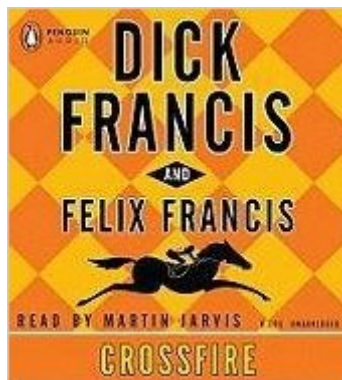


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Crossfire



Synopsis

Unabridged, 9 CDs, 11 hours Read by Martin Jarvis An exhilarating new novel from the New York Times-bestselling authors.

Book Information

Audio CD

Publisher: Penguin Audio; Unabridged edition (August 17, 2010)

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Customer Reviews

In the enjoyable fourth and final collaboration between Francis (1920–2010) and son Felix (after *Even Money*), the army career of Capt. Thomas Forsyth abruptly ends when an IED in Afghanistan blows off one of his feet, leaving him with a prosthetic replacement (like another Francis lead, Sid Halley). Upon discharge from National Health Service care, Forsyth makes his way home to Lambourn, where he gets a less-than-warm welcome from his mother, Josephine Kauri, a horse trainer. After learning that her stable has had a series of mishaps, Forsyth discovers that Kauri has been sabotaging her own animals in response to a blackmailer's threats to reveal her tax evasion to the authorities. With nothing else to occupy him, he turns detective to identify the extortionist. Though the plot details won't linger as long as those in Dick Francis's best work, like *Whip Hand*, this is still a suspenseful read. Francis aficionados will hope that Felix chooses to carry on the family tradition on his own. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Good authors never die; they leave behind at least one book. Francis, who died this year after writing a string of more than 40 racing mysteries, the last 3 in collaboration with his son, Felix, left at least this one book behind. For all lovers of old-fashioned, character-driven, plot-perfect suspense,

this is like getting a windfall from a distant, deceased relative. The hero will remind longtime Francis fans of Sid Halley, the driving force of arguably Francis's finest mysteries. Both have had their careers cut short by a devastating injury (steeplechase jockey Halley lost his hand in a racing accident; new hero, British soldier Captain Tom Forsyth, had his foot blown off by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan). Both have to find their way out of pain and grief to construct a new life. Forsyth, temporarily cut loose from his regiment, returns to the home he fled at age 17, the cold and hostile environment of his mother, one of Britain's top racehorse trainers. While there, he stumbles into a blackmail plot involving his mother, one that puts her horses at high risk. The Francis team uses both Forsyth's dilemma, which is how to find "targets and objectives" in a blown-apart life, and his military skills to enable him to get to the bottom of a rotten mess. The plot reads like classic Francis; the research parts presumably come from Felix, and they add a lot of weight to the saddle. The publisher hints that Felix may be carrying on his father's legacy, but it's doubtful anyone can. Enjoy this bequest. --Connie Fletcher --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This was a reread for me. I first read *Crossfire* when it was originally published in the U.S. But the other day, I was going through a bad case of Francis withdrawal, and decided to read it again. I enjoyed the character of Tom Forsyth and his gradual reconciliation with his frosty mother. Sometimes it's hard to know whether a Francis novel should be categorized as a mystery or a thriller, because they tend to blend the best elements of both. *Crossover* is one of those stories. What is always a feature in a Francis novel is a tenacious hero who demonstrates a breathtaking level of courage. Tom must be at his best as he takes on a group of wolf-in-sheep's-clothing criminals who will do at nothing to destroy him. An excellent read you won't be able to put down. Even if it is your second time through.

Congrats to Felix and his father for putting together another fast-paced, well-plotted mystery. I wish these books would continue to be published yearly forever. However we mourn over Dick Francis' death, Felix has done an admirable job of writing his own novels, and my wish for more continues. This is just solid, heart stopping work, always.

I have been ordering large print books for my sister-in-law Mary to give, after I finish them, to her disabled and vision impaired friend in a nursing home. I find I enjoy the larger print because I don't need reading glasses with them. I had high hopes for this title. My husband and I were both fans of

the earlier Dick Francis mystery novels (written, I believe with some assistance from his wife). I knew that after his wife's death, his son began to assist him. There has been a lapse of years since I last read a Dick Francis horse racing mystery so I was looking forward to this book after ordering it. It's an ok (fair) book but lacks the characterization pizzazz of the earlier Francis novels. The mystery plot is fine but the main character, the protagonist, is hard to warm up to. The character is a man who has been in the military since leaving home at 17. He is now home, permanently because he has been disabled by losing a lower leg to an IED. My biggest problem with the character is the repeated quotes from military strategy books and the character's instructors at Sandhurst. It seems forced. I found the plotting to be more than fair but this forced characterization of the central character in the book is its weakest aspect. Still, I am going to try some of the other Felix Francis books to see if he improves over time. Recommended for die hard Dick Francis fans only. Readable however not re-readable. Once is enough.

I have been a Dick Francis fan for decades; I owned every single book and reread them many times. I always admired the way he was able to craft eminently likable characters who had decency and integrity as well as flaws. You always cared about the participants in Francis' stories and each new plot introduced a new world, within and without racing. But not this one. Characters were wooden and dialogue was leaden, situations unlikely. I was bored. BORED with a Dick Francis novel!! find it hard to believe that Dick Francis did any more than a rough outline of this book before his death. Whoever did the actual writing was far from the storymaster that Mr. Francis was. It does him no posthumous honor.

CROSSFIRE is classic Dick Francis. Captain Tom Forsyth encountered an IED in Afghanistan and lost his right foot. He has just gotten out of the hospital and is beginning a six-month leave. He wasn't a good patient being both bitter and impatient. Because the army has been his life since he was seventeen, Tom is at something of a loss about what to do. He decides to go to his mother's home in Lambourn where she is a famous race horse trainer despite the fact that they really don't get along. When he arrives, he finds that his mother is under more than the usual stress and that she is being blackmailed. It doesn't take long for Tom to get deeply involved in trying to find out who is blackmailing her and solving the problem that led to the blackmail in the first place. This one delves into hedge funds, murder, and modern vices and has Tom using the lessons he has learned as a warrior and the guidance of Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* as he solves the puzzle. This was a mystery with a hero who is competent in his own field and who brings that competency to his investigation.

Tom is smart and honorable. He is dealing with and adjusting to the probable loss of the career he loved. His mother's problems give him a new focus. While this one is wordier than early Dick Francis books it is still a fast-paced story filled with tension and danger. I really liked it and recommend it to mystery fans.

A professionally done book, but lacks that certain Dick Francis spark and pure Britishness (not sure if it is even a word, but you get my meaning, I am sure ;-)). I frankly did not like the main character all that much. What I found illogical / unbelievable / not convincing : * There was ONCE mention of two older siblings of the main character, and they are NEVER mentioned again. Vanished into thin air? * That there was not psychological counseling after surgery (at least it was not mentioned) * That someone who has grown up in a stable knows nothing about horse bridles * That a intelligent and strong woman does not even TRY to find out who is blackmailing her * That he has not taped (video and audio, or only audio) the slimy accountants confession * That the main character was left to die of dehydration instead of simply pitching him from parking garage (it was the second floor). It is a much more believable cause of death, that to find a ex-military chained to wall dead from exposure/dehydration. And it avoids unnecessary complications. And solves the problem immediately. * That he really plans to take over the stable from his mother (he know nothing about running it, and she is a to strong a personality to let him take over just like that)

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