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Show Barn Blues



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Synopsis

"Delightfully addictive barn drama." - HorseNation.com Grace has built her life on show horses. It's been a good life, too -- she mounts her wealthy students on European warmbloods, competes her horses on Florida's rigorous A-circuit, and runs the nicest barn in the neighborhood. Then, suddenly, it's the only barn in the neighborhood. As Grace's country town becomes a sun-drenched playground of pools and golf courses, she vows that no bulldozer will ever touch her farm. With her neighbors selling their farms and moving to more isolated corners of Florida, she finds herself fighting off land-hungry developers alone -- until Kennedy comes along. Kennedy is everything Grace doesn't want around her bustling show barn -- a pleasure rider who would rather wander in the woods than tackle a show-jumping course. Kennedy might make for an unlikely sidekick, but she's just the inspiration Grace needs to fight back against the developers who want to bulldoze her corner of Floridian wilderness -- and, eventually, against the wilderness itself.

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Customer Reviews

Show Barn Blues brilliantly captures the bizarre social dynamic present at so many show barns: on one hand, on some level most professionals who work with horses are passionate about riding,

otherwise they wouldn't put up with the long hours, danger, and financial instability that is an inevitable part of the horse industry. On the other hand, staying in business means showing almost constantly and the decision to show is seldom a reflection of the amateur rider's competence or the horse's welfare—it means that the barn owner needs to make money off of the training fees, braiding fees, and pro rides that showing at a high level entails. Grace, the heroine of the novel, is a veteran rider, trainer, and barn owner who is struggling to stay afloat in a suburban world where horses increasingly seem irrelevant. Her shaky finances (and control freak nature) occasionally blind her to making the best decisions for her horses, including their need for some downtime and to just be horses riding around on a trail. Kennedy, a boarder Grace takes in only reluctantly out of desperation at the beginning of the book helps remind Grace why she loved riding so much in the first place while Grace teaches Kennedy some needed firmness about being a professional in the horse world. What I love so much about this book and all of Natalie Keller Reinert's books is that there is no black and white when it comes to horses: it's not like the people who show are bad and the people who trail ride are good. There are clearly strengths to both and a need for both freedom and discipline when it comes to horses. Making money is a part of life but focusing on winning blue ribbons alone can limit a rider's development as a horsewoman.

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