

# Penguin Random House

## TEACHERS' RESOURCE KIT

### Showtym Adventures: Chessy, the Welsh Pony Kelly Wilson

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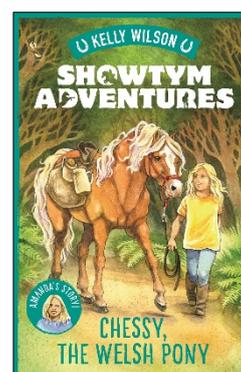
Then comes the chance she has been waiting for – a muster of beautiful Welsh ponies that have run wild in the hills. Among them is Chessy, a striking stallion, and just the right size for Amanda. But small doesn't equal easy, and first Amanda must prove she has what it takes by training a stropo mare from Pony Club.



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:

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#### RESOURCE KIT CONTAINS:

- Before reading
- Themes and setting
- Language features, structure and narrative
- Characters
- Comprehension and close reading questions
- Illustrations
- Creative Responses

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



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**Teacher Notes:*****Chessy, the Welsh Pony* by Kelly Wilson****Synopsis:**

In the fourth Showtym Adventure, Amanda must earn the trust of a beautiful but wild Welsh stallion. Will Chessy ever be safe enough to ride?

Seven-year-old Amanda Wilson dreams of training her own wild pony, just as her sisters have done.

Then comes the chance she has been waiting for — a muster of beautiful Welsh ponies that have run wild in the hills.

Among them is Chessy, a striking stallion, and just the right size for Amanda. But small doesn't equal easy, and first Amanda must prove she has what it takes by training a stropo mare from Pony Club. Will Chessy ever be safe enough to join Amanda on her crazy adventures?

Vicki and Kelly must help Amanda to win her pony's trust in this engaging story of perseverance and reward inspired by the Wilson Sisters' early years.

**Before reading:**

1. What does the cover picture and title indicate about the book's content and setting?
2. As a class, discuss what you know about ponies. Make notes of your points on the first two sections of a 'What we KNOW, what we WANT to know and what we have LEARN'T' (KWL) chart.
3. Read the author's dedication and discuss as a class what a dedication is. In pairs, think about if you wrote a book. To whom would you dedicate it and what would the dedication say? Tell your partner and then share your dedication with the class.

**Themes & setting:**

1. Discuss the following themes and find examples from the book which illustrate each:
  - a. family relationships and friendships
  - b. sibling rivalry and competitiveness
  - c. love of and caring for animals
  - d. patience and perseverance
2. What do you think is the main theme of the novel? Write about your choice using examples from the book.
3. In the ***Thank you*** section at the back of the book (pp. 168–170), author Kelly Wilson writes about the 'constant theme' which she saw emerging throughout the sisters' lives. What was this theme and can you find examples from this section for each of the three sisters?

4. Discuss where you think the book is set. Back up your opinion with examples from the book.

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

1. As a class, discuss genres (styles) of books. Which genre do you think this book might belong to and why do you think this? Consider design elements such as the fonts, the illustrations, the inclusion of photographs and a glossary.
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 Laura. Present your monologue, or read your diary entry or letter aloud, to your class.
3. The author uses many exciting verbs, particularly in relation to the ponies, such as 'pranced and danced' (p. 29) 'bolting' (p. 30) 'fleeing' (p. 30), 'bucking, rolling, rearing or bolting' (p. 38), 'frolicking' (p. 41), 'scrapping' (p. 41) and 'cantered' (p. 45). As a class, create an A–Z poster of exciting verbs you can use in your writing. Use the verbs you have listed and/or those from the book to write a poem about your favourite pony or horse from the book.
5. Figurative language, such as similes, is used to convey ideas that might otherwise be difficult to express. A simile is a language feature that compares one thing to another. Examples of these are: 'Charlie Brown, you're as silly as a clown' (p. 13) and 'You know she's an angel' (p. 37). Find more examples from the book.
6. The following are examples of alliteration: 'the wild Welshies' (p. 49) and 'Muster Madness' (p. 50). What is alliteration? Think of examples of alliteration for ten other letters of the alphabet.
7. The author has chosen a title for each chapter, such as *Chapter 8: Challenge Set* (p. 58). Choose one of the chapters and find and explain the link between its title and the events that take place within the chapter.
8. In the back of the book the author includes a glossary (pp. 165–167). What is the function of a glossary? The words included in the glossary are all horse-related, such as 'skittish mare' (p. 24), 'mustered' (p. 39), 'newborn foal' (p. 41), 'palomino stallion' (p. 41), 'chestnut colt' (p. 41), 'string-halt' (p. 66), 'gelded' (p. 81), 'surcingle' (p. 127), and 'blaze' (p. 130). Find some more examples from the book and create a glossary entry for your examples.
9. This novel contains some words you may not be familiar with. Use the words below from the book to add to the glossary with their definitions.
  - a. forlornly (p. 38)
  - b. flailed (p. 53)
  - c. entourage (p. 82)
  - d. feisty (p. 85)
  - e. forfeits (p. 91)
  - f. obstinate (p. 135)

