Chameleon by Richard Hains

A contemporary thriller about big money, high ambition, and low morals. Jon Phillips is head bond trader at one of Wall Streets largest investment banks and lives the American dream in the heart of New Yorks decadent banking community. But, after years of selfishness and extravagance, he plans his exit through an unprecedented and ultimately fraudulent deal in the US government bond market. A high-ranking colleague, who sits on the banks main board, has teamed up with a Russian financier in order to provide Jon with one of the key elements vital to the success of his ingenious scheme. The deal goes spectacularly wrong and Jons world collapses. As the Russians desperately attempt to recover their lost millions, Jon is thrown into a deadly game of cat and mouse. From the seedy nightspots of downtown NYC to the plush yacht clubs of the Hamptons, pastoral aristocratic England, and Southern Australias endless beaches, past lovers, new menaces, and numerous apparently accidental deaths line his trail. Jons survival now depends on putting the past behind him and becoming a calculated predator instead of the vulnerable prey.

My Personal Review:
Reviewed by Ellen Hogan for Reader Views (11/06)

Jon Phillips is a trader in government bonds for the Bank of Manhattan. He has come up with a get rich quick scheme by cornering the market on bond trading on a particular day. As long as nothing goes awry, he should be free and clear and able to leave his job a very rich man. However to do this his bank has to make a deal with a very shady U.K. Trading Company. Jon needs them to help buy up all the bonds. The day arrives and things are going great. Jon has control of all the bonds and is just getting ready to start selling them off, when word comes down that the head of the Federal Reserve has had heart trouble. This news throws the market into frenzy and Jon has to sell all his bonds at a loss.

Jon knows that his time at the bank is now limited; he expects to be fired. Sure enough, he is called for by the board and is let go. Jon's friend Robert
Baldwin dies in a strange accident right before he is let go. Then there is a smear campaign to destroy Jon’s character, saying he is a drunkard, cross dresser and drug addict. He emails an old friend Penny Jordan and asks her to look into the U.K. Trading Company for him. Jon’s brother David comes to visit on his way back to Australia. The brothers had not seen each other for a long time. While Jon was gone David was killed in his stead. From then on Jon goes after the people who framed him and killed his friend and his brother. As a chameleon changes color Jon is able to change his appearance and stay one step ahead of those pursuing him. With the help of sharks, a sabotaged mainsail, a hunt in the English countryside, and a sabotaged plane. From the U.S. to England to Australia greed, murder and romance are played out.

Jon slips away to anonymity and tries to find ways to launder his ill-gotten gains. There is plenty more to the story but you will have to read the book to find out.

"Chameleon" is a very well written book that keeps you in suspense with all the different characters and twists and turns it takes. The writer shows he has knowledge of the stock market and the trading that goes on. I would recommend the book highly and thoroughly enjoyed it.

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