



Wild Horses

Dick Francis

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From the acclaimed master of mystery and suspense comes a thrilling novel about the illusion of film--and the reality of murder.

Wild Horses Details

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Author : Dick Francis

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From Reader Review Wild Horses for online ebook

Lady Clementina ffinch-ffarowmore says

Another exciting and fast paced racing-related mystery from Francis. Wild Horses takes us to the world of film-making where our 'hero' Thomas Lyon is directing a film based on a book based on a 26-year-old unsolved murder in the racing world. Thomas is having problems with the writer who feels his story has been changed too much and soon also finds the film and himself getting threats. On the other side, a friend of his family Valentine (who Thomas has lately been reading to) dies leaving Thomas his books and papers and his sister, Dorothea is brutally attacked, leaving Thomas to also figure out what it is that Valentine knew or had in his possession that could be a threat to others. As is usual with Francis, I thought he did a good job of re-creating the world of film-making, though neither Thomas nor the film's hero are what we'd typically associate with Hollywood. Also, as one expects of Francis' heroes, Thomas is bright and catches on to things much faster than the ordinary individual, but also ends up getting beaten up for it. The writing was enjoyable and had me wanting to read on to find out how things turn out and whodunit, especially as there wasn't any particularly ominous individual (as in some of Francis' other books) lurking around on the scene. I was surprised by the denouement, yes, but still it seemed just well, ok. But the book as a whole was enjoyable and entertaining, and very readable though not may be among my favourites of his.

April Hochstrasser says

If you ever thought it was easy to make a movie, this book tells the inside scoop about all the little details that go on. Why all the credits at the ends of movies? This book is full of information about all those titles. A movie maker is telling the 26 year-old story of a suspected suicide. However, he uncovers some information that make it questionable whether this was a suicide or murder. Then the people involved so many years ago start a series of events designed to stop the movie so that the real truth won't come out. Very entertaining.

Atishay says

A taut thriller, this is a great getaway for those who want to read something light and interesting. The plot is limited to a few characters and they have been handled well. Thomas Lyon is a Hollywood director who is making a film on a mysterious hanging that took place decades earlier. Though the exact reasons for the hanging are still unknown, Lyon has decided to go ahead and give his movie a fictional ending. However, his dive into this muddy past has stirred some souls and agitated some forgotten memories. Trouble ensues when Thomas starts getting life threats to stop the movie. Set against the background of the racing world, *Wild Horses* never fails to lose its grip on the plot. *The pace is not too fast and not too slow, making it a perfect follow up if you have just finished an intense book and want to read something light and zippy. Enjoy the ride.*

Nathan says

The one about the film director. Much better structure and mystery than "10 lb Penalty", with the WTF

remaining virtually to the end. I thought I remembered this conspiracy story, but it turned out to have been a different plot I was misremembering--bonus! An enjoyable hour or two I don't regret committing to Mr Francis.

The only niggle is the inability of 1990s Francis to reconcile his 60s family values with modern characters. The protagonist is a thirtyish film director, very busy. So far so good. He coolly admires an eighteen-year-old girl, hmm. She's nervous because he's, I don't know, a man. He brings her into his circle, then offers her a trip to America, and decides in his head that he'll marry her. In what world is it not creepy for a 30 year old man to deliberately resolve to spend a lot of money to wife an 18 year old girl he's never so much as kissed? I'm sure it was done because it shows his noble nature that he's not immediately leaping into bed to roger the little lady, but it ends up being more ick than aww.

Nicola says

Oh, boy. This book. Where to start?

Wild Horses is the first recognisably modern Dick Francis that I've read (the characters have mobile phones! and reference Prozac!), which honestly caused a bit of cognitive dissonance for me. I can deal with Francis's stoical male protagonists and flimsy love interests when it's the 70s, but it all gets a bit uncomfortable when it's supposed to be 1994 and the 30-year-old protag (a Gen X'er!) acts like your killjoy grandpa.

(Tangent: whyyyyyyyyyyyy is there always such self-hating homoeroticism in Dick Francis's books? Why is there always a dashing gentleman who the hero is blatantly infatuated with -- in this case, movie star Nash -- who is unconvincingly tossed aside in the final chapter so that the protag can end up with an underwritten wisp of girl? I mean, am I reading this wrong????)

