

DENNI-JO AND PINTO

By Buck Buchanan, Illustrated by Christina Wald (WestWind Press)

A YOUNG COWGIRL'S quest for independence is at the heart of the children's book *Denni-Jo and Pinto* by Buck Buchanan. Denni-Jo is seven-years-old and, in her estimation, old enough to ride her horse Pinto to her grandparent's home alone. Born and raised on a ranch, Denni-Jo knows how to handle herself around all kinds of animals and is no stranger to horseback riding. She can feed and groom her own pony and is quite good with a lasso. Armed with all that knowledge, and anxious to prove to herself and her parents she could manage the two miles alone, Denni-Jo sets off. The short ride doesn't necessarily go as planned. The determined cowgirl has to use all she's learned growing up on the ranch to navigate her way around dangerous situations, follow the right trail, and help an animal in trouble.

Author Buck Buchanan sweetly captures the excitement in this right-of-passage adventure, and illustrator Christina Wald brings the tale to life with bold and sensitive images that aptly capture the drama and joy inherent in going it alone for the first time. *Denni-Jo and Pinto* is inspiring and just plain fun to read whether you're seven or fifty-seven.

