



The Case Has Altered

Martha Grimes

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The sun, smoking behind a haze of cloud, threw off a light of burnished pewter. Mysteriously lit, it was as if the watery, colorless land refused drabness, stood determinedly against dimishment. This is a landscape that can easily deceive, the fens, a landscape that volunteers nothing, as if to say, a landscape that volunteers nothing, as to say, You're on your own, mate—much like the habitues of the only pub for miles around called The Case Has Altered.

The Lincolnshire fens are the right setting for Richard Jury's latest case, a mystifying double murder. The body of one woman is found on the wash; another woman lies floating in a canal in Windy Fen. Both women are connected with Fengate: Dorcas Reese, a servant; Verna Dunn, the louche ex-wife of the owner, Max Owen, a man with a passion for antiques. So when the principal suspect turns out to be Jenny Kennington, a woman Jury has long loved, he decides he needs someone inside Fengate, someone who can impersonate an antiques expert...

The Case Has Altered Details

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From Reader Review The Case Has Altered for online ebook

Katie says

My first impression as I got through the first few chapters: blah

A poor girl gets murdered, but that's not the problem. Murdered girls move the plot along and are often essential for setting up a good story. MY problem is that the author goes to great lengths to let you know this girl is ugly. She's ugly, she's fat, no man wants her, therefore she gives it up easy, and is a slut. Special mentioned features to let you know she's ugly: she's a redhead & has FRECKLES. The HORROR! It's not enough that the author describes her this way while she's alive, but when the detective sees her poor corpse, he can just TELL, even through the *bloating due to strangulation* and being dumped in water, that this girl is FAT AND UGLY. Well screw you, too.

By Ch 8: It feels as if I've tried to start watching a soap opera about 15 minutes into a single show. I don't know who all these people are, who's important, what their relationships are to one another, etc.

We've two women dead, one of whom happens to be friends with the main (?) character, the detective. (I can't really tell, as the majority of the book seems to be from the point of view from one of his friends, who may or may not be lecherous.) I'm 8 chapters in & the only thing the detective has really done is cook up some bizarre plan to have his friend masquerade as an antiquities appraiser in order to 'infiltrate' the house where the murders occurred. Oh, and do some arts & crafts...he honest to goodness spent several pages decorating a music box with little pieces of glass, for the friend who is (to me, very reasonably) a suspect in the murder. Up to this point, the most well-described character is the poor ugly girl who died in the first chapter.

All of this would be forgivable if the story was actually interesting, but I feel like I could skip entire chapters of this thing & it wouldn't make a difference. I've started skimming, trying to get to the "brilliant" parts that would lend this book to receiving reviews that use the words "dazzling," "masterful," and "talented writer." Oh, and the other woman who was murdered? I found out more about her from reading the back of the book than I have in 8 chapters. Sometimes, this is understandable in a mystery book...the characters need to determine WHO has been murdered. But they don't. They know her name, who she is, and apparently she's even famous.

I still haven't quite figured out WHEN this book seems to be set. They mention "the war" and when the detective gets upset at a girl, he's described as getting "shirty." Everything seems rather genteel, proper, and above-board, but the characters have all seemed to have slept around (hinted at) and the F word is used once. It's a bizarre amalgamation of styles & it grated on me.

Ugh. Perhaps the first few in the series were decent, *surely*, since the author has managed to milk this thing for (currently) 23 books...but this one was terrible.

Claudia Brogan says

i loved this. i love martha grimes. even when ---for no earth-shattering reason except holidays and life and its busy-ness---reading the book extends over a span of a few weeks. i was in no particular hurry. reading martha grimes takes me away to a good mental place. i breathe easier ...and i get intrigued.

Eliza says

Always enjoy chief inspector jury novels. This story has wonderful and humorous character development. Best of all, in the end the bad people get their just desserts Aunt Agatha, Theo Wrenn Browne, Verna Dunn, Parker (murders of his former girlfriend and Dorcas) and Dorcas for shooting Verna. Jury figured it out because only a blind person would be interested in Dorcas.

Sherry says

Liked this much better than last few. Set in the Fen(s) of Lincolnshire, most of which have been drained, but in the Wyndham Fen, drained and then refilled for National Trust example of the old watery fens, floats the body of Dorcas Reese, an unattractive servant girl at Fengate and the Case Has Altered pub, just two weeks after the murder of Verna Dunn, the ex wife of the antique loving and happily remarried owner of Fengate. Richard Jury is pulled in by his need to try to rescue the local DCI's prime suspect, Lady Jenny Kennington, who has fascinated him over the ten years of their will'o'the wisp non-relationship. Melrose Plant is pulled in undercover as an antiques appraiser, while his disreputable, conniving aunt Agatha is suing poor second hand shop

Owner Ada Crisp, whose space unctuous book store owner, Theo Wrenn Browne wishes to expand into. Lots of niggling little herrings to round up, net and deal with. Well done. Poor Jury and Plant both mourn over their lack of success with women.

Lynn says

Well, 3 1/2 stars. Grimes is back to her former form, after, in my view, two duds.

This one went along very nicely until the end. I won't reveal what happened, just that the resolution was achieved so quickly and was all speculation. There was no proof, nor does it seem likely that any would be found, if the culprit doesn't confess. A nifty ending, but one that was not guessable. I don't even know how Jury figured it out. Still, Grimes at her second-best is fine work.