Nonetheless, I quite liked the premise of *Wild Horses*: it's a story within a story, with KilljoyGrandpa as a hotshot movie director making a film about an unsolved true crime case from 30 years ago. He begins trying to solve the case -- and gets too close to the truth!!!! Obviously, this is right up my alley. (The only thing that would have made it more relevant to my interests was if someone was making a podcast about the true crime case.)

Of course, the usual Dick Francis suspension of disbelief insanities are in place: we're expected to believe that, in the 90s, horse racing is such a cultural phenom that everyone (EVERYONE) gets their news from some shitty horse racing newspaper. And that a movie studio would name its major new release, *Unstable Times*. (Because... stables??? Yeah!) Plus, this (pretty terrible-sounding) movie about horse racing attracts A-list talent and wins multiple Oscars. Riiiiiiight. Seems legit.

My favourite insane subplot is that KilljoyGrandpa wants to include in the movie a shot of some WILD HORSES cantering down the beach. So he gets a guy to kidnap (horsenap?) some WILD HORSES from Norway, pop 'em in a shipping container, and then let 'em loose on some godforsaken shore in East Anglia. What the actual fuck.

There's too much movie-making jargon weighing down the novel and the melodramatic conclusion to the mystery doesn't gel well with its old-school feel. But, goddammit, I'm sort of sorry to see this one go. It's so batshit, you've gotta love it.

ETA: Almost forgot to share the only line in the whole novel that I highlighted on my Kindle. This is KilljoyGrandpa describing the lead actress in his movie, who I guess he hates for ~reasons: "Silva wore no lipstick and a feminist expression." INSCRIBE THIS ON MY GRAVE, PLEASE.

Kaethe says

1 Jan 1998

15 Sep 2016

Yet another female victim dead for the thinnest of reasons ever, that is to say, a starting point for the plot. And the victim is a young woman who owns her sexuality. And the hero once again falls for an inappropriately young woman in a creepy way. And another woman is mocked for her feminism. I love it despite all those issues. It does evoke movie-making fairly well, as well as the remarkable changes of the twentieth century. Maybe it's just nostalgia, but there are certain visuals that stay with me over the years. And the love of riding.

Personal copy

Becca says

I have devoured many a Dick Francis novel in my life, but I was very surprised and turned off by the twisted nature in the solving of the mystery. I've loved almost all of the Francis novels I've read, and liked the rest. However, this one left a bad taste in my mouth. It was a bit too deviant for me. I also felt that all the connections were a bit too convenient. Everyone of importance is magically connected, and it felt a bit contrived. Up until the last bit, I enjoyed it enough, but wouldn't recommend it. If you're thinking of trying or a Dick Francis novel, start with "Bolt"!

Jinky says

*Actual edition I used: Audio book read by Simon Jones, presented by Simon & Schuster Inc. *

I tried this audio book over the weekend and I liked the experience. I've been hesitant to try it because I figured me for a touch, feel, smell, curl with a paper book kind of gal. Same reason I'm hesitant to try Kindle and the sort. I did try ebook reading from my computer and that went alright. That's only because I wanted to get through the book to read the sequel. Anyway, the audio experience was convenient for me. I used an old school portable audio player and listened while I folded my laundry and other household chores. I even took it to go and listened to it in my car when I went to the store (my kids were good and didn't peep much). The audio experience was also relaxing. I forgot how pleasant it is to be read to. Having a voice other than oneself was a nice change of pace. It was a plus that Simon Jones did a pretty good job at actor-reading. The vocal changes in language and intonation for each character worked here. The genre of mystery seem to be perfect for this venue. However, there are downsides. For instance, it is condensed from the original book version so you're at the mercy of their interpretation and presentation. Therefore, having a similar question in your mind as that of a movie based on a book ... how close did it get to getting it right? Also, it's pretty hard to mark a favorite part, like a quote. Overall, I like it enough to do this again. I must admit though, that upon

completion of listening to this, I felt a sense of guilt. Another book done and barely a sweat! Did I cheat by not reading the book? Hmm, maybe I will read the actual book one of these days and compare.

