

POISONED PEN PRESS  2006

Triple Cross  
Kit Ehrman

*A sinister plot of deceit and revenge unravels beneath the famed Twin Spires of  
Churchill Downs . . .*

*There is something about being on the backside of a racetrack just before dawn that is truly magical--standing along the rail when the light is just coming up, watching the horses move across the damp earth, their dark shapes silhouetted against a rainbow sky. You stand there, breathing in the clean air, listening to the steady primal rhythm of a galloping horse, and the rest of the world simply does not exist.*

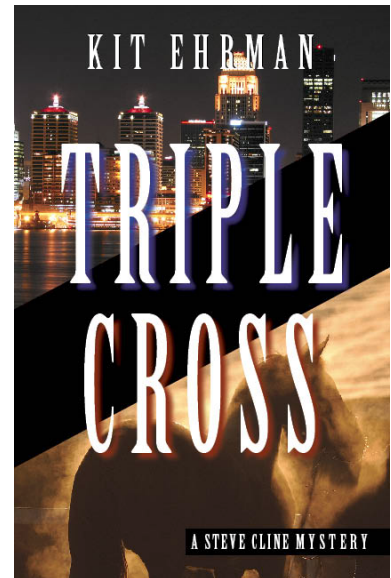
-----  
Barn manager Steve Cline is in Louisville for the running of the Kentucky Derby. Although he doesn't expect to stray far from the horse world, he has enrolled in a private investigations course and is working on the final project--a simple record's search. But the very act of initiating the project sets a series of events in motion that spiral out of control and plunge Steve into the world of the ultra rich where greed and revenge and ambition drive some men to commit unspeakable acts in a power play that culminates in a bloody triple cross . . .

"There is plenty of action here, all set against the excitement and pageantry of the build-up to America's greatest horse race. Neither race fans nor devotees of suspense will be disappointed."  
~*Booklist*

"Ehrman's Steve Cline is tough, intelligent, loves horses, and is curious about people and their complex motivations. Highly recommended for all public libraries." ~ *Library Journal*

"An impressive thriller in the Dick Francis mode, with strong equine background, clued detection, smooth style, intriguing characters, and an inventive plot." ~ *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*

"It's win, place and murder at Churchill Downs in Ehrman's third racing mystery [featuring] upright, charming . . . Steve Cline."  
~*Kirkus Reviews*



DETAILS

**Hardcover 1<sup>st</sup>**

Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 334 / Price: \$24.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-302-7  
5 1/2" x 8 1/2"

**Trade Paperback 1<sup>st</sup>**

Copyright: 2007  
Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 326 / Price: \$14.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-478-3

**Trade Paperback / 1<sup>st</sup> Large Type**

Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 487 / Price: \$22.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-303-5  
6" x 9"

POISONED PEN PRESS  2006

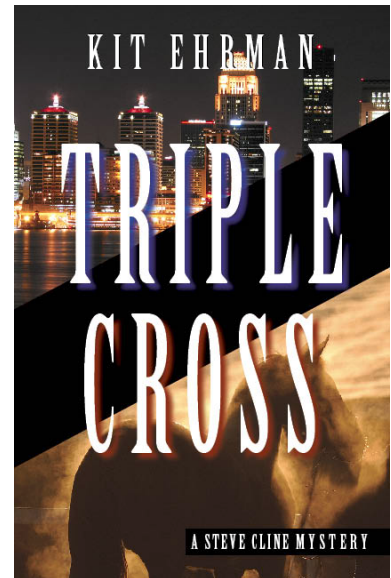
Triple Cross  
Kit Ehrman

*A sinister plot of deceit and revenge unravels beneath the famed Twin Spires of Churchill Downs . . .*

“[In] Ehrman’s engaging fourth outing for barn manager Steve Cline . . . equine-minded readers will enjoy Ehrman’s capable, savvy young protagonist and authentic depiction of the gritty world of horse racing.” *Publishers Weekly*

“All in all, this is another great read, right down to the finish line.”  
~ *Crimespree Magazine*

Forget place and show; this book's a win straight through to the finish. ~*Mystery Scene Magazine*



AWARDS:

IPPY Award Medalist  
2007 Best Book of Indiana  
*BookSense* Notable Book, Feb. '07  
Great Lakes Book Award nominee  
Kentucky Literary Award nominee  
*ForeWord* magazine Book-of-the-Year Medalist

DETAILS

**Hardcover 1<sup>st</sup>**

Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 334 / Price: \$24.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-302-7  
5 1/2" x 8 1/2"

**Trade Paperback 1<sup>st</sup>**

Copyright: 2007  
Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 326 / Price: \$14.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-478-3

**Trade Paperback / 1st Large Type**

Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 487 / Price: \$22.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-303-5  
6" x 9"

## TRIPLE CROSS



# PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

### TRIPLE CROSS

**Author:** Ehrman, Kit

**Review Date:** November 9, 2006

**Publisher:** *Poisoned Pen*

**Pages:** 334

**Price (hardback):** \$24.95

**ISBN (hardback):** 1-59058-302-7

**Category:** FICTION

**Classification:** MYSTERY

---

At the start of Ehrman's engaging fourth outing for barn manager Steve Cline (after 2005's *Cold Burn*), Steve visits Louisville for the Kentucky Derby, courtesy of his newly found biological father, trainer Chris Kessler, who yearns to have his talented son work full-time. But Steve, who lives in Maryland, is considering getting a PI license and uses the time in Louisville to complete a class assignment: find out all you can about someone. He chooses as his research subject Nicole Austin, a Churchill Downs employee he met only once. When Nicole's corpse turns up, Steve quickly becomes the primary suspect. While working to clear his name, Steve is invited into the rarefied world of wealthy racehorse owners by Rudi Sturgill, a cheerful playboy who may be the killer. Though Ehrman has yet to master the tightly focused plotting of jockey-turned-author Dick Francis, equine-minded readers will enjoy his [sic] capable, savvy young protagonist and authentic depiction of the gritty world of horse racing. (*Jan.*)

**TRIPLE CROSS**

# Booklist

**TRIPLE CROSS**

**Author:** Ehrman, Kit

**Review Date:** October, 2006

**Publisher:** *Poisoned Pen*

**Pages:** 334

**Price (hardback):** \$24.95

**ISBN (hardback):** 1-59058-302-7

**Category:** FICTION

**Classification:** MYSTERY

---

When Steve Cline accepts his horse trainer father's invitation to spend two weeks at Churchill Downs as one of two caregivers for Kentucky Derby contender Gallant Storm, he looks forward to an idyllic respite from his normal duties as a barn manager in Maryland. Cline wouldn't be in his fourth crime mystery at the tender age of 23 if he weren't a magnet for trouble, however, and within days of arriving in Louisville, he has befriended a young woman who soon turns up dead. Quickly, Cline has become the target of both the police and a couple of thugs bent on mayhem. His attempts to find out why the young woman was killed lead him deep into the exclusive world of Bluegrass bluebloods, where he becomes increasingly at risk as he gets closer to uncovering a shameful secret. There is plenty of action here, all set against the excitement and pageantry of the build-up to America's greatest horse race. Neither race fans nor devotees of suspense will be disappointed. —*Dennis Dodge*

**TRIPLE CROSS**

# **LIBRARY JOURNAL**

**TRIPLE CROSS**

**Author:** Ehrman, Kit

**Review Date:** October, 2006

**Publisher:** *Poisoned Pen*

**Pages:** 334

**Price (hardback):** \$24.95

**ISBN (hardback):** 1-59058-302-7

**Category:** FICTION

**Classification:** MYSTERY

**Highly recommended for all public libraries.**

This is the fourth book in Ehrman's (At Risk) Steve Cline series. Twenty-three-year-old Steve, supposedly on a two-week paid vacation in Louisville, KY, is actually working. His racehorse trainer father has asked him to muck out stalls and feed the horses he has entered in the Kentucky Derby. Steve soon discovers that managing the barn leaves him time to do some homework for a private investigations course he is taking. Then the subject he picks to investigate turns up dead, and Steve becomes a suspect. At the same time, he is pursued by various people who do him bodily harm. Sound familiar? It is no coincidence that Ehrman's books resemble those of Dick Francis. Ehrman admits it was reading Francis's *In the Fame* that influenced her to switch from a lucrative government job to barn manager at a horse farm and writer of equine mysteries. Like Francis's protagonists, Ehrman's Steve Cline is tough, intelligent, loves horses, and is curious about people and their complex motivations. Highly recommended for all public libraries.-Patsy E. Gray, Huntsville P.L., AL Copyright 2006 Reed Business Information.

