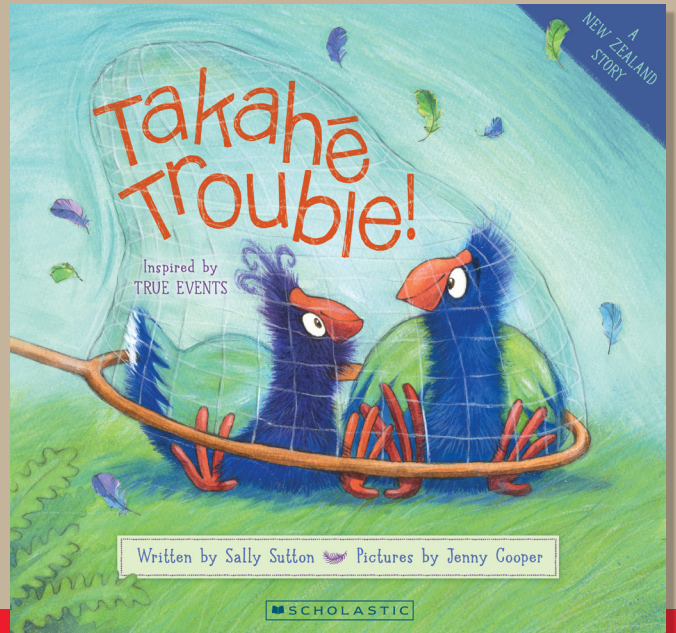


Takahē Trouble

By Sally Sutton

Illustrated by Jenny Cooper



• Reading • Writing • Social Studies • Thinking Skills •

Synopsis

Walter and Manaaki are teenage takahē in a predator-free sanctuary. Manaaki is bored, and curious about the outside world. She encourages her friend to escape with her outside the predator fence. Manaaki wants to see a rat, a roaring road, a stoat, a cat, a dog ... but Walter is not so sure he wants to see those scary things. However when they do, Walter finds it exciting, whereas Manaaki is scared and wants to return home. Walter encourages him to stay out just a little bit longer, and they experience more adventures. Then, one day, they notice people creeping up on them. The takahē let themselves be caught and taken home, where they're content to stay ... for a while.

About the Author

Sally Sutton is a popular children's book author of junior fiction and picture books, such as her award-winning *Roadworks*, *Demolition* and *Construction*, published by Walker Books. Book 6 of her junior fiction series *Miniwings: Moonlight the Unicorn's High Tea Hiccup*, was a finalist in the Esther Glen Award for Junior Fiction at the 2020 NZ Children's Book Awards. Sally enjoys writing for different age groups, but tries to bring the same qualities to all her writing: a strong plot, lively language, and a big dose of fun. She lives in Birkenhead, Auckland, with her husband and two daughters.

About the Illustrator

Jenny Cooper has been illustrating children's books for over 20 years. She lives in Amberley, north of Christchurch. After gaining a qualification in graphic design, Jenny and her family moved to Samoa, where she taught art. Jenny has also tutored at Christchurch Polytechnic and participated in several exhibitions of New Zealand illustrators. In 2015 she won the prestigious Mallinson Rendel Illustrators' Award. With over 70 children's books to her name, Jenny is perhaps best known for her hilarious illustrations for the Topp Twins' sing-along books, as well as several war stories in collaboration with Glyn Harper.

Writing Style

Takahē Trouble was inspired by a true story of escape, rescue and returning home. In October 2019, a wayward takahē couple were recaptured ten days after escaping from their predator-free sanctuary at Tawharanui Regional Park. Their adventure provided the inspiration for Sally Sutton's humorous picture book.

The story includes themes of friendship, adventure and risk-taking, as well as caring for endangered animals. Sally Sutton uses description, dialogue and expository text in third person, past tense. She also uses adjectives and alliteration to describe scenery; active verbs such as *rustled*, *twitched* and *clicked*; slang to portray feelings, such as *meh*, *whatever*, *woohoo*; and interesting speech tags, such as *squawked*, *screeched* and *shrieked*. The author has also used the senses to draw the reader into a scene, and onomatopoeia and assonance, e.g. *crash-thrash-smash*, *swoosh-whoosh-whispers*, and *munch-crunch-scrunch* to make it fun to read aloud.

Illustration Style

Jenny Cooper has drawn the bright and colourful pictures with pencil and watercolour paints. Some of the illustrations are vignettes, while others are full-page landscapes. Children can guess the takahē's emotions clearly from their facial expressions. The pictures are humorous, expressive and beautiful.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

During the shared sessions, encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding of characters and events. Have them make predictions, inferences and relate these to their own experiences. Read the passages aloud and have students read alongside or by themselves.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

Look at the cover and read the blurb.

- Who are the main characters in the story?
- What do you think this story is about? Why do you think that?
- What do you already know about takahē?

Comprehension questions

- What does 'endangered' mean?
- Why are the takahē safe behind the fence?
- What sound words (onomatopoeia) does the author use? Give examples.
- Why does Manaaki want to escape?
- How would you describe Walter and Manaaki's personalities by what they say and do?
- Who or what is twitching and rustling in the bushes? What do you think they are doing?
- Why does Manaaki want to see a 'roaring road'?
- Why would it be dangerous for them to see a stoat, cat or dog?
- What is the surprise on page 15? (Clue: I don't mean the rat.)
- How would you describe the takahē's expressions/emotions on pages 16-17?
- Why is Walter delaying going back?
- What senses has the author used to describe their home?
- How many animals did they see altogether? Can you name them?
- What alliteration has the author used on page 21?
- What are the people trying to do, and why do the takahē think they look silly?
- How do the people catch the takahē?
- Why is Manaaki glad to go home?
- What is happening on pages 30-31?
- Where did Manaaki and Walter really escape from?
- How long were they on the run before they were recaptured?
- Where are they now? Why do you think the keepers sent them there?



Activities

ACTIVITY 1: COLOURFUL LANGUAGE

The author uses alliteration, onomatopoeia and the senses to describe the takahē's home. Give examples. Use alliteration, onomatopoeia and the senses to describe where you live. Share it with a partner and get some feedback. Could you/they be more creative? Afterwards, read it aloud in front of the class and see if they can guess where you live.

ACTIVITY 2: GO WITH THE FLOW!

The takahē are very active in this story, going from one scene or activity to another. Can the students name some of the places where they went? Ask them to turn to their partner and say what the takahē saw and did on their adventure.

Give an example of drawing a flow chart for the beginning of the story (see below) and then ask the students to finish it. Remind students to use only key words to describe the action.



ACTIVITY 3: DRAW AND LABEL IT!

Draw a picture of a takahē and label its parts.

Written by Maria Gill