



# *Scarpati*

## *Horse Taming*



*The Legacy of the native peoples of  
Argentina.*

Cristobal Scarpati



## *Scarpati Tribe*

*Horses are sacred to us and give meaning to our lives, for these and many other reasons this book is dedicated to them and the horse lovers in whole world.*





## *Preface*

I met Cristobal and Oscar Scarpatis by mere chance. It was a cold, Saturday morning in the middle of Argentina when I arrived at San Ambrosio, a private school pleasantly sequestered in the middle of a farm miles away from any paved road. I was looking for any excuse to get out of the meeting I was supposed to attend with my Argentine family as at this point I had only just begun to learn Spanish. I was walking around the farm when I noticed people gathering around a corral. I was fascinated by the culture of the Argentine gaucho and went closer to see what was happening. There, I found the Scarpatis moving effortlessly, commanding a mare to trot in circles. I later realized she had been completely untamed the previous afternoon as I saw them mount her for the first time. I was amazed by the naturalness with which they communicated with the horses. Even though I understood very little of what they said, I was mesmerized and stayed by the corral watching for more than five hours. As I was leaving, Cristobal extended his hand to me. We had only been



talking for a minute before he asked me if I was interested in coming to live with him and learn how to tame horses.

Months later, I arrived in San Luis ready for my new adventure with the Scarpatis. Before even seeing Cristobal, I was taken around town by his mother to meet the entire family. The warmth of the Scarpatis and their Argentine heritage is evident as soon as you meet them. Finally, I arrived at the ranch where I would soon been spending some of the best months of my life. Los Alazanes is the name of Cristobal's ranch tightly tucked away in the mountains of San Luis. It's the ideal image of the rough, wild Argentina I had in my mind. They live simply there, close to the land and their horses. At Los Alazanes, I was introduced to more members of the tribe. There was Flor, Cristobal's darling wife that spent countless hours helping me perfect my own riding abilities; Nehuén, their one-year-old son, who provided constant entertainment; Pepe, a seventy-year-old sage of the sierras that can always be found serving mate and telling stories of the mountains; and Carlito, a young man from



Uruguay that has left his entire life behind in his own country to work alongside Cristobal. It was with these two, Cristobal and Carlitos, that I spent hours on end in the corral. With great patience, kindness, and wisdom, they taught me everything they knew about horses.

I also had the pleasure in getting to know Oscar, Cristobal's father. While he's well-known throughout South America, he's remarkably personable as he enjoys passing his afternoons drinking mate, listening to others' stories, and passing on his knowledge on horses and living. He treated me like his own son. I was lucky enough to help him and Cristobal with a week-long course in San Luis. There I was able to see how affected the people were by their work and the talks centered around horses and living. Practically every night we stayed up until two in the morning talking at the dining room table. I never could have imagined the amount of tears I saw on the last day of the course when the people finally had to go home.



With Cristobal and his family, I learned how to tame horses. I was able to live out a dream that I never believed would be possible. In such a short amount of time, Cristobal taught me how to understand and communicate with colts. He taught me how to manage the work in the corral. I am amazed by the depth of his knowledge and also by the simplicity with which he teaches. I also learned how to live well together with people from all backgrounds. I came away from my time at the ranch with more peace and self-confidence. There, we lived out adventure. We tamed wild horses. We rode through the Argentine sierras on horseback. We rounded up the herd from miles away and drove them back to the ranch. We finished building a house for Pepe. We cooked and ate world-class asados. But above all, we laughed together and shared our lives from all corners of the world.

It was a a tremendous pleasure to translate this book. I would like to say that before coming to Los Alazanes, I knew nothing about horses. All that I learned about taming horses, I learned from The Scarpatis, and I



learned it in Spanish. Forgive me if there are some parts of the translation that don't line up exactly with the proper terminology. I believe strongly in the work that Cristobal and his father have been doing for decades in Argentina. It is with great pleasure that I present to all of you the book and life of Cristobal Scarpati.



*Will Ficklen*



## *My Life*

I was born in San Luis, Argentina, a place surrounded by nature and mountains. Horses have been in my life since the very beginning. Our family was made up of Frida, my mother; Oscar, my father; Luciana, my sister; and Capricho, a horse that my father always insisted was our older brother. We had a full herd of horses at the time, but this particular horse lived with us in the house. One of my chores around the



house was to take care of Capricho. Even before I could walk, I was riding on the back of this horse. Like a lot of children, I

felt a powerful love for horses and animals, in general.





My best friends seemed to all be dogs, cats, and horses. They were mine and I was theirs.

My summer vacations were ideal. I'd spend the entire time on our family's property in the mountains. There, we had to track down the horses and bring them back to the ranch to have them counted and choose which ones we'd be taming that year. I kept a pony there named "Oro Negro", or "Black Gold" in english. He carried me over all types of rough terrain and guided me back home, at times, through fog, rain, or the dead of night.

I blindly trusted that noble pony and not once did he lead me astray. And so it was early on in my childhood that I learned that a horse will never let us down if we give him the best of ourselves that we can.

The better part of my early years was spent helping my father and learning how to train wild horses. Often times, these horses would not see a single person throughout the year until we arrived in the summertime. I began to learn from my father about the way he worked and communicated with horses. I



came to understand that my father had unexplainable, awe-inspiring gift with horses. A “don” is what we would call it in Argentina. His countless years of experience with the animals, accompanied by a profound understand of equine behavior, create a naturalness and fluidity through which he is able to communicate with horses of all backgrounds.



As time moved on, this knowledge had been passed on to me and I had begun to accumulate my own experience in the corral. Until finally came the time for me to spread



my own wings and try things on my own. And so in 2004, I began traveling alone. My work took me to Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Germany quite a few times. Naturally, I continued giving local courses and training in Argentina and South America. This began a



very successful and exciting time for my career and development as a horse tamer. It opened my eyes to a world reaching far beyond our humble ranch in the sierras of Argentina. I was and will always be unceasingly grateful for what my father has done for me. Throughout my childhood, he was my teacher and protector. We are incredibly close and have come back together



to join forces giving courses and educating people about horses. We're content working this way, lending a hand to one another, and taking an adventure whenever it comes our way. Whether it be a particularly wild colt in our own herd or a conference being held halfway around the world, we work as a team.

My life is significantly marked by my experience with horses. They have given me the possibility to conquer my fears and timidity. They have helped me become a man and to have the strength to guide my family in the same manner that I learned from my parents.



My father chose my name in honor of Don Cristobal Luna. This man was the old Ranquel Indian who taught my father so much about living and horses. The Indian lived simply,



without material possessions but with an enormous amount of knowledge. It's an honor to be named after him.

Although I never met him, my father has shared with me more about that man and his life than my own grandfather. I feel



that this man left us a beautiful legacy. We take it up ourselves to carry on his teachings and try to return some of the dignity to the Ranquel Tribe that was so brutally stripped from them in the seizing of their land so many years ago. With this mission and desire for a better future for the horses, my father and I accept a challenge whenever it comes our way. We're adventure partners, and together, we've crossed mountain ranges and oceans to deliver our message.

Ever since I was a child, my parents taught me to love. My mother is a person with an



enormous, generous heart. She has been a perfect example of solidarity and support. Never once did I hear her speak negatively about anyone or complain about anything. She is capable of giving until she has nothing left if that's what it takes to help someone. Her humility is ingrained in my consciousness. Her impeccable conduct stirs something within me: a desire to share with others what she has shared with me.



I am also lucky to have brothers and sisters. The closest in age is my older sister, Luciana. More than just being my sister, she was my best friend, not counting the animals, when I



was younger. Throughout the years, she has been my accomplice and confidant. I have always admired her physical ability and boldness. Our parents taught us to share even the smallest of things. They brought us up to uphold the morals of the famous literary gaucho, Martín Fierro. In this epic poem he tells us,

*Los hermanos sean unidos  
porque ésa es la ley primera,  
tengan unión verdadera,  
en cualquier tiempo sea,  
porque si entre ellos pelean  
los devoran los de afuera*

This translates to “Brothers should be united, because this is the first law. They should have a true union at all times. Because if they begin to fight within each other, they will be devoured by outsiders.” And to this day, Luciana and I remain united. Our families are based in the same traditions and values. This is something of enormous privilege and importance to us.

I also have two brothers that are more than twenty years younger than me. After



separating from my mother, my father remarried and had two more sons, named Pincén and Painé. Their names also have Ranquel significance; they are both derived from two distinct tribal warriors. And as it could have been no other way, they, too, have developed the passion for horses.

I owe a great deal to the horse. They have taken me around the world and given me an enormous amount of pleasure. But I am most thankful for the way they connected me with the love of my life, Florencia. Her love and enthusiasm for horse along with her personality, tenderness, purity, and transparency have conquered my heart. Along with our children, Florencia has helped to complete a circle of life that is absolutely perfect for me.







My children, Abril and Nehuén, could have a chapter all to themselves. But the proper words can never be found to describe the feelings, experiences, and sensations involved



in raising children. Being a father changed, in certain aspects, my way of perceiving reality and living life.





Everything is now more sentimental as I watch our young ones growing up around horses, on the farm, and surrounded by the love of our large family. It's another dream come true and yet another motivation to strengthen the way we live and enjoy the sensation of knowing why we're put here on earth.

When I write or teach classes, I want to give the best of myself. That's not to say my best image, but rather the best of me as a person, in the midst of my strengths and weaknesses. I try my best to be the same person in the corral with a horse as I am outside talking with a friend, in the



kitchen cooking dinner, or traveling on the road. My hope is that people will know me as I am and that I might know them as they are. In my world, it doesn't matter how much you have, if you've succeeded or failed, if you're old or young, if you're attractive or not, if you're healthy or sick. In my world, I open myself, searching for the goodness and



generosity of my mother, the nobility of the horses, and the innocence of my children. And if I see that familiar twinkle in your eyes that I've seen in countless amounts of people all over the globe, then I will count you as part of my world. And whatever I have that you might need is now yours.

The horses have sensitized me and taught me to look beyond what is in front of me. Their pains and fears remain hidden beyond what we can see. The best we can do is to feel their pain as our own and help them to surpass their anxiety.

As people, we are not so different.

We're made vulnerable by the things we believe;

however, this should not be



confused with weakness. We are sensitive, as horses are, with fears and strengths necessary to complement one another.

I was born and raised in Argentina where the air is filled with the smell of horses. The country's history has been marked by the



horse. They were the lives of our native tribes. They were the dedication of the gaucho. They were the necessary tool for the Spanish Conquistador. In all that's been done in our country's history, the horse has been the principal actor. However malicious or beneficial it might have been, our people only

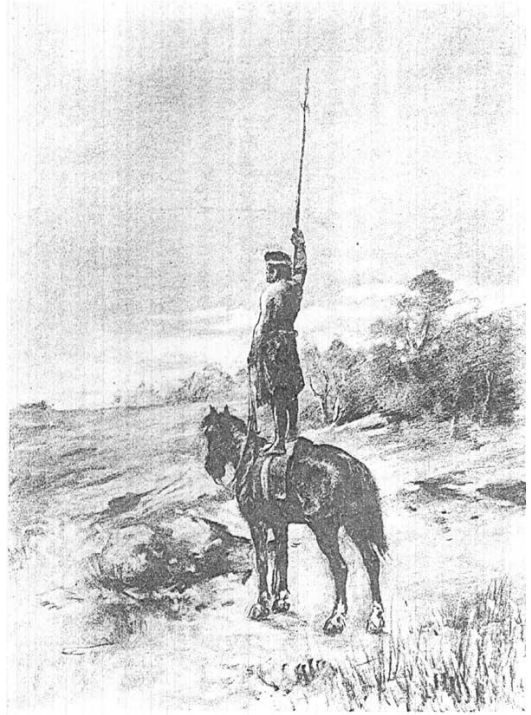


took action by the reins of a horse. The remarkable works, discoveries, and adventures of our people were all done while mounted on horseback. This history runs through our blood. And I can't say that I'm any different. I can provide food and shelter for my family only by means of the horse. They are my life, my inheritance, and my peace.



## *The Origin, the legacy*

Scarpati Horse Taming doesn't only imply a method to educate and tame horses; it's also a philosophy of life, a way of understanding the universe and all that inhabits it. When applied, our method generally brings about very positive results as it's rooted in the natural way that horses communicate with one another and the world surrounding them.