Oh yes, and Agatha's latest "case" is a hoot.

Mandy says

I have read most of the books in this "Richard Jury" series, and I really like them. The storylines are fairly usual murder mystery type of plots, but the characters are great. They are all unique and funny, and the books don't take themselves too seriously. Plus, the books are a neat little glimpse of English life.

Sharon says

Another excellent Richard Jury mystery with a large role for Melrose Plant as they work together to solve a dual murder case using their powers of observation and thinking out of the box. If you are not familiar with these mysteries, I strongly encourage you to read one. Good reading with a bit of humor!

Jennifer Nash says

Really, really boring book. Half the book was told from Melrose's point of view, which would have been okay except for the fact that Melrose was just as boring as Jury. Both the main characters spent way too much time in their own heads thinking about their feelings about past cases and experiences. The author gives almost no details about these past cases.

Also don't like the fact that the author keeps bringing up that the murdered maid was ugly. Her ugliness was mentioned dozen's of times. Also not fair to constantly describe Dorcas (the maid) as slutty when Verna (the other murder victim) and Jenny (the alleged murderer) were just as slutty as she was. Perhaps the author thinks that pretty people shouldn't be described as slutty even if the act slutty.

The only reason I finished the book was to find out how Aunt Ada's trial went and what was going to happen to Zel. The Aunt Ada side story and the trial portion of the book were the only interesting parts of the story.

The characters were for the most part bland, boring and unlikable. Only really liked Parker, Zel, Apted (the barrister) and Charley (the solicitor).

Maria Birnell says

The solution to the murder mystery was interesting but it took a long time to get there. I didn't really understand Jury's relationship with Jenny and I didn't really care to. Zehl was the most interesting character. Did not feel at all invested in the other characters.

Jill Hutchinson says

Richard Jury and Melrose Plant are on the case again. In this adventure, two women are killed in the isolated fens but there does not seem to be any connection between them. Everyone is stumped, but then Lady Jenny Kennington, a friend of Melrose and Jury is arrested and brought to trial for the murders, on pretty vague evidence. Jury, who has a romantic interest in Jenny, is convinced she is innocent although she has lied to the police on several occasions. When the case is finally solved, the reader still has no idea why she lied in the first place. I found Jenny a rather unlikeable character and didn't understand Jury's attraction to her.

As a side story, Melrose's nasty Aunt Agatha is bringing suit against Ada Crisp, who owns a second hand store in Long Piddlington and declares that she tripped over a "chamber pot" on the sidewalk and was attacked by Miss Crisp's tiny dog. Marshall Trueblood the flamboyant antiques dealer decides to act as legal counsel for Miss Crisp.....its a lot of fun and turns out exactly how you hoped it would.

Another good series entry by Martha Grimes and a good read.

Kyrie says

I want to like Richard Jury, I really do, but I don't. I don't dislike him either. Melrose Plant is quirkier, and less likeable, and yet has more appeal, especially in this tale. I felt as at sea about Richard and Jenny's relationship as they apparently did. The solution to the mystery was a long time coming, and was good, but it was a long slog to get there. The comic relief brought by Melrose's Aunt Agatha's lawsuit was the best part.

I keep reading this series and keep wondering why.

Kwoomac says

A British murder mystery starring Scotland Yard's Inspector Richard Jury. Also, his good friend Melrose Plant(my fave). Well written story with great characters.

Katie Hilton says

Richard Jury finds himself conflicted when his current love interest, Jenny Kennington, is the chief suspect in two murders. The two cases seem to be tied together, but it doesn't make sense that Lady Kennington would have motive for both. However, her evasiveness doesn't help matters, and it doesn't endear her to Jury. This is a different plot, but an intriguing one.

Victoria Slotto says

So happy to have discovered (thank you, Kerri) a new-to-me British mystery writer. So characteristic of Agatha Christie, P.D. James and Elizabeth George (an American Anglophile) Ms. Grimes sets us up with an array of suspects, draws our attention from on to the other and keeps us up at night until we found out "who-done-it." Well-rounded characters, with an emphasis on the character. She immerses you in the Fens (pun intended) with such sharp descriptions. My only regret is that I didn't start at the beginning of the Richard Jury series. He is the one character who, the protagonist, seemed to be bordering on flat, but his companions made up for it.

Burkem Cevher says

Yine güzel bir R. Jury maceras?. Ke?ke önceki romanlara yap?lan at?flar biraz daha aç?lm?? olsayd?. Bundan önceki iki kitap d???ndaki tüm önceki kitaplar? okumama ra?men baz? olaylar? hat?rlayamad?m ve hat?rlayamamak beni çok rahats?z etti. Elbette bu yazar?n bir takti?i de olabilir ama ilk defa bu kitapla ba?layanlar için baz? bilgiler tekrarlanabilir. Gerçek yirmi küsür kitapta da tekrarlan?nca s?k?c? da olabilir, bilemiyorum. Bu kitab? daha önce okumu?tum, katılı de iyi hat?rl?yordum ama tekrar okumak bana yine

büyük keyif verdi. San?r?m ?ngiliz polisiye dizilerini de Grimes sayesinde çok sever oldum. Hata aran?rsa elbette bulunur, ama bu seri benim için kafa da??tma serisi. Bu kitap da gerçekten serinin en e?lenceli kitaplar?ndan biriydi.
