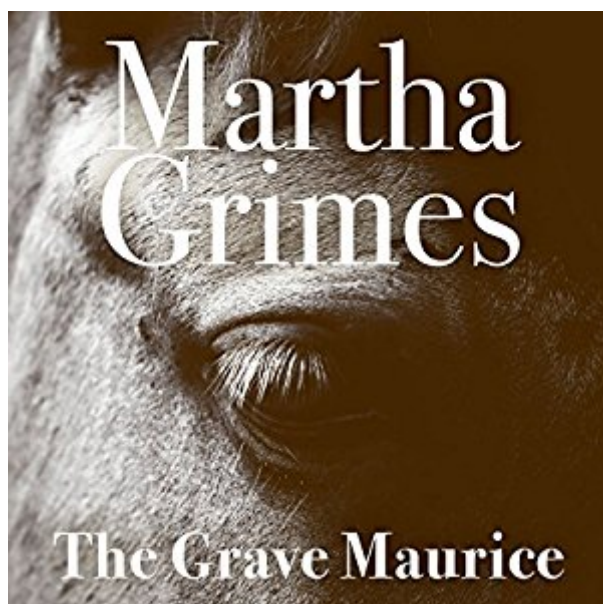


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The Grave Maurice: Richard Jury, Book 18



Synopsis

"Chew on this," says Melrose Plant to Richard Jury, who's in the hospital being driven crazy by Hannibal, a nurse who likes to speculate on his chances for survival. Jury could use a good story, preferably one not ending with his own demise. Plant tells Jury of something he overheard in The Grave Maurice, a pub near the hospital. A woman told an intriguing story about a girl named Nell Ryder, granddaughter to the owner of the Ryder Stud Farm in Cambridgeshire, who went missing more than a year before and has never been found. What is especially interesting to Plant is that Nell is also the daughter of Jury's surgeon. But Nell's disappearance isn't the only mystery at the Ryder farm. A woman has been found dead on the track - a woman who was a stranger even to the Ryders. But not to Plant. She's the woman he saw in The Grave Maurice. Together with Jury, Nell's family, and the Cambridgeshire police, Plant embarks on a search to find Nell and bring her home. But is there more to their mission than just restoring a 15-year-old girl to her family? The Grave Maurice is the 18th entry in the Richard Jury series and, from its pastoral opening to its calamitous end, is full of the same suspense and humor that devoted listeners expect from Martha Grimes.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I sometimes wonder why Grimes's books are called the "Richard Jury" books when more and more Melrose Plant seems to be taking on the job of New Scotland Yard. And how old are these guys now anyway? 50s? 60s? If Jury was 6 or 7 in 1945, well, you do the math. Still they still have their endless string of fillies, doomed and damaged, to fall in love with, bed (even with fresh bullet

wounds) who are destined to either die or wither on the vine like old Viv-viv. "The Grave Maurice" is not a Grimes masterpiece, but it is still pretty good, and altogether tidier, plotwise, than "The Lamorna Wink" which had plenty plot plus and lots of Plant exposition (at least we know why Plant gave up his titles) and a bad sub-plot featuring a most unbelievable child snuff film and just way too many characters. When Grimes is good, as with children and animals, Agatha at bay and Wiggins doing his Yard/Boots the Chemists thing, she is so ... good, clever and funny you will forgive her anything, but when she has Jury send Melrose the ertswhile Earl out to buy one more expensive item as a ruse (a painting, a car, a house, a horse, whatever) or as a pseudo expert (librarian, art collector, antiques appraiser, rider to the hounds) I start wondering if someone really ought to tell DCS Racer, or at Cyril the Cat, that Jury is not on the case, again. And she really is going to have to start introducing some forensics into her crime scenes...she's dating herself. But here, she seems to have lost control of her characters, charming as they may be.

I find myself agreeing with the first few reviewers about "The Grave Maurice" -- it was not a very engrossing or compelling a read. The first few chapters were very well done. Martha Grimes sets up the premise for the mystery-plot beautifully: Richard Jury is in hospital (The London Royal Hospital) recovering from having been seriously shot in "The Blue Last." Bored and restless, his interest is somewhat piqued when his friend, Melrose Plant, tells him of a conversation he overheard at the Grave Maurice (a pub near the hospital). Apparently Jury's surgeon, Roger Ryder, suffered a tremendous loss a couple of years ago when his fifteen year old daughter, Nell, went missing. Coincidentally, Ryder decides to confide in Jury as well, and to ask for his help in resolving the issue of his missing daughter. It turns out that Ryder's father owns a very prestigious stud farm in Cambridgeshire, and Nell, who was completely horse mad as well as possessing a rather magical empathy with horses, was living with her grandfather when she was abducted. The strange thing was that there was no demand for a ransom. And in spite of the fact that it's been almost two years, none of the Ryders have ever given up hope that Nell will return to them one day. And what Roger Ryder wants from Jury to take a fresh look at Nell's case and to see if there are any new avenues that the investigation could take. And with some alacrity Jury agrees. But the discovery of the body of a mysterious murdered woman on the Ryder Stud Farm soon throws a spanner in the works. Who was she? Why was she at the farm? And could her murder have anything to do with Nell's kidnapping? These are the questions Jury has to find answers to if he is to unlock the secrets that the Ryder farm holds.

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