The knowledge and approach that we use derives from an ancient era when the native peoples of Argentina first began their attempts to tame horses. Their unarguable connection to nature put them in the disposition to better understand a horse's reactions. From living in such a natural environment, they had a clear



idea of balancing the concepts of patience, tranquility, tenderness, and harmony. They could see early on that a horse's reactions are motivated out of fear rather than any sort of sinister intent. Through the use of good treatment and clear communication that a horse is able to understand, the natives were able to disarm the animal's natural defenses towards the unknown. Communication was key to creating a relationship and was based in a calm environment where the actions between horse and human could be received peacefully.

The horse's fear is naturally intertwined with its survival. In order to survive, he views any unknown object or situation as a possible threat to his life. This generates a defensive reaction that, in most cases, results in putting distance between himself and whatever it is that scares him. The horse uses this divide between prey and predator as a catalyst, taking him out of a potentially dangerous situation so that he can continue living his life as he pleases.



The natives viewed the horse as a gift from God, so much so that they considered him to be sacred and a focal point of their culture. This view fostered a reverent and nonviolent approach to their treatment. Attacking a horse was considered sinful and would undoubtedly bring about repercussions of divine punishment.

The natives began to notice that the horse's fear manifested itself visibly in what can best be described as tremors in the muscles underneath the skin. This is a reaction sent from the horse's nervous system as an alarm to ward off any unknown object. Whether it be a fly or a tiger, the reaction is always the same. Later, the Spanish word "cosquillas" was given to this reaction which playfully translates to "ticklish" or "tickles". The natives learned that they could subdue the horse's "tickles" by familiarizing him with their hands and touch. Through the means of caressing and petting his body, the horse loses the need to raise this alarm throughout his skin as he now recognizes human touch as something good, soothing, and unthreatening to his survival.



This intimacy and attempt to alleviate the horse's "ticklish" sensation is something we like to call "El Juego Animal", or the animal game. This is modeled after the way colts play in nature. They run around, bite playfully, and rub against one another, finally settling into relaxation and harmony. We want to imitate this playful, harmless form of interaction to secure their trust in a manner that they understand.

The natives also understood that while each horse is different, they still respond equally to the same stimuli and that they are all susceptible to good and appropriate treatment. Each colt works within its own time frame, meaning that he might need more time invested in one particular activity than another. However, with patience and proper care, the colts will all come out of the process with the same positive results of being tamed and well educated.

The natives dedicated a lot of their time to their horses as the tribe desperately depended on them. In time of war, the horse





was the most powerful weapon they owned to defend their rights, land, and family. Naturally, the natives went to great lengths in order to teach and train the horses to endure extraordinary amounts of stress: levels of which are quite enviable in today's standards as few horses now have the capability to do so. All of their teaching and demands were first rooted in the indestructible bond between a horse and his tamer. In an ancient culture such as this, all sought access to the horse as it was a symbol of power and strength and guaranteed them good rank in their society as well as dignified their family's name.

The native's horse was recognized in literary history as something supreme, almost mythical. The image of man and horse practically sewn together, maneuvering themselves across the Argentine landscape without the use of reigns or bits. People were also amazed by the horse's agility, its fine-tuned handling capable of turning on a dime whenever necessary yet still maintaining great stamina and endurance.



In Argentina, we've continued to carry on these traditions and ideologies passed down to us from the Ranquel Indians: including, equine values as well as their views on family. In this culture, everyone lived together peacefully, each individual having his own particular role. Special treatment and reverence was given to both the elderly and the youth. The former represents all the accumulated knowledge and experience of the tribe while the latter is viewed as the future and hope of the tribe. It was in the strength and valor of the youth that guarantees the preservation of the tribe's value and traditions.

They were a democratic people, asking for the cooperation and participation of all tribal members to make decisions. The Chief (casique or lonco) was the represented voice and will of his people and could in no way be unjust or arbitrary with his power lest the people should remove him from his position. We honor this culture's principles and have adopted them as our own: paying respect and caring for nature, living harmoniously together, valuing liberty, loyalty, ethics and morals. As a family we've succeeded in



reviving a way of intertwining our treatment of horses with the way treat and love one another. We are content with our happiness and our success, both spiritually and professionally. For these reasons, we wish to share and introduce our way of life along with our passion and knowledge of horses. Our hope is that people in search of warmth and love for those around them, intimacy with the ones they love, dynamic and caring relationships with their children, and a deep passion and understanding for horses might find this book and come to find what we've found.

I choose to say "we" because it wasn't me that created neither these ideas nor the knowledge. I am only a link in the chain, pretending to be strong and self-sustaining. I've taken the teachings of my father Oscar who first took the teaching of an old Ranquel Indian Don Cristobal, one of the let remaining descendents of a culture now nearly forgotten. And all of us together, suppressing our selfish impulses, have shared what we can in order to know more about the values and principles of those noble inhabitants of our beloved Argentina.



## *Who Treats Horses*

Our own native peoples said that there were men born to treat horses. These people were called “Cawellche”, meaning horse person or horseman. The reality is that not all people are born with the disposition to treat horses. If you’re reading this book, then you have already proved that you have the makings to learn and be with horses. Inside of you, you house the necessary traits to communicate and understand these animals, whether you work with them or not. A Cawellche is someone that considers the horse to be an essential part of him. He needs the horse and feels that he has his own place within the herd. It is curious that the rest of the civilized world speaks of horse tamers and trainers, indicating a more utilitarian view of the horse rather than the fusion of man and horse as the natives saw it. Only in the United States have we seen another term meaning “horseman” or “horsecowoman”. These are the people that have the spiritual need to be with horses beyond their profession. I know hundreds of people that have come to our courses and left with this passion and need



for horses even though they lack the economic capability to own a horse.

This made me begin to think that it is something more than a simple desire. I think it's an ancient legacy passed down to us from



past cultures where the horse signified the group's very survival just as it was with our own natives in Argentina.



## *Characteristics of the Method*

Our approach is probably one of the least methodical in the world of horses, especially in the beginning where establishing the relationship requires particular adjustments within each case. Here, spontaneity should not be confused with improvisation.

Spontaneity is a positive ingredient in the first few times of forming the relationship and strengthening the bond because



spontaneity has, in its own way, an essence of creativity. Using this in the treatment of children and horses has a charm that they clearly accept and share. Improvisation has a somewhat negative connotation, implying something irresponsible and unpredictable that might confuse both the horse and tamer. Improvising once is possible, maybe even twice, but when a person begins to improvise often, he becomes unpredictable and unclear to himself, others, and the horse. Our method is best seen through the eyes of someone who can be spontaneous and take advantage of this aspect of his personality.



We try to help those that have a tendency to improvise so that they can teach themselves how to visualize beforehand and plan for the immediate future. These are very easy exercises that, with a little help, are very effective to train the mind.

During the first three or four days in the round pen, we will continue with the logical protocol that is described in the first steps of the method, but we won't be rigorously tied to the description. We should know that there are flexible margins between actions and we will put this open road to use in order to strengthen the bond with our horses, always making use of our resources derived from both firmness and love. This is so that the colt feels contained and well-treated from the first encounter until it has acquired its education and necessary discipline.



Our method's most evident characteristic is the game we play with skin to skin contact



with the colt: first with our hands and arms and later with the rest of our body. This generates a very intimate contact that establishes the basis on which we develop our bond. This skin to skin contact game that was before mentioned as “El Juego Animal” is precisely designed to imitate how colts play with each other. It has a very positive impact in the horse’s mind. They are able to break the paradigm of us being predators and them being our prey. They can tell that our intentions are for their well-being. For horses that are truly wild and untouched, this game is very interesting. In only a few hours, we can note a great change in their attitude. Because in these animals, we can easily see their fear and ignorance reflected in their reactions and excessive energy. However, after the game, they are notably more subdued and have begun to understand our intentions. This game can be repeated many times a day and throughout various days until we’ve confirmed that the horse trusts us completely.







In social horses that have received some form of treatment since their infancy or were born in a somewhat artificial environment, the contrast is evident between their fear, tranquility, and nerves and those of a horse born in the wild. For these horses, the game is more a part of protocol, as it is virtually unnecessary. But it should not be skipped as it is always interesting to see how the horse will respond.

This game is fun for whoever is in control; it allows us to relate ourselves in more natural terms with the colt. At the same time, we will be incorporating knowledge that will be useful for our entire time with the horse.



After the beginning, we will develop a routine that allows us to give order and clarity in making way for education. Now the colt can anticipate a good part of our actions as well as perfecting his own movements and responses to the orders. He develops balance and perceives the activities each time with more precision and clarity.



The routine won't be something necessarily repetitive or boring. The routine, itself, will continue evolving as we go on, leaving out a few basic exercises from the beginning and incorporating more difficult exercises that promote mental and physical agility from our horse in each step of the education process.

At the end of the education process, we will begin the prelude to the training process which could be a routine where the horse would have to perform each individual activity that he will learn with us. By this time, both the horse and his rider have the mental and physical preparation needed in order to find the excellence and perfection in each movement. This could imply many repetitions of the same motions within the same session, an action that, at first, the horse refuses. Whether we're novices or professionals, we should never forget that this time in the corral is making an important impact on the rest of the horse's life. And we should always remain conscious that time does not matter. What is important is the care, consideration, and understanding of the ones that are responsible for this horse's well-being. The love and vocation that impules us to enter into this world should be



preserved and cultivated each day so that the warmth and quality of our work will always be reflected in our horses.





## *Body Language*

Horses have their own manner of communicating with each other. They do it through signals and sometimes by employing sounds. When horses that don't previously



know each other come together, there will probably be some sort of dispute. When they face each other, we will observe that the language is based largely in gestures: putting their ears back, showing their teeth, and threatening with their hooves. When two stallions are together, we will be able to hear aggressive neighing along with the accompanying gestures. When two friendly horses come together, we will be able to see them in harmony, sometimes caressing one another by biting, scratching, and rubbing



smoothly. When a mother and her young are together, they are generally very gentle. Usually, it is the young that proposes a game to the mother, generally without success as the mother takes feeding very seriously.



With foals of the same generation, it's enjoyable to watch them as they frolic and run around, fighting playfully, chasing one another, and simply passing their infancy as



would be expected. Horses communicate a wide range of emotions, and the thing particularly important to us is that it's all communicated through the body.



Our body language should be varied with them. The difference between horses and humans is that we use oral communication consciously and gestures almost subconsciously. If we want to communicate ourselves fluidly with the horses, we should do so in their language.



In order to do this, we will use gestures and movements in the most conscious ways possible. When we're in front of the horse, each of our movements should be premeditated and controlled. The temperamental colt, especially in his first days, will be very wary of our actions, and we should understand that each action will imply a reaction. I need to understand that the calm and still reactions can be brought on just as



easily as the nervous and scared reactions if I don't control my own actions with certainty. Our subconscious is very powerful and controls a lot of our body's functions. Without going deeply into psychological or biological aspect of things, I have come to understand that the states of anxiety, fear,



anger, happiness, and relaxation surface themselves very clearly in my body. Even though some people can't see it, the horse and his extreme perception will note it immediately. Their senses are very acute like their instinct to survive, so much so that many people believe that horses have a sixth sense. They believe they are capable of perceiving fear even though we might want to hide it. I don't believe that they have a sixth sense. I simply believe in the idea that their five senses are so acute from using them





as their means of survival for thousands of years.

When the time comes to try this body language with a horse we should understand which of his gestures are accepting and which are rejecting. The clear evidence of acceptance is when the horse voluntarily approaches us or a strange object: trying to smell, observe, and make contact.



Their signs of rejection are putting distance between them and whatever scared them, fleeing, threatening us with their ears turned back, kicking, or trying to kick defensively. In every case, we should know that a high percentage of these conditions depend on us, the degree of communication that we're able





to achieve, and, above all, we should always try to demonstrate to the foal that we support him and wish to educate him.

As humans, we have an unavoidable problem: subjectivity. This is a condition of human nature that can be confusing to us and to the horses. We distort objective reality so that we see what we want or we can to see and understand what we want or we can to understand. But it always has a relative limit, turning the universe into what we believe it is, including our own vision of reality changing in accordance to our mood, the state of the weather, our health, etc. We are ever-changing and it's hard for us to assume this reality. But once we accept it as something normal, we can make attempts to filter the way we view the world in a way that is more according to the nature of things as opposed to our own interpretations. Stepping back from this distortion of reality will also help you to step back from making some sort of mistake or acting out of irrational emotion towards a horse.

A person that chooses to spend his life with horses should be emotional, passionate, loving, and able to educate a horse. But they should also be able to always understand



what's been done from a positive and productive point of view. Being objective does not imply being cold or indifferent. On the contrary, to have this sensibility allows us to be as effective and demonstrative as we want to be, and we will also be clear and firm when the situation calls for it. Firmness, discipline, and objectivity give us a large range of versatility to tackle all types of situations with different types of horses. We should remember that these conditions together make up a true vocation, love, and passion for horses that will ultimately bring us remarkable results.



