The animals in Crozet, Virginia, are a lot smarter than the humans, which will come as no surprise to the devoted fans of Rita Mae Brown's mysteries featuring Mrs. Murphy the tiger cat, the luxury-loving feline known as Pewter, and Tee Tucker, a curious corgi. In their seventh outing, they leap and bounds ahead of Harry Haristeen, the spunky postmistress they call Mom. Long before anyone else knows what's going on, they've figured out the connection between the shot fired at wealthy Sir Henry Vane-Tempest during the reenactment of a Civil War battle and a missing airplane hidden in Tally Urquhart's barn. They're better at finding evidence trampled underfoot at a crime scene than any detective is, and they know just whose lap to drop it in. While they might not understand exactly why county commissioner Archie Ingram is so exercised about Vane-Tempest's plans for development in Albemarle County—particularly when it promises to make him as wealthy as the husband of the woman he loves—they've sniffed out the sexual shenanigans that threaten to derail the private pact between Crozet's leading citizens. If Harry and her friends knew what the animals know, there'd be no mystery about it; there'd only be a charming and lighthearted story of chicanery in the new Old South with plenty of local color, the scent of lilacs wafting through every page, and the deft prose of a writer on top of her game. But then, there'd be no raison d'être for the liveliest scene in the book, wherein Mrs. Murphy, Pewter, and Tee take a turbo-charged Porsche for a breakneck ride through Virginia's verdant hills and dales. By the end of the book, the only mystery is whether Harry and Fair, her favorite ex-husband, will manage to get back together again in the next installment—or the one after that—of this popular series. --Jane Adams

My Personal Review:
I have read all of the previous Rita Mae/Sneaky Pie Brown books, and really enjoyed them. I sort of enjoyed this one as well, but if I had it to do over, I wouldn't read it. Here's why:
Its preachy. I can put up with, and even enjoy, some amount of commentary on the human condition from a cat, but this book went overboard.

In the previous books, it was a clever literary device to use pets to push the silly humans in the right direction, but this book went too far. Cats arent smarter than people. Cats have brains the size of walnuts. I love my cat, but Ive had her ever since I was a child, and shes never shown any desire to use her intelligence for anything other than catching birds, squirrels, moles, etc.

(Warning! Small spoiler to follow):

The people never found the answer. Even the pets were just guessing. If I want to read about unsolved murders, I can read the newspaper. When I read a mystery story, the only thing I absolutely require from it is that at the end of the book, at least one non-guilty person has figured out (or been told) who did it, how, and why. The reader finds out who, how, and why, but none of the characters do. I dont think Ive run across that in a mystery before--at first I thought maybe some pages had fallen out of the book or something. Its like the last chapter was left off.

(end spoilage)

Im giving this three stars, because its the last point that really ruined the book for me. Since it came at the end, most of the book was reasonably good.