



THE DOUBLETREE KIDS!

Gayle Farmer

Two Books In One



ALL IN THE GAME

COUPLES



THE DOUBLETREE KIDS

COUPLES

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ALL IN THE GAME

TWO BOOKS IN ONE

Gayle Farmer

To Jeff,

With all my love

Thank you for always being there

and for sharing the memories.

Other books in the Doubletree Series

Follow Your Dreams

High Hurdles

Riding High

Riding Blind

The Sessions and Browning Series

Secret Lives

Lethal Intent

Firestorm

Cold Fusion

COUPLES



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COUPLES

Gayle Farmer

Chapter 1

Blair Evans tossed the brush back in her grooming bucket. Green eyes narrowed to slits, she stared into the leaden sky. It looked ready to burst.

“I hate rain, but this is even worse. If it’s gonna rain, then let’s get on with it. This misty, drizzily stuff makes me crazy. I get so sticky when it’s damp and humid like this. Makes me want to curl up by the fire and just read or something.” Disgusted, she wiped her palms on her jeans and picked up the hoof pick. She reached for Angel’s left front hoof.

“Downright depressing, and I agree about how it feels. One minute I get the chills, the next I’m sweating. Really weird,” agreed her stepsister, Jessi. She continued to brush the sand and dirt out of Foxy’s long black tail. She separated it into three sections and made a quick braid. She tucked the braid up into thirds and wrapped it in a bright green tail bandage. She unhooked the cross ties and attached the lead shank to her horse’s halter.

“As if that’s not enough, we’ve got all these mid-terms coming up. Crud, I’ve got a Spanish exam that’s gonna be a bear, even with Jeff’s help. I’m only half-way through my history report, and it counts for most of my semester grade.”

Melanie grimaced, and ran a vigorous hand through her pale blonde hair in an attempt to diminish the dreaded effects of her riding helmet. It stuck to her head in damp wisps and refused to fluff out. “Arrgh, helmet head,” she said, continuing to rub at her hair. “Looks terrible an’ itches, too.”

She poured a generous amount of Absorbine into her cupped palm and began to rub Benny’s front legs. “I know what ya mean about tests, too. Add the championship show comin’ up next weekend, the awards banquet the weekend after that, and yes indeedy, the next weekend is Christmas. I feel like I’m on a treadmill gone haywire.”

Melanie shrugged at her friends as she brought her horse out of the cross ties and into the aisle. She palmed several sugar cubes and fed them to the gelding and then headed for his stall.

“I could use a break, y’know? Instead, I get the schedule from hell and a calculus test. Go figure.”

Shievon Mahoney popped her head over the stall door and grinned, offering her million-dollar smile. “That’s what you get for taking all honors classes, Melly. Just pray it doesn’t rain until after the show. Man, remember that one year it rained so hard they almost had to call the whole show off? All the trailers kept getting stuck and the footing was so slippery we all thought we’d break our necks.”

“I’ll never forget that one as long as I live,” Blair said, unhooking the cross tie snaps and leading her horse into her stall. “Remember how Angel almost did the splits going down the ramp into the arena? She got so frustrated in that class she actually pulled a rail. Imagine that.”

“Absolute disaster all around,” Jessi said. “We’d have done better to stay home and miss the whole thing. I went off course twice and Mom was so mad, remember? Thought I’d never hear the end of that one.”

“Well, y’know, Jessi,” said Becky Edwards, a pert redhead with bright aqua eyes. “You have to admit you’re in control there. I mean, learning your course is up to you.”

“Oh, you always side with Mom. Just because you’re her assistant and all, you could cut me a little slack.” Jessi started to grumble. Pulling off her helmet, she shook her head, running her hand vigorously through her dark brown hair. She kept at it long enough to make a rat’s nest. Finally she straightened up. “I do my best, y’know.”

Blair glanced at Jessi in dismay. The hair thing was a sure sign of aggravation. Before Blair could say anything to defuse her, Melanie chimed in.

“Ya know she’s right, Jessi, and ya still do it. No wonder Karen fusses at ya. I mean, what’s with that?”

By now, Jessi’s cheeks flamed. “Oh, just gang up, why don’t you?” She glared at Melanie as she led Foxy to her stall, put her inside and secured the door. Snagging her bridle and saddle, she stormed up the aisle to the tack room without another word.

Shievon came out of her stall and bolted the door behind

her, normally pale cheeks pink. “Why do you guys keep doing that? It’s really mean, y’know? Jessi already feels bad enough. Why keep ragging on her about it?”

Becky shrugged. “Well, I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to hurt her feelings. It’s my fault for saying anything, but really, Shievy, best friend or not, it’s about time she got over that, don’t you think?”

“Crap.” Shievon turned on her heel and headed up the aisle in search of Jessi.

Becky turned to Melanie and Blair, eyes wide, arms outstretched. “I didn’t mean to start trouble.”

“Forget it, Becky. Ya just told the truth, although the timin’ might be a bit off,” Melanie said. “We’re all stressed to the breakin’ point. Feelins’ get hurt real easy at times like these. Besides, ya have to admit it is a bit much.”

“We aren’t all blessed with photographic memories, Melly,” Blair said. She slammed Angel’s door and followed Shievon up the aisle.

Becky and Melanie glanced at each other and shrugged. “Ya need a lift home? Right about now I could use a latte.”

“Thanks, that sounds great. Maybe they have one with hemlock.” Becky chuckled at Melanie and followed her to the parking lot.

Authors Note:

I hope you enjoyed these stories and always appreciate your opinion. Go to my web site at www.gaylefarmer.com to find more books in the Doubletree Kids Series.

Happy Reading

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