## TRIPLE CROSS



# Midwest Book Review

### TRIPLE CROSS

**Author:** Ehrman, Kit

**Review Date:** December, 2006

**Publisher:** *Poisoned Pen*

**Pages:** 334

**Price (hardback):** \$24.95

**ISBN (hardback):** 1-59058-302-7

**Category:** FICTION

**Classification:** MYSTERY

“ . . . another great read, right down to the finish line.”

What would you say to an all-expense-paid two-week vacation to Louisville leading up to the Kentucky Derby? Steve Cline, a 23-year-old barn manager, who in three previous novels managed to get into all kinds of trouble and solve various mysteries, of course said yes when his father asked him to substitute for an ill employee. And thus begins another tale in which Steve suffers numerous assaults. How he survives these beatings is beyond comprehension—but he usually comes up on top. Steve is contemplating leaving the horse world and has enrolled in an investigations course. His last assignment to be completed is a sort of background check on someone—anyone. He intends to complete the assignment while tending to two horses—so much for the vacation—one of which is entered into the Derby. The subject he picks is a young Churchill Downs marketing employee he meets in the barn. It's a simple records search—but it sets off all kinds of ramifications.

The story progresses with the customary flavor of previous novels, excellent descriptions of caring for horses and the racing world—especially the flavor of Derby fever. Steve is invited to a posh party, exposing him to the rich world where greed and revenge rear their ugly heads. Meanwhile, the woman he is investigating seems to have disappeared. Steve is attacked several times by two thugs who believe he has a tape. Once, they attempt to run him over. Because he is looking into the missing person, he becomes a subject of interest to the Louisville Police Department. It becomes a race to solve the woman's disappearance. All in all, this is another great read, right down to the finish line—will the horse win the Derby?

## TRIPLE CROSS

# MYSTERY SCENE

### TRIPLE CROSS

**Author:** Ehrman, Kit

**Review Date:**

**Publisher:** *Poisoned Pen*

**Pages:** 334

**Price (hardback):** \$24.95

**ISBN (hardback):** 1-59058-302-7

**Category:** FICTION

**Classification:** MYSTERY

“Forget place and show; this book's a win straight through to the finish.”

This fourth novel in the Steve Cline mystery series finds the protagonist in Louisville, Kentucky. As the book begins, the city preps for the running of the Kentucky Derby, just days away. Cline has been invited to Churchill Downs by horse trainer Chris Kessler, the man he's recently discovered is his real father. While the trip is a semi-vacation, Cline uses some time to complete homework for a private investigations course: choose a subject and gather as much information as possible about him or her. When the woman Cline picks disappears, his vacation takes a dark detour. Thugs stalk him in search of a mysterious tape, the police seem just on the edge of treating him as a suspect, and even people seemingly on his side--the son and daughter of a wealthy oil family--may have motives less straightforward than they seem.

Ehrman does a fine job of interweaving the plot's various threads--high-stakes horse training and trading, corporate shenanigans, romantic intrigue--and deftly navigates disparate worlds ranging from the lifestyles of Louisville's old-moneyed elite to the training routines of the hotwalkers working on the backside. While local color enhances this novel's vibrant setting, Ehrman also keeps an eye on the larger series, revisiting Cline's ruminations on his adoptive father's death, his slow adjustments to his real father and struggles with romantic fidelity in the midst of a plethora of tempting female characters. Forget place and show; this book's a win straight through to the finish. - Art Taylor

## TRIPLE CROSS

# IN & AROUND HORSE COUNTRY

### TRIPLE CROSS

**Author:** Ehrman, Kit

**Review Date:** November 19, 2006

**Publisher:** *Poisoned Pen*

**Pages:** 334

**Price (hardback):** \$24.95

**ISBN (hardback):** 1-59058-302-7

**Category:** FICTION

**Classification:** MYSTERY

**Triple Cross** by Kit Ehrman dishes up the delectable young sleuth Steve Cline in an action-packed mystery that takes place during the two weeks preceding the Kentucky Derby. Steve gets an offer he can't refuse from his biological father, Chris Kessler, trainer of Derby entry Gallant Storm and heads to Louisville.

Steve figures he can complete his project for a private investigations course at Churchill Downs. All he needs is a good subject for the records search, but the person he chooses ends up missing. He gets involved with wealthy siblings, Rudy's a racehorse owner without the head for the family business, natural gas, but Paige is a whiz-kid in geophysics. Before you know it, our hero's getting worked over by thugs who are looking for a tape and the race is on.

The race is on long before the start of the Run for the Roses. When the subject of Steve's records search ends up a murder victim, he can't help himself and gets involved trying to find out whodunit. In the course of his investigation, he stumbles across corporate sabotage and a racing scam. Like everything else at the track, what goes round, comes round.

Ehrman spent time researching on location and captures the sensory feast of Derby fever and the thrilling world of Thoroughbred racing. She paints vivid portrait of privileged and affluent lifestyles, as well as understanding the various types of people found in racing where it takes all kinds. The title cleverly plays on the concept of Triple Crown and alludes to the subplots woven into this engaging story line.

Her protagonist continues to develop and grow while escaping deadly situations with murderous villains. He also faces his own issues about life, love and temptation. The author credits her husband and sons with providing insight into the male psyche. Best of all, she likes her young hero – and so do we. They made their debut in 2002 with *At Risk*, followed two years later by *Dead Man's Touch* and last year's *Cold Burn*. The fourth Steve Cline mystery hits Horse Country early in 2007 – put your betting money on another Ehrman winner. Hardbound, dust jacket, 364 pages. \$24.95

“Ehrman dishes up the delectable young sleuth Steve Cline in an action-packed mystery [where] he also faces his own issues about life, love and temptation -- put your betting money on another Ehrman winner.” ~ Lauren Giannini

## TRIPLE CROSS



### TRIPLE CROSS

**Author:** Ehrman, Kit

**Review Date:** October, 2006

**Publisher:** *Poisoned Pen*

**Pages:** 334

**Price (hardback):** \$24.95

**ISBN (hardback):** 1-59058-302-7

**Category:** FICTION

**Classification:** MYSTERY

“Fans of Dick Francis will almost certainly find some similarities, but Ehrman is no clone.”

Steve Cline isn't sure he wants to work hands-on with horses forever, although he loves the animals and can't imagine not being around them. So he's taking a course on some of the more mundane aspects of private investigating. Sounds pretty banal. Steve is in Louisville, Kentucky doing a favor for his father, Chris Kessler, who's training a horse called Gallant Storm. Gallant Storm is running in the Derby and Steve is helping out by covering for an absent stable-hand. It's Steve's first trip to the Derby, at least as an adult, and he's keenly aware of the hype and the mounting frenzy in and around Churchill Downs.

