

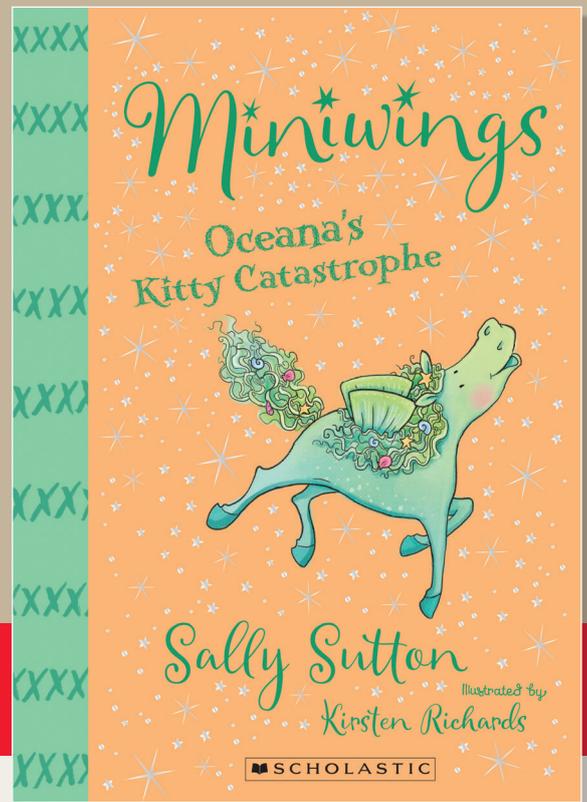
Miniwings #3

Oceana's Kitty Catastrophe

Text by Sally Sutton

Illustrations by Kirsten Richards

- Art • Reading • Writing • Transactional Writing
- Thinking Skills



Synopsis

Sisters Sophia and Clara named the six miniature winged toy horses 'Miniwings' in Book 1 of this series. In Book 3, the girls are desperate to have a pet and come up with dozens of ideas of what they'd like – from llamas to piranhas. On the car trip to Grandad and Nana's place for an overnight stay, they plead for a pet but their parents give them the 'Responsibility Talk' instead. When they arrive at their grandparents' cattery they're warned they must be on their best behaviour because Mrs Johnson, the cattery inspector, is coming that day. What could possibly go wrong?

Sophia can't remember if she put the latch back on the cattery door after visiting the cats. She's sure the Miniwings are the cause of all the cats escaping, just in time for Mrs Johnson to witness the ensuing catastrophe. Mrs Johnson yelps, and her cat Fluffy leaps from her arms into the fray of cats running around. Mrs Johnson tries to capture Fluffy, but her high heels wobble and her white trousers get muddier and, in the end, she topples into the pond. She is not amused. She picks up her cat and leaves in a hurry. The grandparents fear their cattery will be closed down.

Then another Mrs Johnson arrives, claiming she is the inspector. How confusing for the grandparents! It turns out that the first Mrs Johnson was just somebody coming to drop off her cat. Grandad and Nana are a little shell-shocked while the inspector talks to them. This gives the girls time to corral the cats in the cattery before the inspector comes to see how well the cattery is run.

On the trip home, the girls discover one of the kittens has sneaked into the car – and they've got a pet after all!

About the Author and Illustrator

Born in Auckland, New Zealand, **Sally Sutton** decided she wanted to be a writer when she was six years old. She is now a best-selling, award-winning author of many popular books, including *Roadworks* with Brian Lovelock (winner Best Picture Book NZ Post Children's Book Awards 2009) and its sequels *Demolition* and *Construction* (published by Walker Books.) Many of her picture books have been named Storylines Notable Books.

Sally's first junior fiction series with Scholastic was her humorous, native animal Diary series: *Diary of a Pukeko*, *Diary of a Bat*, *Diary of a Frog* and *Diary of a Sea Lion*, illustrated by Dave Gunson. She is thrilled to be working on chapter books again with the hugely enjoyable Miniwings series, illustrated by Kirsten Richards.

Sally loves to write for different age groups, but strives to bring the same qualities to all her writing: a strong plot, lively and rhythmic language, and a big dose of fun. Sally holds an MA in German. She has a keen interest in Grimms' fairy tales and European languages, and also enjoys writing plays. She lives in Auckland with her husband and two daughters.



