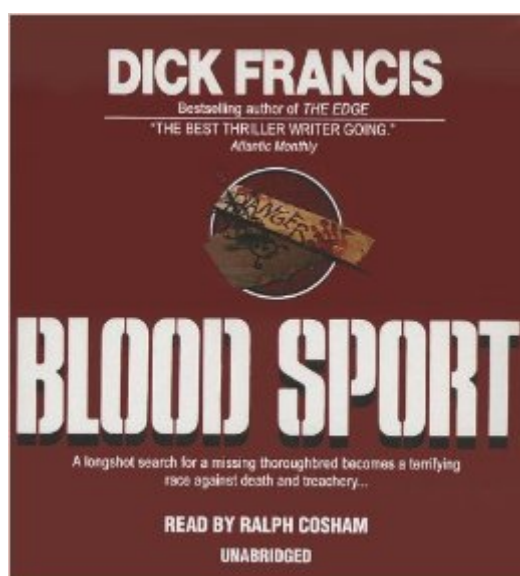


The book was found

Blood Sport



Synopsis

English agent Gene Hawkins is restlessly facing three weeks of vacation with only his tormented past for company. So when his boss asks him to help millionaire Dave Teller locate a prized missing stallion, he accepts. But he gets more action than he bargained for when he draws the affection of his boss' beautiful teenage daughter, advances from Teller's socialite wife, and the deadly attention of the horse thieves, who would be happy to put Hawkins out to pasture...permanently.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (32 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #3,341,331 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #26 inÂ Books > Books on CD >

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Customer Reviews

Dick Francis has earned a well deserved reputation as one of the best suspense writers around--based more on his writing skills and character development than any real talent for suspense. This is because virtually all his books, regardless of character and milieu, follow a well developed formula. By the third or fourth Francis book one has a pretty good feel for how things will proceed. His average books are well enough crafted to keep your attention, his better books--such as Banker, Reflex and Proof--grab you by the throat and won't let go till you are done. Blood Sport is a significant departure for Francis. The formula is gone, the action aspects of his work take back seat to a much more cerebral style and the main character is far from the iconoclastic, self reliant individualist we normally expect from Francis. Gene Hawkins is a "screener" for the British Government--essentially a "mole" hunter. He is also suicidal--his previous relationship has shattered and left the man a psychological mess. He has sublimated his troubles into his work--until now. Faced with a mandatory three week leave from his boss, fearful for his employee's life--sets him onto the trail of the thieves of one of his pals thoroughbred race horses in America. What follows is one of the

more bizarre, compelling chase stories I have ever read. It is also the most unusual novel Francis has written to date. Not all Francis fans will like this book—as the previous reviews will attest. However, I found the story very compelling and felt more of a real connection to the characters than is the norm with a Francis novel. I also found it to be more of a true suspense novel than is usually the case with Francis. I urge Francis fans to give it a try.

I recently finished rereading *Blood Sport* again—it's either my third or fourth read of the book. I think I've reread only 1 other Francis novel, so clearly this novel speaks to me a great deal. This is because the hero is suicidal and finds ways to live. The hero is depressed, yet he is able to live by drawing on anger that anyone would deprive him of the right to live or die. I will not spoil the ending of the novel, but I will say the hero finds a better and more powerful reason to live the rest of his life without considering suicide. Another key character also suffers from depression; she is able to find a new career in life and improve her life a great deal. Romantic love does not play a significant role in either character's battle with depression. If you have ever experienced depression, I recommend this book. It will distract you from your life with its plot that (even after almost 40 years) is still gripping, but more importantly this book offers some great messages about the value of human life, friendship, and the nature of love that may inspire and comfort you.

Considering it is a 1967 publication, *Blood Sport* portrays a man who suffers from depression and from a person (me) who also has and does can say the portrayal is very realistic. I'm amazed Francis could write like this in the mid-60's and wonder a bit now if Dick didn't go through some bouts of depression because you almost have to to portray it correctly. A worthwhile read for more than one reason. Aches, cold feet, full of malaise, life seeming worthless and confusing...Francis knew what he was talking about.

There's only one problem with Dick Francis books: insomnia! The author, no stranger to the world of thoroughbred racing, has a knack for rapidly drawing the reader into the story. The interest is easily maintained as Francis unravels the inner workings of the criminal mind. I enjoyed the change in locale from England to California. As usual Francis does not disappoint and skewers the villain(s) with his always dry wit. There are enough believable red herrings to keep the reader guessing until the satisfying end.

I'm not going to review these four novels here. Each of them is just another reason why I think Dick

Francis was the Grand Master of mystery writers. He's gone now and I feel a great sense of loss about that. It's moderated by the fact that in his later years he was joined by his son Felix Francis who wrote with him and eventually continued on his own to write under the aegis of the Dick Francis brand. I frankly would be hard pressed to tell whether I am listening to the voice of the father or his son as I read Dick Francis books. These particular books are all by Dick Francis himself and this volume is a tremendous bargain for FOUR splendid novels. Thanks to for offering it.

OK, we've all read at least one of Dick Francis' early novels. The usual components are there: HORSES, racing, mystery, and often a physical or psychological character defect. (I write this, having a hearing loss, so I can appreciate the effort!) The main character, Gene Hawkins, is an intelligence agent who once had his heart ripped out. (I always wanted to write that last phrase) In his agony, he has to escort his boss's nubile 17-year-old daughter to California, to solve a horse kidnapping. Living in the 21st century, trust me, you will not guess the ending of this novel. We need a few more authors with this sense of decency.

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