There are all kinds of people in and around the stables, and Steve picks one of them for his course assignment: Nicole Austin, a PR woman for Churchill Downs, who comes in to look at some of the horses. Rudy Sturgill invited Steve to a fancy party. Sturgill is a horse person, but definitely out of the league most people imagine Steve belongs in. Sturgill is connected to some pretty heavy money, but it's all in oil, and he's into horses.

Steve goes, mostly to see why he was invited in the first place. But he's mugged in the john by people wanting some kind of tape they think he got from Nicole. Nicole, the woman he met for five minutes. Steve is now curious. Battered, but very interested in Nicole.

When Steve gets back to his hotel, his room has been searched. Nicole has disappeared. Her car is at her house, but she's not at work and then her apartment is searched. Curiouser and curiouser. The police eventually connect some of the dots, and come talk to Steve. They talk to him some more when Nicole's body is found. None of this makes Steve any less interested in what's happened to Nicole, and why.

TRIPLE CROSS is the fourth book in Ehrman's series. It's good. The plotting just keeps getting better. In each book we learn a little bit more about Steve and his family, what makes him the man he is, and what his flaws are. Ehrman has managed to place him in different parts of the horse world in each book, and in a plausible fashion. TRIPLE CROSS takes place in the world of money and privilege, but the motivations are as common as dirt. Fans of Dick Francis will almost certainly find some similarities, but Ehrman is no clone.~ **P.J. Coldren**

## TRIPLE CROSS



### TRIPLE CROSS

**Author:** Ehrman, Kit

**Review Date:** Nov 13, 2006

**Publisher:** *Poisoned Pen*

**Pages:** 334

**Price (hardback):** \$24.95

**ISBN (hardback):** 1-59058-302-7

**Category:** FICTION

**Classification:** MYSTERY

It's win, place and murder at Churchill Downs in Ehrman's third racing mystery (*Dead Man's Touch*, 2003, etc.). In the lush Maryland horse country, Steve Cline wears two caps: the respectable, businesslike barn manager's, and the deerstalker he hides in the closet. His girlfriend Rachel has had to be stern with him about his penchant for sticking his nose into matters that don't concern him. Where Steve sees in sleuthing only a bit of harmless titillation, she sees possible risk addiction. That's why he hasn't told her how he's spending his free time while they're apart. Two weeks before the Kentucky Derby, Steve's in Louisville helping out with Gallant Storm, his father's Derby entry, pitching in to pamper and cosset a thoroughbred that has a real shot. But his workload leaves plenty of time for the mail-order private investigator course he's taking, and soon he's contending with an actual homicide, the death of a young woman whose naughty habits have left behind a lengthy suspect list. At once, Steve shifts into gumshoe mode, out-hustling a bevy of professionals who prove remarkably forbearing at being left at the post. The horse stuff is interesting, and it's hard to dislike upright, charmingly feckless Steve, but the plot has holes, and the dawdling pace could have used a touch of the whip.

## TRIPLE CROSS



### TRIPLE CROSS

**Author:** Ehrman, Kit

**Review Date:** May 4, 2007

**Publisher:** *Poisoned Pen*

**Pages:** 334

**Price (hardback):** \$24.95

**ISBN (hardback):** 1-59058-302-7

**Category:** FICTION

**Classification:** MYSTERY

“ . . . a novel that Dick Francis would be proud to claim.”

This is a novel where horses and barn manager-cum-detective Steve Cline share top billing. The city of Louisville, scene of the Kentucky Derby, also figures largely.

In the early preparations for the Derby, a young PR woman, doing stories on the Derby entrants, is murdered. Steve, at 23, is completing work for his investigator's license, and digs into the case, a real-life tragedy he cannot resist. All the while he is taking his regular shift at the barn.

He meets owners, trainers, and handlers, and along the way is roughed-up by a couple of thugs and almost killed by a speeding vehicle. But for all his detecting and dangerous living, he has no idea who killed the woman or why.

Always in the background looms Derby Day, lending a second layer of suspense to the proceedings. Steve knows that the murder is somehow connected to the horses, but he cannot see how. Danger threatens constantly, and the question is whether he can solve the mystery before another tragedy occurs - to himself or to others.

Kit Ehrman has written a novel that Dick Francis would be proud to claim. It is fast paced with vivid characterization and sparkling dialogue. It absolutely reeks of authenticity as far as horse racing is concerned, and those who may not know the difference between chain shank and an Irish martingale will find the answers before they finish this book. Bonuses: the city of Louisville in all its grandiosity and beauty in the lead-up to the Derby , and, of course, the Derby itself.

This is the fourth Steve Cline book. You'll enjoy it. **RECOMMENDED.** ~Michael F. Hennessey

## TRIPLE CROSS



### TRIPLE CROSS

**Author:** Ehrman, Kit

**Review Date:** May 2007

**Publisher:** *Poisoned Pen*

**Pages:** 334

**Price (hardback):** \$24.95

**ISBN (hardback):** 1-59058-302-7

**Category:** FICTION

**Classification:** MYSTERY

Steve Cline is invited to Kentucky by his biological father Chris Kessler for a two-week vacation including the running of the Kentucky Derby. Cline works as a barn manager and Kessler as a trainer, and this is the perfect opportunity for them to get to know each other and prepare a horse for running in the Derby.

Cline has been working at getting a Private Investigators License and has a class assignment to fulfill while there. He has to choose a person and find out all there is to know about them. Unfortunately, the person he chooses goes missing, and he is the prime suspect in her disappearance. He must work to find out what really happened to her and stay not only out of jail but as it turns out, alive. Someone is upset about this investigation, and they think that he knows more than he actually does.

This is an interesting and tense thriller set against the big money world of professional horseracing. Ehrman did a wonderful job of integrating the realities of horsemanship and racing into a top notch thriller. This is the third (sic) installment in the series, and I'm sure there will be more to come.

*Inez Daylong*

## TRIPLE CROSS



### TRIPLE CROSS

**Author:** Ehrman, Kit

**Review Date:** May 2007

**Publisher:** *Poisoned Pen*

**Pages:** 334

**Price (hardback):** \$24.95

**ISBN (hardback):** 1-59058-302-7

**Category:** FICTION

**Classification:** MYSTERY

“ . . .another great read, right down to the finish line--”

What would you say to an all-expense-paid, two-week vacation to Louisville leading up to the Kentucky Derby? Steve Cline, a 23-year-old barn manager, who in three previous novels manages to get into all kinds of trouble and solve various mysteries, of course said yes when his father asked him to substitute for an ill employee. And this begins another tale in which Steve suffers numerous assaults. How he survives these beatings is beyond comprehension--but he usually comes up on top. Steve is contemplating leaving the horse world and has enrolled in an investigations course. His last assignment to be completed is a sort of background check on someone--anyone. He intends to complete this assignment while tending to two horses--so much for the vacation--one of which is entered into the Derby. The subject he picks is a young Churchill Downs marketing employee he meets in the barn. It's a simple records search--but it sets off all kinds of ramifications. The story progresses with the customary flavor of previous novels, excellent descriptions of caring for horses and the racing world--especially the flavor of Derby fever. Steve is invited to a posh party, exposing him to the rich world where greed and revenge rear their ugly heads. Meanwhile, the woman he is investigating seems to have disappeared. Steve is attacked several times by two thugs who believe he has a tape. Once, they attempt to run him over. Because he is looking into the missing person, he becomes a subject of interest to the Louisville Police Department. It becomes a race to solve the woman's disappearance. All in all, this is another great read, right down to the finish line--will the horse win the Derby? ~Theodore Feit

# Winning field of books

Publishers are showcasing the Kentucky Derby, in photos, historic accounts and fiction

By Scott Coffman  
Special to The Courier-Journal

It's Derby time again, and publishers have fronted a winning field of books this year that fit the spirit of Kentucky's holiest-of-holies.

