm excited because he apparently did a lot of the richard jury books and his voice suits these wry british mysteries so well). anyway, i thoroughly enjoyed the reading, but it was abridged so i feel like i might have missed some further dialogue that would have made me enjoy the book even more. i love the relationship between plant and jury and there was very little time for interaction between them on the audio version. hopefully there would be more in the actual book. my mind also has a tendency to wander when i am listening to audio books so i end up zoning out and missing things. i am very much a visual learner :). regardless, the story was good and made all the more enjoyable by tim's great accents.

Margaret says

An enjoyable, entertaining, easy book.

Barb says

I loved Martha Grimes's The Man With A Load of Mischief and decided to try the second of her mysteries, The Old Fox Deceiv'd, which employs some of the same likeable characters in a similar English setting. Unfortunately, there were many, many new characters introduced so I suggest keeping a character list if your memory is poor like mine. I ran out of paper and patience after jotting down 21 bios without knowing who was to be important to the plot (turns out half my list were unimportant characters and some whom I neglected to list were important). There were lots of twists and turns, mistaken identities and humor to keep the plot moving but it never quite equaled her first book for me...and all that writing made my hand ache. Still it was good enough for me to try another, which I am about to do. So glad these witty little mysteries are still floating around used book sales!

Kay says

Re-read of the second-ever Jury & Plant village mystery, complete with some of the gentry, and some horses and hunts and hotels, and murders, of course, and a plucky 12-year-old boy, and a Twelfth Night setting, and a great pub with its lovely proprietress. Jury and Plant are not close buddies yet, but the seeds are there and the mystery is intriguing and the solution surprises and satisfies.

Enjoyed the metafiction of Maud-the-hopeful-bride-of-the-manor confessing to hanging out in the pub when the writing's not going well, grabbing Wiggins' interest as he asks, "what sorts of things do you write"->romances he has seen. We have to wonder if Grimes does the same pub-going!

The best description of the book: "A haze of gray had settled over her once-dark hair like the bloom on stale chocolate."

S Dizzy says

Another interesting mystery with Jury and Plant with crisp writing and vivid scenes, with a spot of wit thrown in as well.

First Melrose had made quite sure that Julian would be going for his morning walk by offering to accompany him. Julian had given him the same look he might have used had Melrose offered to share his bath water. Walking for an hour on the moors (as Julian said he intended to do) when one could be sitting by a warm fire drinking Cockburn's Very Superior Port seemed to Melrose the act of a madman, but it would give him an opportunity to undertake his search.

Suzy says

Now I get it! While I enjoyed the first Richard Jury book and rated it 4 stars, I didn't quite understand why it was a favorite of my niece and her Mom, two of my mystery book buddies. I liked this for all the reasons listed in my review of the first in the series, *The Man With a Load of Mischief*. Those things I love in a murder mystery were amplified in this book #2 with none of the things that drove me crazy in book #1. How much did I like this book? I'm declaring this a favorite series!

Steve West's narration is perfect for the classic Brit battle of the classes that plays out in in Grimes's cast of characters.

On to book #3!

GeraniumCat says

This series manages to be pretty enjoyable despite some highly implausible characters and some liberties with English idiom. I think that, although set in England, they were intended for US readers, so some things which have equivalents on either side of the Atlantic tend to get their US names.

The series is quite formulaic in many ways - there are always children, dogs or cats, and the same group of characters always put in an appearance: Richard Jury, who is a nice policeman, Melrose Plant who has given up his title (but it's always referred to because it always comes in handy to impress), Plant's ghastly aunt, and others. As the series goes on these people spend more and more time sitting around, while sub-plots accrue around them.

The Old Fox Deceiv'd is an early excursion - only Jury and Plant really feature, and events happen relatively straightforwardly. Jury's angst is beginning to be established, though, as he frets about impending promotion.

One of the things I like about the series is that they aren't focussed on London. This one is set in a village with the most unlikely name, for N. Yorkshire, near Whitby. Grimes can't help seeing things with an American eye and sometimes she just plain gets things wrong. Bastardising the name of the small Scottish town where I grew up is one of her mistakes, and I winced every time I read it, because it originates from the wrong language. It's a pity, because her sense of place is otherwise good. And apart from that, I enjoyed it.

Gail says

Light, comical, enjoyable mystery with engaging characters, although Jury's ability to turn women into jello is a bit tiresome. Still, it's worth a read for the humor and the very engaging little boy. Grimes often has her heroes, Jury and Plant, interact with children in a delightful and highly realistic way.

One off thing: this series is set in England, but the author is an American. Once in a while, what seems to be an "Americanism" sort of interferes with the illusion; of course, as an American, I'm not sure if the British would use the expressions or not.

Aoife says

Not sure how much of it is too blame on the atrocious German translation but I didn't really connect with this book despite the engaging mystery and the interesting characters. I also was a bit confused because parts of it were quite light-hearted and others were quite dark, including most of the characters back-stories. Might give this series another try but not very soon.

