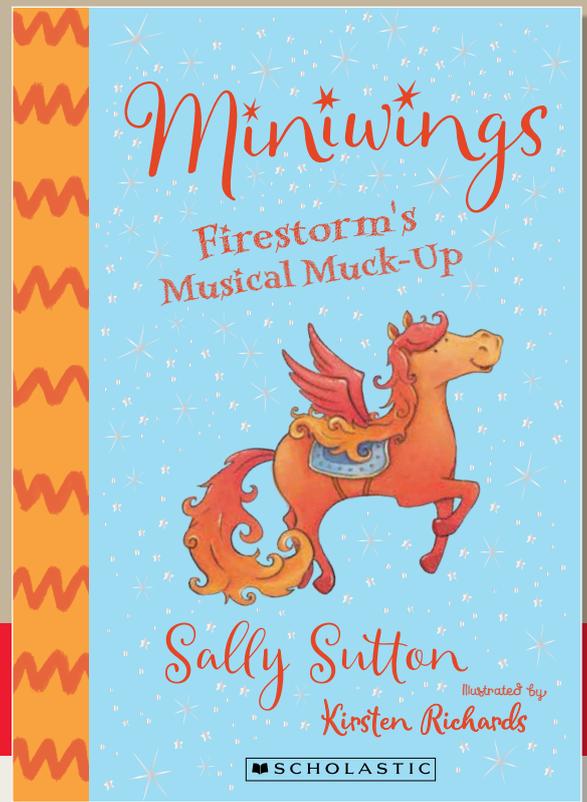


Miniwings #4

Firestorm's Musical Muck-up

By Sally Sutton
Illustrated by Kirsten Richards



Synopsis

Firestorm's Musical Muck-up is the fourth book in the bestselling *Miniwings* series. The star troublemaker in this book is Firestorm, a gorgeous little winged toy horse that comes to life when adults aren't looking. Firestorm is one of six winged horses, each with their own fun, humorous story to tell.

In *Firestorm's Musical Muck-up* Sophia and her younger sister, Clara, are about to perform in the school orchestra, only they haven't practised much, and the *Miniwings* think their music is awful. While trying to quieten one of the *Miniwings*, Sophia brandishes her violin bow in the air and breaks it across the doorframe. How will she play her violin now? Her parents won't let her get out of it that easily. The two girls come up with even more crazy excuses to get out of the performance, but Mum and Dad don't listen. Fortunately – or not, according to Sophia – their music teacher, Miss Rose, gives her another bow to use.

Unbeknown to the girls, the six *Miniwings* have hidden in the girls' violin cases and have come to the performance. They're angry with the girls for threatening to cut off their tails, and they intend getting revenge. While the girls perform on stage the *Miniwings* whizz around the players. Suddenly, Clara drops her flute, jumps up and barges her way through the violins, looking like she's going to catch a ball in a cricket game. Sophia is wondering what she's doing, then sees Firestorm heading towards a big red button labelled 'Fire Alarm'. Sophia lunges forward – and falls off the stage.

When the alarm goes off, everyone thinks it's for real. People panic, yelling and pushing their way out the door. The fire engine screeches noisily to a stop in front of the hall, and a firefighter jumps out. Sophia knows that the handsome firefighter would make a great match for Miss Rose. Meanwhile Firestorm is hiding behind the hall, embarrassed at the chaos he has caused. Together the three of them come up with a plan to make up for the mischief they've created. They suggest that the orchestra returns to the stage to continue the concert – with very special guests, the firefighters!

While the orchestra set up, Clara and Sophia perform a duet in front of beaming parents and a smitten Miss Rose and firefighter Vincent.

About the Book's Creator

Sally Sutton is a popular children's book author of junior fiction and picture books. She is most recognised for her award-winning *Roadworks*, *Demolition* and *Construction* picture books published by Walker Books and illustrated by Brian Lovelock. 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.

Kirsten Richards is the bestselling illustrator of *The Littlest Pilgrim*. Originally from the UK, she has been illustrating books for children ever since she left university, many years ago. She has spent time teaching art and design to both adults and children. She also designs merchandise, souvenirs and fashion garments for children of all ages. She now runs a boutique design and illustration company where she draws, paints and designs to her heart's content. The *Miniwings* series is her second project with Scholastic NZ, following on from Lucy Davey's *Dinosaur Hunting*.

Themes

- Being kind to one another
- Revenge is not sweet
- The importance of practice
- Friendship
- Anger

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

- Look at the cover. What can you tell about the story from the picture? Whose story do you think this book is, and what mischief will he get up to?
- Read the descriptions about the Miniwings and choose your favourite character. Say why you like that one best.
- What did the Miniwings think of the two girls' music-playing? Write down a sentence from the story that proves your point. (Chapter One)
- How did Sophia break her violin bow? What was her back-up plan? (p.21)
- What 'instruments' did the Miniwings play while the girls practised? And what type of reception did they get from the girls? How did this make them feel? (pp.24-26)
- What did Clara threaten to do that really upset the Miniwings, and how did they show their anger? (pp.31-32)
- List the excuses the girls came up with to get out of performing. (pp.33-37)
- Describe Miss Rose. (p.40)
- What did the girls discover when they opened their violin cases? Were they worried – and should they have been? Why? (p.44)
- What did Firestorm do and how did Clara and Sophia try to stop him? (pp.54-57)
- What happened when the fire alarm went off and how did everyone react? (p.62-65)
- When the firefighter jumps out of his engine, Sophia sees an opportunity. What was it? (p.70)
- How did Sophia know that Miss Rose and Vincent liked each other? (p.71)
- How did the trio make up for the chaos they had caused? (p.85)
- What money-making scheme did the girls think of to help them buy a new violin bow? (p.88)



Activities

ACTIVITY 1: PLOT THIS!

Get the students to plot the next story in the series. It's Comet's turn and the title of the new book is *Comet's Cross-Country Crime*. They can plan it in storyboard or mind-map style from beginning to end.

ACTIVITY 2: THE SEVENTH MINIWING!

Encourage the students to brainstorm ideas for a seventh Miniwing. What type of mischief does this Miniwing get up to when he or she is around the other Miniwings? What is his or her name? Ask students to write a character description and draw a picture of the newest Miniwing.

ACTIVITY 3: WHAT IF?

What if Miss Rose didn't have a spare violin bow? Ask the students to brainstorm what else Sophia could use. Will they think of something you can find around the classroom or home, or will they invent something? Fast finishers can draw a sketch for how it will work.

Teaching notes written by Maria Gill



teacher toolkit

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