

# Penguin Random House

## TEACHERS' RESOURCE KIT

### Showtym Adventures: Casper, the Spirited Arabian Kelly Wilson

In the third Showtym Adventure, Vicki takes on a dangerously bad-tempered Arabian. Will she be able to uncover his potential?

When Vicki hears about a difficult Arabian that no one wants, she will stop at nothing to save him.

Years of misunderstanding have left Casper wayward and mistrustful, but Vicki senses a gentle soul beneath the pony's rough exterior.

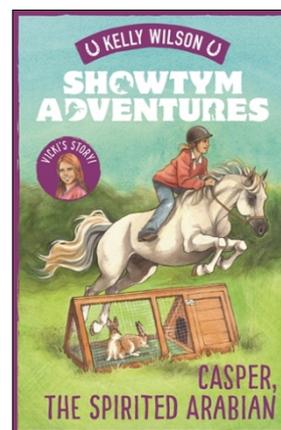
Vicki must learn the importance of patience and compromise to have any chance of winning over the high-strung gelding. Will Casper ever trust humans again? And will Vicki be able to uncover the potential she sees in the spirited Arabian?



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* and a junior chapter book series Showtym Adventures.

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  
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Format: Paperback  
Extent: 176 pages  
Readership: 7-10

#### RESOURCE KIT CONTAINS:

- Before reading
- Themes & setting
- Language & features
- Structure & narrative
- Characters
- Comprehension & close reading questions
- Illustrations
- Creative Responses



## ***Casper, The Spirited Arabian* by Kelly Wilson Teacher Notes**

### **Before Reading:**

1. What does the cover picture indicate about the book's content?
2. When and where might the story be set?
3. What does the title suggest to you?
4. Read the author's dedication. If you wrote a book, to whom would you dedicate it and what would the dedication say?
5. Read the author's letter to the readers. If you were to write a letter about yourself and how you hoped to inspire others, what would it say?
6. As a class, discuss what you know about ponies.

### **Themes & Setting:**

1. Discuss the following themes and find examples from the book which illustrate each:
  - a. family relationships and friendships
  - b. love of and caring for animals
  - c. courage and strength
  - d. practising and competing
  - e. resilience and perseverance
  - f. creativity and friendship
2. What do you think is the main theme of the novel? Write about your choice using examples from the book.
3. Discuss where you think the book is set. Back your opinion with examples from the book.

### **Language features, structure and narrative:**

1. What do you think is the genre of this book? List the aspects that are indicative of this genre.
2. The narrative of the book is in the third person. Why do you think the author chose to do this? Is it effective? Choose a passage about one of the main events of the book. Rewrite the passage as a first person narrative, such as a monologue, diary entry or a letter to a loved one by a person featured in the book, for example, Vicki or Dad. Present your monologue, or read your diary entry or letter aloud, to your class.
4. Figurative language, such as simile and metaphor, is used to convey ideas that might otherwise be difficult to express. Examples of these are: 'with eyes as big as saucers' (p. 37), 'He's just a blur of white, like a ghost in the night' (p. 83) and 'Fear flickered in her stomach' (p. 46). Find more examples from the book.

5. The following are examples of alliteration: 'Sleepover Shenanigans' (p. 72), 'Moonlight Madness' (p. 81) and 'a frown flickered over his face' (p. 127). What is alliteration? Think of examples of alliteration for ten other letters of the alphabet.
6. The following are examples of what figure of speech: 'swished' (p. 31), 'sloshed' (p. 36) and 'buzz' (p. 135)? Find other examples from the book. Write a poem or descriptive paragraph which includes the words from your examples.
7. The author uses idioms and colloquialisms in the book. What are the phrases below typically symbolic of? What is the origin of these phrases? Research their origin. Choose five phrases and draw cartoon interpretations of them:
- 'we're all ears' (p. 17)
  - 'a heavy heart' (p. 26)
  - 'she hounded her parents' (p. 29)
  - 'you're like a broken record' (p. 30)
  - 'with a spring in her step' (p. 54)
  - 'straight from the horse's mouth' (p. 114)
  - 'keep an eye on you' (p. 120)
8. The author has chosen a title for each chapter, such as *Chapter 2 First Impressions* (p. 20). Choose one of the chapters and find and explain the link between its title and the events that take place within the chapter.
9. In the back of the book the author includes a glossary (pp. 164-166). What is the function of a glossary?
10. This novel contains some words you may not be familiar with. Choose ten words below from book to add to the glossary with their definitions.
- a. inquisitively (p. 15)
  - b. disposition (p. 21)
  - c. begrudgingly (p. 22)
  - d. mused (p. 22)
  - e. warily (p. 23)
  - f. despairingly (p. 24)
  - g. oppressive (p. 26)
  - h. exasperated (p. 28)
  - i. adamantly (p. 30)
  - j. pelted (p. 31)
  - k. frantically (p. 31)
  - l. saturated (p. 31)
  - m. perceivable (p. 38)
  - n. scoured (p. 39)
  - o. ruefully (p. 46)
  - p. placid (p. 49)
  - q. dislodged (p. 63)
  - r. shenanigans (p. 72)
  - s. forlornly (p. 74)
  - t. ambled (p. 82)
  - u. hectic (p. 142)