C. says

We are remembering you with all our hearts, Lovey. Four years today does nothing to stop that and never will, our precious white cat. Please watch over your brother, Conan. Guide whomever has been around him to read his tattoo or something. Whether he walks or is helped further, may our other precious son be home soon. Having Conan home with us at last, will comfort us not being able to have you.

My book review will be along in a while. Dates like today are sacred, however traumatic and grief-stricken it was four years ago. Our Lovey is thought of with smiles now. You certainly brought them in person, with love since infancy that prompted your very appropriate name.

Dorothy says

Twelfth Night in the tiny Yorkshire fishing village of Rackmoor. It is a typically chilly and very foggy night with a North Sea wind blowing. The perfect night for murder.

A young woman in costume apparently on her way to a Twelfth Night party at the local manor house is brutally murdered, her body left on steps on the way to the party. She was stabbed with some sort of two-pronged instrument. The police can't find the murder weapon or very many clues to what actually happened.

Days later, when the trail has already grown cold, New Scotland Yard is called in and Inspector Richard Jury, along with his sidekick Wiggins, is assigned to the case. He's soon joined by his unofficial sidekick, Melrose Plant, who just *happens* to be a guest in that aforementioned manor house.

There are many questions about the victim of the murder. First of all, her identity. Was she really Dillys March, the long-lost much-loved ward of Colonel Titus Crael, owner of the manor house? She certainly bore a remarkable resemblance to Dillys, but that wasn't the name she gave. Was she truly Gemma Temple, the name which she had used? What was she doing in Rackmoor? Was she involved in some kind of scam in which she was trying to convince the Colonel that she *was* his ward so that she could share in his fortune? And, most of all, who stood to gain by her death?

As Jury and his cohorts begin to pursue these questions, they uncover an unexpectedly tangled web that leads to other undiscovered murders. And, of course, it all has its roots in a decades-old maze of unrequited loves and unavenged wrongs in the village. The quiet, unassuming English village once again proves to be a very dangerous place.

As in Martha Grimes' first entry in her Inspector Richard Jury series, which I just read earlier this week, we find that Rackmoor has its full complement of eccentric residents, several of whom have potential motives for murder and all of whom seem to have strong opinions about the murdered woman, as well as some of the tragedies of earlier years which have possibly led up to this particular murder.

Two of the most sympathetic characters whom we meet in *The Old Fox Deceiv'd* are a young boy named Bertie and his dog Arnold. Both ultimately play a role in the unmasking of the murderer. Twelve-year-old Bertie has been left on his own by his mother who has gone off to London to pursue her dreams, which would only be impeded by the presence of an almost teenage son. Bertie and Arnold actually manage quite well without her. Bertie works part time and various people look in on him daily and make sure he has what he needs. The village takes care of its own. Who needs social services?

Rackmoor does indeed seem to have been an idyllic place before those pesky murders intruded. Things are never quite what they seem though, are they?

Again, Grimes has constructed a charming cozy mystery with quirky characters and plenty of gentle humor. Just the ticket for a summer day when it is too hot to do much of anything except sit in the shade with a cooling drink and read.

Charles E. says

I love the Richard Jury series. I first read these books about 20-years ago and after they became available for the Kindle I decided to reread the series (I had forgotten many of the details). They are just as fun to read now as they were then.

Each book is named after a famous English pub, where some of the action takes place, and all somehow involve a child and a cat.

This is the second of the series and I strongly suggest reading the series in order because characters from earlier books, as well as references to cases, pop up as the series progresses.

Great Fun!!!!!!!

IslandRiverScribe says

This British police procedural, the second in Martha Grimes' Richard Jury series, is not only written in the early 1980's, it takes place in that time frame also. Therefore, no cell phones, no computers, no Internet, and no DNA testing exist to speed things up or save the day. Our protagonist and his compatriots must solve the murder the old-fashioned way with paper and pencil, personal interviews, attentive visual observation, open-mindedness, logic and cunning.

The novel begins in a rather unique way. In the first 15 pages are 5 separate scenes. The first scene details the events a few minutes prior to the murder and the murder itself from the victim's point of view. The second and third scenes detail the exact same time frame from the viewpoints of two other residents of the village as their time lines momentarily intersect with the victim. The fourth scene is the finding of the body and a nasty, bloody find it is. The fifth scene details the arrival of the local detective inspector who will have to, unwillingly, cede control of the investigation to Scotland Yard and Detective Chief Inspector (soon to be Superintendent) Richard Jury.

While the opening scenes may be quite dramatic, the remainder of the book is quite deliberate and convoluted. It is a cerebral walk through innuendoes, lies, secrets and past lives. Late in the book, finally picking up on one discrepancy in a minor character's story, I got my first feel toward the murderer's identity. And while I did get that correct, I missed the motivation completely.

This novel is also a walk through a northern seacoast village whose culture and language are a far cry from those of London, not only for the reader but for Jury himself. Both the dialect and the colloquialisms of the village culture gave me a rough time throughout the book. I finally gave up on the dictionary and simply read for general effect in those areas. While the dialect was somewhat capable of being decoded, the many references tied specifically to the sport of fox hunting and the thatching of roofs were practically impenetrable. It's almost as if the author was being deliberately heavy handed, trying to show off to the reader and/or prove the depth of her research.