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Kirsten Richards grew up in a small village in the Berkshire Downs in the South of England, where she spent most of her days running, jumping and climbing trees. If she wasn't covered in mud, she would most probably be scribbling down stories to amuse her sister, or encouraging her pets to sit nicely whilst they had their portraits drawn.

After completing a foundation Art and Design course, Kirsten moved to Swansea in Wales, where she spent three very happy years studying towards a degree in General Illustration. She graduated in 2006 and emerged bright-eyed and bushy-tailed into the world of children's publishing.

Since then Kirsten has worked on a whole array of exciting projects, including books with Scholastic USA, Oxford University Press, Hodder Children's Books, Thomas Nelson and Top That Publishing. One of her highlights was in late 2008 when *The Littlest Pilgrim* (Scholastic USA) made its mark, spending three weeks on the *New York Times* bestsellers list.

Since moving to New Zealand, Kirsten has spent time teaching art and design to both adults and children and designing 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 illustrated junior fiction series *Miniwings* (written by Sally Sutton) is her second project with Scholastic NZ, following on from Lucy Davey's picture book *Dinosaur Hunting*.

Writing Style

Miniwings is a funny, early chapter book with colourful illustrations that support a reader growing in confidence. The books can be read aloud, or read by an independent reader. Sophia, the main character in the *Miniwings* stories, talks directly to the readers in a lively, fun tone.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

- Look at the cover. Do you think this is a fiction or non-fiction story? How can you tell?
- Look at the first few pages. Why has the author written a letter to the readers before the story starts?
- Who is your favourite *Miniwing*, and why? Which one is the focus for this book and how would you describe her?
- What started the 'kitty catastrophe'? (pp. 9–10)
- What might be the Pros (good things) and Cons (bad things) about owning a llama? (p. 10)
- Why weren't the *Miniwings* keen on the pets the girls liked? (pp. 12–13)
- Why were the girls going to their Nana and Grandad's place? (pp. 14–15)
- What was the 'Responsibility Talk' all about? (pp. 17–18)
- How did the parents shut down the pet talk? (p. 20)
- Guess some of the things that might go wrong for Sophia and Clara and the *Miniwings* at the cattery.
- What was the *Miniwings*' name for cats throughout the story? (p. 25, pp. 50–51)
- Why did Clara get angry on page 26? Name a food that you don't like to share.
- What do you think *Miniwings* and cats have in common? (pp. 28–29)
- Where did Wanda come from? (p. 33)
- Why did Sophia not check that the door was properly shut? (p.36)
- Describe Sonia Johnson's personality. (pp. 37–39)
- What do you think Mrs Johnson is asking for on page 41?
- Describe the disaster Sophia and Clara saw outside the cattery. (pp. 46–47)
- What were the *Miniwings* frightened of on pages 50–51?
- How did the girls try to solve the problem, and how successful were they? (pp. 53–55)
- How did what happened next, go from bad to worse? (pp. 59–65)
- How were the girls feeling after Mrs Johnson left? (pp. 68–69)
- What did the girls do to get the cats back into the cattery? (pp. 74–77)
- How did the confusion arise between the two Mrs Johnsons? (pp. 78–79)
- What was the lovely surprise the girls found in their car? (pp. 87–89)



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Activities

ACTIVITY 1: SLOW-MO ACTION

Make a flip book as per these instructions: <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Flipbook>. Then draw step-by-step pictures on each page of Fluffy jumping from Mrs Johnson onto the ground and the cats chasing Fluffy, ending with Mrs Johnson in the pond. Then flick the pages of your flip book to enjoy the fun.

ACTIVITY 2: PAMPER PET INSTRUCTIONS

Create a pamphlet on how to care for a kitten. What will it need? How often does it need feeding and watering? How can you toilet train it? How often does it need grooming? Draw pictures to illustrate what needs to be done when caring for your kitten.

ACTIVITY 3: SAVE THE CATTERY!

What if Sonia Johnson had been the Inspector? Write a different ending to the story, describing what the girls did to solve the problem and stop the cattery from being closed.

ACTIVITY 4: iPad OVERLOAD

Sophie is distracted with the new iPad throughout the story. Write a P-M-I (Plus, Minus, Interesting) chart on the good (Plus), the bad (Minus), and an interesting fact about electronic devices such as laptops, tablets and smartphones. See how many things you can think of for each one. Here's a chart to help you out:

P-M-I on using an electronic device		
PLUS 😊	MINUS ☹️	INTERESTING

Written by Maria Gill