

THE STAR AND I
CHAPTER 6: Crossroads

2000 guineas (2nd May, 2009)

The week before the English 2000 Guineas at Newmarket, I was on a trip to Sabah in Malaysia. One of 13 member states of Malaysia, Sabah is located on the northern portion of the island of Borneo.



Northern Tip of The Island of Borneo

The second largest state in the country after Sarawak, Sabah is often referred to as "The land below the wind" because of its location just south of the typhoon-prone region around the Philippines. Ideal for few days of relaxation away from over-crowded Hong Kong.



Sabah's remote beaches

Sea The Stars ran a high temperature on 17th March, Mr. Oxx told my mother a week ago that we probably would not run in the 2000 Guineas.



Sea The Stars ran a temperature on 17th March

I returned to Hong Kong the day before the 2000 Guineas. My mother told me to stay at the airport and head straight to London. However, on the one hand I was just too tired. On the other I was very apprehensive of seeing my horse in the flesh, racing in my own colours. Sea The Stars is the son of our beloved Urban Sea. She had carried my father David's colours, whereas Sea The Stars was to carry my colours and I was no longer that innocent little boy wearing spectacles. Life had moved on.



I was apprehensive of seeing my Sea The Stars in flesh



Sea The Stars was to carry my colours

Instead, I watched the race at home on television. My mother asked me to bet GBP1000 win and GBP2000 quinella: Sea The Stars and Delegator. Not a gambler by nature, I found the amount too big and just had GBP100 on Sea The Stars to win at 10/1.



I bet GBP100 on Sea The Stars to win at 10/1

Since I was at home, I was wearing a T-shirt that said "you can never have too many guitars" with a bunch of guitar pictures on it that my mother had given me, the reason being that I like to play the guitar and collect them. Since then, it was to become the 'auspicious' part of my racing attire.



My famous T shirt

Also, I would speak to my mother on the phone and I would have my iPhone headset on to talk to her. That is why I am seen wearing headphones at every race.



Christopher, wearing i-phone headset at every race

After Sea The Stars triumphed in the 2000 Guineas, we were so delighted at home that everyone was jumping up and down. To have won an English classic was simply beyond our wildest dreams.



Winning the 2000 guineas was simply beyond our wildest dreams

My mother's emotions were much more complex. She thought of Urban Sea and how her son had now proven himself a Group 1 miler. She wept, her tears a mixture of great joy and profound sorrow. For her, it was a matter of her mare's legacy and that inspired mating of Urban Sea and Cape Cross that had now confounded my mother's many critics.



Goodbye my magical mare



Mother's profound sorrow

Our beloved mare Urban Sea had died on the 2nd of March, having foaled her last son – Born To Sea. She stood up and began to lick her son clean. The foal was well but she was not. Within

minutes, her extraordinary life had ended at the age of 20.



Christopher mourning in front of Urban Sea's grave at the Irish National Stud

It had all started with that little foal in Paris, Kentucky and the range of international coincidences that brought her into a family who took her to its heart.



Kentucky, land of horses in USA



Little foal in Kentucky

That miracle of Urban Sea is not the merit of professionalism but of love, belief, friendship between two families of different backgrounds and cultures.



Chinese Traditional family



European traditional family

Yet, they shared the same love and passion for this light framed and far from beautiful filly.



We
both
♥
Urban
Sea

Both families shared the same love

Urban Sea risked being sent to race in the French provinces at the age of two or being sold at Goffs sale in 1992 aged 3. She could have been sold to USA to continue her racing career in 1993 aged 4. She should have been sold to professional breeders since my mother knew nothing of bloodstock breeding. She had been sold by my father and bought back by my mother.



Urban Sea risked being sent to Land of wine at age of 2



Urban Sea risked being sold at Goffs` 1992 Ar at age of 3



Urban Sea risked being sold to race in USA at age of 4



Urban Sea was welcomed home by Mother

Urban Sea had temporarily lost contact with us when first sent to Ireland, an unknown country to my family.



unknown country to my family

If my mother had not struggled against all odds with her Urban Sea, Sadler's Wells would not have sired his successor in Galileo and Ireland would not have its latest equine icon – Sea The Stars.



Sea The Stars, Irish National hero



Sea The Stars : Irish latest equine icon



Galileo : Successor of Sadler'sWells, Champion sire

This victory meant everything to my mother and represented Urban Sea's legacy. She had helped in breaking the cultural barrier between different nations and academic backgrounds.



Children of the world



culture barrier

She had created a possible communication between the two worlds : One of a farmer and the other of an intellectual with a scientific background, gaining insight through mutual understanding.



Farmer



Scientist

Mother is a very innovative person who can create possibilities out of improbabilities. She wants to serve as the transition between yesterday and today.



Yesterday



Today

This is why I have asked Mother to write the earlier part of this extraordinary story, taking on the later part myself. I want to bring my readers into the world of horses which also involves history, nations and human relations. Love and passion do sometimes astound and confound.