**"Two Minutes to Glory: The Official History of the Kentucky Derby** by Pamela K. Brodowsky and Tom Philbin (Collins, 352 pp., \$34.95).

*Two Minutes to Glory* is the official story of the world's greatest horse race — the Kentucky Derby. The book is a beauty, full of 132 years of statistics and history for this incredible event. It encapsulates this history of Churchill Downs from the beginning of the Derby in 1875 right up to today.

A lovely centerpiece for your coffee table, the book is fully illustrated. Each Derby, from 1875 to 2006, is given its due in fascinating stories that recount not only the races themselves but unique tales from behind the scenes at trackside. Much history and majesty are to be found here, and great tales of the people who make the Kentucky Derby what it is, both on the mount, in the stables and seated trackside.

**"Triple Cross" by Kit Ehrman** (Poisoned Pen Press, 336 pp., \$24.95).

A perfect read on a lazy weekend, or just entertainment between races, *Triple Cross* was named a notable book by Booksense, the influential collective of independent booksellers across the country, and it is easy to understand why. When barn manager Steve Cline visits Louisville, he uses his time here to complete an assignment from a PI course he is taking. The assignment: find out everything you can about someone. As is often the case, Steve's "subject" is soon dead, and Steve is the prime suspect.

Dodging the legal system,



fans, the book brings to mind the nonfiction magic of Erik Larson.

**"Barbaro: America's Horse" by Shelley Fraser Mickle** (Aladdin Paperbacks, 160 pp., \$8.99).

Marketed for children ages 9-12, *Barbaro: America's Horse* will enthrall adults as much as youngsters with its lean tale of the champion and his untimely demise.

Author Mickle gives us real insight into Barbaro's personality, using his "voice" during many experiences to provide a real sense of his accomplishments and trials.

His was a unique and fascinating life. The book includes a lovely poster and a fascinating glossary of equine terminology used throughout the book.

While it is a book about the life and death of a celebrated horse, *Barbaro* is, ultimately, a story about love: a horse's love of racing, America's love of a winner, and a love that allows us to recognize when to say goodbye.

The writer uses the technique of "writing" what *Barbaro* might be thinking at different times during his experiences.

**"Barbaro: The Horse Who Captured America's Heart" by Sean Clancy** (Eclipse Press, 192 pp., 25.95).

From the moment he broke down at the Preakness, favoring his shattered leg, *Barbaro* became America's horse. His treatment and attempted recovery ignited debate across the nation from race fans and even casual observers: Should he be humanely put down, or should the champion be given every fighting chance to live? In more than 100 stunning photos, we see the story of this amazing animal from the beginning to the end.

It is a truly moving story, and this charming winner's story explains the hold he had on the American conscience. He was a unique creature, full of the vim and



By Pat McDonogh, T

Last year's Kentucky Derby featured a dramatic finish. New books focus on the late thoroughbred winner.

vigor to which we humans aspire, and it is easy to understand why his owners went to such lengths to try to save him.

*Barbaro* was a star during his sadly short career, and his unsuccessful bid for life will benefit future champions. That is his real legacy: He fought to live so that future generations of beautiful animals could be treated with the knowledge gained from *Barbaro's* treatment.

The book celebrates an uncommon animal, and as the end approaches, there is a growing sense of melancholy, like reminiscing about a close friend who has passed away. *Barbaro* will not soon be forgotten, and neither will this book.

**"The Psychology of Thoroughbred Handicapping" by Thomas Wilson** (Two Peas Press, 27.95)

If you are a handicapper, playing for fun and profit, you will devour the weighty theories in this fascinating tome. It is not a new "system" designed to win you big bucks effortlessly but, rather, is designed to be used in tandem with other accepted

methods of betting. Using a serious case study introduces the applied human relates to betting. The theories the results see the average bettor as a casual wagerer, amply still r nating — all reading.

Human nature are always specially wher quantified as they are her mentions th "think of han game of ches for playing." a convincing and why we t tively influen of our racetr

If you're s proving your and improvi whatever "sy The Psycholo bred Handic welcome ad brary, a val the skills you

Scott Coffman  
writer and bo

Triple Cross  
Kit Ehrman

*A sinister plot of deceit and revenge unravels beneath the famed Twin Spires of  
Churchill Downs . . .*

an excerpt . . .

A metallic click dragged me from the depths of a dreamless sleep.

I had no memory of falling asleep. Couldn't, in fact, remember slipping between the sheets. I was lying on my back with an inadequate pillow flattened beneath my head. My skin felt cool, and I realized I'd flung off the bedspread sometime during the night.

Another click. The sound hadn't come from the air-conditioning unit as I'd first thought, or the thermostat on the wall directly to my left. It sounded like it had come from the other side of my door.

I held my breath and listened. Had I flipped the . . . what had Fortman called it? The fliplock? I couldn't remember.

Another softer click was followed by a subtle shift in the room's air pressure and a definite change in the background noise. A yellow shaft of light telescoped across the ceiling, then collapsed back onto itself and disappeared as the door to the hallway opened, then closed.

Someone had stepped into my room. One person, judging from the length of time the door had been open.

I could hear his breathing as I eased my arms from beneath the sheet. The top corner of the bedspread lay curled over like a wave rolling onto a beach. My jeans were buried somewhere beneath it, and the only weapon I owned was tucked inside the front right pocket. I slipped my arm between the folds, and my fingertips brushed cool denim.

The guy at the door hadn't moved. He'd stepped from a brightly-lit hall into a pitch black room. I pictured the layout as it must have appeared to him. Thanks to the crack under the door, he would have a good bit of light around his shoes, but I doubted it stretched beyond the foyer. I'd drawn the drapes, and the token nightlight incorporated into the hairdryer holder in the bathroom had burned out. The faint green glow from the clock's digital readout and an occasional flash of red from the smoke detector wouldn't help him much.

I'd found my jeans' waistband. I inched the material through my fingers until I felt the snap. Curled my fingers around the knife's casing. Withdrawing the knife, I struggled to control my breathing. My only chance of getting the upper hand was to convince him that I was asleep. The sound of a shoe pressing into carpet reached my ears. I unfolded the blade.

Author's Bio  
Kit Ehrman

*If you'd told me I would "grow up" to be a mystery author, I never would have believed you . . .*

Kit Ehrman grew up a mile from the Baltimore City line - - not a likely place for a "horse person," but when she was working for the government, she came across a copy of Dick Francis's *In the Frame* and was hooked. She read every one of his mysteries that she could get her hands on, quit the government job, and went to work on a horse farm, thus kicking off a long career working with horses. Well, there's a lot of down time mucking out stalls, so she got into the habit of making up stories in her head. One thing led to another, and when she turned to writing, those stories grew into the Steve Cline mystery series.

Many of her experiences, impressions, and observations are reflected in the stories. For example, while she was working foal watch at a huge breeding farm in Pennsylvania, a serial arsonist was burning down vacant barns in the surrounding neighborhoods. She says, "To this day, I still remember how spooky it felt to look down the barn aisle around two in the morning and see an orange glow on the horizon and know another barn was burning." That incident kicks off the third book in the series, *Cold Burn*.

From the fancy hunters and show jumpers that display their prowess as they soar over challenging obstacles to the sleek, often high-strung, thoroughbreds that compete at the racetrack, the horses are as integral to the stories as the mysteries themselves. The series follows the adventures of Steve Cline, a young man who grew up privileged and wealthy but finds himself alone in the world and penniless at the age of twenty-one.

