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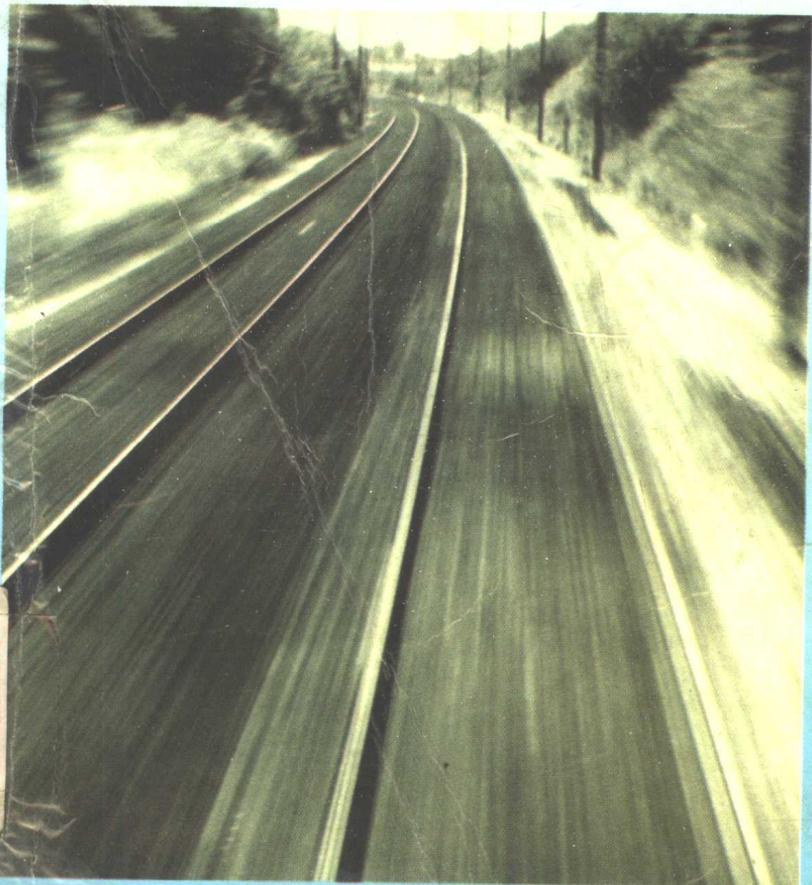
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边 缘

The Edge

迪克·弗朗西斯 著

DICK FRANCIS



北京)

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GLOSSARIES

- blackmail** 敲诈,勒索
groom 马夫
transcontinental 横贯大陆的
persecuting 迫害(persecute 的现在分词)
glacier 冰川
brochure 小册子
compartments 列车车厢的分隔间
bedridden (因疾病或衰老等)卧床不起的
waistcoats 背心,马甲
champagne 香槟酒
sulky 生气的,绷着脸的
unhitched 松开,解开
sabotage 阴谋破坏活动
briefcase 公事皮包
axle 轮轴,车轴
flares 焰火
canyon 峡谷
sling (用以固定断臂的)吊带
vet 严格审查(如某人过去的记录,资格等)

* 注:以上所列单词为书中黑体字

边缘

The Edge

在环加拿大赛马旅行列车上,云集着来自世界各地的赛马和它们的主人。他们将参加沿途各地举行的赛马大会。杰基侦探所的侦探托·凯斯勒混迹在人群中,周密地监视着从中捣鬼的朱利斯·费默的一举一动。故事曲折奇特,扣人心弦。