Locale aside, Grimes writes novels that are character-driven. Jury is not the stereotypical cop who bullies his witnesses and suspects; he is the cop who uses patience and research to quietly trip them up. He treats his coworkers with respect and knows how to shut up and turn the other cheek when respect is not an option. He is a man who surreptitiously helps those abused by power or neglect. And he is a man who hovers just on the edge of clinical depression. Wiggins, while a hypochondriac, has a penchant for detail and organization and is thus a useful sergeant for Jury. And Plant, the earl who renounced his title and who wants to be a detective, seems destined to become Jury's best friend.

Grimes also writes novels that are character-based, rather than situational. The major characters of Jury, Plant and Wiggins have traveled from the first novel to this one. They are written in three-dimension, clearly drawn physically and intellectually, with more and more hints to their emotional makeup provided. Their experiences in the past novel significantly flavor their responses and interpretations in this tale, and they are

appearing to become something of a team.

What Grimes does not write is action-adventure. However, this novel is not a cozy or a beach read either. The murder is violent and intricately motivated even if it is solved by brains rather than brawn. And Grimes makes the murder part of this novel a standalone situation – begun, processed and solved in one book with no major plot threads hanging on to fuel a future plot line.

However, even when cliffhangers are not involved, novels in a series are always best read in order. This series is no exception since previous situations are referenced but not explained. And, oh, by the way, when you have finished the last page of the book, go back and read those first 5 scenes again.

Writerlibrarian says

We find Jury and Melrose looking for a murderer in a fishing village on the coast in Yorkshire. Their reunion doesn't include Agatha (which for me is a plus, I find that character very annoying) but does include an old pub and a village where the streets are very narrow and twisted. One can lost herself or himself in them. The murder mystery is interesting, we have an adorable little boy and his dog (bordering on the too cute, almost). Still, some red herrings, some smart twists. I liked it then, I like it now. Good comfort reading. 3 1/2 stars.

Amy says

This is a difficult book to rate. It never really caught me like some mysteries. You know the type, the books that by chapter two you're committed to staying up all night to finish the book even though you have a job interview the next morning at 8 am.

The mystery was appropriately twisty. The characters interesting. It was overall good but a bit plodding.

Kara says

This was another great mystery done by Martha Grimes. I enjoyed the first book more because there were so many funny, interesting, and oddball characters, however the ones which did carryover were a joy to see back. I love Martha Grimes theme of placing murders in towns with unique pubs, and I especially love Jury traveling from town to town to solve them. It not only gives each story a new fresh setting so you're never stuck in one place, but also keeps it comforting and familiar by having some of the same great characters in book after book.

I listened to this book on audio, so as far as narration goes, seriously Steve West is unreal. I listen to ALL books on audio, and I have never come across a narrator who has as many voices as he does. He must have a bottomless bag spilling over with them because each and every character has his/her own unique tone. The fact that Richard Jury will be going from town to town solving murders in a series of almost 2 dozen novels means we will be introduced to dozens and dozens of characters. Steve West is by far in the top of his class and the perfect narrator to perform this series. I love him so much I've actually added some books to my wish list just because he's the narrator. Im completely hooked to everything and everyone surrounding this series. As far as Im concerned, each book is worth several golden credits.

Simina says

I'll admit it: I'm well and truly hooked by this series. I haven't had so much fun in ages. This one was grimmer than the first, a little bit more prone to reflection, but it was just as awesome - if not even more so.

The recurring characters are coming along nicely. I like how they evolve and I enjoy their relationship. They all contribute to the plot, there isn't really a single character that eclipses the rest completely. I know mentioning Louise Penny's series again isn't really relevant, but I think that's where she failed. Her main character is made out to be so much nobler and better than everyone else. This is why I think Martha Grimes' Richard Jury series is much, much better.

Points go also to the atmosphere. Martha Grimes knows her village winter apparently. The descriptions and the weather go marvelously well with the story.

Also, I've got to mention Bertie and his dog as another attraction. But then again, I'm always up for a book that has a dog in it.

The Flooze says

I'm very glad to have found this series. The characters are delightful: Jury, the gentlemanly detective who is haunted yet still enjoys the little things; Wiggins, his oddly insightful, hypochondriac Sergeant; Melrose, the charming and witty aristocrat; and last but not least, the dreaded busybody Aunt Agatha.

Even the characters specific to the case are interesting, as Grimes does her best to imbue them with distinct personalities rather than littering the tale with cardboard cutouts of witnesses and suspects.

The case itself is a twisty one. The suspects are many - just enough people with motive to make figuring things out a challenge for both the leads and the reader. Accompanying them as they ferret out information in their distinctive ways is a treat.

I also enjoyed the references to the first case. It's always nice to have continuity and the feeling of catching up on old friends.

Finally, I must give a shout-out to my favorite character: Oh, Arnold. You're the bestest boy in all the world. You're a fine doggie, and I hope we see you and your owner again.

Jenny says

[Rolfe had had an affair with the cook, Lily's mom (hide spoiler)]
