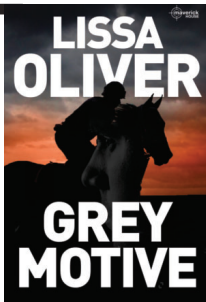


Grey Motive

By Lissa Oliver

Maverick House, May 2023



GREY MOTIVE is the latest novel written by the award-winning, London-born and County Kildare-based racing journalist, Lissa Oliver. Many of our readers will be familiar with her previous novels set in the world of racing – Chantilly Dawns, Gala Day and Sainte Bastien, and most of them will be familiar with her work in leading publications such as European Trainer, The Irish Field and European Bloodstock News. She has also been nominated on a number of occasions for the top award of Racing Writer of the Year at the HWP Derby Awards.

Oliver has been referred to in the past as Ireland's Dick Francis, and she certainly knows how to spin a yarn set against an authentic racing background. She is also passionate about music, and once again in Grey Motive she demonstrates her depth of knowledge about the sport she loves, while managing to include numerous musical references in the text.

In this book, we follow three intertwined stories about people facing a variety of problems. Failing schoolboy Jack is offered a place on the Racing Futures Programme – it's clearly the last-chance saloon for the teenager. Chris and Terry, in charge of the historic Sainte Bastien Stables, find that they have a potentially star racehorse on their hands, but worry that they don't have the financial wherewithall to keep him. Lastly, Jack's mother, Joy, finds herself embroiled in investigations of theft from the betting office where she has worked for many years.

That potential star of a racehorse, as you will have guessed by now, is Grey Motive himself, and we follow his progress as his trainers, whose main raison d'être was to make money by trading in bloodstock, are forced to change direction and plan a Triple Crown campaign when fate delivers to them a colt of exceptional ability.

Lissa Oliver knows her racing inside out, and never puts a foot wrong in writing about all of its facets. This authenticity lends the book great credibility, and the reader is free to enjoy how the narrative unfolds secure in the knowledge that the text is error-free in terms of its racing content. I would even suggest that many racing enthusiasts will learn something new about the sport by reading this volume.

Stylistically, it strikes me that Oliver skilfully uses the dialogue which takes place between the various leading characters to reveal the narrative as it unfolds. In this I found myself thinking that the book reminded me of Richard Osman's Thursday Murder Club novels, which have proved so popular in recent years. It's not so much a crime thriller set in a racing world; sure, a crime has been committed and the police are anxious to find the thief, but, in a real sense, the drama in this story is provided by Grey Motive himself and his progress towards a date with destiny on Town Moor.

The author was kind enough to send me an early copy of her manuscript some months ago, and when I learned that the book was to be published around the beginning of May, I re-read it for the purposes of writing this review.

Suffice it to say that I enjoyed reading it just as much second time around, and I have no hesitation in recommending the book to anyone looking for an entertaining and easy read over the summer; it makes the book all the more enjoyable that it is clear from the outset that those looking for a sure-footed guide through the racing world aspects of the book are in the safest of hands. ■

NEW ARRIVAL FOR ROSE

THIS HANDSOME chap is a colt by Kameko, the winner of the 2,000 Guineas in 2020, and is the first foal out of Rose of Kildare, the Make Believe filly who, so memorably, won a trio of Group 3 races for our Kingsley Park 14 Partnership. The youngster was foaled on March 4 at Tweenhills Stud, who kindly sent us this picture.

Acquired by Qatar Racing Limited, Rose of Kildare ran in three Listed events last summer while in foal, notably finishing second to Emotion in

Newmarket's Chalice Stakes.

'He is very strong and an excellent model,' Qatar Racing's David Redvers told the Klarion, 'but he was born quite small (as is often the case when fillies race on in foal). That said he is catching up well and like his mother has plenty of character and swagger for a smallish foal.'

Clearly, David is full of hope for the colt.

'As the old saying goes: It's not the size of the dog in the fight that matters but the size of the fight in the dog!' he said.



We wish the foal, and all his connections, the very best of luck for the future. ■