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The Edge

DICK FRANCIS

Level 5

Retold by Robin Waterfield
Series Editor ~~Deak~~ Strange

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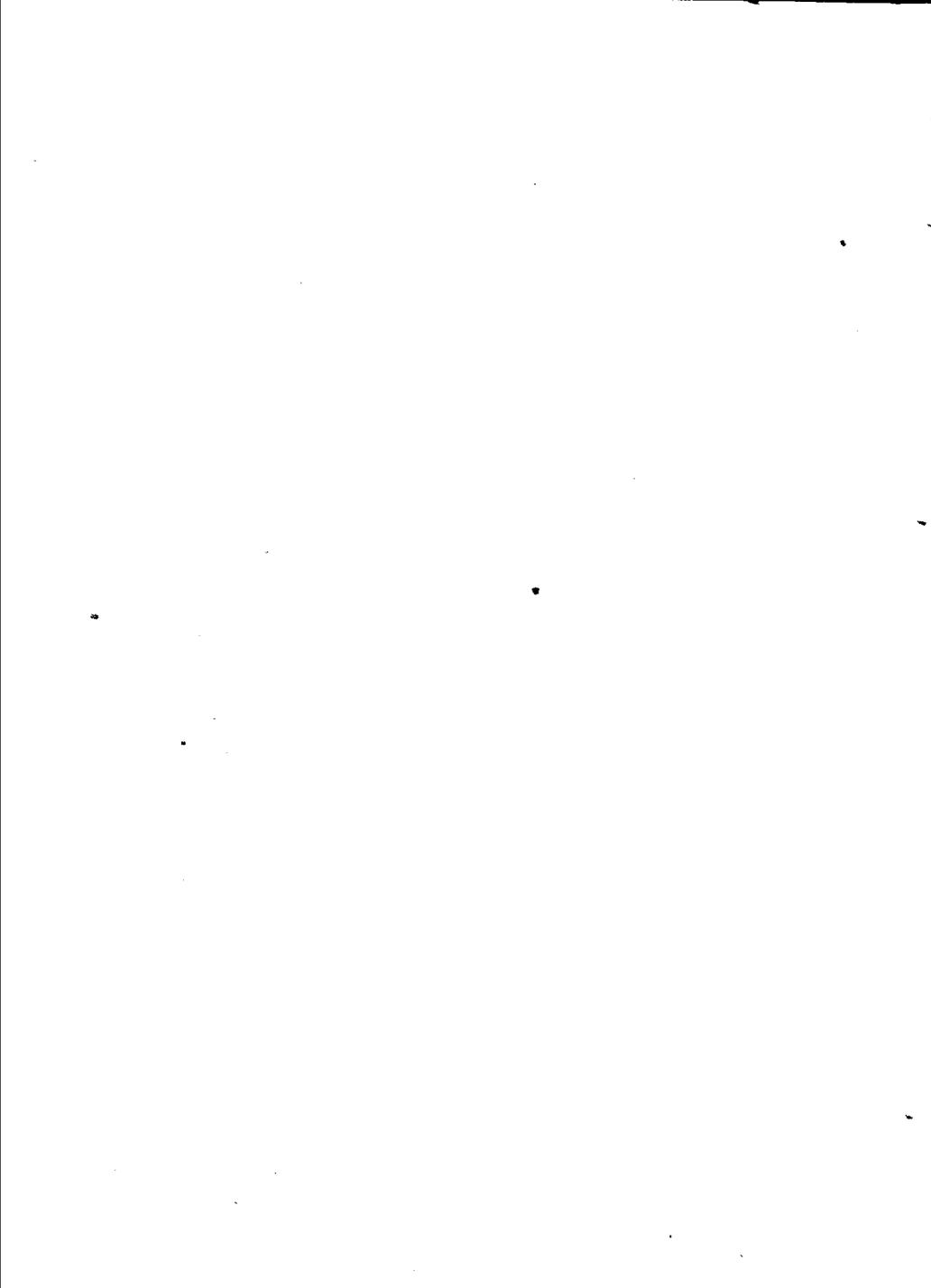
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CHAPTER ONE

I was following Derry Welfram at a race meeting when he dropped to the ground and lay face down in the mud in the light rain. Several people walked straight past him, thinking that he was drunk. I knew that he wasn't drunk, because I'd been following him all afternoon – and, in fact, for some days. However, I didn't go up to see what was wrong or to try to help him: I didn't want anyone to see me with Welfram.

It was soon clear that this was not just an unconscious drunk. A doctor came out of the race track building, turned Welfram over, did some tests and started to hit him hard on the chest. He carried on at this for a while, but eventually gave up. An ambulance arrived and took Welfram's body away.

I headed for the bar: that was where the gossip would be. I moved around the room, listening, and it wasn't long before I overheard a woman ask her husband whether he'd heard about that man who died of a heart attack earlier.

It was a pity, I thought, that Welfram had died – not because anyone would miss him, but because it put me and my boss, Brigadier Valentine Catto, back to where we started. The investigation had got nowhere so far.

My name is Tor Kelsey. I work for the Jockey Club* as a kind of policeman – or some would say as a spy. The horse-racing world is attractive to criminals, and our job is to catch

* A jockey rides horses in races. The Jockey Club looks after the interests of horse-racing.

them and warn them off, if possible, or get them banned from any further involvement in horse-racing. On extreme occasions, we bring in the official police force.

One of the worst criminals to inhabit the horse-racing world was Julius Apollo Filmer. Tall and elegant, he mixed with the highest levels of society, because they were the ones with the money and the horses. Nobody knew exactly how he did it, but he managed to persuade people to sell him their best horses cheaply. You have to understand that a prizewinning horse is worth millions. So why would people sell? The paperwork was all nice and legal, but something rotten was in the air. We were certain that Filmer used **blackmail** and threats, but we needed hard evidence.

