

# Nancy Drew

## DIARIES™

Mystery  
*of the*  
Midnight  
Rider

CAROLYN KEENE

Copyrighted material

# Nancy Drew DIARIES™

Mystery of the Midnight Rider

#3

CAROLYN KEENE

Aladdin

NEW YORK LONDON TORONTO SYDNEY NEW DELHI

If you purchased this book without a cover, you should be aware that this book is stolen property. It was reported as “unsold and destroyed” to the publisher, and neither the author nor the publisher has received any payment for this “stripped book.”

This book is a work of fiction. Any references to historical events, real people, or real places are used fictitiously. Other names, characters, places, and events are products of the author’s imagination, and any resemblance to actual events or places or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.



ALADDIN

An imprint of Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing Division

1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020

First Aladdin paperback edition May 2013

Copyright © 2013 by Simon & Schuster

All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form.

ALADDIN is a trademark of Simon & Schuster, Inc., and related logo

is a registered trademark of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

NANCY DREW, NANCY DREW DIARIES, and related logo

are trademarks of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

Also available in an Aladdin hardcover edition.

For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact  
Simon & Schuster Special Sales at 1-866-506-1949 or [business@simonandschuster.com](mailto:business@simonandschuster.com).

The Simon & Schuster Speakers Bureau can bring authors to your live event.  
For more information or to book an event contact the Simon & Schuster Speakers Bureau  
at 1-866-248-3049 or visit our website at [www.simonsspeakers.com](http://www.simonsspeakers.com).

Designed by Karina Granda

The text of this book was set in Adobe Caslon Pro.

Manufactured in the United States of America 0413 OFF

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

Library of Congress Control Number 2013933925

ISBN 978-1-4424-7860-2 (pbk)

ISBN 978-1-4424-7861-9 (hc)

ISBN 978-1-4424-7864-0 (eBook)

# Contents

<a href="#">CHAPTER ONE</a>	<a href="#">Riding High</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">CHAPTER TWO</a>	<a href="#">Rules and Rumors</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">CHAPTER THREE</a>	<a href="#">Food for Thought</a>	<a href="#">33</a>
<a href="#">CHAPTER FOUR</a>	<a href="#">Taking Note</a>	<a href="#">50</a>
<a href="#">CHAPTER FIVE</a>	<a href="#">Test Case</a>	<a href="#">65</a>
<a href="#">CHAPTER SIX</a>	<a href="#">Vandal Scandal</a>	<a href="#">76</a>
<a href="#">CHAPTER SEVEN</a>	<a href="#">Research and Gossip</a>	<a href="#">84</a>
<a href="#">CHAPTER EIGHT</a>	<a href="#">Fast and Loose</a>	<a href="#">98</a>
<a href="#">CHAPTER NINE</a>	<a href="#">Mixed Messages</a>	<a href="#">111</a>
<a href="#">CHAPTER TEN</a>	<a href="#">Signing Statement</a>	<a href="#">132</a>
<a href="#">CHAPTER ELEVEN</a>	<a href="#">The Evans Edge</a>	<a href="#">152</a>
<a href="#">CHAPTER TWELVE</a>	<a href="#">Driven</a>	<a href="#">175</a>



## *Dear Diary*

---

---

PAYTON EVANS HAD NAMED HER HORSE after the exact time he was born: Midnight.

I had never seen such a magnificent horse before. His coat gleamed in the sunlight. His mane and tail both looked like there had never been one sleek hair out of place.

And when Payton rode him, she looked just as perfect.

Ned told me Payton had been riding horses forever, and that she and Midnight were first-class champions.

She was so lucky to have figured out what she wanted to do with the rest of her life.

## CHAPTER ONE



# Riding High

“IS THAT HER?” I ASKED, SHADING MY EYES against the glare of the afternoon sun. “The one in the beige breeches and tall boots?”

Ned grinned. “You’ll have to be more specific, Nancy. Just about everyone out there is wearing beige breeches and tall boots.”

The two of us were leaning on the rail of a large riding ring at the local fairgrounds. At the moment it was crowded with horses and riders warming up for their next class. All of them—male and female, teenagers and adults—were dressed almost exactly alike.

“You have a point,” I said with a laugh. “So how are we supposed to know who to cheer for once the class starts?”

Just then one of the horses separated from the others and trotted toward us. “Ned Nickerson? Is that you?” the rider called.

Ned waved. “Hi, Payton! It’s good to see you again.”

“You too.” Payton halted her horse in front of us and smiled shyly. She was about sixteen, with a slender build and delicate features that made her look tiny atop her horse, an enormous bay with a splash of white on its forehead.

“Payton, this is my girlfriend, Nancy Drew,” Ned said. “Nancy, this is Payton Evans.”

“Nice to meet you,” I said. “Your horse is beautiful.”

“Thanks.” Payton leaned forward to give the horse a pat on its gleaming neck. “He’s actually not mine, though. I’m riding him for my trainer—he’s one of her sale horses. He’s still a little green, but he’s coming along.”

“Green?” Ned raised an eyebrow. “Looks kind of reddish brown to me.”

Ned poked me on the shoulder. “Here come Bess and George,” he said. “I was wondering where they’d disappeared to.”

“Bess said she wanted to grab a soda.” I noticed that Payton looked slightly confused as she watched my two best friends approach. “George is short for Georgia,” I explained with a wink. “But nobody calls her that unless they’re trying to get under her skin.”

Payton nodded. “Got it.”

By then Bess and George had reached us. Both had sodas, and George was also holding a paper cup of French fries smothered in ketchup. The scent of grease wafted toward me, temporarily overwhelming the pleasant horsey smell of Payton’s mount.

“Payton Evans, George Fayne, Bess Marvin,” Ned said, pointing at each girl in turn as he made the introductions. “Bess and George are cousins, believe it or not,” he added with a grin.

“What do you mean, believe it or not?” Payton asked.

I laughed. Bess and George may share the same



family, but that's about all they have in common. Bess is blond, blue-eyed, and as girly as they come. George is, well, pretty much the opposite of that. For instance, Bess had dressed up to come to today's show in a pretty dress, stylish flats, even a matching bow holding back her shoulder-length hair. George? She was wearing what she wore just about every day. Jeans, T-shirt, and sneakers.

"Don't pay any attention to him," Bess said. "It's nice to meet you, Payton."

"So you're the superstar rider Ned keeps talking about," George added, popping a fry into her mouth. "He's been totally geeking out about how you're probably going to be in the next Olympics. Is that true, or is he just pulling our legs?"

Payton played with the reins resting on her mount's withers. "Actually, my trainer tells me the chef d'équipe of the US team is supposed to come watch the Grand Prix at this show."

"The chef de what?" Bess asked as she reached over and snagged one of George's fries.

Ned. “So are Payton’s parents going to be staying with you too?”

“No,” Payton answered before Ned could say anything. A sad look flitted across her face. “They have to stay in Chicago for work today and tomorrow, and then they’ve got a family obligation that will keep them busy for most of Saturday. But they promised they’ll be here in time to watch me ride in the Grand Prix on Saturday.”

“The Grand Prix? What’s that?” Ned asked.

I rolled my eyes at him. “Weren’t you paying attention when I dragged you to this show last year?” I joked. “The Grand Prix is the big jumping competition on Saturday night. It’s sort of like the equestrian competitions you see in the Olympics. Huge, colorful fences that are, like, ten feet high.”

Payton laughed. “Not quite,” she said. “Even the best Olympic horse couldn’t jump a ten-foot fence! The heights are more like five feet.”

“Close enough,” I said with a shrug. “Anything I can’t step over myself looks high to me.”