## *The Look*

Many people talk about how we should look at a horse. There is always the question in our courses, “Do you have to look a horse in the eyes?” The answer is both simple and complex. The look, in itself, is not an aggressive or peaceful action. I can look at a horse wherever I’d like once I understand that this look is a part of my entire body language.



The horse observes everything we do, and if our body language is complete, it will be relaxed and feel secure. The look is a part of the entire image, placing little importance to where it is directed so long as the message is clear. And so if we have a tense or nervous



attitude, our look will become of secondary. The doubt surfaces from our condition of being predators and them being prey. As predators, we can feel pressure than emanate itself in a strong, firm stare or a smooth, tranquil gaze. No matter what look manifests on our face, there are also complimentary muscles contracting or relaxing to match what our eyes wish to



communicate. Let's make an experiment of staring at a dog that we've never seen before. Sustain your stare for a few seconds and note how its visual contact with us is very evident. Do the same with a horse that you've never seen before. You can only stare at one of his eyes, as they are on opposite sides of his head, or at his head if you're further away. Either way, the horse will not make contact.



Think on how the dog was able to maintain eye contact, but the horse, with amplified vision, was not. While the horse's vision may be more attentive, we should consider where the eyes are located on his head. Being on either side of the skull gives him an amplified panorama of clear observations, but this horse is only able to see through this amplitude. The horse appears to be taking in all of our body language without being able to discern specifically what we do with our eyes. I've experimented hundreds of times by staring fixedly at a horse in his eye while I worked and have found the results to be the same as when I don't look him in the eye, so long as I have the consciousness of everything that's happening with my body.





It is important to understand that taking away the fixed stare from an object, animal, or a child will grant it a sense of freedom from the pressure. But I insist that this is a part of the whole process. Taking away the look also means reorienting my body in another direction with something else and this is what finally takes the pressure off the horse. For example, I might turn my back to the horse in the round pen after completing and exercise to drink mate or a glass of a water, allowing the horse time to relax as my attention is focused elsewhere.



If this explanation helps people to be clearer with an animal, then that's something worth celebrating. But I'd still like to continue with my point of view that leaving behind the



importance of isolating “the look” and rather amplifying the concept and criteria of what body language actually means to the horse. It’s not that the look isn’t important but that even more so is the posture of our shoulders, arms, hands, etc. In the end, the horse is a complete entity just like us. And we have to connect everything with everything so that at a distance, we will express all our desires.

When it comes to physical contact, I won’t hold anything back so that all my intentions and desires would be perceived as clearly as possible. I’ll allow him to smell me, see me, hear me, and touch me. And in turn, I’ll do the same. I’ll do the same to leave the impression that in my mind, in my spirit, and in my flesh we are one.



## *The Bond*

This begins to take shape from the first points of contact we make with the horse. The bond is something that molds and transforms as time goes



on. We need to know that in the first few sessions in the corral, the colt will be afraid and “ticklish”. We should move cautiously

to form a strong, long-lasting bond based on trust. We shouldn't wrong the colt in any way. A common mistake is hurting the horse in some way with either delayed or rushed actions even though our intentions might be set on forming the proper bond.



The bond is formed like steel. I've always like







making this comparison. Forging steel requires cold, heat, and beating the metal so that it can become stronger and more resistant. It's the most appropriate metaphor I've found to describe how we form the bond. The moments of heat and cold would be the moments of calm and excitement that we'll expose to our horse while he's being tamed and learning the education process. Beating the steel makes it stronger just as the moments requiring firmness give better form and fullness to the horse's character. The secret is to avoid pain; pain is our worst enemy in forming the bond. The horse is prepared to accept pressure and support demanding work, but he is not prepared to feel pain. Pain diminishes the colt's self-esteem. From pain comes less desirable conducts, sometimes converting into trauma which deeply saddens us. Other times, they simply distance themselves from us and demolish our idea of finding a way to convert our relationship into a well-functioning team. Because our true desire is to move fluidly from a team, to a partnership, to one being that's part man-part horse.



The bond precedes any form of education. It's something present at a spiritual and mental level. We can take our horse to an extraordinary level of education and training or leave the entire process behind, and the bond will remain regardless. I've seen trained and competitive horses that never had the opportunity to experience the bond. The obedience and submission is evident, but so is the sadness in their eyes. Luckily, it is



almost the exact opposite with horses that have received good treatment and developed the bond with their owner, tamer, trainer, and rider. This type of connection between horse and human is similar to what forms between two people that trust each other blindly out of love rather than reason. It's the



same with horses. Above all, a horse needs love in order to achieve motivation and commitment. Naturally in order to tame and educate a horse you will need good information so that you can transform him into a horse that is educated, predictable, and, at the same time, strong, safe and full of self-esteem. This accumulation of actions, techniques, and mechanics are there to give a touch of love so that they settle in the mind and heart of the horse in a positive and definitive manner.

The bond is not forged solely out of tenderness. When I speak about love, I'm referring to an ethical and moral commitment including moments of tenderness as well as moments of firmness, discipline and order. You may think I'm a broken record, but our colts really are like children. They need a lot of love accompanied by limits illustrating what they can and cannot do for us to live together peacefully. The possibility to establish a





healthy limit to a child or a colt is the conductor of our mission. Before taming and educating the colt, he has to be respected and cared for. To do this we should make a place for ourselves in his life and be worthy of his trust and respect. There's no specific technique in developing the bond. It is something that arrives out of feeling. And if we don't have that feeling, we will find it very hard to know and understand our horse. I don't think I have to explain myself too much with this point. If you've opened this book and dedicated yourself to reading it, then it must be that particular feeling towards horses that motivated you in the first place. As for me, my main aspiration in life is to come to where I understand as much I can: to feel, think, and live like a horse so that I feel more and more like the creatures I love.



## *The Limit*

This concept is also a great educational tool. The limit is a clear dividing line between what is permitted and what is not. I don't apply punishments save for extreme situations like self-defense. That is why I've found the limit as a form of preventing situations that arise out of a lack of discipline. A limit is conceptual but in practical terms we can imagine that the limit is what separates two things, one country from the other, my house and my neighbor's, the individual lanes on a highway, right from wrong.



We can see that the limit is an idea that makes living together possible. It gives us security when we're traveling, the sense of

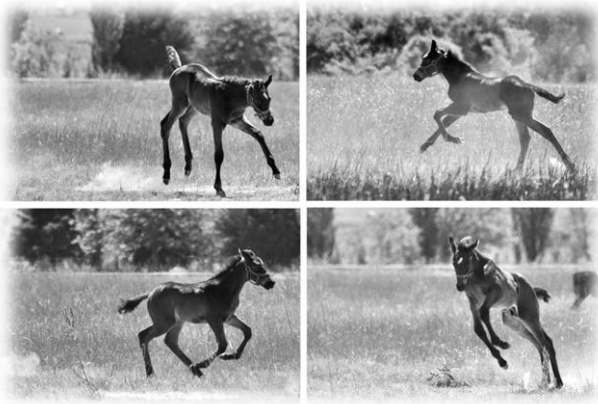


ownership, and so on. All we should know about the other side of the limit are the consequences. Sometimes these consequences come from nature, other times the law, or even the will of someone else. But in every case, going over a limit can be dangerous, harmful, and irrational. As mothers and fathers, we are constantly trying to show to our children that there are consequences for their actions. And with the proper amount of love, patience, and persistence, they will come to understand clearly.

In reference to our central theme, the horse begins learning limits from his first days of life. In the herd, this is the running currency and all understand it perfectly. The concept of limits will become fundamental in raising a horse naturally in the wild. Paradoxically, the majority of problems arise from horses that are raised in stables or other artificial environments where their conducts are manipulated only a few hours after birth. These socialized horses become disrespectful of others' space, almost always surpass limits, and sometimes are incredibly difficult to educate in the first sessions. The reality is that you have to be very firm and insistent in



enforcing limits to these horses. Not all foals that have encountered people are left with bad tempers; some turn out to be incredibly obedient. It's generally only those born in some sort of artificial environment that conditions the horses' behavior. Nature is wise, and horses that are raised in her will have a very predictable vision of ethics. This is regardless of what part of the world the



horse might be born in. The horse will have his instinctual reactions, his fears, and the capacity to live cooperatively in a herd without violating the space of others as he knows what the consequences are.

Early human intervention in a foal's life produces a similar result to what we've seen with our children. Basically, all children have the same needs but according to how they



were brought up, they develop different types of conduct and interpretation of limits. Many times it's our children's teachers that give order to these conducts as they can be more objective and clearer than we can. Many times it falls on me to place limits and structure in a horse's life after he has been educated by his owner. When limits are missing, horses have the permission to develop quite negative conducts.

To learn how to be objective and able to apply limits clearly, I would recommend you to continue with this idea. In very simple terms we will make an idea of what limits are and try to order actions and behaviors into two groups: within the bounds of a limit or out of bounds of a limit. I will begin with the list of negative things, as they are few, that the horse is prohibited from doing. For example, 1) I don't want my horse to bite me; 2) I don't want him to kick; 3) I don't want him to buck; 4) I don't want him to move when I mount or dismount; 5) I don't want him to go at a speed that I haven't decided. All that is outside of this list is permissible and I will manage these five things with time and dedication.





For all the conducts I don't desire, I will have the limit as a tool to explain to him what it is that he shouldn't do. In the hypothetical case that he wants to bite me, I'll firmly take the halter at the knot below his head and pull his head down with strength. The amount of strength I use will be gauged on the amount of effort the horse put into biting me. When he eventually tries to kick, I will continue to touch his back hooves and his legs with the rope until he no longer feels the need to have this reaction. When he bucks, I will have him trot for a few more minutes in the corral to calm him down. When he moves while I'm trying to mount or dismount, I will repeat the exercise until he understands what it is that I'm trying to achieve. In respect to speed, this should be achieved with work and repetition; teach the horse to follow a rhythm and respect it. Don't forget that these are examples and the degree of each exercise and limit should be objectively analyzed for each particular case. This is not a guide to train horses; rather, it's a tool to understand how we can educate a colt using clear ideas and concepts that can be applied to practice. If we want to learn to tame and educate horses, we should ask for the support of someone with experience. By complementing



the experience of someone else with the ideas of this book, you are bound to find satisfactory results.

Horses are brutal with each other. They know what bites and kicks are. They know why these things happen, and they know how they feel afterwards. But these things are done in a herd to generate order and discipline. When a person becomes aggressive with a horse, with or without proper reason, he runs the risk of being wrong and generating consequences that have nothing to do with order and discipline.

For these reasons, we avoid punishment and employ the use of the limit. The limit is an act of love and commitment. It's like when I have to place a limit for my son; my intentions are always directed towards his well being. If I'm not doing so, I'm not fulfilling my responsibility to him as his father. And his health, life, and education could be at risk. In my world, the concept of the limit is something related with living together healthily where respect, good treatment, and proper education are the basis of a happy and healthy life.



## *Time*

In general, humans have a different perception of time for each situation. However, we are subjects of a reality that is absolutely independent of our whims and desires. But does time ever pass the same way twice? We project our emotions and desires, our fears and reluctance on this constant, unfailing measurement of hours, days, and years. The result of this can be seen when we're enjoying something, perhaps a dream vacation in a beautiful location. We're with good friends or family, the food and countryside couldn't be better, and the time flies. We find ourselves on the last day, and while the trip has left a marvelous impression on us, we wonder where the time has gone. Everything flew by in a blur of dinners, laughter, restful sleep, and candid conversations with our loved ones. We wish there had been more time and even play with the idea of stopping the clock and staying there forever. At the same time, we have things that require effort and sacrifice. Sometimes we're sick or the weather is miserable outside. Here we feel like time is standing still. Days seem to go on and on, and we wish things would just hurry up. Such is



the human mind. If you're faithful to a philosophy of natural life, you'll be able to learn to accept time as it is without arguing with it. This is a problem that we can't explain to our horses. They live their lives in a completely different rhythm. Each day is similar to the one before and the one that is to come. They don't seem to have the anxiety for something to happen or the sleepless nights wondering over the things left undone.

I always tell my students that they have two options. You can make time your friend or fight with it the rest of your life. If you choose to fight, things will always be slow when you don't like something and everything will scream by when you are enjoying yourself.