A few months ago, we almost had the evidence. A young **groom** foolishly boasted in a pub that what he knew could spell big trouble for Mr Julius Filmer. Two days later, the groom turned up dead in a ditch. The police found four witnesses to pin the planning of the crime on Filmer, but on the day of the trial they either left the country or changed their stories, with the result that Filmer got off. Once again, Filmer's threats and blackmail had proved successful, and justice had failed to be done.

However, one of the frightened witnesses hinted to Catto (who could be rather persuasive himself) that it was Welfram who had threatened him, until he changed his story. So Catto gave me the job of finding out all I could about Welfram, with a view to proving that he was Filmer's man. But now Welfram was dead.

A few days later, Catto asked to see me and we met at his club. We discussed Welfram's death for a while, but he soon came to the point.

'Have you ever heard of the **Transcontinental Race Train**?' he asked.

'Yes,' I said. I'd spent some months in Canada. 'Owners from all over the world take their horses to Canada and travel right across the country, in considerable luxury, stopping here and there to enter their horses in races. It's a famous event in Canada. But why do you ask?'

'Filmer's going on it this year,' Catto replied. 'In fact, it looks as though he's made special arrangements in order to go on it: he recently bought a half share in a horse that was already entered for the train. It seems that he is up to something. He's still angry about the trial: he has threatened to hit back at the world's racing authorities – for **persecuting** him, he says.'

'If anyone ever deserved persecution, he does,' I said. 'But what on earth could he do on the train?'

'That's for you to discover,' Catto said. 'I've contacted the head of the Canadian Jockey Club – an old friend of mine called Bill Baudelaire – and he's arranged for a place for you on the train.'

'I hope you remembered to buy me a horse as well,' I joked, 'otherwise they'll soon find out that I'm not an owner and get suspicious.'

Catto laughed. 'Don't worry,' he said. 'In fact, other people go on the train as well, not just owners. People go just to attend the races and have a good holiday. Of course, these racegoers don't travel as luxuriously as the owners . . .'

'Oh, great!' I said sarcastically. 'Thanks for a ten-day, uncomfortable journey!'

'No, no!' exclaimed Catto. 'You're not going as a racegoer. They travel in a different part of the train from the owners, so you wouldn't be able to keep an eye on Filmer.'

'Well, what *am* I going as, then?' I asked.

'As a waiter,' Catto said. He smiled at my surprise, and added, 'These rich people hardly notice waiters: you'll be

well placed to listen and spy.' Then he brought the conversation to an end. 'You're due to meet Baudelaire in Ottawa – he'll tell you more. Oh, and Tor – take care: Filmer's a murderer.'

CHAPTER TWO

I started on this line of work a few years ago. I had been travelling the world for several years, working anywhere I could and at any job, although the jobs were often connected with horses. I had been brought up by a horse-mad aunt after my parents had died when I was still a child.

I came back to England when I was twenty-five and had a meeting with Clement Cornborough, a lawyer who was an old friend of the family. He took me to lunch and we just made small talk, as far as I could tell.

Two days later, however, he rang me up and invited me to dinner, this time at his club. It turned out that a third person had also been invited to dinner – his old friend and fellow club-member, Brigadier Valentine Catto. Catto was very much the soldier, but by no means given to hasty action: that evening, for the first time (but by no means the last), I heard Catto's famous and typical saying, 'Thought before action'.

Catto wasn't obvious, but he was definitely asking me questions about my life. By the time dinner was half over, it was clear to me that I was being interviewed for something, though I didn't know what. I only learned much later that Catto had once happened to mention to Cornborough that what the Jockey Club really needed was an invisible man – someone who knew the horse-racing world well, but who wasn't known in return, an eyes and ears man, a fly on the wall of horse-racing who no one would notice. A person like this, they thought, was unlikely to be found.

And then two weeks later, I flew in from Mexico and met Cornborough. During lunch, the idea came to him that perhaps I was the man Catto was looking for.

By the end of that evening at the club, I had a job.



I flew to Ottawa the day after my meeting with Catto and went straight from the airport to Baudelaire's office, which overlooked the city and was full of antique wooden furniture. He was about forty years old, with red hair and blue eyes. We took to each other straight away. After chatting for a while, to get to know each other, I asked him what he could tell me about the owner of the horse which Filmer now partly owned.

'It's a woman,' he replied, 'with the extraordinary name of Daffodil Quentin. Her husband was a respected member of the Canadian racing world, and when he died a year ago, he left her all his horses – and everything else as well. Since then, no fewer than three of the horses have suddenly died, and Mrs Quentin has been paid all the insurance.'

'You mean . . . ?' I said.

