

Penguin Random House

TEACHERS' RESOURCE KIT

Showtym Adventures: Dandy, the Mountain Pony Kelly Wilson

An exciting new junior fiction series inspired by true events from the Wilson Sisters' childhoods.

When nine-year-old Vicki Wilson's beloved lease pony is sold, she is heartbroken. Her family doesn't have much money, and she is desperate to have a pony of her own so she can keep riding. Then Vicki has the chance she has been waiting for, to tame and train her own wild pony! How will she earn the trust of her beautiful new chestnut? And will Dandy ever be quiet enough for her to ride at Pony Club or compete at Ribbon Days?

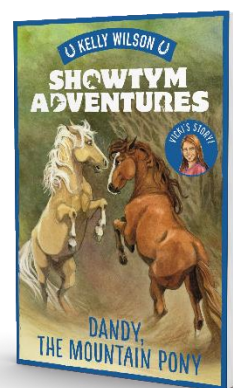
This is a heart-warming story of courage and determination based on the Wilson Sisters' early years.



Born in Whangamata, Kelly Wilson relocated to Northland with her family at the age of five. Having grown up around horses, she competed in show jumping to Pony Grand Prix level, before focusing on her creative talents. She won a scholarship to Auckland University of Technology and graduated in 2009 with a Bachelor of Graphic Design, minoring in Photography.

She is the author of three bestselling adult books, *For the Love of Horses*, *Stallion Challenges* and *Mustang Ride*, as well as a children's picture book, *Ranger the Kaimanawa Stallion*.

With her sisters Vicki and Amanda, Kelly has starred in a TV series, *Keeping up with the Kaimanawas*, which follow their work taming New Zealand's wild Kaimanawas.



SPECIFICATIONS:

Imprint: Puffin
Published: 2 October 2017
ISBN: 9780143771494
RRP: \$14.99
Format: Paperback
Extent: 160 pages
Readership: 7-10

RESOURCE KIT CONTAINS:

- Before reading
- Themes
- Comprehension questions
- Language and style
- Research and Creative Responses

Penguin Random House New Zealand
67 Apollo Drive, Rosedale, Auckland 0632
Phone +64 (0)9 442 7453



Penguin
Random House
New Zealand

Teaching Notes: *Showtym Adventures: Dandy, the Mountain Pony* By Kelly Wilson

Before Reading

1. Before reading the book, look at the cover image and title. Discuss what the book might be about.
2. What genre (style) do you think this book is? Why do you think this? Think about the fonts, colours and style of illustrations and what they tell you about what sort of story this is.
3. In groups of 3-4, discuss what you already know about horses. Aim to come up with between five to eight points on this topic.
4. In groups of 3-4, come up with between five to eight questions you have about the story based on your discussion from activities 3-4 above.
5. Share your points and questions with the class. Make note of any new facts or information that you learn from this discussion.

Themes

This exciting and heart-warming story has important themes that even readers who have no experience with horses will relate to.

Financial and Emotional Costs of Horses

On page 30 when Vicki asks her mother if she misses riding horses, she responds, "Sometimes, but there's not enough money for all our dreams to come true." The family's financial situation is an important concern for them, as is their love of horses. As you read the story, pay attention to how they take care of their horses – and themselves – despite not having very much money.

Dreams versus Reality

This theme is closely related to the financial and emotional costs of horses. On page 36 Vicki's father states, "No daughter of mine is going to be stopped from living her dreams." Throughout the book the family consider weigh up the realities of keeping horses alongside pursuing their dreams. The parents' different positions on dreams versus reality create some moments of conflict in the story.

Discipline and Responsibility: Rider & Horse.

Vicki is determined to train her "wild" horse and takes this responsibility seriously. Although she has setbacks and sometimes makes mistakes, she also has the discipline to achieve her dream.

Vicki is the eldest of the three Wilson children. This means that she has the responsibility to model good horsemanship to her younger sisters, who are not as disciplined as she is in the care of their ponies.

Patience and Trust

Vicki's mum says, "Patience is key" (p. 61) when showing her daughter how to win the trust of her horse. The story is a wonderful lesson about the value of patience, trust, and being open to learning. Dandy isn't merely a "pet", but a character whose fears and achievements are as important as Vicki's.

Comprehension Questions

1. The story begins with the three Wilson sisters competing at a Ribbon Day event. From reading chapter one, what do you understand about how horses and their riders compete at Ribbon Days? What are some of the different categories and what are the judges looking for?
2. Thinking about how horses are maintained (looked after and prepared for events), what examples are there in chapter one that show how carefully Vicki looks after Cardiff and how her younger sisters do not take as good care of their horses.
3. From the descriptions of Cardiff, write a short paragraph (3-4 sentences) explaining what he looks like and how he behaves. You could even draw your own illustration.
4. The family travels to the Hikurangi Swamp area of Northland (New Zealand) to buy a horse. What do we learn about this unique landscape from reading pages 21-27? Note at least four words or phrases used to describe the landscape. Next, locate the region on a map if you have never been there.
5. Vicki is an intelligent and observant girl and there are examples in the story of her understanding other people's – and horses – points of view. This is also known as perspective. On page 30 Vicki, "mull[ed] over her mum's last words, convinced they had hidden meaning. Did her mum want to ride again? If so, was it only money that stopped her?" What do we know about how Vicki's mum's life was different before she had children?
6. Also on page 30, Vicki's mother is mending clothes. From what we know about the family, why might she be doing this?
7. Vicki's mum says, "Education is even more important than riding" (p. 32). Why does she believe this? Does Vicki's dad feel the same way?
8. Re-read from the second paragraph on page 47 to the end of the first paragraph on page 49, and also look closely at the illustration on page 48. From this section, what do we – and Vicki – learn about what it's like for a wild horse to be moved to live on a farm? Write down three examples.
9. Vicki's dad says, "There's a new rule in this house: no one gets to eat until the horses are fed" (p. 52). Why do you think he has introduced this rule now? How might it relate to the theme of discipline and responsibility?
10. Why does the family have to pick grass and muck out the horses' paddock (p. 53)? Mucking out could be a term to add to your glossary (see activity 1 under Language and Style).
11. Why is it important that Vicki watch her mother stroke Jude's neck (p. 60)? What does she learn from this and how does it relate to the theme of patience and trust?
12. Why is Vicki worried about Dandy fighting with the other horses in the paddock on page 91?