### **Characters:**

1. Amanda's laugh is described as 'contagious' (p. 36) and Mum and Dad admire Vicki's 'passion and determination' (p. 38). Think of three adjectives to describe the characteristics of the following characters: Kelly, Mum, Annabelle and Mike.
2. Choose an important event from the novel and describe Vicki's reaction to it.
3. What do you think Vicki learns over the course of this novel? How do you think she has changed by the end of the book? How do you think her view of herself and her personality traits have changed?
4. What are the different pressures on Vicki throughout the novel? What factors lead to the decisions she makes and how does she cope with the situations she finds herself in?
5. What does the novel say about friendships and/or family and their importance during difficult times? List examples of episodes when friends and/or family are either a help or a hindrance to Vicki.
6. Do you think Vicki is a realistic character? Why or why not?
7. Do you think Kelly, Vicki and Amanda have a realistic sibling relationship? Do you believe that their relationship, as well as their relationships with their friends and family, develop and change through the book? If so, list these changes and the main events which contribute to them.
8. Which character do you particularly like or dislike? Why?
9. Which character do you most identify with? Why?
10. Read the 'Characters' section (pp. 152-154). Note down any new information it tells you about the characters from the book.

### **Comprehension/Close Reading Questions:**

1. How long had Vicki been riding for (p. 13)?
2. Why does Stella call the pony 'one from my nightmares' (p. 14)?
3. Why does Dad give Mum an 'apologetic glance' (p. 25)? What does it tell the reader about their opinion of Casper?
4. Why was there an 'oppressive silence' during the car ride home (p. 26)?
5. What does Vicki say will happen to Casper if nobody takes him (p. 27)? How do you think this knowledge affects the different family members' views of the pony?
6. Why is Vicki 'unable to contain her optimism' after talking with her sisters about her desire to buy Casper herself (p. 35)?
7. What event makes the sisters forget momentarily about 'their plans to make money' (p. 36)?
8. Why does Mum warn the sisters not to 'get too excited' (p. 38)? What does it tell the reader about their opinion of Casper at this point in the novel?
9. In what way was Vicki's reunion with Casper not 'what she had dreamed of' (p. 46)?

10. Why does Vicki think Casper's future 'looked cloudy' (p. 47)? How, when and why does her opinion change about his future?
11. What was the 'family rule' about working with the ponies (p. 57)? Do you agree with this rule? Why or why not?
12. Why does Vicki think Casper is 'remarkable' (p. 70)?
13. What are Vicki's friends' views of Casper (p. 84)? Do you think their opinions are fair? Why or why not?
14. Why is everyone so worried when they see Charlie 'swinging his head around and nipping at his stomach' (p. 88)? Were their fears founded?
15. What is Stella's dad's reaction to seeing Casper again (p. 102)?
16. How and why does Vicki feel before competing in the show (p. 102)? Do you think her feelings are justified?
17. What roles do the parents play in the girls' show (p. 104)?
18. Why does Vicki roll her eyes at Dad's introduction (p. 108)?
19. Why does Stella joke that they need to give Vicki and Casper a 'handicap', and what is the handicap they choose (p. 109)? What does this joke tell us about the progress Vicki has made with Casper?
20. What does Mike suggest may be the cause of Casper's behavioural and weight issues (pp. 115-116)? What does the family do based on this suggestion?
21. What and why does Kelly whisper 'in awe' (p. 122)?
22. Why does Vicki tell the man she can keep up riding Casper bareback (p. 127)?
23. What and why did the sisters and Stella call their team and what were their costumes (pp. 137-138)?
24. Why did Vicki ride forward on Dandy and lead Casper at the prizegiving (p. 141)?
25. What does Vicki realise Casper taught her (p. 148)?