Ehrman also has a short story in *Derby Rotten Scoundrels*, an anthology of mysteries surrounding the Kentucky Derby, written by members of the Ohio River Valley Chapter of Sisters in Crime, presented by Silver Dagger Mysteries.

Kit Ehrman has worked as a groom, veterinary assistant, foaling attendant, and barn manager at numerous horse facilities in Maryland and Pennsylvania and currently lives in Indiana. She is a member of Mystery Writers of America, International Thriller Writers, Inc., and Sisters in Crime.

The Steve Cline mystery series is published by Poisoned Pen Press.



DETAILS

D.O.B. June 15th  
Birthplace: Baltimore, MD  
Married? yes  
Kids? two

favorite season: all of them  
favorite movie: *Pearl Harbor*  
favorite pastime: reading  
favorite TV show: none

favorite mystery authors:  
Dick Francis  
Lee Child  
Steve Hamilton  
Janet Evanovich  
Greg Iles  
Dennis Lehane  
S.J. Rozan  
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle  
William G. Tapply  
T. Jefferson Parker  
Robert Crais  
Steven Havill  
and on and on . . .

favorite fictional character: Steve Cline

## Kit Ehrman / Bibliography



PUBLISHING EXCELLENCE IN MYSTERY

6962 E. First Avenue, Ste. 103  
Scottsdale, AZ 85251  
Phone: 1-800-421-3976  
Facsimile: 1-480-949-1707  
e-mail: [sales@poisonedpenpress.com](mailto:sales@poisonedpenpress.com)  
website: [www.poisonedpenpress.com](http://www.poisonedpenpress.com)

**Return Policy:** All books are fully returnable as long as title is in print, provided that books are returned in clean, saleable condition.

### CURRENT TITLE

#### TRIPLE CROSS

Copyright: 2006 (Dec)  
Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 364 / Hardcover / 1<sup>st</sup>  
Price: \$24.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-302-7

#### TRIPLE CROSS

Copyright: 2007 (May)  
Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 326 / Trade / 1<sup>st</sup>  
Price: \$14.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-478-3

### BACKLIST - IN TRADE PAPERBACK

#### COLD BURN

Copyright: 2005  
Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 324 / Trade / 1<sup>st</sup>  
Price: \$14.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-293-4

#### DEAD MAN'S TOUCH

Copyright: 2003, 2005  
Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 306 / Trade / 1<sup>st</sup>  
Price: \$14.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-292-6

#### AT RISK

Copyright: 2002, 2005  
Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 292 / Trade / 1<sup>st</sup>  
Price: \$14.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-265-9

### BACKLIST - IN HARDCOVER

#### COLD BURN

Copyright: 2005  
Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 334 / Hardcover / 1<sup>st</sup>  
Price: \$24.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-143-1

**DEAD MAN'S TOUCH**

Copyright: 2003  
Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 306 / Hardcover / 1<sup>st</sup>  
Price: \$24.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-089-3

**AT RISK**

Copyright: 2002  
Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 292 / Hardcover / 1<sup>st</sup>  
Price: \$24.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-036-2

**TRADE / LARGE TYPE****TRIPLE CROSS**

Copyright: 2007 (Jan)  
Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 527 / Trade Paperback / 1st Large Type  
Price: \$22.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-303-5

**COLD BURN**

Copyright: 2005  
Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 487 / Trade Paperback / 1st Large Type  
Price: \$22.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-157-1

**DEAD MAN'S TOUCH**

Copyright: 2003  
Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 487 / Trade Paperback / 1st Large Type  
Price: \$22.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-090-7

**ORDERING INFORMATION**

**Return Policy:** All books are fully returnable as long as title is in print, provided that books are returned in clean, saleable condition.

**Distribution:** Poisoned Pen Press titles are distributed through Ingram, Baker & Taylor, and Brodart and are available directly from the publisher.

**Poisoned Pen Press Discount Schedule:**

1-4 Mixed titles	20%
5-9 Mixed titles	40%
10+	44% and free freight in continental U.S.
20+	46% and free freight in continental U.S.
30+	48% and free freight in continental U.S.
40+	50% and free freight in continental U.S.

**Terms:**

Terms are net 30. You can fax us a P.O. at 480-949-1707 or you can send email to [sales@poisonedpenpress.com](mailto:sales@poisonedpenpress.com).

POISONED PEN PRESS  2005

Cold Burn  
Kit Ehrman

*It's a trifecta for young Steve Cline, a hero in the Dick Francis vein . . .*

When Bruce Claremont quit his job working on a thoroughbred breeding farm and vanished, his sister Corey asks barn manager Steve Cline for help. So Steve slips into Bruce's world, and the more he learns, the more he suspects that Corey may never see her brother again. Because all is not as it seems in this pastoral setting where secrets and jealousies and obsessions are the norm, and the present seems to be repeating its fiery past. If Steve's not very careful, he just might get burned . . .



**Bronze Winner**



**IPPY AWARD Finalist**

**Praise for *Cold Burn***

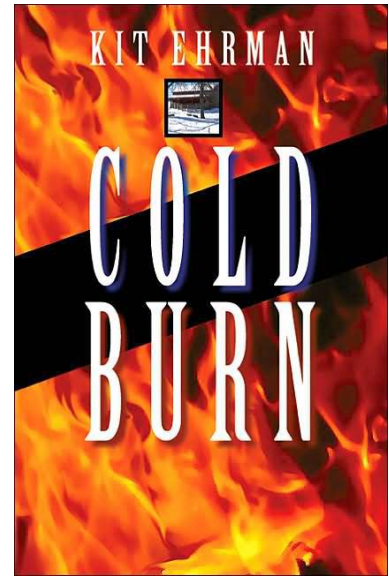
"Foul play among the thoroughbreds brings Ehrman's young Lochinvar riding to the rescue once more. Gallant Steve is increasingly irresistible in Ehrman's best yet." ~*Kirkus*

"Ehrman skillfully ratchets up the suspense en route to a surprising conclusion that nonetheless makes perfect sense . . . fully engages the reader, then leaves him or her satisfied. What more could you ask of a mystery?" ~*Booklist*

"The nitty-gritty grunt work that takes place . . . in the horse barns where mares are bred and foaled, is the backdrop for Ehrman's absorbing third mystery to feature Steve Cline. He has a pleasing honesty [and] Ehrman's knowledge and exposition of life on a horse farm is most impressive and enjoyable." ~*Publishers Weekly*

"COLD BURN is a terrific, engaging novel full of bits of horse breeding arcana, and a more complex and realistic view of life and death - and birth - than can usually be found in the standard mystery novel." ~*The Daily Oakland Press*

"Ehrman's real strength, however, is her canny ability to carry the reader into the foaling barn so that its sights and sounds and smells and vitality are completely vivid." ~*Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine*



**DETAILS**

**Hardcover 1<sup>st</sup>**

Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 334 / Price: \$24.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-143-1  
5 1/2" x 8 1/2"

**Trade Paperback 1<sup>st</sup>**

Copyright: 2005  
Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 324 / Price: \$14.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-293-4

**Trade Paperback / 1st Large Type**

Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 487 / Price: \$22.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-157-1  
6" x 9"

POISONED PEN PRESS  2005

**Cold Burn**  
Kit Ehrman

*It's a trifecta for young Steve Cline, a hero in the Dick Francis vein . . .*

“Once again, Kit Ehrman has proved that she is eminently qualified to fill the void left by the retirement of Dick Francis.” ~**MyShelf.com**

“The dénouement is enough to keep the reader awake for many nights to come. Action pours off the pages with wonderful abandon . . .” ~**Bookloons**

“a fascinating look behind the scenes into the world of big time horse breeding [that] pulls the reader into the story with immediacy and excitement.” ~**I Love a Mystery**

