

# STORY» EXPLORING ROOTS AND RIDING FREE: A JOURNEY TO XURÉS

In 2022, I was driven by a thirst for adventure and a connection to our ancestral land. I, Claudia Sinead Rodríguez Álvarez, accompanied by my mother and loyal dog Cova, embarked on a transformative journey. Leaving city life behind, our destination was the rural beauty of Xurés Natural Park.

### *Chapter 1: An Equestrian Legacy.*

As an 18-year-old with a profound love for horses, my equestrian roots trace back to my early childhood. Born into a family of seasoned riders, the passion for horses intertwines with my Irish-Spanish heritage, particularly in the enchanting region of Ourense in Galicia.

### *Chapter 2: Summers of Serenity.*

Summers in Carreiras, nestled within Xurés Natural Park, became a family tradition for Claudia. Surrounded by nature's beauty, I formed lasting memories with generations of remarkable women: my great-grandmother Nicolasa, grandmother Ramona, mother, and beloved sister Leonor.

### *Chapter 3: Tales of Bravery and Adventure.*

Nicolasa's stories of fearlessly riding her Garrano horse between villages left a profound impact on me, instilling a spirit of bravery and determination. This set the stage for my aspiration to create a life centred on freedom and animal well-being.

### *Chapter 4: A Quest for Freedom.*

Despite training and competing in Madrid, I sensed my horses needed more space. Relocating to Sierra Norte de Madrid improved their well-being, but the desire for more space persisted.

### *Chapter 5: A Dream Came True.*

An opportunity to settle in stables near Carreiras prompted my dream project: a haven for happy horses in Xurés. The dream materialized into reality, a place where horses roam freely, offering scenic routes through the park and equestrian lessons.

The journey to Xurés Natural Park has been a profound exploration of self, roots, and the pursuit of freedom. Stepping out of comfort zones led to the realization of dreams.

### *Current Status:*

After a year and a half in the rural area, my project has thrived. With 19 horses, including various breeds and even a new canine addition named Kurni, the balance is overwhelmingly positive. The equestrian center has become a hub for local children to learn horse riding; witnessing their growth brings immense satisfaction.

The project expands into adventure tourism, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in Xeodestino Celanova-Xurés. Activities range from horseback riding tours through ancient paths to horse therapy and wild horse herd observation. The goal is to provide unforgettable experiences connecting people with nature.



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