



Death by a Dark Horse

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The impossible has happened and, as stunned as she is, Thea Campbell can't ignore the facts. Her horse has disappeared and the person who has the most to lose has stolen him. Would Valerie Parsons put her shot at Olympic gold on the line because she coveted a horse? Or was there something more personal at work in such a reckless act? Thea intends to track her down, find her horse and get answers. But Valerie is beyond caring what Thea or the Olympic Committee may think. She's dead. At first, Thea's horse is assumed to have killed the woman, but when the coroner determines it was a human hand and not a horse's hoof that ended Valerie's life Thea becomes a person of interest. Now intimidating people with little regard for due process are showing up on her doorstep looking to even the score. Thea takes charge of clearing herself of the murder and discovers all aspects of predictable life as a self employed accountant have become anything but. Her possessive boyfriend sees a rival in a sexy geology professor who seems to regard Thea's faults with interest, her aunt is convinced Thea's horse is psychic and, most troubling; her own sister turns out to be the latest addition to the victim's long list of enemies. With more at stake than ever, she pursues her investigation, and in a seedy biker bar comes face-to-tattoo with information that will lead the police to the real killer. She dutifully reports to the detective in charge. But Thea is wrong. As close to dead wrong as she ever wishes to get.

Death by a Dark Horse Details

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From Reader Review Death by a Dark Horse for online ebook

Edie Ramer says

I'm not a horse person, but while reading this book, I fell in love with Thea Campbell's horse. I can see why the victim—a woman everyone loves to hate—wanted to buy Blackie. Who wouldn't? Still, that's not reason enough for Thea to kill her. She's got more pressing problems, in her accounting business and in her personal life. But both she and her horse are under suspicion, and the police don't know enough about the murdered woman's life to know what to look for. Plus, the victim's influential and notorious father seems to suspect her, too.

Someone has to do something...and it looks like the someone is Thea.

If you like reading Dick Francis books, you'll love reading this book. From now on, Schreyer's books are on my to-buy list.

Gail Baugniat says

This mystery has enough twists, turns, and interesting characters to keep me reaching for my Kindle every free moment.

Susan Schreyer's protagonist, Thea Campbell, is a feisty account who loves her horse Blackie more than her own life. She proves her love with courage and, at times, unadvisable actions.

Thea's thinking isn't always sound (haven't we all been there?) and her actions had me on edge a few times.

I enjoyed learning interesting tidbits about horses and their care while trying to figure out "whodunit" and why. The protagonist's characteristics make her someone I will follow into the next book of the series: Levels Of Deception.

Terhi says

Fast read with precise writing. Some grammar edits slipped by but really enjoyed the story!

April Tanner says

I liked it

Thea is the kind of heroine I want to smack but have a fascination with anyway. This is a well written convoluted mystery that kept me guessing to the very end who dunnit. The fact that horses are involved was a nice bonus and when Thea finally quit being so timid and cowgirl'd up I like her lots more. Good story that kept my interest to the end and I will read the next ones!

Jeanie Jackson says

I loved it even though I did want to shake Thea a few times but I find that to be true in many amateur detective and cozy mysteries. I do understand why she felt compelled to figure out who had murdered the spoiled brat victim, especially when her horse was in danger of being blamed and put down. This first book in the Thea Campbell Mystery series was my first, but it will not be my last.

I look forward to spending more time with the characters who have already reached my heart.

Len says

This is a total page-turner! The story will keep you guessing from the beginning to the end! I love how Thea cares about Blackie like a friend, beyond caring for a pet. At times, she almost even forgets about herself and the fact that the police may also consider her a suspect!

Thea is a magnetic character who you'd want to stick with in a book, you'd want to be friends with her if she was a person in real life, and perhaps even help her do the detective work! I admire her braveness and can't forget the moment she saw Valerie's body, right there in front of her. I gasped as I read this part and thought 'My God, if this was happening to me, I'd drop dead!' Each time I guessed who the killer was, I was wrong.

If you are a mystery book-lover, this book is definitely for you! A book that is cleverly-written! I'm going to read Thea Campbell again! :)

Ellen White says

Blackie is gone, every professional wants to buy the horse. The rig they describe is Valories.. Her horse was there, at Valories place, but so was a murdered body. Good reading

Susan Schreyer says

Amazing story -- I dream about the characters!

Tammy Kenney says

I thought it was a pretty good mystery. Sometimes I didn't care for the main character Thea. The storyline was good and has horses in it, another plus for me. The author does manage to surprise you with who the killer actually is. Will probably read more from this author.

Allison Kohn says

A very good read

I enjoyed this mystery and look forward to reading the ones following. I especially enjoyed reading about the dressage and the personality of Blacky. I also enjoyed the way the girls worked together to save themselves.

Norma Huss says

When Thea's missing horse, Blackie, is found in the pasture with a dead woman, the first thought was that crushed head was caused by Blackie. Thea knows that's not true, but how did Valerie die?

Was it murder? Who did it? And why? Soon Thea is asking all those questions, but so are the police, and they have more clout.

I found this mystery a captivating read. Recommended for horse lovers, mystery lovers, heck, let's just say for all readers and be done with it!

A.M. says

The cleverly titled Death By A Dark Horse has all the trappings of an engaging murder mystery: high stakes, an independent heroine, intimidating goons and a clever villain. All of this is set upon a backdrop of horse-riding and dressage, so right off the bat I can easily recommend this story to horse lovers. If you're not much of a horse person, rest assured this novel might still have something to offer you.

As a main character, Thea is very much someone you can relate to. She's clever — and runs her own accounting business — but at the same time she's also the “average Jane” of the story who is caught up in events greater than herself. The same could be said for all the characters in the book: Schreyer manages to avoid stereotypes and make her cast believable. Even the police — who at first I found very annoying and frustrating — ultimately are behaving as you'd expect them to behave if some average citizen decided to play detective.

As for the plot, it's fast-paced and entertaining, and most importantly for a murder mystery, the resolution isn't predictable: the identity of the killer was certainly a ‘dark horse’ that took me by surprise. Interwoven with the murder plot is Thea's love life (in crisis) and her insecurities when it comes to horse-riding — while neither of these two elements dominate in the novel, they provide much needed colour and background to Thea's character.

In sum, if you enjoy murder-mysteries with strong female leads, or if you like horses, than this might be a book for you.

Rebecca says

3 star

Pretty solid mystery although she put some things together oddly. Would read more, I think.