“Fans of master horse mystery writer Dick Francis may consider Ehrman a successor.” ~**Fauquier Times-Democrat**

“Ehrman's stud-studded tale is a fun, frisky read that bursts from the starting gate and never breaks stride.” ~**Mystery Scene**

“Ehrman's *Cold Burn* (1590581431, \$24.95) will prove immensely satisfying to fans of horseracing mystery author Dick Francis.” ~**Midwest Book Review**

“Ehrman seems destined to step into Dick Francis's shoes, or should I say, riding boots, in this series starring Steve Clines, a young man who works well with horses and solves crimes as he works out his own troubled past.” ~**The Mystery Reader**

“Fans of Dick Frances will think Kit Ehrman is his successor.” ~**Midwest Book Review**

“a double whammy conflict between the investigation's elements and the emotional aspects as to why Steve runs off to tilt at windmills while ignoring his own career and the relationship he has with a special woman. . . . engrossing.” ~**Heartland Reviews**

“an outstanding mystery set in the glorious backdrop of horse country.” ~**New Mystery Reader**

“*Cold Burn* gallops into the winner's circle. Move over, Dick Francis and John Francome; Kit Ehrman is here to stay.” ~**Mystery Lovers.com**

“Once again, Kit Ehrman has proved that she is eminently qualified to fill the void left by the retirement of Dick Francis.” ~**MyShelf.com**

Cold Burn  
Kit Ehrman

*It's a trifecta for young Steve Cline, a hero in the Dick Francis vein . . .*

Excerpt . . .

When the alarm blasted me out of a dead sleep, I bolted upright and slammed my palm on the snooze button. In waking, I was intensely aware of the unfamiliar smell of the dark room, of the feel of bed sheets that weren't mine, of the heavy comforter that had slid down to my waist. The memory of where I was, and why I was getting up at eleven-thirty in the middle of the goddamn night, kicked in like a toggle switch being flipped. I groaned and flopped back on the mattress.

Four hours sleep before my long day.

I didn't bother with a shower. If I was going to get drenched in amniotic fluid and horse urine, what was the point? When I got to Stone Manor just before midnight, every single barn was lit up. A flutter of anxiety churned through my stomach before I realized that the lights were most likely controlled by timers. Greg, my landlord, did the same thing. Extending the perceived daylight hours brought the mares into estrus earlier than nature intended, and in the thoroughbred industry, the earlier in the calendar year a foal is delivered into this world the better. Each month of growth and development he gained over his contemporaries would work to his advantage. He'd be just a little stronger, just a bit more coordinated, and with luck, faster than his stablemates. I punched my timecard, picked up the keys to one of the farm trucks, and went in search of Maddie.

A plume of exhaust drifted from a Stone Manor truck that idled by the doors to barn six. I pulled into the drive and spotted Paul Genoa's car parked on the grass. I left the engine running and approached the doorway, mildly annoyed.

My annoyance shifted to concern when Maddie's shrill voice cut through the still air. "I am not!"

I strode into the barn.

"And even if I was," she yelled, "it's none of your damn business."

They were midway down the aisle, and Paul had his left hand clamped around Maddie's elbow. "Come on, honey. Don't do this to me. You're my--"

"Don't you get it?" Maddie shrieked and yanked her arm free. "I'm not your anything."

Paul latched onto her arms, and she pulled back.

"Let her go, Paul," I said, and their heads whipped around at the sound of my voice. I walked calmly toward them.

Dead Man's Touch  
Kit Ehrman

*Ehrman's Dead Man's Touch is a winner in every sense of the word...*

What do you do when everything you've held to be true, when your entire life, in fact, turns out to be a lie? When 22-year-old Steve Cline learns that he's illegitimate, and his real father is a race-horse trainer, he heads to the Maryland track. Steve's father recruits him to work undercover in an effort to discover who's been doping his most promising horses, and he quickly gets caught up in the unique lifestyle inherent to the backside. But it is not a life without peril because some men are willing to do anything to get the right horse under the wire first.

**Praise for *Dead Man's Touch***

"In *Dead Man's Touch*, Steve Cline, the young stable hand who made such a strong and sympathetic hero in *At Risk*, searches out the father he never knew, a thoroughbred trainer at a Maryland racetrack. Ehrman . . . strikes a solid claim to this gritty territory with another heels-up thriller that takes up where Dick Francis left off." ~*The New York Times*

"Ehrman, who gave us the well-received *At Risk*, has produced a second solid, diverting and apparently authentic equine mystery. Along the way we get enough details of the hard, smelly, underpaid life in that part of racing called--not without humor--the backside to make up for several screenings of *Seabiscuit*." ~ *The Chicago Tribune*

Leslie Doran, special to *The Denver Post*, says "Dick Francis fans rejoice. America now has its own version of stories about the horse-racing world and the people populating it. Kit Ehrman has created a driven, principled character and puts him into situations where he must fight for the moral high ground. Readers who love the excitement of the race will be thrilled with the arrival of this new addition to the field of mystery fiction." ~ *The Denver Post*

"From the labor-intensive work in the oppressive heat of a Maryland summer to the cockroach-infested living quarters of the help, Ehrman creates an authentic and vivid picture of the reality behind the glamour of the races. [and] . . . in this chilling sequel from Ehrman . . . with its sensitively drawn characters and enchanting horses with unique personalities, this is sure to be a contender for the winner's circle." ~ *Publishers Weekly*

"Ehrman's second horse whodunit [with] his exceedingly likable hero... finishes in the money." ~ *Kirkus*



DETAILS

**Hardcover 1<sup>st</sup>**

Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 306 / Price: \$24.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-089-3  
LCCN: 2003110853  
5 3/4" x 8 3/4"

**Trade Paperback 1<sup>st</sup>**

Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 306 / Price: \$14.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-292-6

**Trade Paperback / 1st Large Type**

Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 487 / Price: \$22.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-090-7  
6" x 9"

POISONED PEN PRESS  2003

Dead Man's Touch  
Kit Ehrman

*Ehrman's Dead Man's Touch is a winner in every sense of the word . . .*

Reviews . . .

“Ehrman is excellent at establishing a lingering sense of dread, She brings to life the hard, everyday workings of the racetrack while she engages the darker reaches of a reader’s imagination.”

~*Mystery Ink*

“With her two books, AT RISK and DEAD MAN'S TOUCH, Kit Ehrman has established herself as a successful and worthy successor to Dick Francis.” ~Reviewing the Evidence

“There’s plenty of action--murder, sex, chicanery [in] what should be a lengthy and popular series.”  
~*The Drood Review of Mystery*

“. . . rich in emotion, swirling movement and menace.” ~Reviewing the Evidence

“This book came out of the starting gate and never stopped. Action all the way. Fast-paced and hard-hitting.” ~Bookloons

an excerpt . . .

I gradually became conscious of my breathing. Slow, deep breaths, indicative of sleep, then a subtle shifting of air currents that set off an alarm somewhere in my brain. I told it to shut up and slipped back into blissful oblivion, only to be awakened by a tickling sensation on the back of my neck, like a shirt tag that had twisted out of place.

When I remembered I wasn't wearing a shirt, I came fully awake.

A hand clamped down on my neck.

I opened my mouth to yell, and he shoved my face into the pillow, the sound getting lost in the foam stuffing. I swung wildly at him and was surprised when he let go. As I pushed upward, I heard a click. Something touched my lower back.

Pain jolted through my spine and slammed me against the mattress. Sharp, brutal pain. Air shot out of my lungs. A scream.

My scream.

Dead Man's Touch  
Kit Ehrman

*Ehrman's Dead Man's Touch is a winner in every sense of the word...*

Fingers twisted into my hair, and he held my face against the pillow.