If you haven't tried audio books, I recommend that you give it a shot. It might be convenient and a relaxing break for you as well.

Happy listening!! =]

Monica Willyard says

Not my favorite of Francis, books: yet the story and like able protagonist drew me in. :)

April Andruszko says

I haven't read a Dick Francis for a while but this reminded me what an enjoyable read they can be. Think there were some plot holes but a page turner none the less

Claire says

Wild Horses is one of my favourite Dick Francis novels. I had not read it in a long time, and was a bit afraid that I wouldn't enjoy it as much now as I did as a teen, but I was pleasantly surprised.

This novel deals with the world of horse racing (as all or nearly all Dick Francis's novels do) but also with film-making. The narrator, Thomas Lyon, is an ex-amateur jockey turned movie director; he is shooting a picture based on a novel which itself was inspired by a 26-year-old scandal: the wife of a horse trainer was found hanged in his stables, and no-one ever managed to find out what exactly happened (suicide? murder?).

The plot progresses slowly at first, but soon Thomas has several problems to deal with at once: an old friend of his is dying, shooting a movie, which is never easy, is complicated by the screenwriter's hostility, then another one of his friends is brutally attacked and someone is trying very hard to shut down the film's production. There's a particularly exciting racing scene, scary knives, a cool bromance, and lots of descriptions of filming the movie (I have no idea how accurate they are - it seemed to me, at times, that they felt a bit too much like Dick Francis had a list of facts about filming that he wanted to include in the book, but that didn't bother me).

My only regret is that I'll never get to see the film that they spend most of the book filming :-)

Jason Reeser says

As with all Dick Francis thrillers, this book did not disappoint. So many authors over-use violence, making it commonplace. Francis has always been able to bring a few violent acts down to a point that is personel, and

scary. The reader is never numb to the pain and terror of even small injuries. I suppose Francis had enough run-ins with injuries as a jockey to give him this edge. But the next important step that Francis takes is to develope villians that are personal in nature as well. These aren't James Bond villians who want to take over the world and are willing to kill thousands at a single swipe. No, his villians have small, personal, violent urges that are directed at one or two people. I am reminded of that discomforting feeling I get in the grocery line when I inadvertently run afoul of a stranger who suddenly looms beside me with a presence that cannot be ignored. A "what have I gotten myself into?" sort of situation--is this guy going to follow me into the parking lot and come after me? Seriously? What is wrong with this guy?

Wild Horses has these two elements in fine racing form. The slow, methodical descent into mystery and danger drew me in, with ever increasing speed. Somewhere around page 250, I stopped taking breaks from reading and galloped down the home stretch, as if the last lap were run down a steep hill.

As a bonus, this book dealt with movie making, and I love anything that details this process. This was great fun.

David says

Another easy-to-read Dick Francis mystery, but a long way short of his best work. I wasn't overly convinced by the movie-making setting that provided the background to the novel. In my opinion, it padded the storyline needlessly. The big red editors pen could easily have gone through much of it, including in particular, the dream sequences and the purchase of viking horses offshore - both of which added nothing of note to the actual plot. 3 stars *** (just).

Kate Millin says

As usual with a Dick Francis I found it very difficult to put this book down, and I don't remember reading it before. The main character (and narrator) Thomas Lyon is a caring and yet forceful character as he is a director of a film about a death that happened over 20 years ago. He is also helping to support his old friend Valentine at the end of his life and finds out more than he bargained for. The action, while quite scary is not as violent as it has been in some of his previous books. Tom as has to be quite clever at reading people to be a successful director as well as to solve the mystery.

Reading again in October 2014.

Carolyn (in SC) C234D says

I've enjoyed many of Dick Francis's mysteries over the years, although I haven't yet included all of them in my Goodreads listings. They are usually interesting, quick reads; I do not tend to read them as analytically as some of the other reviewers seem to. All I wrote fourteen years ago was that this was a good mystery featuring Thomas Lyon, a film director who needs to figure out who is stabbing people now, and what happened 26 years ago when a young woman was found hanged.