When we begin a story with a horse, we should make amends with time. We understand that the horse has an immense capacity to learn and collaborate with us so long as it takes place in his own time. The education process takes as long as is necessary. In my world, there's no particular mechanism to measure time. I owe this to the horses. They have taught me patience, to be calm, and to wait for the right moment to go on to the next step. And this has given me great results. One makes less mistakes when



he's calm, he's safer traveler without the rush, and enjoys himself more when he can stop and contemplate the beauty that's happening all around him.

You should become friends with time and associate yourself with it to enjoy each day. You see this reflected in the time that you spend with your wife, your child, your friends, your summer garden, and your horse. Put all your attention into what is close to you. Tell your mind to wait a minute while you enjoy this instant that will stay with you forever. Horses can help us to unite our bodies with our minds in an instant. When we're disconnected, things don't happen. In reality, things happen, but they don't pass by the work of our own hands, making it impossible to enjoy the moment as our own. A horse needs you; he needs all of you. He needs to note the coherency between your ideas and your actions. And we should make a little effort at the beginning to achieve this capacity to be who we really are, in body and mind. As people, we're accustomed to faking things. From our childhood, we develop the ability to show what we want to show. It's hard for us to take off our mask to reveal who we really are and what's happening to us. If



we're sad, we can say that everything's alright and smile so that those in front of us can't see our sadness. It's difficult for us to accept the fact that we're sensitive and vulnerable. It seems that it's almost prohibited to feel fear, pain, sadness, frustration, or anger. This old human custom continues to be useful in some aspects of social life, even though we are internally damaging ourselves. Throughout our days, we're taught to be this way, and we teach our children to hide their true feelings. Could that mean that we're the ones responsible for taking away their innocence, the quality of unfiltered interpretation and expression that we admire so much? We teach them to be like us, and in doing so, we bring an end to the joyful, purposeless days of youth. Luckily, with the horses, this is not possible. They can sense that there is something more than what we're communicating; they know when we're trying to hide something. They can see our insecurity and perceive our fear. They suffer from our frustration and anger. It's only once we leave this behind and assume who we really are that we'll be able to communicate fluidly with them. In this way, we can reverse, to some degree, the feelings that have detained us and foster those



feelings that give us strength, that make our flesh tingle with excitement, and give us what we need to continue on.

To live life is to feel the pleasure of life. It is walking barefoot in freshly cut grass, listening to my son's laughter, drinking a glass of wine with my wife, and being with a horse as the sun sets behind the sierras (mountains). The pleasure of life is being thankful and humble for what you have. It is a timeless and magical quality.

Each day that I work with a horse, I cover the basis of what we did the day before, clearing the way for the day to come. I only ask what I assume he is capable of giving. I know that little by little, adding knowledge and experience each day, the process continues on evolving and the horse and I are healthy, calm, and safe.

We're obsessed with time, and yet, the majority of times we're not conscious of it. In our courses, people never cease to ask, "How much time will it take to tame a horse? How much time should I work the horse each day? How much time should I wait before mounting the horse for the first time?" And the list goes on. The answer to these



questions is relative. As all people are relative, so too are horses. There's no way for me to know how much time it will take to tame a horse that I barely know, and I can't know how long you will need to achieve certain things with your own horse. What I can tell you is that what you're looking for will come to pass sooner or later. You should dedicate yourself to generating an environment for things to be as they ought to be. If it takes you a minute, an hour, a day, or a month don't let it worry you. What's important is achieving your objectives and reaching your goals. Because as you and your horse go on learning, it won't matter how much time it takes. It's a mistake to be rushed; a mistake that could include not achieving the goal at the time you proposed or ever. Another truth is that once you've gained more experience and developed a good level of communication with horses, everything will happen more quickly and fluidly. Sometimes you feel that you need to learn more and think hard on what you should do. And this is the passion of the profession for us. We never stop learning or improving.





I'm not pressured with a colt. I won't be a better tamer for achieving more objectives in less time. I'll be a better tamer and person if I do what I've proposed to do without having to make amends or settle any debts when all is said and done.

Common sense, experience, and a bit of information will help us to discern how much time we will need to achieve a particular objective. It will depend on many factors such as the colt's temperament, his character, his life story, as well as a combination of our own temperament, character, and life story.

A person that is sure of himself, has acquired good information, and dedicated his time to improve his performance with horses will not have to worry about time. With a good philosophical base and an agreeable methodology, he will go on educating in his own way: taming colts, training horses, and enjoying all that lies in between.



## *Awards and Punishments*

We don't use the classical method of awards and punishments. There are no candies or carrots awaiting the horse during his training. Nor are there beatings or pain after the moments he doesn't do as we wish. Pauses, rest, and recuperation could be considered his rewards as they imply a break in demanding his cooperation. However, the punishment is in no way acceptable in the education process. If the horse does something unpredictable, like kicking or bucking, it is because the horse is still "ticklish" or is in some way lacking trust from your relationship. These concepts should be understood and the idea of punishing or hitting the horse should be forgotten, as this conduct will compromise the nobility of the animal. Instead, it makes the animal more like a controlled object rather than its own autonomous being, with an accompanying trust in a tamer and his education process.



## *Traumas and Vices*

There are two clear lines of undesirable conduct in horses. Some are provoked by trauma while others are from acquired vices attributed to inadequate handling. The traumas can be related to human actions or natural accidents. The relationships with poor treatment, violence, and pain will put the horse in a constant defensive attitude than can be made evident in his tendency to flee when you want to get a hold of him to begin working. Sometimes, these horses can be reeducated and recuperated. It is a complicated and dangerous job that should stay in the hands of a well-experienced professional. These are not the types of types of horses that a student should use to acquire experience and knowledge.

Vices are conducts that are not quite as dangerous as traumas. If the horse is uncomfortable or annoyed, these vices can derive from poor treatment and exaggeratedly good treatment alike. This might appear as a situation where the horse does not recognize the limits or some precise point of discipline for being treated in an



incredibly tender, sweet manner where firmness would be advised.

There is a large list of common vices: the horse won't let the tamer get a hold of him, not walking once the rope is attached to the halter, they surpass you upon pulling the rope, they bite or move when being saddled, they move at the moment of mounting, they kick and become angry when changing from trotting to galloping, etc. In all of these cases, the solution has a common factor: firmness. Firmness allows us to achieve discipline. The problem then is generated by the people that are unable to resolve these vices themselves. This is generally due to an immense love that the people have for these animals and are saddened by placing limits on their horses. I can tell you that the horse is not going to stop being happy or stop loving you because you were firm with him. Many times, it is the firm attitude that strengthens the bond between humans and animals. I'm speaking from experience as this was one of my problems when I began taming. My love for horses was almost an obstacle in the particular phases of the education process. I had problems pushing my horses to the stage of training and this began to give me a bad attitude. A



horse is able to perceive our weakness and begin making his own decisions that don't line up with our will. In all of this, I recommend you to be firm when necessary without feeling guilty or sad because it's all part of the game. And for that game to be fun and enjoyable you should sometimes have to do things that require effort and dedication.



## *Patience*

Patience, in itself, is a virtue of the horse tamer, but it can quickly become negative if confused with passivity. Being patient is having the clarity and awareness to give the horse time to understand. Being passive is delaying making decisions and instead returning to a boring process for both you and the horse. The colt is a dynamic and energetic creature that needs you first to define what it is that you want. This means beginning and ending in a determined exercise; in this amount of time, the horse should have achieved what you wanted without reaching a point of enormous physical and mental exhaustion.



## *Sensitivity*

People are generally born with this attribute. This is something that should be developed when working with horses, but don't confuse it with hyper-sensitivity. Hyper-sensitivity is an exaggerated sensation that strips your ability to maintain order and hierarchy. Proper sensitivity is the ability to perceive what level of pressure is necessary for the horse in any particular moment. It allows you to yield and pause so that communication can be clearly processed. Sensitivity brings us closer to the horse and allows us to get his mind to see if what we're doing is working or not. Sensitivity allows us to connect with the colt by caressing him and let us feel how he receives and interprets our message. We will know when he's scared, nervous, and calm without having to think and analyze him relentlessly. We see sensitivity as a natural gauge within ourselves that helps us understand more from feeling than reason.



## *Empathy*

This is a complement of sensitivity. It is the true capacity to feel as if the sensations and feelings of another are our own. Empathy is develops with experience and is what helps you discern what is happening in the mind of the horse. We can assume that he's nervous because you realize he isn't in his usual territory; the corral is completely foreign to him. The anxiety that the horse feels must be taken into account, and we should find ways of giving him relief in his new environment. We can perceive that he's scared because he has never before had a rope attached to him. Remember, this colt probably roamed carelessly all his life, knowing only freedom. We can feel his exhaustion because we know he comes from a life of leisure and stillness; it is incredibly taxing for him to work an hour. This information will help us better preserve our horse. We will be able to use his energy more efficiently. We will know how to calm him when he's scared. And we will be able to offer him company and companionship when he's alone. This isn't even considering his basic needs of food and water; though it should be obvious that we will remain attentive so that nothing goes unattended.





The consequences will be obvious if he is debilitated in any way. There will be an apparent meekness that is more related to exhaustion and hunger than our teaching. As my father always say, “Siento como caballo, luego domo caballos.” Feel like a horse before taming a horse.



## *Ideal Age to Train a Horse*

A common question is when the right time to train a horse is. There are some that consider the sooner the better and begin treating a foal hours after it is born. There are others that think that the foal is ready after a year. With others think that three to five years old is ideal health wise to begin treatment. I maintain a flexible position. I am largely open to any age, but I like to keep one fixed idea. It's not so important when the beginning of education should start but rather it's more important that there is formulation and orientation to support a healthy mental state for the horse. Whimsically, people place themselves in a horse's lives. This implies a responsibility that we should assume. Between other things, we should withhold our absent minded desires and be respectful of the foal's needs. I have my ideas and have thought at length over what people do: some that I've seen, some that I've listened to, and others that I've read about. But I didn't want to take a critical role out of respect for them. It seems to be better for this book to say what's been useful to us and to talk about the few things that I've experimented with and found successful.



In managing our own herd, the foals are born in nature, in open air and surrounded by the mother and others in the herd. The mother always looks to separate herself before the birth, searching for intimacy for her and her new-born. In watching this, I deduce that natural instincts tell her to be alone with her young; because of this, I won't approach them for many hours. Only after the colt is standing, has fed from the mother, and taken his first steps will I come close to meet him. I will then stay with him and the mother for a few minutes. All the mothers in our herd are tamed and docile which makes it easy to be with them as mothers have a tendency to change their attitude after the birth of their foal. Without coming too close or trying to touch the newborn, I remain for a few moments so that the mother and child can see me in this space. Only with this action does the foal assimilate the human image as something that is not dangerous and would never flee from us. In our home, no one can touch a foal until it's at least three weeks old. I decided this amount of time after observing that during this time, they only appear with their mother. They separate for a few meters a couple of times a day and a little more when they lie down to sleep at night. At three



weeks, they adopt a more energetic and independent attitude and spend more time playing and investigating. Just at this point, we can pet him no more than three times and only when he approaches us. This plan was not very strict until a few years ago. A foal was born in our herd and was excessively handled by the person in charge of feeding him while I was away travelling and this developed an irrelevant, rebellious, and, at times, aggressive behavior. All of this was due to an excessive amount of physical contact. She was all disoriented and unmanageable. In the eyes of anyone else, it could have been funny because she acted like a dog. But it was very sad for me because I had to be very firm and strict in order to educate her, and in the end, I was unable to get a very good result. Since then, I've been very reserved with the amount I socialize with foals. I try to do no more than being close to them and petting them once or twice. In this way I can be assured that the fear factor will remain intact as well as the "tickling" sensation almost as if it were a wild colt. Still when these foals turn three years old, they are practically unafraid and have very little "tickles" even though I have remained distant from them. I do my best to preserve these two qualities as



they're crucial to the education process. A horse that is not sensitive, without fear or "tickles", is more of a problem than a solution. The "tickles" allow me to communicate with a horse. They are used as impulses, to provoke instinctual tremors imbedded in the skin's sensitivity. A little bit of fear is an important ingredient for our bond. The colt will value the things we help him understand and connect with us like an ally. The fearless colt can ignore us and even challenge us when we try to pressure it to work. These are a few reasons why I don't want a horse that is excessively tame at the beginning of the education process. The idea is that neither of the extremes is desired.

When a foal is around a year old and the time comes to wean him from his mother, I put a halter and rope on him and leave him in the round pen with his mother for a few hours. The next day, I do the same thing but without the mother. The foal will step on the rope and become familiar with the function of the halter. I teach them to follow me when I pull on the rope and then pet them a little bit. I repeat this process three times a year, approximately once every four months. In these short sessions, I try not to provoke any



reactions that might require placing a limit or a disciplinary measure. All that I want at this point is to have access to the foal and be able to manage them for an eventual veterinary treatment and check-up. No more training will be given to the foal than this as I will wait until he is three to progress any further with him. With these half a dozen times that I've worked with the horse, he will enter into the training process as a safe, fluid, easy, and pleasant colt. At this point he will have the minimal physical and mental maturity to understand all the tasks that I will teach and require of him.

