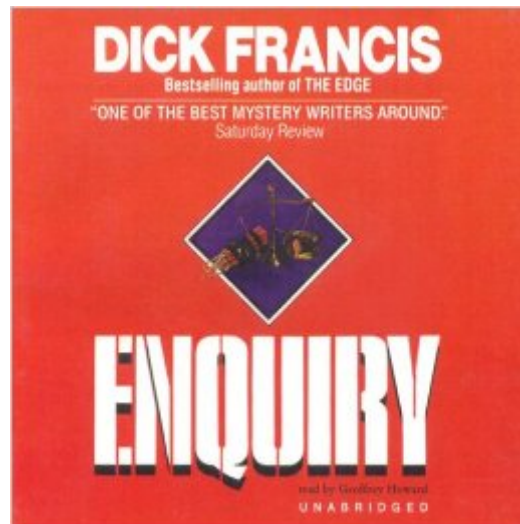


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Enquiry



Synopsis

Jockey Kelly Hughes and trainer Dexter Cranfield have been barred from racing--a devastating event for them both. The charge at the secret enquiry? Throwing a race for personal profit. It is a vicious frame-up, and worse, they have nowhere to turn to clear their names. Still, Hughes refuses to take the phony verdict lying down--even though his personal enquiry might have him lying down permanently.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is my favorite Dick Francis book, but they all are really. In this one a jockey and a horse trainer are accused of throwing a race and are banned from racing. While this hurts deeply, and Francis is a master at describing pain, mental or physical, the two react differently. The trainer just goes into an alcoholic stupor and contemplates suicide, but the jockey wants to know who set them up and why. He goes after the accusers with a vengeance. Of course he gets beat up and then nearly killed, but he doggedly continues with the search for the truth. This character is the perfect example of Francis' main characters. They are not superhuman or anything but they are strong-willed and have a desire to succeed and do the right thing at all costs. I like that in them. They have personal values and attributes we all would love to have and hope we do--integrity and grit. This is a Francis book that has you really hating the bad guys and deeply empathizing with the good guy--the Lone Jockey :-). The good guy even gets the girl in this one. She's also likeable, although not at first. Not all of Francis' secondary characters remain static unlike some authors. Francis doesn't always let the main character get the girl which is a refreshing change from most authors, but his characters

are always such that you know they'll survive without her. As a woman, I find Francis' characters sexy--especially the one in this book. This was definitely another great suspenseful mystery from Dick Francis. No fan should be without it!

The primary reason I continue to seek out and read Dick Francis is that he continually creates heroes that are efficacious and rational. He avoids the common pitfalls of most modern writers, and instead invents characters who pass the ultimate test: "Would I like to meet and know this person?" If you can answer "yes" to that question then there is great potential for enjoyment in the fiction centered around that character. If you answer "no" to that question, why even bother reading further? Dick Francis' characters almost always receive an unreserved "YES!" Read "Enquiry," it's not the best from Francis but it's still furlongs beyond the rest.

"Yesterday I lost my licence." That's how the book begins ... and indeed Kelly Hughes, a leading jump jockey, has been indefinitely suspended from racing after being found guilty of deliberately losing a race. He knows that someone has rigged evidence against him, and rather than sit back and wait for the ban to be lifted, he sets out to find his secret enemy. Hughes isn't a detective, and just as he doesn't really know how to carry out an investigation, the reader can't guess at how the plot will develop. My favourite highlight is when Hughes is driving home after a dance. At first it seems to be just a 'filler' scene, but it turns into something more dramatic - and the writing here is particularly well-crafted. The two main characters are Hughes himself, a widower, and Roberta, the snooty daughter of his employer. Near the start of the book Roberta asks him: "That picture .. that's your wife isn't it?" "I nodded." "I remember her". She said. "She was always so sweet to me. She seemed to know what I was feeling. I was really awfully sorry when she was killed" "I looked at her in surprise. The people Rosalind had been sweetest to had invariably been unhappy. She had had a knack of sensing it, and giving succour without being asked. "Unfortunately Roberta has been brought up by her father to regard jockeys as an inferior social class, and it takes a long time for the two of them to kindle any real friendship, let alone romance. Francis is particularly good in this book with the minor characters - such as the aristocratic Bobbie, who clearly is very fond of Roberta but can't help hinting that Hughes is a better match for her, or Derek the diffident mechanic who kept most of his brains in his fingertips. The plot doesn't flag, the tale builds to a satisfactory climax and I only wish Hughes had appeared in another of Francis' books.

This was the first Dick Francis book I have read and I must say that I am impressed! I bought it

because I had nothing to read one rainy afternoon and because I am interested in horseracing. I read it in one day. The characters were real and the plot was interesting. If you look at the copy I have you will see all kinds of scribbles in it where I have marked quotes and phrases that I liked. For example, Kelly describes how he feels after his accident as "Not so much as banging the head against a brick wall as being actively attacked by a cliff". Yep, I know that feeling...Francis just said it better than I could have. Just one warning...don't pick up this book unless you can afford to spend the whole afternoon reading it.

The story of Enquiry begins after a jockey, Kelly Hughes, and a trainer, Dexter Cranfield, have been stripped of their licenses and banned from any association with racing. Thanks to a flashback, we learn the hearing was pretty much a kangaroo court and the pair was framed for intentionally throwing a race. Hughes decides to find out what really happened and starts digging into things. Along the way, he starts to get chummy with Cranfield's daughter, making for some interesting cross-class romance. From there, things proceed to resolution in a pretty straightforward fashion for a mystery. Enquiry moves along at a quick pace, and is not a long book at 264 pages. Kelly Hughes is the main character and he's honest, fairly courageous, and reasonably intelligent. He's no detective but he is determined to keep digging until he can find out who set him up. It doesn't take long for you to get firmly in his corner and stay there. The supporting cast is also interesting. It was definitely a nice touch to show the class snobbery between aristocracy and laborers. This book is a good read and I'd recommend it to anyone looking for a mystery. Either first time readers or established fans of Francis should be pleased with what they find here. I can't point out any real flaws in the book because it didn't suffer from any. Buy it, read it, and enjoy it.

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