



Martha Grimes

[1931 –]

Grand Master Award from Mystery Writers of America, 2012

Richard Jury, a Scotland Yard investigator based in London, England:

The Man with a Load of Mischief (1981)	The Case Has Altered (1997)
The Old Fox Deceiv'd (1982)	The Stargazey (1998)
The Anodyne Necklace (1983) <i>1983 Nero Award</i>	The Lamorna Wink (1999)
The Dirty Duck (1984)	The Blue Last (2001)
Jerusalem Inn (1984)	The Grave Maurice (2002)
Help the Poor Struggler (1985)	The Winds of Change (2004)
The Deer Leap (1985)	The Old Wine Shades (2006)
I Am the Only Running Footman (1986)	Dust (2007)
The Five Bells and Bladebone (1987)	The Black Cat (2010)
The Old Silent (1989)	Vertigo 42 (2014)
The Old Contemptibles (1990)	The Knowledge (2018)
The Horse You Came In On (1993)	The Old Success (2019)
Rainbow's End (1995)	

Emma Graham, a young girl in La Porte, Maryland:

Hotel Paradise (1996)

Belle Ruin (2005)

Cold Flat Junction (2001)

Fadeaway Girl (2011)

Andi Oliver, a young amnesiac and drifter:

Biting the Moon (1999)

Dakota (2008)

Paul Giverney, a suspense novelist dealing with cut-throat publishers in New York City:

Foul Matter (2003)

The Way of All Fish (2014)

Non-series:

The End of the Pier (1992)

The Train Now Departing
(2000)

[two novellas: *The Train
Now Departing* & *When
the Mousetrap Closes*]

Martha Grimes (1931-)

- Born in Pittsburgh, her father was an attorney, her mother a hotel owner; she spent every summer at her mother's hotel in western Maryland (*Hotel Paradise* is about her 12-year-old self)
- BA, and MA from University of Maryland
- Divorced, one son Kent van Holland (who writes as Ken Grimes) a PR executive in DC, 2 grandsons
- Has taught English at Univ of Iowa, Frostburg State College and Montgomery College, both in MD
- Lives in Silver Spring MD, Santa Fe NM, and Sarasota FL
- Sent her first Richard Jury novel (without an agent) to several publishers; in 1979 an editor at Little Brown found the manuscript in a slush pile, offered to publish with a first printing of 3000 – *The Man with a Load of Mischief* (1981)
- *Five Bells and Bladebone* (1987) was her first to make the *NY Times* best-seller list
- *The Horse You Came in On* and *Rainbow's End* bring Jury to the US (Baltimore and Santa Fe)
- She and her son wrote a book about alcoholism (*Double Double: A Dual Memoir of Alcoholism* (2013))
- Has also written books about the NY publishing world
- British sometimes laugh at errors in her books, but her best books have been compared to Dorothy L. Sayers and Ngaio Marsh
- Robert Barnard reviewing *Help the Poor Struggler* wrote, "The best thing about [Grimes's] early books was a Sayers-like boisterous humor, and it is odd to find that growing seriousness suits Grimes as it never did Sayers. Where Sayers became dull, Grimes takes on a new tautness and purpose." Barnard, an Englishman, also remarked that in *Help the Poor Struggler* Grimes fine-tunes her portrayals of English society, which, according to Barnard, had in earlier books been a "slight but disconcerting bit off-key, out of focus." Barnard noted that "the feel is now right, the narrative confident and convincing."
- By her fourth and fifth books (*Dirty Duck* and *Jerusalem Inn*) she received major review attention that not only lauded her ability as an American to write authentic British mysteries, but also to merge the conceits of the British form with the tone and atmosphere of the American. "*Help the Poor Struggler* is rather an

American novel, with brooding and cynical overtones of Raymond Chandler" (*Time* magazine).

- German TV has made "The Deadman in the Pub" out of the first book, "Murder in the Fog" from *Help the Poor Struggler*, 2 others.

See <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm6263574/>

Things to think about:

Plot

- 1) Did you guess the solution to the mystery?
- 2) Were there clues? Were there red herrings?
- 3) How did the 20-year-old case relate to the current case?

Setting

Does the pub in Long Piddleton play a role in the story?

Style

- 1) Are parts of the book humorous?
- 2) All of Grimes's book titles are names of British pubs. Who is the "poor struggler" in this case?
- 3) Grimes is an American writing a British series. Does she use a lot of "Britishisms"?

Characters

- 1) Does Richard Jury meet your expectations as a Scotland Yard detective?
- 2) How does Jury utilize Melrose Plant in this story?
- 3) What other characters stood out for you?