I hope that the comparison of a foal and a child isn't offensive to anyone as I find it very affective and suiting. For me, it's an honor as childhood holds the few moments of innocence, nobility, tenderness, and fragility like a foal. And as the years go by, we begin to become numb to what is important like love, tenderness, and easiness. This is sad because we learn to distract ourselves from what is truly essential, while the children and the horses remain in contact at all times with what is important. Like children, foals have a right to develop happy and healthy and these three years of a colt's life closely mimic the



first ten or eleven years of a child's life. All children and horses alike have an unarguable ability to learn. However that doesn't mean that they are mature enough to be pushed and have a lot demanded of them. Horses require complete physical and mental maturity in order to train and compete. At this point in a colt's life, it is capable of understanding 99% of the education process; they are not, however, capable of assuming 99% of the competition's requirements and all that they imply. There are some horse with great genetic potential with parents and siblings that have performed remarkably in a determined sport. For this, there are expectations for the colt, and he is oftentimes rushed through the education process without regards for his maturity. The results are usually disappointing. There are other horses that stay in the competitive training process because they've demonstrated a great capacity to learn and execute orders which makes trainers very enthusiastic, wanting more and more in a shorter amount of time. The horse finally plateaus or begins to backslide, manifesting attitudes brought on by stress. They could begin swallowing excessive amounts of air causing intestinal and liver problems, become unexplainably



sick, and the list goes on of undesirable conditions all due to stress, high demand, and immaturity. There is a saying, “Lento, lento, se llega lejos.” Slow, slow and you’ll go far. My father always told me that a tamed horse is not the same as a mature horse. And so this chapter is meant to show that there are many things you can do with a horse throughout its entire life, but your actions should be well thought out for both your and the horse’s well being. In waiting for the proper time, we have acquired the right to begin the colt in a moral and ethical education process.

*Conclusion:* I will socialize with the foal without placing myself between him and his mother or the other horses he lives with. I will never separate him from his mother for treatment or physical contact before he is one year old. Then at that age, I can teach him a little about the halter’s function in order to administer veterinary treatment or transport. And finally, once he’s three years old, I will begin taming and training him.





## *Foal, Colt and Horse*

A foal is the creature from his first day of life until it is three years old. In this amount of time, I suggest that he have a natural life in the herd with a few sporadic interventions to socialize with him, preserving this animal condition that nature wanted for the horses.



The colt is the apparent horse that is still developing physically and is between three to five years old. He has good mental development and will be educated in order to be converted into a horse that begins around five years old. The differences of state of being from a foal to a colt to a horse give us dividing lines between the levels of intervention that we can have in their lives.



The intervention with the foal will be minimal. It will be much heavier and active with the colt so that we can educate him. And with the horse it is even more so that I should not worry myself with all of these delicate questions as are necessary for the physical and mental health of a young colt. In



comparison with humans, we might say that the foal is like a child, the colt is like a teenager, and the horse is like an adult. With this comparison, we can clearly discern the differences that exist within the progression of life. The child will require a lot of time from his family and friends. The teenager will distribute his time between family, friends, and school. The adult will face the large life tasks (work, sports, becoming a contributing member of society, etc.) with great clarity and determination.



In this chapter I don't want to fully define the foal, colt and horse; I only wish to mark a few relative points. There are simple differences that disappear with time. In order to become a tame and educated horse, you would have to have been at one time both foal and colt. Understanding the usefulness of these differences is directly related to the type of treatment that we should have with foal, colt, and how the treatment of handling can vary within mature horses. I will also use the word, colt or green horse, for the horse that wasn't tamed even though the years passed, and he became an adult. For a colt to become a horse, he requires the double condition of maturity and education.

The horse is like the genre with its differences divided into three steps, each step giving its own levels of education and maturity. The foal becomes the colt which, in time, will be converted into the horse. In my conception, the colt is a young horse at three years old that requires being educated in order to be able to have a trusting relationship and easy handling of his movements. The horse has come through this process; he has been confirmed and now is at least five years old. As my father always told me, "Hijo, no es los



mismo un potro domado, que un caballo maduro.” Son, a tamed colt is not the same as a mature horse. Being tamed and educated will not necessarily mean that the horse is mature. We place special attention in the point of mental maturity as well as physical maturity. And we have found that at five years old, a horse reaches a good level of both types of maturity.

I won’t say too much about foals as in my way of thinking, I prefer to leave them to be as natural as possible inside the domestic treatment that we give them. I’m not speaking about leaving them completely wild. I’m talking about them continuing being horses including in some of the various artificial mediums that we oftentimes use.

We should always be attentive and connected with the colts as there could be foreseen reactions provoked by the lack of experience and maturity. From my point of view, the horse is more predictable and controls his reactions safely based in himself and his trust in his rider.

The colt is developing his character, and for this we should be very consistent in our relationship that we have formed with him.



His temperament will not change during the education process, but his character will require experience to take a positive course of tolerance, stability, and obedience. In ideal terms, the horse is generally very tolerant to changes. The horse is stable in different situations and obeys our orders in calm, tensionless moments as well as physically and mentally demanding moments.

For example, we don't recommend an exaggeratedly affectionate handling for foals or colts. We recommend a patient relationship of respect without the abuse of caressing and multitudes of affection. These attitudes work well with people, but they can humanize the foal and possibly distort the future relationship by having excessive amounts of trust and a lack of respect in questions of physical space and obedience to



our hierarchy. However, with the horse that has been educated and understands how to properly live with humans, we can be as affectionate as we'd like as the base of the relationship has been formed as well as a healthy bond. Before this point, we have to wait, suppressing the desire to give them affection until the horse is at least three years old. Then we will have a more natural and stable horse: a horse to which we can offer carrots, sugar, and other tasty treats.



Consider the hypothetical scenario of someone who doesn't know how to raise a child but wants to gain his affection. The person gives the child sweets, affection, and permission to do anything. This child will have serious problems to understand society's limits in the future. He will have self-esteem issues. He will develop a weak, intolerant, and unstable personality. We can make our own conclusions as to what can happen to a horse if we were to do the same to him. As I



will say many times in this book, sometimes love means demonstrating firmness and discipline. My commitment is to give a good destiny to the future colt that requires more than just my tenderness and selfish desires.

The foal, colt, and horse are all together one thing separated into different stages of life. They are always susceptible to incorporate knowledge and experiences. And it is up to us to discern what knowledge and experience each will incorporate in his particular stage of life.



## *Tools and Skills*

To tame a horse and do it well, we place a lot of value in useful physical tools such as the round pen, halters, ropes, saddles, reins, etc. We also recognize the importance of mental skills in this book. Some of these are expressed very specifically while others appear in different parts throughout the various chapters. These would include our idea about what a colt is, how to manage time, how to direct our energy and body language, how to accept our emotional state, and the amount that we know about ourselves.

The principal concept of these mental tools is the human aspect. We should work beforehand in understanding ourselves and how we can deliver our message through gestures and movements to the horse. This is crucial if we want to deliver a clear message to the horse. That message should contain all of our incorporated knowledge through which we have reasoned and tried to practice coherently. In my case, I had to assume that I was a little anxious and impulsive. Ever since I was young, before my character and behavior became equally tranquil and settled, I





accumulated a lot of anxiety within myself when things in the world didn't go my way. I was very idealistic and dreamed of perfection. However, when I found myself in the midst of an imperfect reality, I couldn't help but feel frustrated. These are a few of my personal aspects that I had to improve in order to achieve an excellent degree of communication with horses. Now after having learned and matured a little bit more, I feel that I have a good control of my emotions and because of this I understand that I am susceptible to making mistakes but I have to ceaselessly continue training my mental control as it gives me so much security at this point in my life.

Each person will make his own analysis of himself. Don't try to punish or praise yourself. We will try to find the weak point that we all have and work beyond it in order to be more coherent in the ideas that we have about taming and educating others. We should begin with ourselves, and if we are able to do so, we will have won the right to intervene in the life of another. My father calls this process "self-taming". It really is a passionate idea because we get to know ourselves and improve ourselves just as we aspire to do



with horses. This is both the beginning and the end of a virtuous circle. Without this process, our children, our horses, and anything else we're responsible for run the risk of not being understood or treated with the right coherency. This "self-taming" is a process of self understanding, self criticism, reflection and ultimately action. These actions will have the goal of correcting, improving, and assuming the potential with ourselves, our conduct, our thoughts, and our feelings.

"How does one do this?" This is complicated for some and easy for others; it depends a bit on your relationship with your ego. In this case, I recommend you to leave your ego outside of this game. Your ego will tell you that you are fine when you are wrong. It will justify you when you are at the beginning points of anger and frustration. It will give you support when you are in the wrong. The ego does not accept that we are imperfect. It does not assume that we should always be trying to learn in order to improve ourselves. The people that can refuse their ego with maturity, humility, and experience have nothing to fear as they come into the world as they are. They don't have the need to



prove anything to anyone or the need to be better so that they feel good about themselves. They don't live a life externally focused on relationships and appearance while internally they are sad and alone.

The ego is born in our first moments of life. It is formed and fed by itself. It grows and develops and takes on its own life. When we are hurt by constructive criticism or someone else's opinion, the pain is derived from the ego feeling despised. We must tame, educate, and discipline our ego. It is almost impossible to eradicate it or take it out of us as it will accompany us for all of our days. But if we loosen its reins it will become stronger and more dominant. Animals don't have an ego; this is why we say that they are noble and capable of accepting reality as it truly is. Horses and dogs are an example of natural humility. They can be just another foal in the herd or world champion of a particular sport. But they will always have the same needs and capability to adapt. They don't have the whims of a rock star or the pride of a powerful leader. They will always be essentially pure and it is only us humans that have the capability to corrupt their purity. What can we do to preserve this aspect of



nature's genius? It's very simple: try to be as natural as they are.

As I've said before, the physical tools are very useful. This wide and comprehensive standard that we are developing in order to treat horses will enable us to make good use of these tools. These tools give us power, and we can use that power to build a stronger relationship that improves each day. Or with or without meaning to, we can use this power to waste the horse's energy, lower his self-esteem, and achieve a physical domination that has nothing to do with the spirit of this masterpiece, with the spirit of horsemanship, or that of Scarpati Horse Taming.



## *The Round Pen*

This is the ideal place to begin to tame horses. It is the same as the classroom for children. Here we will be able to explain to the colt why we are close to him and what we want to achieve through physical contact. Then through the possibility of walking, trotting, and galloping within this infinite circle, he will feel like his freedom is not completely limited. With the game of coming closer and then moving further away in semi-freedom, the colt will continue gaining trust as time goes on. Everything will happen without painful consequences. Once we have been able to mount him, the circular corral is again the best and safest place to take the first walks while seated in the saddle. With the help of the fence, we will give the colt the possibility to move within the security of the circle without needing to exhibit force. In this way we will incorporate lateral movement which is the capacity to move both front hooves without major difficulty. To conclude, we will use the round pen to begin the relationship, forge the bond, and then go out into the exterior world as a team not as two unknown parties.



## *The Halter and the Rope*

These tools work together. By way of the halter, we will incorporate the basic stimuli of handling. The colt will learn to respond to pressure by turning, stopping, walking backwards, or following us when we are on the ground walking with rope in hand. This gives us great control of the horse's movements. It also grants us great power that should be used in the most respectful and coherent way possible. These tools could either help the horse realize his potential or harm him. We might harm the muzzle zone, or we could detonate unconditioned reflections like when the horse begins throwing himself around the corral and pulling backwards strongly. And so I will say that these tools are useful so long as they are used as intended. The material that they are made of should be smooth and anatomical. Avoid the use of halters with rigid muzzles and rough texture. The horse's skin in the muzzle region should always remain intact with only mild wearing of the hair. But there should never be swelling or sores. If I realize that my halter is producing either of the latter, I should change it immediately. This pain is an enemy of the learning process and



can turn our work into something morally doubtful. Remember that education of entering into the life of another should never involve negative consequences. The horse's health is sacred to me.

