



The Last Summer at Feather River

Karen Nelson

Sibylline Press (May 19, 2026)

Softcover \$20.00 (312pp)

979-889740018-8

In Karen Nelson's coming-of-age novel *The Last Summer at Feather River*, a woman works to save her grandfather's failing ranch.

In the summer of 1993, twelve-year-old Brooke navigates adolescent friendships and romance at Feather River Ranch, where her grandfather runs a summer camp. It's a cozy, nostalgic atmosphere, wherein campers read *Nancy Drew*, swim in the lake, and drag their sleeping bags under the stars. She also faces too-grown-up concerns: her adolescent crushes escalate toward skinny dipping and physical intimacy.

Then a terrible incident cuts Brooke's mostly idyllic summer short, and the camp is shuttered. Ten years later, Brooke returns to tend to the horses and help her aging grandfather with chores. She reconnects with a former camper, rekindles her love of riding, and uncovers the truth behind the accident, all while trying to set circumstances right.

Ranch life is well fleshed out in terms of the complexities of raising and riding horses, though some of the prose is overwrought, as with "Laugh lines radiated from the corners of his eyes and his weathered face looked as if the years of sun, wind and outdoor work had preserved him like a coat of varnish." But Brooke's family relationships and memories are attended to in a tension-sustaining manner: she struggles with her grandfather, mother, Feather River Ranch, and concerns about the accident that shut down the camp, all at once. The details of the critical summer are revealed piece by piece, with new information coming both through flashbacks and present-day revelations.

In the sometimes cozy, sometimes foreboding coming-of-age novel *The Last Summer at Feather River*, a woman returns to her grandfather's ranch to learn the truth about her past.

HANNAH PEARSON (May / June 2026)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.