

Book Review: The Shadow Friends
By Tess Gerritsen

“The Shadow Friends”, the third book in the Martini Club series from author Tess Gerritsen, is the best of the three.

And the first two (“The Spy Coast” and “The Summer Guests”) are damn good as well.

The Martini Club is comprised of five friends, all of whom are retired CIA agents living in Purity, Maine. But somehow, they can’t completely escape their past. In “The Shadow Friends” a renowned disease expert and Russian defector dies mysteriously during a global affairs conference emceed by Ingrid Slocum, a member of the Martini Club. Almost immediately after, a waitress at the hotel where the conference was being held is found murdered, an event that dredges up chilling memories for Ingrid of a mission gone bad.

Ingrid becomes obsessed with avenging the deaths from that horrible mission decades ago and is drawn back into the game by a former CIA colleague and lover. Unbeknownst to her husband Lloyd and three friends, Ingrid travels to Amsterdam to attempt to settle the score. As her friends begin to uncover elements to Ingrid’s plan, husband Lloyd and club member Maggie Bird attempt to track her down. However, a network of assassins is intent on stopping them.

The pacing is excellent throughout, as is the growing level of intrigue, complete with a few plot twists. The Martini Club members – Ingrid, Lloyd, Maggie, Declan and Ben – are all likeable seniors who, while enjoying their retirement years, have never lost the ability or the desire to flip the switch and assume their prior life persona.

That’s perhaps a wonderfully understated theme to all three of these books. The Martini Club members are all in their sixties, but while older, they’re far from obsolete. They tend their flower gardens and chicken farm, but they never lose the desire to confirm to themselves, and everyone around them, that they’ve still got it.

Will there be a fourth book in this series? I hope so.

Five stars and a high recommendation for “The Shadow Friends.” The Martini Club members may be getting older, but they’re also getting better.