



Deadly Nightshade

Cynthia Riggs

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At 92 years of age, poetess and Martha's Vineyard native Victoria Trumbull is about to take on a new vocation-solving murders.

Deadly Nightshade Details

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From Reader Review Deadly Nightshade for online ebook

Janet says

Domingo: "Sweetheart, that man is trying to kill you"

Victoria: "Oh, what a nice man!"

Domingo: "Sweetheart, that man is a drug dealer and a murderer"

Victoria: "I really like him. I've invited him to dinner."

Domingo: "Sweetheart, I don't want you to be alone while this bad man is trying to kill you"

Victoria: "I'm going to go out on a ramshackle fishing boat for a day, and accidentally spy on bad guys, but don't worry about me!"

I hate characters that are too stupid to survive childhood, and hate them even more when they're supposed to be 92 years old and in full possession of their faculties. Her 30-something granddaughter was no better.

Elizabeth: "Look gram, someone's following our car! Maybe it's the people who want to kill you! I'm going to detour down this dead end road, then off onto an unpaved track through the woods, full of potholes, and see if they stay behind us!"

I actually kind of liked the author's attention to detail, the sights and sounds and smells of the Island.

Pamela says

Victoria Trumball, in her 90's, lives in Martha's Vineyard. One night while waiting for her granddaughter to finish her shift as assistant harbormaster, Victoria hears an argument, a scream and tires squealing across the harbor. Thus begins the string of several murders, drug smuggling and intrigue on the small island.

Interesting characters and loved the setting. A little grittier than some cozies (language), but a very good read.

Kevin says

This is my second foray into the genre of Geezer Lit. It was only slightly better than the first.

This is just a strange mystery. The star is in her nineties, but you wouldn't know it from her capabilities. She could just as easily be in her 60's, except she has a 30-year old granddaughter. The plot is not well told. There is very little for the reader to puzzle out because the characters' seem to know the plot and tell it before there are any clues (or red herrings) for the reader.

There is no particular sense of time. The author also assumes that the reader is familiar with Martha's Vineyard. A map would have helped. I kept waiting for the woman police chief to play a larger role. We are also supposed to believe that another police chief and a selectman are involved in drug running and skimming harbor profits. What also drove me crazy was so much extraneous descriptive material in the midst of the narrative. Do we care that two boys rode their bikes by the house or that someone crossed his legs a certain way?

Unless you like boating and are familiar with Martha's Vineyard, I'd recommend that you read a different

book.

Jane Irish Nelson says

Somehow I didn't realize that I had read this once before, some time ago. I immediately remember the beginning, but nothing else about the book. It opens with 92-year-old Victoria Trumbull waiting for her granddaughter Elizabeth to get off work. Suddenly she hears voices, and a scream, followed by a splash. When she investigates, along with Elizabeth, and the harbormaster, Domingo, they find a body. He was obviously murdered, the question is why? And, of course, who did it? Domingo, a former New York City policeman, cautions Victoria and Elizabeth to be careful, since they have no idea who might be involved. And, indeed, the case is very involved. This is not a cozy mystery; there is danger around every turn. Interesting characters, a fascinating setting, along with a clever plot all add up to a very enjoyable read. Recommended.

Arlen says

Charming characters, but we're asked to accept frustrating plot inefficiencies and frustrating character blindness to what's right in front of them. I was entertained and glad that I read this book. I'd recommend it to anyone looking for light diversion.

Sarah says

Cozy New England town where everyone knows your name and the doors are unlocked despite the fact that an endless amount of murders are about to take place over the series. Not to worry, an adorable retired lady named Victoria will solve them all. Victoria is a 92 year old cat lover and the title features a botanical species. When you put this all together, you'll find that I am the target audience and I ate this right up.

Growing up with the Murder She Wrote series, I fell right into the rhythm of this authors narration. I had just been watching Hallmark Christmas movies (target audience) and one was set in Martha's Vineyard. So I was trying to use the scenes from that movie to help flesh out the setting. After a book and a movie, I think I need to visit. Anyone in Martha's Vineyard want to give me some pointers? So far, I already know to not go meeting dodgy characters by the waters edge at high tide. Your input would be appreciated.