"That was just a taste," a voice above my head whispered, "so you know I mean business."

Spasms racked my arms and legs. A million burning needles. Nerve endings firing uncontrollably.

I was dimly aware of the mattress depressing as he climbed onto the bed and straddled me, and I couldn't do a thing to stop him. He yanked my head backward, and somewhere among the confused jumble of thoughts bouncing around inside my brain, I thought that I should scream for help. Yell at the top of my lungs. Do something. But the thought never made it to my mouth or anywhere else. A hand came around in front of my face and slapped something across my lips.

"What if he vomits like the other one?" someone mumbled. Nervous. Distant. Close to the door.  
"He'll choke."

"Shut up," the one on top of me said. More like a growl than a voice. Low. Under his breath.

He let go of my hair then, and my head dropped back onto the pillow. Somewhere overhead, the sound of ripping. He jerked my head off the pillow and pressed something over my eyes. I tried to open my mouth, and this time I felt a response. The correct impulse traveling along the right nerve. Muscles trying to move. But my lips were stuck together.

Tape. It had to be tape.

He bound my wrists with it.

"Look at this."

The words jarred me into the present. Not the nervous voice by the door. Not the one who had put the tape on my face, either. A younger voice. Casual.

"You were right," he said. "He's got background info on everyone in Kessler's outfit. And look at this." Papers rustled. "This ain't no kinda paycheck I ever seen."

## DEAD MAN'S TOUCH

# NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

### DEAD MAN'S TOUCH

**Author:** Ehrman, Kit

**Review Date:** December 28, 2003

**Publisher:** *Poisoned Pen*

**Pages:** 314

**Price (hardback):** \$24.95

**ISBN (hardback):** 1-59058-089-3

**Category:** FICTION

**Classification:** MYSTERY

### CRIME by Marilyn Stasio

Hidden away from the glittering stage of thoroughbred racing, with its flashing silks and gleaming horseflesh, is a place they call "the backside." In her second stable mystery, *DEAD MAN'S TOUCH* (Poisoned Pen Press, \$24.95), Kit Ehrman refers to this behind-the-scenes area – where trainers, grooms, barn managers and stable hands minister around the clock to the needs of their high-strung charges -- as "a world unto itself." Ehrman, who has worked at show barns and breeding farms, strikes a solid claim to this gritty territory with another heels-up thriller that takes up where Dick Francis left off, in the barn.

Steve Cline, the young stable hand who made such a strong and sympathetic hero in "At Risk," searches out the father he never knew, a thoroughbred trainer at a Maryland racetrack, and signs on as a "hot-walker," a lowly exercise worker, when he discovers that someone has been fixing races by tampering with his father's horses. In true Francis tradition, Steve takes plenty of physical punishment as a sleuth. But his undercover role also gives him the inside track on life as it's lived on the backside, a grueling, even squalid existence that pays off in the chance to get close to the magnificent animals that have more character and heart than the two-footed fools who view them as a commodity.

## Off the Shelf

## Emotional journey draws readers into horse racing drama

*Dead Man's Touch*

by Kit Ehrman

Poisoned Penn Press,

2003

306 Pages

Retail Price: \$24.95

Hardcover

By Elyse Thibodeaux  
Staff Writer

When Steve Cline attends the funeral of his estranged father, he is totally unprepared when his brother, Robert, rudely informs him that he is not really his father's son. His mother, who after much insistence and prodding gives Steve the name of his birth father, confirming this unsettling news.

With this new information Steve sets out to find his birth father. Upon locating Kessler, a trainer at the Washington Park race track, he finds himself volunteering to assist him in uncovering those responsible for drugging his horses and threatening Kessler's life. Steve, once again, puts himself in danger's way, only weeks after being hospitalized for an almost fatal gunshot wound during his investigation into a horse theft at Foxdale where he was employed.

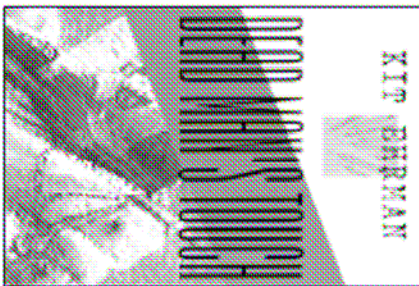


Elyse Thibodeaux

*Dead Man's Touch* is an emotional journey of intrigue and murder in the world of the overhyped horse racing. This novel is a well-conceived and well-implemented drama with intense psychological context. It explores not only the mystery at hand, but also delves into the realm of familial relationships. Its exciting plot will have you sitting on the edge of your seat and champing at the bit.

This extraordinary work is well researched and definitely well edited. It flows smoothly and effortlessly throughout the storyline — each piece fitting snugly into the previous. The tone of the novel is at once both dark and hopeful, just as is Steve Cline's current outlook on life.

The main character of Steve Cline is one of an emo-



tionally torn man, who felt unwelcomed as a child and displaced by his family as the cause of the family's problems. He still loves his now deceased father, and even at the age of 22, still feels a need to prove himself in his father's eyes, even though that is no longer possible. So, armed with the knowledge that his father is not his biological father, he seeks to find solace and acceptance from a man that until now, had no knowledge of his existence. Steve fights many internal battles during the course of this novel, which ultimately show his strength, his compassion and his humanity.

The character of Kessler, Steve's biological father, is a well-rounded character who is capable of many emotional levels. He is warm and sensitive, strong and sure of his place in the world and in his family. Although surprised by Steve's arrival, he shows almost immediate acceptance.

This was a bit hard to swallow at first but, as the reader becomes more familiar with him as the plot goes forward, his easy going personality and his deep sense of family shown by his relationship with his daughter, Abby, make it much more believable. This is a mystery that is definitely

worth the price of admission. This is author Kit Ehrman's second offering in the mystery genre. Her first, *All Risk*, centers around the world of show horses and is the first of the series featuring the character Steve Cline. Ehrman has spent countless hours mucking out stalls and performing as a barn manager on the East Coast, having grown up in Baltimore, Md.

Rating: **3.5/5** Books  
(out of five)

Elyse Thibodeaux can be reached at 409-832-1400 ext. 240 or at [elyse@thesexaminer.com](mailto:elyse@thesexaminer.com).

## Catching story motivates toddlers to explore their own creativity

Ella Sarah Gets Dressed

by Margaret

Chodos-Irvine

Harcourt, Inc., 2003

28 Pages

Retail Price: \$16.00

Hardcover

By Elyse Thibodeaux

Staff Writer

Ella Sarah knows just what she wants to wear. Her

toddlers to explore their own creativity. The artwork is so colorful and eye-catching that I can't imagine a child that wouldn't be immediately drawn to this work. I loved the way the book focused on Ella Sarah and her friends by showing their faces. All the other characters in this book were never shown above the shoulders.

A Seattle native, Chodos-Irvine resides with her hus-

## DEAD MAN'S TOUCH

# POISONED PEN PRESS 2002

## At Risk Kit Ehrman

*In this thrilling debut, young Steve Cline learns that managing a show barn can be murder . . .*

This stirring first mystery is set in Maryland's rich horse country where Steve Cline seems, at twenty-one, much too young to be in charge of a major stable. Seasoned by summers on a dude ranch, his skills and stamina are sorely tested when he's hijacked early one morning along with some of the stable's horses. His escape turns him into a killer's target in an environment where a complex scheme develops and everyone, no matter how innocent, courts risks . . .

