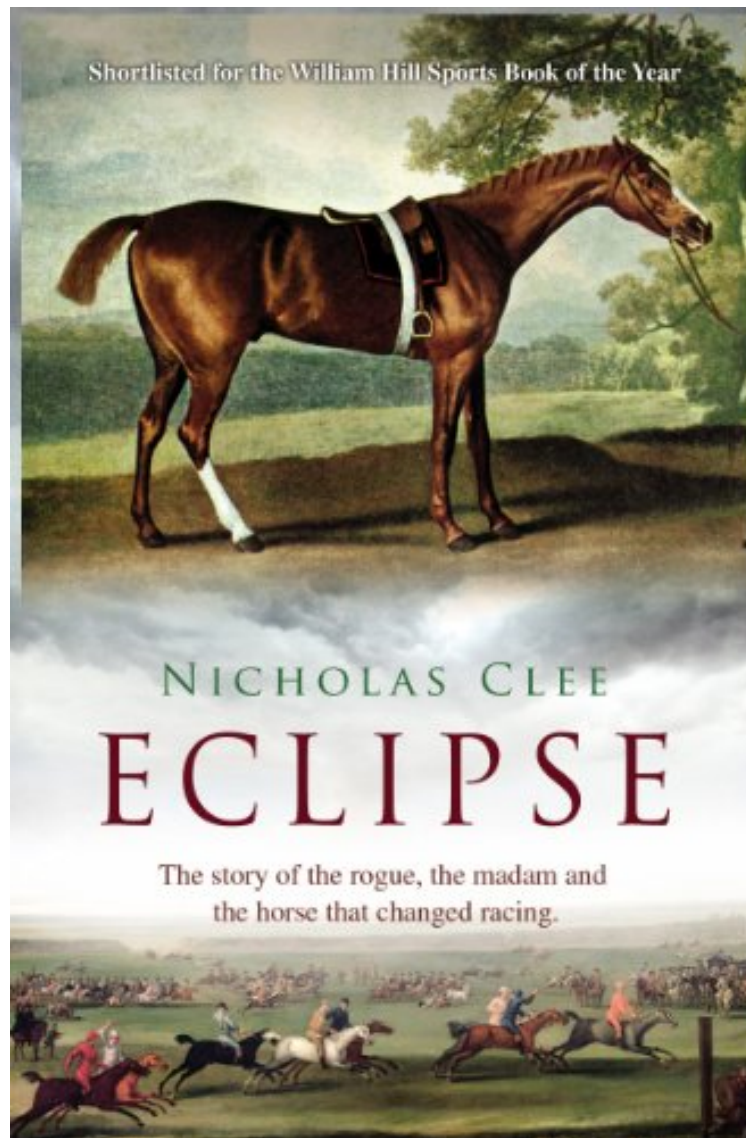


(Pdf free) Eclipse

Eclipse

Von Nicholas Clee

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Von Nicholas Clee : Eclipse before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Eclipse:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Speed bonnie horse like a bird on the wingVon Peter Durward HarrisBorn in 1764, Eclipse easily won every event in which he competed. This wide-ranging book provides a long-overdue look at his life and career, together with the people around him and an insight into life in eighteenth century London. It also explain some of the major developments in