Kelly Aley says

I had never heard the term "geezer lit" prior to reading other people's reviews of this book. The heroine is 90, so I guess she qualifies. She's much more active than Ms. Marple and doesn't draw on her experiences as a youth for her crime-solving, so I'm not exactly sure why the author made her so elderly. The clues for this mystery were a bit ham-fisted. I found the weapon. Here is a note, etc... I would stick with Agatha Christie. She's much more of an artist. As a side note, I listened to this on audiobook and although it was set in Martha's Vineyard, MA, the reader was British and gave all of the old men Scotch and Irish accents. Weird. Couldn't they find a northeastern reader?

Louise says

Fun quick easy read...a cozy mystery. Good for a snowy week-end

Teresa says

I didn't think this book was all that great, but it wasn't bad either. It was an easy read and that was about it. It was easy to figure out from the beginning who the bad guy was.

Laura says

I can't help it, I love these books. Are they fantastic mysteries? Not really. Is it easy to believe the protagonist is 92? Ummm... Would I recommend them to all my friends or my mystery book group? Probably not. But, none the less, every time I finish one, I'm eager to start a new one. I love visiting Martha's Vineyard in each of the books (although I agree that a map would be useful) and I like the light botanical theme. I like her attention to detail in describing the scenery. I like the nautical accurateness about the tide and boats. Unfortunately, this particular book is not her best (it's a pity that it's the first in the series and may turn people off). I'm off to get the next one at the Library...

Beverly says

Although I enjoyed this book I had a very hard time getting interested in the beginning. I don't know if it was because I was listening to it and should have been reading it. There were many characters and it was difficult to keep them all sorted out--not being able to go back and reread easily. Additionally, I didn't like some of the character's names (i.e. Meatloaf and Fatso) and that kind of put me off. But the premise of the mystery was good and there were certainly some surprises. I'm going to have to read the next one in the series before I definitely decide to continue with the series or not. I did love the idea of Victoria, who's in her 90's I believe, being the detective.

Marty says

I picked this up at our library's used book store thinking it might be a good gift for a friend who had just returned from a visit to Martha's Vineyard. I don't think I'll give it to her. The story is OK.. but it is uneven and drags quite a bit in the first half. The spunky 92 year old Virginia Turmbull is a treat. I wouldn't have believed her, but I had an aunt who lived to be 105 who was almost as spunky. Virginia was the best drawn of the characters, the others were a bit shallow so I didn't care as much for them. The story happens in and around the boat harbor where Virginia's granddaughter works as assistant harbor master. Virginia is witness to a gruesome murder while waiting for her granddaughter. The murder turns out to be just a part of a nasty criminal ring that is operating in Martha's Vineyard. Virginia, (and her common sense) is a major player in bring the criminals to justice.

Pat says

Good story, but it needs a good editor.

Janice says

The main character is Victoria Trumbull, a Martha's Vineyard resident. She's 92 but seems more like 72 when picturing her in the story. While waiting on a bench at the harbor for her granddaughter and her boss, the harbormaster. She hears a loud scream but can't see well because it's getting dark. Later she shows them where she heard the scream and they find a dead body floating in the water. Her curiosity gets both her and her granddaughter involved in investigating the murder. Liked all the characters and the story line was good, but I don't think I'll read another because I think the author uses a lot of unnecessary words and sentences to tell the story.

JG (The Introverted Reader) says

Really, it's more like 3.5 stars, but I couldn't bring myself to bump it up to 4.

Deadly Nightshade is a mystery set on Martha's Vineyard. The "detective"? A 92-year-old poet named Victoria Trumbull. One evening while waiting on her granddaughter, an assistant harbormaster, Victoria hears a scream followed by a splash. When her granddaughter and the harbormaster show up, Victoria has them go out on the boat to investigate and they find the body of a shady local character floating in the water. Victoria is the only witness, so she is in some danger. But she's determined to sort out this mystery.

This book was entertaining; it had some interesting, quirky characters, and I really didn't figure out the mystery on my own. What more can you really ask for? I enjoy these kinds of books, but they aren't my very-favorites, so my rating is a little biased that way. If you like Miss Marple, Aunt Dimity, or even Agatha Raisin, you'll probably like Victoria Trumbull also.