### **Illustrations:**

1. The illustrations throughout the book are by Heather Wilson. Examine them. Do you like the style? Why or why not? What kinds of lines and textures are used? Design your own illustrations for one page of text.
2. In pairs, each choose your favourite illustration from the book. Write a description of the illustration, then read your written description to your partner and each draw a picture based on your partner's descriptions. How do your drawings compare to the drawings in the book? Consider points such as, is the composition similar and is it as detailed?
3. The book is about real people. Look at the photographs of the Wilson sisters that feature in the book and on the back cover and compare these images with the illustrations in the book. Then choose a photograph of another notable sports person, or of yourself, to create an illustration.
4. Design your own cover for the novel, including writing a new blurb.

### **Creative responses:**

1. Create an illustrated timeline of the main events of the novel. Choose an important event at, or near the end of the book, and describe how it helped you understand a key idea or theme of the novel.
2. Vicki hides 'dozens of handwritten notes around the house for Mum and Dad to find, outlining all the reasons why they should let her save Casper.' (p. 29). Imagine you are Vicki. Research facts and information about the benefits of owning and taking care of a pony. Include these facts when writing a persuasive note to Mum and Dad to try and convince them to save Casper.
3. Each weekend the sisters compete at an event, such as Ribbon Day, a Mounted Games competition and an A&P Show (p. 117). Choose one of these events to research. Think about the event's history, rules, competitors, etc. Present your findings to your class as an informative report on paper or on Google Docs, etc.
4. Imagine you are either one of the children who gets to ride Charlie and Cameo at the market (p. 42) or one of the other children taking part in the Pony Club Trek (pp. 124-133). Write, design and publish a short illustrated children's picture book about your experience. Read your book to a younger class level.
5. The novel features a descriptive piece of writing about Vicki and how she felt riding Casper at midnight (pp. 84-85). Write a descriptive narrative or a recount about a time when you have done something you love to do, what happened and how you felt about it.
6. The sisters design a show-jumping course out of random objects to compete in like a real show-jumping competition (pp. 90-99) and Stella's dad, Peter, states that he 'heard there's a massive show on today' (p. 101). In groups, design an advertising campaign for the girls' show that Peter may have seen and heard in order to come and attend. Your campaign could include elements such as pamphlets, radio jingles, posters, slogans, etc. Remember to use persuasive and descriptive language. Include a drawing of a bird's-eye view of what you think the show-jumping course would look like.
7. Read the 'How-tos' section (pp. 155-163). Use this as inspiration to design an illustrated how-to pamphlet about any jobs relating to owning and caring for a pony.
8. The group of friends buy some food to cook over the camp fire (pp. 75-77). In groups of two to four students, using the same \$15 budget the girls had to buy food, design a camping menu.
9. Annabelle's stepfather is a vet (p. 90) and recommends Casper is seen by an equine dentist (p. 115). Find out what is involved if you want to do either of these jobs for a career.
10. Choose your favourite moment from the book and create your own illustration or artistic interpretation of it, for example, a cameo painting, diorama, painting, model, poem, cartoon strip, movie storyboard, video, etc. Write a brief artist's statement to accompany your interpretation.
11. After reading the book, choose and discuss your favourite page/pages or moment in the book. List five reasons for your choice.

12. In pairs, list what you feel are the main points of the book. Compare with your classmates. Do you agree or disagree with their choices? Why or why not? Next, write a short plot summary based on your choices. Alongside your written description present your sequence in either a comic strip or a movie storyboard format.
13. In groups, imagine you are film producers attempting to gain financial backing to turn *Casper, The Spirited Arabian* into a feature film. Write up your proposal and include one or two scenes from the book in film script form, and your choices for the soundtrack, casting, location, costumes, etc. Also, design advertising posters for the movie.
14. Read the 'About the Author' section (p. 173). Write a letter inviting author Kelly Wilson to come and visit your school. Explain why she should come to your school and what you would like her to talk about relating to the book. Decide what your top ten questions for would be and include them in your letter.
15. After a close reading of the book, choose your favourite chapter to write your own comprehension questions about. Create a quiz based on your questions. Ask a classmate your quiz questions.
16. Choose your favourite chapter from the book to summarise. Present your summary in a poster, powerpoint, pamphlet or video format to your class.
17. Find the other books in the *Showtym Adventures Series*, such as *Dandy, The Show Pony* (Puffin, 2017) and *Cameo, The Street Pony* (Puffin, 2018). Write a comparative review, to compare and contrast the book with at least one other book from the series.
18. Look at the quotes from readers in the 'Did You Enjoy This Book?' section (p. 172). Use these quotes as inspiration to write a longer review of the book, aiming it at the readership of your favourite magazine, newspaper or website. Consider the following questions:
  - Which characters appealed to you the most? The least?
  - How did the story make you feel as it unfolded?
  - What ideas in the book awakened your interest?
  - What did you dislike, or find boring?
  - Do you think this is a significant book?
  - Why is this book important for today's readers?