the way horseracing evolved and what happened to Eclipse's skeleton. There's even an art chapter featuring George Stubbs and other painters. Part of one of George's paintings adorns the front cover. The early history of horseracing is hazy, as events weren't chronicled meticulously. Other events of the time are also open to doubt, especially concerning the people who were in some way connected to the story of Eclipse. Eighteenth century journalists, like their modern counterparts, were prone to distorting the truth when it suited their objectives. With all those caveats, and allowing for further embellishment by the author, the story as told is certainly fascinating even if it may not be entirely true. Plenty of upper class people feature in the story, notably the Duke of Cumberland. His military career included victory over Bonnie Prince Charlie's army at Culloden, but was otherwise mostly a series of failures. (Bonnie Prince Charlie escaped; his army were butchered.) More successful as a racehorse owner and breeder, the duke bred both Herod and Eclipse, but he died of ill-health (at least partly self-inflicted, it seems) in his mid-forties when Eclipse was just a yearling, well before he started his racing career. The main characters were a disreputable but charismatic Irishman, Dennis O'Kelly, and his partner, Charlotte Hayes, an up-market brothel owner. Charlotte was well aware that her reputation depended on the health and well-being of her prostitutes (aka nuns), so she encouraged her clients to use Mrs Phillips' famed new engines to avoid spreading venereal diseases. Charlotte also taught her nuns to behave in a very ladylike fashion, appropriate for her upper class clients. In 1769/70, when Eclipse raced, all races were run in heats over long distances, as they had been for centuries before. Within the next decade or two, British racing changed rapidly to single races over shorter distances. The St Leger started in 1776, the Oaks (for fillies only) in 1779 and the Derby in 1780. If these races had existed in 1767, when Eclipse was three years old, he would surely have won the Derby and St Leger. As it was, he didn't start his racing career until he was five, which was the custom of the time. Two chapters on Eclipse's male line legacy feature horses that the author wanted to write about, irrespective of whether they were important to its continuance - Hambletonian, Whalebone, Running Rein, Gladiateur, Hermit, St Simon, Sceptre, Pretty Polly, Phar Lap, Arkle, Nijinsky, Secretariat and Dubai Millennium. (Seabiscuit wasn't a member of the Eclipse male line, otherwise it's clear that he would have been included too.) Running Rein doesn't deserve mention in such illustrious company, but the author clearly wanted to write about the notorious 1844 Epsom Derby. Really, I think that somebody in Hollywood should use that race as the basis of a movie. In the piece on Nijinsky, the author grudgingly concedes that Mill Reef (who got me hooked on racing) may have been a better racehorse than Nijinsky; Lester Piggott certainly thought so. In the piece on Dubai Millennium, he disparages Snaafi Dancer, The Green Monkey and Jalil, omitting to mention that Jalil was a decent horse who won at Group level, albeit never justifying his purchase price. In those legacy chapters and in the main story, the author sometimes contradicts himself in different passages. He acknowledges the importance of Herod and Matchem in the development of the thoroughbred, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, yet maintains that the pre-eminence of the Eclipse line today proves Eclipse's superiority. Yet the eighteenth century annual champion sires lists (which Eclipse never topped, though he was often second) show that the Herod line was the strongest at that stage, as the author acknowledges. Eclipse was probably the best racehorse of the eighteenth century (though Flying Childers and Highflyer appear to be other candidates for that title) but he was a less successful stallion than Herod or Herod's son Highflyer. The author even suggests that St Simon ensured the survival of the Eclipse line, yet St Simon's branch of that line is as much in peril today as are the Herod and Matchem lines. The author discusses Eclipse's large heart, explaining a theory that the gene for it may be tied to the X chromosome. If so, a stallion can only pass it to his daughters, but a mare can pass it to all her offspring. That may explain why Highflyer (often mated with Eclipse's daughters) was such a great stallion and may also explain why some stallions (including Secretariat, who had a huge heart) become successful broodmare sires while their sons are disappointing. If this theory is true, Eclipse was a more important stallion than we thought, but not because of the male line. Male lines are interesting (as Ed Bowen's Dynasties shows) but never tell the whole story, as the author also acknowledges. The book is fascinating, but sometimes strays far beyond the world of horseracing. Although the author may have tried to write with a wider readership in mind, I'll be surprised if it appeals to a non-racing readership; this book isn't another Seabiscuit. I wanted to read about all the people connected to Eclipse, but I wonder if the author overdid this aspect, especially as the main story continues into the early nineteenth century, well after both Dennis O'Kelly and Eclipse were dead. The book was bound to be flawed because of its reliance on eighteenth century sources, but the author has added in his own flaws. Nevertheless, there's a great story here with a lot of information that's worth reading, if you tolerate the flaws.

Kurzbeschreibung Epsom Downs, 3rd May, 1769: a chestnut with a white blaze scorches across the turf towards the finishing post. His four rivals are so far behind him that, in racing terms, they are 'nowhere'. Watching Eclipse is the man who wants to buy him. An adventurer who has made his money through roguery and gambling, Dennis O'Kelly is also the companion of the madam of one of London's most notorious brothels. While O'Kelly is destined to remain an outcast to the racing establishment, his horse will go on to become the undisputed, undefeated champion of his sport. Eclipse's male-line descendants will include Desert Orchid, Arkel and all but three of the Derby winners of the past

fifty years. And his astonishing life will be matched only by that of the rogue who owned him. Pressestimmen "A compelling and brilliantly researched reflection of the era which featured one of racing's most renowned equine heroes." (SIR PETER O'SULLEVAN) "Nicholas Clee has taken one of the greatest of all racing stories and brought it wonderfully back to life" (BROUGH SCOTT) "There have been several previous books about (Eclipse), but none that sets him so vividly in context as this study by Nicholas Clee." (DAILY TELEGRAPH) "Clee does a brilliant job of conjuring up the rollicking Georgian London inhabited by Dennis O'Kelly and his brothel-keeping mistress." (SUNDAY TELEGRAPH) "Clee knows how to tell a gripping story: he weaves the halves together into a well-written narrative of social change... fascinating." (INDEPENDENT) Werbetext In the bestselling tradition of Seabiscuit, the extraordinary true story of the world's most famous racehorse, and the rogue who owned him.