The halter and rope will allow us to teach all of the stimuli discussed in this book. We will also be able to promote flexibility in the neck and body from a very easy exercise. By using the halter, we can place a series of limits that are generally necessary in the first step. We will be able to put the horse's head in an obedient position looking straight ahead. We will be able to avoid him biting us if he happens to try. We can discipline him to remain still when we want him to. I always try to teach my students not to abuse the halter. We reserve the use of pressure for very specific points. For the moments when we are not demanding the horse, the muzzle should remain relaxed and light on top of his nose. We will obtain much better results this way. If we were to make an exaggerated use out halter, the colt will become accustomed to the pressure and lose the sensitivity that we need in order to achieve a smooth handling in the not so distant future.



Other tools like the saddle, bits, reins, spurs, and whips are optional and particular to the tastes of each person. For example, I choose a light and anatomical saddle that molds well to the back of the horse and makes for a comfortable ride. I am very simple when it comes to the bits. I choose a bit that is very basic and soft for the horse's mouth without the curb bit or any other pieces involved. I want something that allows me to have similar handling to the halter without the risk of hurting the colt's tongue, palate, or gums. I use a whip only when necessary when I need to reinforce the stimulus to move forward. Keep in mind that like all tools, this could provoke pain if used incorrectly. The spurs are the same as the whip. They help to impulse the horse and achieve better performance, but the spur should be smooth and never used with the intention of punishing the horse. These things are all a question of tastes and experience. All I really need to start with the horse is a halter, rope, and a lot of desire to establish a relationship and forge the bond. Everything that comes after that is trying, practicing, and gaining experience as it is only time and experience that will give us the knowledge of which tools best accompany our particular style of work.





But until we have acquired this experience, we will make one promise: Regardless of what tools are used to educate and train my horse, I should never provoke pain or injury. This promise comes from experience itself. To cause pain or injury to a horse intentionally is unforgiveable. And you might ask what the situation is where a horse suffers the same only unintentionally? It's a tragedy. I have said that many negative consequences can arise from bad intentions. But generally we harm horse out of ignorance. I might be that the saddle isn't situated or cinched properly, and we damage the withers and back of the horse. It might be that the bit that we like isn't appropriate for the horse and hurts some part of his mouth. It might be that the cinch strap that we use is too dry or hard and injures the skin at some point. It might also be that the rope that the halter is made out of isn't ideal and rubs the muzzle area bald. There are many things that can cause pain in a horse and we are too late to realize until the consequences are already visible. For this we should always be attentive and observe those that have been doing this line of work for more time than us because their experiences can be the light that illuminates our own path. We will know that the tools



have the potential to help us or hurt us. “It is unarguably our own actions that are responsible for making either good or bad use of the tools we choose”.

One day I was watching a professional work the reins of his horse. His excellent handling of the horse left of deep impression. I moved closer to ask him about a few details. His name is Jango Salgado. As friendly and humbly as you can imagine, he began to tell me how he worked. I asked him about the Weymouth bit, with its long metal legs extending from the horse’s mouth, that I had seen him use. He answered me by saying that this is the last bit after a series of other bits he uses to train his horses. He moves from the lesser to the greater. He starts with a soft bit and moves through various others of differing widths and textures that he tries depending on how each horse responds. He needs to finish with this Weymouth bit for his competitions, but he doesn’t work with them every day. Following his recommendation, I bought a few different types of bits. Until then I had never used spurs and he explained to me how to use them and when to stop with them. I had never used them because I was prejudiced from where I grew up.



Oftentimes the spurs in Argentina are very sharp and as a child I saw many horses hurt by the use of them. This idea stayed with me, and I never wanted to use them. Jango recommended me the ones that he used and now I also own a pair. We became good friends at that event, shared much about horses, and he enjoyed seeing our work. Jango Salgado went on to be the best rider in Brasil in reins and has to world championships in the United States. I never would have suspected his humility or quality of character. I am forever grateful for what he has taught me as it was far beyond what we are able to do with horses. Ever since that day, I still use the spurs he suggested from time to time. The various bits usually remain hanging in our garage as I am particularly loyal to my soft bit. But I will not discard the idea of using other tools whenever it is necessary.



## *Before You Begin*

We all have some form of anxiety in being with horses and practicing the things we've seen and heard that others are able to do. There are many things that should be analyzed while watching a professional work with horses before going to a corral to train a horse. The naturalness and security in a professional's actions is usually achieved after years of dedication.

As a teacher, I like to make a mental effort to remember my beginnings so that I can empathize with my students' situations as they begin. As you learn, I feel it is important to reflect on the concrete knowledge you're accumulating as well as the emotions you're feeling: i.e. anxiety, fear, happiness, etc.

Before entering to the round pen to work, you should be able to answer the following questions: What is a colt? What do I want to achieve with the colt?



## *What is a colt?*

A colt is a horse that has not yet been educated. They can have unpredictable reactions and become somewhat dangerous if we don't have complete control of each situation. Colts can be anywhere from temperamental to quite docile, depending on the particular history of each horse. In all cases, you should be very careful and discrete in the way you interpret its reactions and convert them into pre-established, predictable actions. A Colt is like a teenager. He's sensitive and moldable by either good or bad treatment. Any unjust punishment might cause him to lose trust in his tamer and harm his self esteem. Good and correct treatment will generate more confidence and raise the self-esteem of both the horse and the tamer. Especially when they're young, colts need to trust the tamer before beginning with the education process. We try to establish a good relationship before teaching them movement and coordination exercises.

The greener the horse is, the more you can learn from its natural language. If the horse is very tame because he received human treatment since birth, then you'll find



yourself in front of a horse without many major reactions. On the opposite side of things, if the horse has had negative or traumatic experiences, you will surely have violent and unpredictable reactions surfacing from past memories. My recommendation is to choose a young horse of about three years with a known origin. The colt should be healthy, without scars or injuries, and a reasonable behavior without many foreseeable surprises. An attentive look is preferred and is often the case with green horses. When I saw “green horse” I don’t mean a wild horse that has never before been in contact with people. I am referring to a raised horse in a natural condition with normal functions of the breeder’s herd. With the proper modes of preparation and with enough experience, you will be able to extend the variety of horses that you can tame. The suggestion in the manner of choosing a colt is intended for those who are just beginning the learning process that is both logical and coherent. I make this suggestion out of my own experience with people that place high goals for themselves without making the proper preparation. It is a mistake to believe that with a more complicated you are going to learn more. It



can sometimes be that way, but it is very dangerous, relative, and unnecessary as a first step. I have always equated working with horses with playing sports. In a sport, you need to cover the basic fundamentals and strategies of the game before you are ready to begin competing. This gives your mind and body time to mature and become accustomed to the demands of the particular sport. Later, the elemental skills will feel like second nature and you will be prepared to compete. Imagine trying to compete in a sport in which you have little to no practice or experience; the likeliness of being defeated by a seasoned veteran is practically 99%. Equally, the horse tamer should learn and mature, later setting goals that are more difficult. If not, I could be very dangerous for both the tamer and the horse to begin working out of inexperience and immaturity.

Conclusion: A green horse is a horse without experience, with fears and “tickles” that should be understood and addressed, as they would be to a child, with respect, care, and firmness. The selection of your first colt should be according to your experience and maturity.

What do I want to achieve with a colt?



The answer should surely be: tame him, educate him, and train him. In all of these cases, you should diagram a work plan as well as prepare a schedule for how could carry out your work plan. When it comes time to learn, horses are very capable. You just need to make sure that when that time comes, you are capable of teaching them. Educating a horse can easy when you have the right knowledge but can also prove particularly difficult if you're missing the right information or experience. The information can be found easily as there is an immense market of professionals that offer advice and knowledge. As for the experience, you will have to go about your own ways in acquiring it. You could take courses, help out a professional, or try it for yourself. In any of these cases, you should pay a lot of attention to the horses. And if you're watching closely, you'll find that it is generally always our own actions that cause a horse to react, whether positive or negative. A high percentage of a horse's reactions are provoked by a human's actions. You should be conscious of the subconscious functions in your brain that manage the majority of our own actions, especially when we are under pressure. These subconscious actions have us seriously





conditioned. When you're in the presence of a colt, it can perceive your emotional state. If you're in a state of calmness and security, will quickly recognize that and begin to relax. But if you're displaying yourself as anxious and unsecure, the horse will instantly become nervous, distant, and could potentially return to being aggressive. This is why you should consciously manage your actions and clearly visualize what it is that you want to do and then how you want to do it. It is very important to be able to send clear messages to the horse and then be able to perceive whether or not it's responding to your wishes. The work plan should be expected to take a fair amount of time. However, within a short amount of time, it would be ideal to enter into the corral with a clear and achievable idea to begin and end each session with the sensation of having taken advantage of time in the most productive way possible.



## *Going to the Round Pen*

Once you've accumulated enough information and have decided to go to the Round Pen to practice with a colt or a tame horse, you should go with a positive attitude. In this way, you should have the energy and predisposition of doing a good job.

### *Communication*

A clear and fluid communication with the horse is fundamental for establishing a positive relationship and beginning to forge the bond necessary to develop mutual trust. This communication is achieved when you have clear ideas and are capable of making decisions. In the first few moments, you should establish a form of hierarchy which is: ordering the roles of each participant: you as the teacher, the horse as the student. To incorporate this sense of hierarchy, you must use body language and do your best to imitate what horses do with one another within a herd. This is a "game" that consists of following the horse inside the corral, applying pressure from behind so that it begins to trot while remembering to allow for appropriate amounts of rest. Through this game, the horse will perceive that the



decisions are made by the teacher and that it should respond exactly as the authority instructs. During the pauses allotted for rest, the colt will be able to see that your intentions are not to do it harm but rather to establish the hierarchical order that it's accustomed to within the herd. Once the hierarchy is established, make physical contact with the horse. First, place a halter and attaching a rope so as to be able to order the horse's movements. This gives more control over the moments when you want the colt to be moving and when it should stay still. That way, the horse will assimilate to both of the actions whenever you desire them. This makes it possible to discipline the horse to remain still, for example, when you go to mount with and begin walking without too many problems. However, when you work with too much stillness, the colt is used to being in one static position and you might have problems later in making him walk, trot, or gallop.

The game used for establishing hierarchy cannot be measured in time. Results are what we're aiming for. Once you've gotten the attention of the horse and feel that it has understood the exercise that is when you've



finished. This generally lasts about 10 to 15 minutes if all goes well, but each case is different. The next game is based on eliminating the “tickling” sensation and acquiring trust with the horse in body-to-body contact. With the use of the rope and a safe position, begin caressing and petting the horse in the accessible places, such as the areas along the neck and back. Then slowly begin to work towards the more sensitive areas like the stomach, hind quarters, front legs, and finally its back legs. Lifting its front and back legs can be postponed for a few days until a greater level of trust is established. If done correctly, this can be performed fluidly and without inconvenience to the horse. With some of the more sensitive and scared horses, this can become complicated if attempted too early. The more mutual trust you can gain with the horse, the likelihood of anything unpredictable happening is dramatically decreased. The process of the strengthening the bond and eliminating the horse’s “tickles” is also something we measure by results as opposed to time. Continue observing its levels of calmness and nervousness throughout the various exercises as the days go on. When it becomes relaxed and understands your



movements and physical contact, then it is fair to believe that your objective is being achieved. The different types of temperaments, or moods, that a horse displays will help you to create a guideline on how much time the horse will require in order to comprehend, trust, and incorporate these lessons. Don't be discouraged by a slow progression. Allow plenty of time for this process to take full effect as it is the basis on which everything else will be taught in the future.

Once you've achieved the hierarchy, you have also established a relationship with the horse based on good treatment. There should now be a visual level of mutual trust that you can use to present new objects to the horse such as the saddle and mats: objects that will become essential in his education.

Mutual trust is essential before attempting to leave the corral with the colt. Before working with him outside the corral, introduce with the new location, allowing him to walk around, smell, and familiarize himself with the new surroundings. This way the horse does not have to focus on what you're asking of him at the same time that he's adjusting to the new location. Remember to allow pauses



and breaks so that he can process in his mind what it is that you want him to learn.

*Conclusion:* You should establish an effective and powerful bond that begins with your decision of becoming the colt's partner and accomplice rather than his discipliner. To accomplish this, establish a system of hierarchy that will calm the horse, reassuring him that he is with someone that understands the ways horses communicate and has his best intentions in mind. You can affirm this relationship through physical contact, displaying good will and trust. Throughout his education, remember to show the colt appropriate amounts of respect, clarity and firmness.

Some people are uncomfortable with the words, firmness and discipline. I don't ever intend to use these in a negative context. Colts are like children; they depend on you for instruction. There are times for being calm as well as, without losing that sense of tranquility, being firm and effective in your decision to place limits that the horse cannot cross. This is fundamental in the education process. Considering the contrary, you might confuse the horse by avoiding firmness, allowing him to deviate from the things he's



learned. Violence and pain are absolutely prohibited. But firmness and discipline are sound resources to use in order to avoid situations that could be considered violent.

