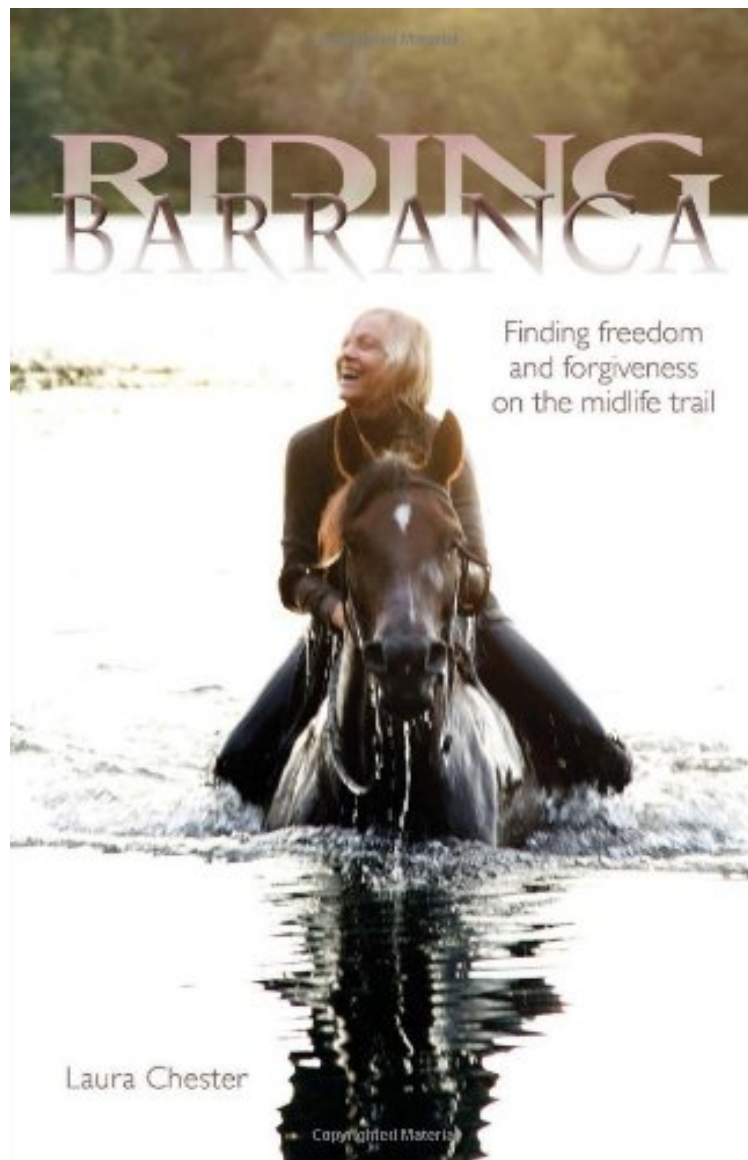


(Free download) Riding Barranca: Finding Freedom and Forgiveness on the Midlife Trail

# Riding Barranca: Finding Freedom and Forgiveness on the Midlife Trail

Laura Chester

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**Laura Chester : Riding Barranca: Finding Freedom and Forgiveness on the Midlife Trail** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Riding Barranca: Finding Freedom and Forgiveness on the Midlife Trail:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Moving/Life Changing By Nancy Baxter What a special book. I am