- g. ruckus (p. 135)
- h. resolve (p. 152)

### **Characters:**

1. In this novel, Amanda is the main character. How would you describe Amanda? Choose an important event from the novel and describe Amanda's reaction to it. What do you think this tells us about her as a character?
2. What do you think Amanda 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 has changed? How are these changes linked to the themes of the novel?
3. What are the different pressures on Amanda throughout the novel? What factors lead to the decisions she makes and how does she cope with the situations she finds herself in, such as having to swap Charlie and train Magic instead?
4. 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 Amanda.
5. How would you describe the sibling relationship between Kelly, Vicki and Amanda? Do you believe that their relationship, as well as their relationships with their friends and family, develops and changes throughout the book? If so, list these changes and the main events which contribute to them.
6. Which character do you particularly like? Why?
7. Which character do you most identify with? Why?
8. Read the **Characters** section (pp. 156–158). Note down any new information it tells you about the characters from the book.

### **Comprehension/close reading questions:**

1. Amanda feels that sometimes it is 'hard being the youngest sister' (p. 15). Why does she feel this way, particularly in relation to her and her sisters' ponies and competitions?
2. In Chapter 2, what reasons are behind Amanda being so determined to compete and win? Do you think her Dad was 'doubting her abilities' or was this Amanda's perception (p. 19) and why would she think this?
3. How does Amanda feel about her offer to swap ponies with her friend Laura (p. 26)? Why do you think Amanda persisted on going through with the swap? What does this tell the reader about Amanda's character and personality?

4. What reasons does Amanda give her Dad to convince him she is old enough to tame a wild pony (pp. 35–36)? Do you think her reasons are convincing? Why/why not?
5. What does Vicki tell Amanda about how she trained Charlie (p. 38)? What themes from the novel do you think this conversation illustrates?
6. What are the reasons Mum and Vicki give regarding it being easier now for the family to keep a few wild ponies (p. 40)? What does this tell us about the family's past and current financial situation?
7. In Chapter 6, what events led to the Welsh ponies running wild on the farm? What will happen to the ponies that are left on the farm? How does this information affect Amanda's family's decision about keeping the ponies?
8. Why did Amanda's heart sink after her discussion with Mum and Vicky about training the wild ponies (p. 61)?
9. What is said about Amanda by her sisters to make her 'reluctantly return to her post' (p. 67)? Do you think this is in keeping with her character?
10. What was the compromise the girls came to over the horse's name (p. 71)? What does this tell the reader about how the sisters work together?
11. When Amanda is riding Magic in front of Laura, what does she do to boost her confidence (pp. 76–77)? Why does she need this confidence boost?
12. How does Chessy react to being around Indiana Jones (p. 84)? What does this tell the reader about Chessy's personality?
13. How is it that Amanda gets to ride Casper in the Autumn Show Hunter Series (p. 90–91)? What does this tell us about the girls' relationship with each other and with Mum?
14. What goal does Amanda have for Chessy and Magic (p. 100)? What is Vicki's reaction to this goal and what does it tell us about the horses and how realistic the goal is?
15. In Chapter 15, how do the sisters try to convince their father that getting more animals — the calves and the pig — is a good and important idea (pp. 108–11)? Does it work?
16. Why do the sisters want to go back to the 'dump-site from the old days' (p. 124)? What does their insistence in going back and the work they do tell us about their personalities and work ethic?
17. How do the new neighbourhood children help with Amanda's training of Chessy (pp. 139–140)?
18. In the last chapter, has Amanda achieved her goal of turning Chessy into a 'quiet kids' pony' (p. 148) and how does Amanda feel about Magic now?
19. Amanda exclaims that she thinks the 'coming season is going to be the best yet' (p. 152). Why does she think this and why do you think the author chose this as the way to finish the novel?