### *Preparations before Beginning to Tame*

When I have a green horse to tame, I choose to study the horse in its natural state for, before taking him to the corral for the first time. While doing this, I'm taking note of how it relates to the other horses and how it looks. I try to describe what characteristics distinguish it from the others. Later, I bring him to the round pen accompanied by at least one other horse so that he's calm and doesn't feel too isolated. Remember with colts, that solitude generates a lot of anxiety that is evident in their restless behavior, neighing, scratching at the ground, and attempting to jump over the top of the corral. To easily avoid this state of anxiety, leave him another companion and allow them to eat a little grass within the round pen. In this way, you can insure a calm beginning with the Colt. This preparation should take at least three hours. In this time the horse will become familiar and accustomed to the enclosed



space. This amount of time practically guarantees the ability to take away the companion and begin the education process solo. The colt will no longer have the same anxiety or the strong desire to leave the corral, allowing you the opportunity to promote positive communication to begin the taming process.

### *Step One*

The first evident objective with the colt is to place the halter on him. But there are a series of previous actions that should be respected and achieved in the best way possible. The culmination of all the work will then lead us to placing the halter on him. These prior steps first consist of achieving the hierarchical order. In order to do this, make the colt trot in one direction at a constant rhythm using your body language, making a clicking sound with your mouth, and, when necessary, reinforcing your message with the rope. After obtaining an obedient response, stop the horse by ceasing to pursue it within the round pen. Allow a few moments of complete stillness. Once he stops moving, call his attention so that he looks at you. To do this, I usually jump a little, hit my waist with my





hands, or whistle. Some horses are very attentive and connect quickly while others are largely distracted and apathetic. With the latter, you should increase the energy of your movements and be more evident in the messages you want to give him.



Repeat the trotting game multiple times in both directions and call his attention before trying to get closer to him. When I feel as though I have his complete attention and that he's relaxed, I begin to shorten the distance between us. Peacefully, I begin to approach him, trying to avoid making him want to dart away from me. I move closer and then move further away various times so that the colt learns to support the pressure without feeling



the need to escape. If I note that the horse becomes frightened and distant, I should return to the trotting game. I trot him and stop him, trot him and stop him until he becomes more receptive to me. Once he allows me to come close, I will caress and pet him in the most accessible places. This will most likely be the face, neck, and a little bit along the back. It's best to avoid other parts of the body until there's a greater level of mutual trust. The first caresses should be smooth and constant, avoiding patting or scratching him. When the colt naturally tolerates the petting and caressing, I will begin to rub the halter over his body and have him smell it before I try to put it on him.





This can last anywhere from a few minutes to hours, but we shouldn't let anxiety or frustration affect our state of mind because the horse needs our attitude to be as calm as possible. Any change in my mood or character will be perceived as negative, and the colt will return to distancing himself. Once I've finally attached the halter, I will attach a rope. Later I will leave him with the rope still attached in the corral. Always leave the colt in the round pen for the first time where there are no obstacles that could snare the rope and potentially harm the horse. Before I leave him alone, I will step on the rope easily without applying pressure on his nose or head. The horse might become scared and pull on the rope to alleviate the pressure. By stepping on the rope, the colt will learn in his own way what the pressure is and how to alleviate it. This begins preparing for the work that will come later on.

## *Step 2*

The following step is easier. However, that does not mean that we can be any less concentrated or connected with the horse. It is very important to train your mind to always be at a high level of attention. To begin the



second step, which should also be on the second day, I will begin calmly with the initial trotting game that we taught the horse the day before. I will keep him trotting for five to ten minutes in each direction. This exercise serves as a warm-up and fosters the colt's capacity to sustain an activity for a certain amount of time.



This disciplines and forces him to concentrate without the need of expending too much effort. We will go about strengthening his muscles in this warm up in a way that also prepares his mind to continue functioning. The exercise requires a lot of pressure from the tamer in the beginning until the colt learns to trot systematically and over the next



few days, we will see that the horse is more and more prepared for this level of work without the need of exhibiting a lot pressure. If I've done this exercise well each day, we will come to a place where the horse will sustain a trot during the warm up and I'm virtually standing still in the middle of the round pen giving vocal commands and a few hand motions. The warm up is recommended for all horses, no matter how docile or temperamental they might be, because it will prepare all horses equally to be mentally and physically prepared for what is to come.

After warming up, tie the rope to the halter and show him the use of limits. This is done by executing the same trotting exercise only now the horse is attached to the rope.

The horse is still free to trot in the circle as he wants; only now we have the ability to pull on the rope and tell him to stop. At this point, I will pull on the rope, applying pressure on his nose by way of the halter. In this way, he will begin to associate this feeling with the order to stop. In these first moments, I move closer to the horse with the same calm attitude. As I move closer to him, I will also be shortening the length of the rope until I make contact just as I did the first time. The contact is



smooth, caressing slowly so that the colt is comfortable.



I will spend a handful of minutes doing this. It could be twenty minutes or more before his body relaxes. You will know he's reached that point when his eyes quit flickering in all directions, he loses muscle tension, and his body language in general is more at peace. I will then move on to other parts of his body cautiously but at the same time trying to maintain naturalness in the motions. Here I will be perceived positively and the horse will assume that my intentions will continue to be for his good. Remember that the bond begins in minutes but develops in a greater sense over many days until a real and evident mutual trust is achieved. We need to begin to



pay attention to the length of the rope as we begin to caress him further away from the halter. I never want to have a lot of slack in the rope. I should always feel as though I can limit and contain him at any moment. But this doesn't mean that the rope always has to be tense. Tension should only be used to give clear messages and orders. The tension will be regulated by my arm which will be extended toward the nose whenever necessary. We will caress the horse for an extended amount of time in this second step, but don't forget to have him trot every five minutes so that his mind remains fresh. Touch the horse with your hands on its right and left sides with the rope. Once a high level of trust is gained, we will run the rope all over his body as we did with our hands. The horse will be able to understand that this foreign object is safe and will not inflict any harm or pain.

### *Step 3*

Working with the rope is very useful. With it, we will order the majority of the horse's movements and conducts. It will also be the tool that allows us to teach him how to turn, stretch his neck, trot, gallop, walk backwards,



and gives us the ability to correct his mistakes or bad conduct.

The first turn should be done by passing the rope over his hind legs so that it is wrapped completely around him. During this process, it is important that the horse remain completely still. Pull on the end of the rope lightly so that the horse will have to turn a complete 360 degrees to alleviate the pressure. The horse should be able to figure it out on his own. We will wait a few seconds for him to think and then, if necessary, push his head in the direction we want him to go. The turns should be repeated at least three times per side. Be cautious not to abuse this exercise as it can induce hyper-flexibility in the neck, limiting us in future exercises.







To walk backwards with the horse, I will now reap the benefits of leaving the rope attached to the rope overnight. He now understands that to alleviate pressure from the rope, he has to move in a certain direction because of the uncountable amount of times he must have, himself, stepped on the rope during the night. I will repeat this stimulus, making constant pressure backwards and downwards on his halter. Now, it will be easier for the horse to understand this stimulus and how to alleviate the pressure.



With the same rope, we will imitate the cinch strap long before we decide to saddle him. Pass the rope from its back and stomach, placing constant pressure so that the new sensation will become almost normal. If the



horse feels uncomfortable and defends himself by jumping or kicking, we should remain calm as if nothing happened and repeat the exercise more carefully and better preparing the colt so that he understands what we're doing. This could be showing him a smoother version of the same exercise or changing for a few minutes to something more relaxed and easily understood to try again what caused the reaction.

In these first moments, we should be clear and firm, but we know that there should be a certain flexibility and tolerance while the horse is learning his first exercises. Some new concepts to a horse can appear incredibly complicated to understand and execute. This is even more exaggerated with a particularly temperamental colt that has never before been touched by a person.

#### *Step 4*

Once we've come to the point where the horse is calm and responds to the demands of the halter and rope in a tranquil and obedient manner, we will elevate the level of pressure in physical contact. Now we won't be so stealthy with our movements and we will begin to do things like moving surprisingly



and jumping a bit in front of the horse. We'll make hand gestures and all sorts of sounds and so on. This will make the relationship that's been forming between us and the colt all the more sincere and safer for both parties. It's better to accustom the horse to all types of movements, noises, and situations. We've waited patiently to form the proper amount of mutual trust to be able to try these things with our horse.



We should remember to resort to stillness and calmness to cool down the atmosphere if the horse becomes too anxious. If we understand that the horse is fearful and only needs healthy, pain-free experiences, we should offer him the opportunity to live



together with us so that each day he discovers that there is always a happy ending. We shouldn't avoid things that scare him, for these things will help him overcome his fear. When the colt can see that the things that scare him don't produce painful consequences, he learns to support the stimuli and accumulate these things along with what he has already learned. With this information, we will provoke a few situations that scare him a little and then immediately calm him down so that he can understand what happened. You don't have to do anything extraordinary. It would be enough to make gestures, pat his skin firmly, and move the rope over his body quickly. In this way, his tolerance to the unknown will begin to increase and soon we will have the possibility to begin mounting the colt bare back and place the saddle without major complications.

### *Step 5*

Let's remember that at the start of each new day, we should repeat the routine from the first few days: the warm up, the smooth contact with your hands and the rope, more active movements, gestures and sounds, until



we come to the point of the day before. From there, try to toss in a few more exercises so that you continue to form a fun and varied routine. I don't necessarily have to complete the routine in the same amount of time as the day before. Each time, this should come more easily and naturally to the horse.



Running through the whole routine can take about twenty minutes, more or less. We'll take advantage of the rest of the hour to exercise the activities that present the most difficulty for the horse as well as those that need improving or perfecting. In the first few days, we can invest more than an hour to reinforce the relationship and to tame the colt, but once the horse displays a level of



comprehension and calmness, we will try not to exceed more than an hour a day because that way the horse will always have energy to respond to our requests. However, until all our objectives are being achieved in the first few weeks, don't provide more than two or three days of rest. In this amount of time, the horse will recuperate his energy, relax, and be in a better disposition for three or four more days of concentrated work.

In this step, we will make our first mount. This can be the first big challenge to a novice, but take it slow and be patient. We will mount the horse as the natives used to. First, I will play and practice jumping at the horse's side until he understands that he should remain still. I begin to jump and lay my torso across his shoulders. I play with him by pushing and petting him in order to prepare him for the moment that I decide to fall directly across his back.





This can take a few minutes and multiple attempts. It doesn't matter if I'm able to mount him completely in these first attempts. It's more important that the horse understands that nothing bad is going to happen to him when I'm in this position. Usually, when someone fakes to mount the horse more times than is necessary, the horse will become impatient and possibly angry. The faking motions should be used only so much as is needed for the horse to understand what it is you are communicating. If we need to take time and collect a bit of courage to prepare for this step, we should step away from the colt and avoid any mental agitation. From a distance, the horse can lose fear and gain trust.

It would not be surprising if at some point the horse will try to bite or kick in this step. In these moments, you need to be firm and mark a clear limit between what he can and cannot do. A clear limit will help avoid having to deal

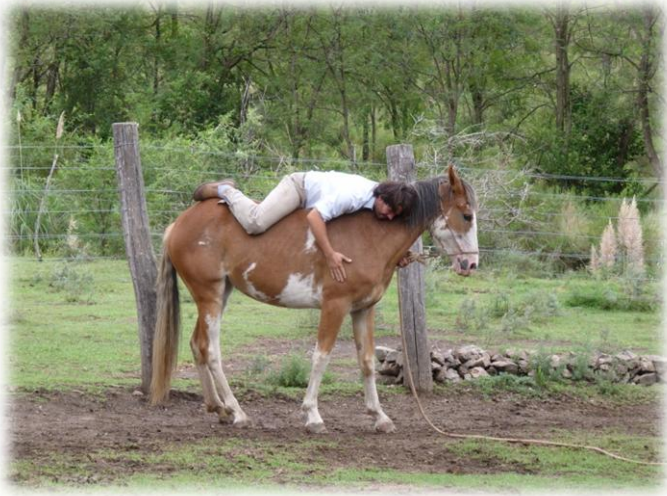






with these problems in the future. A clear limit could consist simply of placing your hand firmly below the halter and pulling strongly on its head or give him a strong pat on his back. These actions could be perceived as brutal, but in the horse's world, it is a simple way of calling his attention. Horses kick each other and bite ferociously to win themselves a spot in the herd and to be respected by the others.

