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***Ranger the Kaimanawa Stallion* by Kelly Wilson illustrated by Jenny Cooper**

Publisher: Penguin Random House

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A true New Zealand story told by Kelly Wilson, one of the three sisters who starred in the TV series *Keeping up with the Kaimanawas*. Their determination to rescue wild horses that roam the Kaimanawa Ranges fascinated many New Zealanders.

Ranger is an exciting picture book where the sisters' compassion for horses is shown in how they gradually teach the wild stallion to accept their care and training. The girls introduce him to new experiences such as wearing a halter, being in a river and the ocean, and allowing Kelly to sit on his back. With gentle encouragement Ranger learns to trot and jump, and even lets children ride on him. Within nine months, the stallion takes part in a show jumping event that culminates in a tremendous achievement.

Jenny Cooper uses the tawny colours of the Kaimanawa Ranges to create a burnished landscape for the wild horses. She brings the countryside to life with the tussock blowing in the wind and the horses' hooves kicking up the dusty ground. The illustrations are full of action from the horses galloping free, to the low-flying helicopter herding the wild-eyed animals into enclosures.

Ranger's interaction with humans is well-portrayed with the stallion initially shying away from the sisters and the young women's patience until the horse begins to trust them. The progression of Ranger's training is realistically illustrated in the developing bond between the sisters and the rescued horse.

This book will captivate and educate young readers about the power of trust and caring.

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Reviewed by Jean Bennett

