

## Anthony Reynoso Born to Rope

Cooper, Martha

My name is Anthony Reynoso. I'm named after, my father, who is holding the White horse, and my grandfather, who is holding the dappled horse. We all rope and ride Mexican Rodeo style on my grandfather's ranch outside of Phoenix, Arizona. As soon as I could stand, my dad gave me a rope. I had my own little hat and everything else I needed to dress as a charro. That's what a Mexican cowboy is called. It's a good thing I started I when I was little, because it takes years to learn to rope.

I live with my mom and dad in the little Mexican American and Yaqui Indian town of Guadalupe. All my grandparents live close by. This

will help a lot when the new baby comes. My mom is pregnant. I've got a secret about Guadalupe. I know where there are petroglyphs in the rocks right near my house. My favorite looks like a man with a shield. People carved these petroglyphs hundreds of years ago. Why did they do it? I wonder what the carvings mean. Every Sunday morning the old Mexican Mission church is packed. At Easter, lots of people come to watch the Yaqui Indian ceremonies in the center of town. No one's allowed to take photographs, but an artist painted this wall showing the Yaqui dancers.

Some Sundays, we go to Casa Reynoso, my grandparents' restaurant. If it's very busy, my cousins and I pitch in. When there's time, my grandmother lets me help in the kitchen. Casa Reynoso has the best Mexican food in town. On

holidays, we go to my grandfather's ranch. Once a year, we all get dressed up for a family photo. I've got lots of cousins. Whenever there's a birthday we have a piñata. We smash it with a stick until all the candy falls out. Then we scramble to grab as much as we can hold. Best of all, at the ranch we get to practice roping on horseback. My dad's always trying something new ... and so am I! In Mexico, the Rodeo is the national sport. The most famous charras there are like sports stars here.

On weekdays, Dad runs his landscape business, Mom works in a public school, and I go to school. I wait for the bus with other kids at the corner of my block. I always come to school with my homework done. When I'm in class, I forget about roping and riding. I don't think anyone in school

knows about it except my best friends.

It's different when I get home. I practice hard with Dad. He's a good teacher and shows me everything his father taught him. We spend a lot of time practicing for shows at schools, malls, and rodeos. We are experts at passing the rope. Our next big exhibition is in Sedona, about two hours away by car. After rope practice we shoot a few baskets. Dad's pretty good at that too! On Friday after school, Dad and I prepare our ropes for the show in Sedona. They've got to be just right.

Everything's ready for tomorrow, so I can take a break and go through my basketball cards. I decide which ones I want to buy, sell and trade. Collecting basketball cards is one of my favorite hobbies.

It's Saturday! Time for the show in Sedona. I get

a little nervous watching the other performers. I sure wouldn't want to get messed up in my own rope in front of all these people! After the Mexican hat dance, we're next! My dad goes first ... and then it's my turn. While the mariachis play, I do my stuff. Even Dad can't spin the rope from his teeth like this!

Then Dad and I rope together, just like we practiced. It's hard to do with our wide charro hats on. When my dad passes the rope to me and I spin it well, he says he has passed the Mexican Rodeo tradition on to me. Now it's up to me to keep it going. Mom is our best fan. She always comes with us. It makes me feel good to know she's out there watching. Sometimes tourists want us to pose for pictures with them. It makes me feel like a celebrity. After the show, boy, are we

hungry! We pack up and eat a quick lunch.

Then we go to a special place called Slide Rock. Slide Rock is a natural water slide where kids have played for hundreds, maybe even thousands, of years. It's cold today! I'd rather come back in the summer when it's hot. But Dad pulls me in anyway. Brrrr!

Time to go home. Next time we come to Sedona, the baby will be with us. I wonder if it will be a boy or a girl. It's hard to wait! I'm going to love being a big brother. Pretty soon the baby will be wearing my old boots and learning how to rope from me.