Once we've practiced a few of the jumps and laid ourselves across the top of him, then it's time to make the first jump to land on our



stomach on top of him. To do this, we will stand at his side and use our hands, shoulders, and legs to smoothly land on our





abdomen across his back, as close as possible to the withers.



Remember to maintain control of the rope at all times. We still stay in this position for a few seconds. It is not very comfortable, but we will give the horse the opportunity to get used to our weight and once more assure him that nothing bad will come from this position. Before beginning to walk him, I can take a few minutes of rest and try two or three more times so that later I can place a leg on either side of his rear. It's a weird position that the natives used to walk the horse. The position consists of stretching the length of my body along the spine of the horse, with my feet close to the rear, and my head is



alongside his neck. In this position, the colts become calm even if they have never had any experience of this kind. It eliminates the temptation to defend themselves which can sometimes happen when we are on top of their back. Sometimes mounting the horse in this method, the horse remains static and refuses to move. He could be confused by the added weight or weighting for clear orders from above. It's a natural instinct to feel insecure, but the horse can always sense that. This creates doubts for the horse that could provoke either stillness or restlessness in the colt. In my case, I will be able to continue working from the ground and continue mounting and dismounting until I have the confidence to place the same strength in our orders on top of the horse as I had from the ground. Here is a piece of advice that helped me unlock the secret to this situation. When the colt appears to be very confused and finds it hard to comprehend moving forward or refuses to remain still, I move directly to Step 6. This is where we introduce the saddle. I have him walk, trot, and gallop with the saddle. Then, I remove the saddle and try again to mount him bare back.



I continue using the same clicking sound to make him move forward and apply a little pressure with my legs to get him to walk. I should be insistent and dedicated to walking him through the entire round pen in the native position. Later, I will mount in a more normal position. We will avoid giving him too much information in respect to direction. We want the colt to walk as fluidly as possible without the need to be constantly handled. If we're putting too much pressure in all different directions on his nose, the colt will stop at any moment. We will only indicate one direction from inside the round pen and try to walk in the horse's preferred direction. To stop him, we will pull on the rope and make the same soothing sound. Once the horse has come to a stop, we will dismount smoothly so that the colt understands that we demand him to remain still in all moments, especially mounting and dismounting. The work is finished once we've left the colt free to rest and relax but never before. A horse has an incredible capacity to learn the things we teach him. But even larger is his ability to learn the things we don't teach him or at least what we haven't done intentionally. That's why it's important that he remain still during mounting and



dismounting. If he moves during the first few mounts, and we don't do anything, then we will have a lot of work in the future trying to correct him. I want the horse to be in compliance with my desires when we are inside the round pen, and when he is outside of that time, he is free to do whatever he chooses.

### *Step 6*

Here we will begin introducing the saddle. Try again to mount the horse bare back and take note on how the horse is advancing from the previous days. Remember to make him remain still at all times and have him abide all imposed limits. Before placing the saddle, we will simulate the sensation of the cinch strap with the rope. We will throw the rope over one side of his back and wrap it underneath his stomach. Begin rotating and rubbing the rope along his back and underside. Move slowly, giving the colt plenty of time to smell and understand your intentions. Next, we will present the saddle pads or mats. Allow him to smell it and then place it on his back. I like to have him walk and trot with the rope while the saddle pad rests on his back. We can feel it and see the object, even if it falls to the



ground. This will inevitably happen but is useful to familiarize our colt with more possible situations and reducing his fear of the unknown. Once it accepts and understands the saddle pad, we will present the saddle in the same fashion. I will place it smoothly on his back and adjust the cinch strap only so much so that it will not fall down.



This first time can create an uncomfortable sensation that could provoke a strong reaction. It might begin to run off and begin to buck. To avoid this, we should adjust the cinch strap slowly and progressively. In between adjustments, have the colt walk and trot within the round pen to assimilate himself to the pressure without the need to react violently out of fear.



To mount for the first time, I will have the horse stand still and put my foot in the stirrup. I will do a couple of gestures with my foot to see how the colt reacts. If he moves, or becomes restless, I will continue working with these gestures until he becomes still. Finally, I will stand in the stirrup, putting all my weight on that foot. My hip should be at the height of the saddle, and I will stay there for a few moments, again observing how the horse interprets this action.



Once I know that he is calm, I will smoothly pass my other leg to the other side. Once seated, I will stay still for a few moments before pushing him to move forward and begin making the same circles as before. Special attention should now be placed in the



orders to advance and to stop. Again, these orders should be clear and simple.

If you lack experience, be patient and give simple orders before trying anything more complicated. We will make some mistakes, but we should know that we are doing the best we can for the good of the horse and he will continue to forgive us so long as we don't harm him. It is very satisfying when everything goes according to plan and extremely frustrating when things don't go according to plan. It's in these moments of uncertainty and frustration when one should have special strength to maintain a clear mind in order to find a solution. A helpful idea in these moments is to use these situations as a work review. If something doesn't go well today, let's see how it goes tomorrow. When we train and educate, we should not be thinking in terms of time or in terms of an exact plan. Time can always be a factor or pressure that neither us nor the colt need.





## *Step 7*

Now we are able to place the saddle on our colt and ride him. Don't feel pressure to go fast or slow through this section. These are the fundamentals that we hope to make use of for years to come.

Now whether bare back or mounted in the saddle, we will teach the horse the basics of the reins. This is: advance, turn in both directions, stop and walk backwards. We will do all of this at a walk at first to achieve confidence and good results.



Then we can move on towards trotting and ultimately galloping. The exercises of walking and trotting are recommended as a first step as you're better off postponing galloping until later. Walking and trotting first will make it a





time where the new horse is learning to use its muscles and acquiring balance. Work in this manner for about a month with repetitive breaks and pauses. Then we will have the horse well tamed, educated, and without anxiety so that the transition to galloping is smooth, safe, and calm.

### *Step 8*

After we've worked for many days in the round pen and feel that all has been successful, we can then move towards taking the horse outside of the corral. Leaving the round pen should be progressive, without time restrictions; the bond and trust should be very strong between us and the horse at this point. When leaving the round pen, take the horse by the rope over the new ground you plan on using.





This way the horse's mind will function equally in the round pen as outside of it and its responses shouldn't change too much.

There are some horses that see the open space and want to move around more openly than we would permit. There are others that have worked fine in the round pen, but upon leaving, they lose their calm and become less docile. Many times people ask me, "When do you take the colt out of the round pen?" My response is simple, I tell them "every day". But what I do outside of the corral is more important to understand because I understand that the reasoning of a lot of people goes along with seeing the image of a horse running wide open in the countryside and they would assume this is working outside the round pen in Argentina. For me, galloping openly in the countryside is something that comes after logical and coherent actions that permit me to ride where I want and at the speed that I want without the need to always worry. Clearly, for this I invest a lot of time and immerse the horse in a good education that comes directly from my hands. And so the answer to the question is, "To do something outside of the corral, I leave each time I work inside the



round pen and only gallop calmly in the open countryside once everything appears to be understood and well adjusted within the horse.”

### *Step 9*

We try to perfect the walking and trotting movements inside and, when we can, outside the round pen. We issue orders through the reins, reinforcing with our legs, and sometimes with our weight and the sounds we make with our mouths. We will go achieving a handling that is delicate and agreeable to the horse without the need of using so much strength. One of our objectives is to communicate fluidly with the horses from the beginning until the end. With the passing of time, the colt should give us the possibility to refine and perfect the handling with these perceivable and understandable orders for our horse while they might not be necessarily evident to someone watching from the outside. The rein work should be with the halter and not with the bit. Conceptually, it's identical and technically can present their differences for each discipline and each trainer, etc. Conceptually, the handling implies a direct communication with



the brain, so it's not important if it's done from the mouth or from the nose. With this idea in mind, we can be able to handle the horse from the mouth, nose, neck, with our legs, or with our voice. During the education process, I go about connecting myself with the colt by changing my form of command, alternating between my legs and my voice. And then one day will come where the horse will be able to turn just by positioning my legs in a certain way. The conclusion is that preserving the horse's brain, offering tranquility, safety, and education with a true commitment, the horse will give us more satisfaction than we can imagine. That which hurts the horses, which makes them dangerous and unpredictable, are the human actions that harm and offend gradually. This could be applied to any of us and to any other animal. And so I will always say that if you're not in the disposition to do things in this manner, being respectful and honest with the horse, then don't do it all, because it will be the horse or another innocent person that will pay the consequences for your actions. And if you love the horse and treat it the best you can, it won't matter so much the method you use, the safety of the horse and many



other people will be able to enjoy what you have achieved.

### *Step 10*

Now it's time to have a little more fun. You now have the base to turn a colt into a tame horse. With this base, it will be very easy to lift the hooves. To do this you can teach him a sound, or a word, and repeat it at the time the hoof is lifted so that it connects the two actions together. We can teach it to come to us at the sound of whistle or by calling his name, offering a bit of food each time he comes. He will learn to come at the whistle or the sound of his name, because it is known that horses learn by repetition. But this isn't where I'm trying to put my emphasis. I'd rather the horse and I have a strong bond, a relationship of trust and enjoyment, rather than only interacting as instructor and student. First, I'd like to see the relationship develop and then we can move on towards learning and doing fun things. The result of this will be the same, in both cases the horse is acquiring new information, but the way both of us feel is completely different. Horses are like children and have an extraordinary capacity to learn and make associations with



ideas. So long as we don't wrong them, we will be able to have all of their mental and physical ability. Continuing with the possibility of expanding the potential of our horse and its healthy, strong brain, we will put in more time handling the horse with the legs and voice without the need of using reins. This is something we do simply for our own liking. In reality, no one needs to go out and work on a farm or in a competition without reins. It's something that we do to enjoy the knowledge that we've done all that was necessary to blindly trust and for him to trust us in the same manner.

Whether the horse is meant for competition, leisure, or a mixture of both, this base of self-esteem, tranquility, and security will undoubtedly bring out the possibilities to expand the potential to a superior level which would be achieved by decreasing a few more of its intrinsic conditions.

This description of our method is only an example, an explanation words. If you're not experienced, don't try to follow these descriptions as a guide because it can be dangerous. I believe that learning every complex thing from a book or video is not very recommendable. Sure it's possible.



There are many people that have the ability to do a lot with very little. But to go about practicing these steps and processes without the supervision of a teacher that can clarify things can become dangerous. Like all risky activity, if we take the proper precautions and carefully patient, these risks can be seriously minimized and we will not have unnecessary accidents that are generally a product of impatience and audacity. If I were to give you one bit of advice, it would be, “First, enjoy the learning process and then the enjoyment of doing the actual work will come.” The important thing is to enjoy. Do your job and have fun with it and soon enough, you’ll have your turn. Your soul will stay full and content in all that you do as you try this “arte de amansar” (the art of taming) of enjoying all aspects of teaching and educating.



## *My Dad*

I want to present to you my Dad, he have an amazing life and a beautiful story to tell us, his book is coming soon and I want to give you a brief overview about my Dad, my partner, my teacher, my idol...



Oscar Scarpati Schmid was born in San Luis, Argentina in 1948. Early on in his childhood, he discovered his passion for horses . This passion, gave him the impetus to investigate the horse in a wide variety of situations . He has dedicated his life to the systematic study of the horse: its nature , behavior and psychology.

In his childhood, he met a pure Ranquel Indian named Don Cristobal. This man passed on his culture, life philosophy, and regard for horses that his tribe valued above all else. Thus he was, as Oscar sees it, rescued from oblivion. He began taming horses, calling his method "Doma India", or Indian





Taming, in order to honor the Ranquel Tribe for what they had given him.

He now has 50 years of experience working with horses, has traveled over thousands of miles on horse back , examining its performance in the most varied situations: extreme heat, cold, snow, the Andes mountains, deserts, rivers, ponds and in the sea.



His masterpiece was named Capricho. He was the horse of Oscar's life. With Capricho, he achieved 76 diferent exercices. Quickly, Oscar found the horse's potential to be extraordinary. He started this horse with the idea of reproducing the Ranquel warhorse (which is to lie down in the grasslands , to withstand him pulling on his tail, to defend him as a dog would, to be able be steered with his legs, respond to vocal commands ,



etc). And what an achievement it was, surpassing all original expectations.

Eventually, Oscar's ability with horses began pulling him in directions beyond the borders of his home province. With the world's demand for knowledge, Oscar began teaching courses which now occupies his time year round. He would say that his mission is to teach, to help people understand horses, and revive this forgotten method that creates unprecedented results. His success is apparent as the method has been shared and is being practiced on an international level.



*To be continued...*