enchanted about the peace you have found with your horses. I wish every parent would read this book and realize the damage they can inflict on their little ones. I could feel the pain. It was cutting and deep, but how wonderful you learned to understand your Mom's character defaults and find a measure of forgiveness. Thank you for sharing your travels. She made India come alive for me. So great that you saw beyond the color to the pain and I felt I was on the Ganges with you. This is an important book and thank you for writing it. I look forward to your next work.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Superb Adult Coming-of-Age Journey By Elizabeth Ervin Cast as a one-year journal, Laura Chester's most recent book chronicles her rides on horseback into the far landscapes of Arizona's borderlands, the Massachusetts Berkshires, and even forays into Australia, India, and Mexico. Some segments are brief, barely a single page long, containing a single thought or observation; others approach chapter length as Chester celebrates the vast beauty all around her, as well as the darker regions of her childhood. The counterpoint of Chester's explorations into the emotional turmoil of her upbringing set against the joy found on the back of her equine soulmate, Barranca, make this a compelling read, hard to put down. The various sections are generously accompanied by black and white photos from Chester's past and present, portraits of her horses and her relatives, giving the prose even more immediate life. Chester's life contains so many of the elements that make for great storytelling - a daughter's adoration of her handsome, enigmatic, larger-than-life father, a stormy relationship with a difficult and often cruel mother, parental behavior often bordering on abuse and yet a privileged childhood full of adventure, travel, eccentric relatives, and always horses. Indeed, this is an adult coming of age story, a frank and honest portrayal of a woman in midlife taking stock of her past with all its flaws and sadness, set against her unfolding understanding of both her parents. As she unlocks the strange dynamics that shaped her relationship with her mother and father, she gains a capacity for forgiveness that accompanies her mother's decline into Alzheimer's and death, setting her free to embrace the next chapters of her life unencumbered by regret. Of course, the true core of this memoir is Chester's love for her horses, especially Barranca, whom she credits for giving her emotional as well as physical safety. As she describes their countless rides, she speaks of the trust and affection that flow between them, and of her debt to him for keeping her safe and taking her into places that few have ever seen. Chester's style intimately draws the reader into her own experience and we feel ourselves carefully picking over rocks, stepping through streams, standing on high bluffs looking out across the San Rafael Valley, shivering in rainstorms, galloping over green hills, giving our horses their heads to find their way home when we are lost, and finally rubbing them down and closing the gates after a long day in the saddle. As Chester writes, "Few people know the land around here as well as we do, having ridden over so much of this landscape." And though there are colorful episodes set in Australia, Mexico, and India, the most heartfelt passages come from Chester's observations riding in her two familiar home territories, southern Arizona and the Massachusetts Berkshires. Laura Chester's honesty shines through 'Riding Barranca,' and in the end we admire her courage and are grateful for her letting us share her emotional journeys with her family and her beloved horses. This is a book to savor, one to stay on the shelf for years. If it has a flaw, it is that there is so much in it to think about, so much experience to absorb. The only remedy, then, is to turn back to page one, and begin all over again! Highly recommended for readers young adult and older.-- Elizabeth Zinn, author of 'Heart's Blood' and 'The Happiness Lottery'

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. riding out of the water By Laura Chester I wrote this book and love it. It is really one of my all time favorites. The photographs by Donna DeMari Mason Rose are fantastic and add such a nice intimate dimension without overwhelming the text. The cover photograph in particular was an astonishing moment, when I rode my horse Barranca bareback (for the first time) into Prospect Lake-- the water was warm-- and he seemed to love it but swam out deeper and deeper, until we were both almost submerged, so I turned him back towards shore, and Donna managed to get this amazing picture. As Thomas Moore says in his foreword-- "I don't know why I am so enchanted by this book by Laura Chester. I'm not a horse person, though after reading the book, I wish I were... It is much more than a chronicle or diary. Laura punctuates the rides with unsettling stories of her family... and it is this counterpoint that makes the book unusually satisfying... a work of art."

In this remarkable one-year journal, skilled horsewoman and adventurer Laura Chester brings us into her world, where we deeply connect with the earth and its seasons, with beauty and sometimes danger. While riding in places as far-reaching as Mexico, Australia, and India, Chester is always grateful to come home to the comforts of her familiar horse. As they cover the borderland of Arizona and the hills of Massachusetts, we get to know Barranca as intimate companion, mediator between soul and nature, whether entering the wilds of Cochise Stronghold or picking Berkshire apples from the saddle. Carried along on waves of memory, released by the gaits of her smooth-moving fox trotter, this literary memoir takes us on a personal exploration as well as where family relationships are fractured by anger, jealousy, illness, and death. With the help of her big-hearted animal, Chester is able to retrieve the past and find forgiveness. For as she says, "Riding Barranca puts me in the moment, which is where I want to live."

emotionally charged personal accounts play perfectly off the stories of Laura's trail rides. Without them, Riding Barranca would be a one-dimensional and forgettable narrative recounting a seemingly perfect life in the saddle. Together, the sweet and sour combine to create a relatable story that leaves the reader rooting for the author

while reflecting on his/her own life."—Horse Style Magazine[A] journey—both geographical and metaphorical—surveyed through the high-up lens of a wise woman on horseback; one whose greatest solace and joy stem from her daily jaunts through known and unknown territory."—Nichole Dupont for RuralIntelligence.com