13. The landscape is an important feature in the book. What is a key difference for Dandy living on the farm compared to where he lived in the mountains? See page 92.

Language and Style

1. Throughout the book are many examples of horse jargon (special words or expressions used by a profession or group that can be difficult for others to understand). Write a glossary of at least 20 horse jargon words used in the book. This can include the final sections (pp. 145-157).
2. The story is inspired by the true life of the Wilson sisters: Vicki, Kelly, and Amanda. Although the story is written in the style of a novel (fiction), what clues are there in the book that tell us this book is based on real experiences in Kelly Wilson's life? Find three non-fiction examples in the book. These can be written passages or illustrations.
3. The narrative of this book is in first person from Vicki's point of view. Write your own version of chapter one in first person from the point of view of either Kelly or Amanda.
4. There is an example of foreshadowing on page 20 when Vicki says, "My favourite books are about taming wild horses." What does this sentence suggest about the challenges Vicki will face in the story that will be different from her previous experiences with horses?
5. Volcanos are an important recurring image in the book. On page 23, the chestnut pony is described as having a "glistening red coat rippling like lava." *Rippling like lava* is a language feature called a simile. A simile is a language feature that compares one thing to another. Find other examples of volcano images used to describe the horses in the book and discuss why you think the author has used these.
6. There are many words in the book used to describe how horses move, including "canter" on page 43. As you read the story, make note of at least six different words used to describe how horses move and write the definition for each of these.
7. Closely re-read pages 83-86 and pay attention to the language features the author uses to describe the persistence, dedication, and challenges in training a wild horse. Language features include verbs, adjectives, onomatopoeia, and direct speech. For example, we read that at one point Dandy is "shaking" (p. 84), which is a verb that shows us that he finds the training difficult also.
8. At the end of this section (last paragraph of p. 86) we see a change in Dandy's behaviour. What words and descriptions does the author use to show us that he is having a carefree time? Look for words that describe how he moves in this section in contrast with the words used in the previous section.
9. Antonyms are words that have opposite meanings, such as *tame* and *wild*. There are many examples of antonyms in the book as Vicki trains her horse – and herself! They are also used to show the difference between how Vicki looks after her horses compared to her sisters. Find five pairs of antonyms and write them down. Share them in pairs.

Illustrations

1. The illustrations in the book are by Kelly Wilson's mother, Heather Wilson. Examine them and then discuss with another student what you like about them. Why are the black and white line drawings effective? Are there other events or characters in the book you would like to see illustrations of?
2. Create your own illustration of an event, moment, or character in the book that you feel is important. Give the illustration a title.
3. The illustrations in the book have two main purposes: 1) to enhance or support the story, and 2) to show correct methods for looking after and behaving around horses. Find an example of each type of illustration and then another illustration that serves both purposes.

Research and Creative Responses

1. In your original (before reading) groups, discuss whether or not you discovered the answers for your questions from before you began reading. Make note of your answers and then in pairs, or on your own, research the remaining questions, then share your answers with the group.
2. Draw or copy a (profile/full size) picture of a horse and label its different parts.
3. Create a poster or pamphlet that explains the different horse tack (equipment and accessories) used for the care and presentation of these magnificent animals.
4. We meet many different types of horses in the book including a gelding, a mare, and a pony (pp. 14-15). In pairs, find a definition and image for each type of horse in the story.
5. The Wilson family has to sell some of their horses. Create your own newspaper or online advertisement for one of the horses.
6. The Kaimanawa Horses are well-known wild horses that live in the Kaimanawa Ranges, New Zealand. Research the history of these horses and present your findings either as a speech to your class or as a poster.
7. Horses have cultural significance in many parts of the world, including the Chinese Year of the Horse. Research the significance of horses to a culture that is significantly different to your own. Present your findings in either a speech, a poster, or a pamphlet.
8. Vicki's mum says, "Education is even more important than riding" (p. 30). Hold a class debate with one team arguing education is more important than riding and the other team arguing against this.
9. Draw a family tree and include descriptions for each character of 2-3 sentences each. You can even include the horses!
10. On page 130 other girls at the Ribbon Day are criticising Vicki, her family, and her horses. Imagine that you are someone who has overheard them, then role-play a situation where you would defend Vicki, her family, and horses. Try not to be confrontational and argumentative. Instead, think about the themes in the story and what you would want these girls to understand.
11. Create your own Ribbon for one of the events won by Vicki and Dandy.
12. There are many tips in the book for best safe practice around horses. In pairs, rehearse and then present for your class a demonstration showing how to keep safe around horses and how to win a horse's trust.

13. Horses are measured in hands. Research why this is and how it came to be. Write a paragraph to explain your findings.
14. Write a review of the book for your local newspaper, a favourite magazine, or website. Give it a rating out of five stars and explain what you think are the strongest points of the book and who else it would appeal to. What important lessons can be learned from this book? Be careful not to give away the ending!