'We're not certain of anything,' Baudelaire replied to my unspoken question. 'But it does rather look like insurance fraud. We've no proof, however. And now she and Filmer are partners!'

'An unholy pair,' I remarked.

'Exactly.'

'What's the name of the horse?'

'Laurentide Ice,' Baudelaire said. 'It's named after a famous Canadian glacier. God, I wish I knew what those two were planning!'

'Leave it to me,' I said, but I didn't feel as confident as I tried to sound.

Baudelaire and I arranged to meet the next day, after I'd had time to digest what he'd told me, and to read the **brochure** he'd given me, all about the Transcontinental Race Train. I went through the brochure during breakfast in my hotel.

The train, I learned, was basically divided into three parts. The front four carriages would hold the luggage, the horses and the grooms; the next five provided accommodation for the racegoers. It was the final five carriages which concerned me most.

First, there were the sleeping **compartments** for the staff – waiters (including me), cooks, travel agent and other officials of the railway. Then, the next two carriages consisted of the extremely luxurious sleeping-compartments for the owners. Lastly, there was the first-class dining-car and a carriage with a bar for the owners to sit in when they were not eating meals. The overall impression was one of great style and luxury: no expense had been spared. And one would undoubtedly have to be very wealthy to buy a ticket for the Transcontinental Race Train.

The train would travel west, from Toronto to Vancouver. Apart from short stops for the engine to take on fuel, and for more food and water to be taken on board, there was to be an overnight stop in Winnipeg, in a top-class hotel, with a special horse-race laid on, and generous prize money for the winner. Another special attraction would be staying in a hotel in the mountains: the hotel brochure promised amazing views of natural beauty, including a glacier. Then the train would descend to Vancouver, on the west coast, where the trip would end with another horse-race. It sounded like one long party – and it sounded as though being a waiter was going to be hard work.

The Transcontinental Race Train had been running once a

year for several years by now, and the races attracted huge crowds. People flooded into Winnipeg and Vancouver from all over Canada – not to say from all over the world – and the regular transcontinental train, called the Canadian, followed the Race Train all the way across Canada, bringing extra racegoers who couldn't afford the cost of a place on the Race Train itself.

CHAPTER THREE

Bill Baudelaire came to my hotel room in the middle of the morning. I ordered coffee, and he filled me in on some further details.

I asked him why he hadn't simply blocked Filmer's place on the Race Train.

'Believe me,' he said, 'if I could have, I would have. I rang Catto to ask what I could do. Were there any grounds for banning Filmer, I asked? He said that there was no firm evidence. If he'd ever been found guilty of anything, even a parking ticket . . . But he hadn't, so anything I could have done to keep Filmer off the train would have been illegal; Filmer could have protested that he was being persecuted, and more people would have believed him. So I asked Catto whether, since we couldn't get Filmer *off* the train, we could get one of our men *on* the train. Here in Canada we don't have anyone quite like you in our Jockey Club. So here you are. I hope you're as good as Catto says you are.'

I murmured something modest.

'One thing our brochure doesn't mention, Tor,' Baudelaire went on, 'is that we allow anyone who owns his own private rail car to apply for it to be joined on to the train. This year, unusually, we had an applicant: Mercer Lorrimore.'

He sat back in his chair, looking satisfied with himself. He had spoken the name as if I should recognize it, but I must have looked blank. He raised an eyebrow. 'Don't tell me I have to explain who Mercer Lorrimore is,' he said.

'I'm afraid so,' I answered.

'He's only about the richest man in Canada,' said Baudelaire. 'Most of his money comes from banking. He and his family are known all over Canada; the society and gossip columns of the magazines and newspapers would be lost without them. Whatever else anyone can say about him, though, no one can deny that Mercer loves horses and horse-racing. He has some wonderful horses.'

'And he's coming on your train,' I said.

'Yes,' said Baudelaire, 'and so is the rest of his family too — his wife Bambi, their son Sheridan, who's about twenty, and their teenage daughter Xanthe.'

'And you say they'll have a separate car,' I said.

'Yes, it'll be added on to the rear of the train.'

'One other thing,' I said, 'before I forget. How will I get in touch with you, if I need to? I don't want to ring your office at the Jockey Club, because the fewer Club members who know that I'm on the train, the better. Can I ring you at home?'

'I wouldn't advise that,' he said. 'My three daughters are never off the phone. Why don't you ring my mother? She'll pass messages on to me; I'll be sure to tell her where I'll be. She's always at home, because she's **bedridden**.'

'All right,' I said, 'if you say so.' He wrote the number down on a piece of paper and gave it to me. But I wasn't particularly happy, since I imagined that a bedridden old woman would have a leaky memory, and be slightly deaf, and so on.

