

Fergus, The Soccer Playing Colt

Dan A. Peterson

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In this exciting adventure story, young Bobby Simpson and his friend, Ramon Aguilar, are playing soccer near the pasture one day when they discover that Bobby's star palomino colt, Fergus, has an unusual talent. Fergus, bred to be a polo pony, plays goalie in their soccer game—and wins! As soon as the local news media broadcasts Fergus's remarkable ability, Ian Connor, of the International Soccer Federation, takes Bobby, Ramon, and Fergus on a promotional soccer tour throughout the United States. The trip has its costs: the boys meet some shady characters like Rumble Smith, Reiterate Johnson, and Billy Joe Culpepper, who have their own plans for the lovable Fergus. They dye him a different color and steal him!

While a debut novel for the author, the story reflects Peterson's impressive expertise and experience. He holds a degree in journalism and English from Brigham Young University, and has served as the editor of three trade publications. Peterson knows all about horses, too, having grown up on a farm, and having raised paint horses to show.

Exploring this delightful story—with its tension and obstacles—young readers will not only enjoy the adventures of a remarkable horse, but will also learn about the importance of friendship and family. While Bobby and Ramon fear that Fergus may not be found, the boys remain loyal friends whose hopeful attitudes serve them and the people they love. In addition to the boys' parents, other adults in the story, such as Connor, Brooke Campbell, and the bus driver, Will, figure prominently as fine role models for young people and provide a clear contrast to some of the less trustworthy adults who use Fergus for their own gain.

Although the book meanders a bit at the beginning, and some aspects of the story are predictable, young readers will agree that *Fergus, the Soccer-Playing Colt* comes to a satisfying conclusion, and offers interesting statistical information about some of the most famous ball parks and stadiums in the United States along the way.

CARLA L. VERDERAME (August 18, 2009)

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