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# A Breed Apart: The Horses and the Players

*Mike Helm*

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**Mike Helm : A Breed Apart: The Horses and the Players** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Breed Apart: The Horses and the Players:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Interesting book on horseracing. By R. Pandolfo This book is well written and has several interesting chapters that delve into different aspects of horse racing. Very good chapter with a leading trainer offers details about the training of horses and there are good chapters with gamblers, jockey agent, the track racing secretary, etc. One of the better books on horse racing that I've read. As a handicapper, this does give pretty solid handicapping insights, although it's not really a book on handicapping. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Love this book. By Gina D Very well written and an interesting book. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it and recommend it to anyone wanting to learn more about the world of thoroughbred horse racing--or people like myself who already love thoroughbreds! 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. An education in what makes a track tick. By A Customer Mike Helm is a writer who happens to be a handicapper and racing fan. In this book he explores all aspects of thoroughbred racing by visiting and speaking at length with all the people that have a role horse racing. This would include jockeys and their agents, trainers, owners, grooms, hotwalkers, exercise riders, vets including the track vet, stewards, the racing secretary, handicappers, gamblers, and parimutuel clerks. If I'm making it sound dry, it isn't. The passion for horses and the game is right on the surface all the way through. He also answers many questions I have asked myself: on what bases does a racing secretary assign weight? Why do they write a well-balanced card one day, and a full card of cheap claimers with an allowance thrown in as the feature on others? Do jockeys pay any attention to what the owner and trainer tell him before a race? Why do horses often run off form when

bumped up in class? What do trainers really think? Why do stewards rarely take down a horse based on a jockey or trainer objection? Does anyone make money gambling on horses over the long haul? This is the kind of book you will enjoy reading, and can refer back to. I wish it had an index though.

This entertaining behind-the-scenes study takes the dedicated horse-player to California's tracks to meet Jack Kaenel, who booted Aloma's Ruler to victory in the Preakness, and Chuck Jenda, who trained Brown Bess to an Eclipse Award. These and many other professionals are by your side as races are analyzed, bets placed, and questions answered about everything from claiming races, turf versus dirt, drugs, fixed races, and more. This informed look at the sport of kings offers information unavailable from any other source.

From Publishers Weekly This look at what goes on behind the scenes at the San Francisco Bay area's Golden Gate Fields will interest virtually everyone who has ever visited a racetrack. Helm, publisher of City Miner Books, takes readers on a tour of what the cognoscenti call "the backside," introducing us to trainers and assistants, jockeys, exercise riders and grooms, trackmen, veterinarians, stewards, owners and a racing secretary. He also interviews bettors who claim to have developed methods to beat the system. We're shown that innumerable elements are involved in a horse race, from the physiology and even the psychology of the horse and the sensitivity of trainer and jockey to the condition of the track, which can vary hour to hour, and the racing secretary's ability to furnish good competition. Readers looking to improve their handicapping skills will find Helm a knowledgeable, pragmatic consultant. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal This is an entertaining and refreshing look at the behind-the-scenes activities of horse racing. Written by a San Francisco Chronicle correspondent who is also a recreational horseplayer, the book is mostly a transcription of interviews with some of the sport's many participants. Included are conversations with a jockey, a trainer, and a veterinarian, who explain their respective roles in the sport. In the process, they reveal aspects of racing that are little known to most trackside enthusiasts and that might be useful to betting strategies. The book's interview style captures much of the color, character, and passion that is invariably a part of the horseracing environment. Very informative and highly readable, this can be digested purely for pleasure or for the handicapping insights which can be gleaned. Highly recommended for all sports collections. - David Van de Streek, Pennsylvania State Univ. Libs., York Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.