### Praise for *At Risk*

"It's amazing what horses can do for a mystery. Kit Ehrman's debut novel, *AT RISK* . . . reeks of authenticity, and the hunters and jumpers have personality to burn. When seven of these horses are stolen in the dead of night, Stephen Cline, the 21-year-old barn manager . . . in the honored tradition of a Dick Francis hero, vows to track down the thieves . . ."  
~ *The New York Times*

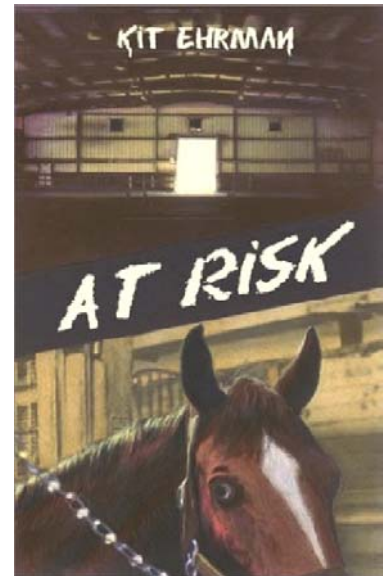
"Both horse lovers and crime fans who've never stepped into a stirrup will relish Ehrman's riveting debut . . . Ehrman treads Dick Francis territory with a sure foot . . . [and] has created a memorable cast. With his youthful zeal and perseverance, Steve Cline makes a captivating hero and sleuth, one readers will be eager to see again." ~ *Publishers Weekly*

"The smart money could make the unusually likable protagonist a favorite in the Francis Stakes."  
~ *Kirkus*

"At best, only a small fraction of first novels turn out to be first in a series (why assume that success for *At Risk*?) The overarching reason is that its author is thoughtful and clever, as well as skilled. Ehrman's writing is unobtrusively crisp . . . The plot is intricate, intriguing, and solid in the best traditional style . . ."  
~ *The Droid Review*

"*At Risk* by Kit Ehrman is suspense on steroids and one of the best debut novels to hit the crime literature racetrack since Dennis Lehane's *A Drink Before the War*. Clear ample shelf space for a Steve Cline series because Ehrman, a real-life horse farmer, has hit the literary trifecta."  
~ *Andrew McAleer of Austin Layman's Crimestalker Casebook*

"Ehrman writes with a kind of unexpected guilelessness that I found charming . . . And it is here that the heart of the story lies, for it is in this author's skillful creation of the intelligent, loyal, ingenious, ingenuous, sometimes brash, often reckless and very young protagonist that the author's creative ability excels. The story is all Steve Cline, and Ehrman very wisely keeps it that way."  
~ *Yvette Banek for Mystery Ink*



### DETAILS

#### Hardcover 1<sup>st</sup>

Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 292 / Price: \$24.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-036-2  
LCCN: 2002108993  
5 3/4" x 8 3/4"

#### Trade Paperback 1<sup>st</sup>

Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 292 / Price: \$14.95 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 1-59058-265-9

#### Mass Market Paperback

Fiction/Mystery & Detective/General  
Pages: 292 / Price \$6.99 (US Dollar)  
ISBN: 0-7434-7506-2  
4 1/8" x 6 3/4"

Published by ibooks  
Distributed by Simon & Schuster

**OUT OF PRINT**

# POISONED PEN PRESS 2002

**At Risk**  
Kit Ehrman

*In this thrilling debut, young Steve Cline learns that managing a show barn can be murder . . .*

“. . . a great read.” ~**Di Bingham**

“. . . reminiscent of Mr. Francis’ English countryside . . . [T]he author’s prose and plotting are equal to the task.” ~**Theodore Feit**

“Kit Ehrman’s AT RISK is for fans of Dick Francis and anyone who likes an edge of your seat, fun, page-turning whodunit.” ~**Al Blanchard**

“Fast-paced action throughout.” ~**Midwest Book Review**

“Ehrman is especially good at creating a sense of place. Her mastery of sensory detail made the Maryland countryside, the barns, Steve’s apartment so real that they become important elements of the story.” ~**Mystery News**

“The plot draws us along to the very end with nonstop action and descriptive language.”  
~**Heartland Reviews**

“The action comes fast and furious in this first novel by horseman/author Kit Ehrman. Tension builds as the story gallops from one incident to the next, each one leading to the final bloody battle . . . Kit Ehrman scores high in the show ring of mystery with this exciting debut novel.” **Mystery Scene**

“Cline is a quixotic young hero, the quintessential good guy with just enough baggage to make him likeable. Ehrman does a wonderful job of mixing murder, mystery and horses into a fast-paced thriller.” ~**Murder and Mayhem**

“Readers will gain some insight into the behind-the-scenes workings of an enterprise like this, and some appreciation for the wiles and foibles of horses, some of whom become almost real characters in a story that gradually spins farther and farther out of control. Steve Cline, with the impetuosity of youth, gets more involved than he should in trying to do the police department’s job; he makes mistakes and he sometimes pays for them. But in the end, Cline is a real youth and his adventure is as real as crime fiction gets. Enjoyable and readers will welcome more horsey adventures with Steve Cline.” ~**Reviewing the Evidence**

“Kit Ehrman’s debut novel is one that has horse lovers and mystery fans alike excited. The crisp, no frills writing style of Ms. Ehrman is a refreshing drink from the pool of mystery novels.”  
~**Romance Junkies**

# POISONED PEN PRESS 2002

At Risk  
Kit Ehrman

*In this thrilling debut, young Steve Cline learns that managing a show barn can be murder . . .*

an excerpt . . .

After the day's work was done, and with security high on my list of pressing concerns, I methodically walked around the farm, looking for weaknesses in our defenses. First stop, the implement building. I crossed over to the wall that enclosed the small storage room and flicked on the lights. Because the fixtures were widely spaced and partially blocked by the hay mow, the work area was poorly-lit with heavy, deep shadows under the equipment.

I squeezed behind the row of tractors, ducked under the hay elevator, and looked up at the massive wall of hay. Large quantities of it. All highly combustible. For that reason, even though it was a pain in the ass to haul, we only stored a day's worth in the barns. I would get Dave to hang more fire extinguishers near the entrance, but what good it would do, I couldn't imagine. If they decided to burn down the building, it would be at night when no one was around. If they decided to burn down a barn. . . . Well, I couldn't even think about that.

The smeared, sick graffiti seemed even more threatening at night. I backtracked, switched off the lights, and wondered if they'd been bold enough to turn them on while they spray-painted their little message. For the umpteenth time, I wondered who they were and why were they messing with Foxdale. And would they be back?

I followed the lane past the implement building and looked toward the old paved road. It dead-ended to my left, at a barricaded fire road that marked the western boundary of a wide swath of state park land. All of those unspoiled acres and the river that wound through it attracted boarders as much as anything else. Only Foxdale's employees and an occasional truck from the mushroom farm frequented this part of the farm. It wouldn't take much fencing and a couple of gates to prevent anyone getting onto the farm from the road, but if someone really wanted to hurt Foxdale, chains and locks and gates across the driveway wouldn't make any difference.

I slipped my hands into my pockets and headed back. A horse was being led into barn A, his figure back-lit by the soft light that poured through the open doors. Even at that distance, I could clearly hear his shoes scraping the asphalt.

I checked barn B. Short of installing better locks and adding more fire extinguishers, I couldn't think of anything else we could do to improve security. Outside, I looked at the grain bin that towered high above my head and thought about poison. If someone wanted to contaminate the grain, they would have to climb up a narrow ladder to reach the valve at the top. Thirty feet up. Thirty feet of flimsy metal ladder in the dark.

There were easier ways to ruin Foxdale. With a match, for one.

Kit Ehrman is a veteran of show barns and breeding farms in Maryland and Pennsylvania.  
POB 1287 / Columbus, IN 47202-1287 / e-mail: [kitehrman@usa.com](mailto:kitehrman@usa.com) / [www.kitehrman.com](http://www.kitehrman.com)