### **Illustrations:**

1. The book's illustrations are by Heather Wilson. Examine them. How would you describe the style? What kinds of lines and textures are used? Design your own illustrations for an event or moment in the book you think is important.
2. The book is about real people and horses. 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 and descriptions by the author, such as how Chessy is described

when Amanda first sees him (pp. 56–57). Then choose a photograph of yourself and an animal you like and draw an illustration of you and the animal together.

3. Design your own cover for the novel, including writing a new blurb.

### **Creative responses:**

1. As a class, look at your KWL chart from the **Before reading section**. Add some points to the 'What we have learnt' section. Display the chart in your classroom.
2. Read the author's letter to the readers (p. 9). If you were to write a letter about yourself and how you hope to inspire others, what would it say?
3. The family saves Welsh ponies from the farm. Locate Wales on a map of the world. Research this part of the world.
4. There are many different types of horses mentioned in the book including stallions, geldings, mares and ponies. In pairs, list all the different types of horses mentioned in the book. Next, find a definition and image for each type of horse that is featured in the book. Present your findings in the style of pages from an illustrated encyclopedia for children.
5. Amanda makes up lyrics to help make herself less nervous before her first show-jumping competition (p. 14). Choose your current favourite song and make up some lyrics that you would sing to yourself to the tune of the song if you were nervous. Perform your song to your class.
6. The sisters have loved reading the *Silver Brumby* books about wild Australian horses, and as they watch the stallions it feels 'as though the horses in the book had come to life' (p. 41). Using wild Australian horses or the horses in the novel as inspiration, write, design and publish an illustrated children's picture book about what wild horses' lives might be like before being caught and trained. Read your book to a younger class level.
7. The girls compare their digging in the dump-site to archaeological digs in Egypt (p. 125). Write an informative report about Ancient Egypt and/or archaeologists.
8. Mum tells her daughters that she is happy they have not spent their money on lollies, as she believes 'Memories are much better than sugary sweets' (p. 132). Write a descriptive narrative or recount about your favourite memory and in what way it is better than sugary sweets.
9. Mum discusses Maestro's lineage with his potential new owner (p. 132). Draw the Wilson's family tree based on information from the book. Include a short description for each character and include each of the sisters' horses also.
10. Mum tells the girls that she will 'pin a poster up at the saddlery' to advertise Chessy (p. 147). Design and create this poster to advertise Chessy. Make sure to use advertising and persuasive language in your writing to convince a new owner to purchase Chessy.

11. In the final chapter of the book, Amanda and her sisters take part in a Pony Club rally (pp. 149–152). Research what happens at Pony Club rally events. Think about the rally's history, rules, competitors, etc. Present your findings to your class as an informative report on paper or on Google Docs, etc.
12. Read the **How-tos** section (pp. 159–164). Use this as inspiration to design an illustrated how-to pamphlet about any job relating to owning, caring for or training a wild pony.
13. Choose your favourite moment from the book and create your own illustration or artistic interpretation of it, for example a diorama, painting, model, poem, cartoon strip, movie storyboard, video, etc. Write a brief artist's statement to accompany your interpretation.
14. After reading the book, choose and discuss your favourite page/pages or moment in the book. List five reasons for your choice.
15. 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 create an illustrated timeline of the main events of the novel.
16. 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. For example, when the children play the cops and robbers game it illustrates how much Amanda's perseverance in training Chessy has helped turn him into a safe child's pony.
17. 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 her would be and include them in your letter.
18. 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.
19. Find the other books in the *Showtym Adventures Series*, such as *Dandy*, *The Mountain 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.
20. Look at the quotes from readers in the **Did you enjoy this book?** section (p. 171). 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 did you identify with the most? The least?
  - How did the story make you feel as it unfolded?
  - What ideas in the book awakened your interest?
  - Why is this book important for today's readers?