

Miss Flint Meets the Great Kweskin: Another Collection of Miss Flint Stories.

Grades 2-4 / Ages 7-9.

Review by Tanya Boudreau.

****1/2 /4**

Excerpt of Miss Flint Meets the Great Kweskin:

Paul took a bite out of his banana. "Simple. I'll get Mr. Shirley to invite us to the fire hall as part of Fire Prevention Week. You know, a little lecture on how to fireproof our houses, avoid starting forest fires, that kind of thing. If we're lucky we might even get to sit in the fire engine."

"I don't know," I said. "You know how much Miss Flint hates field trips. Especially after our trip to Pauline's farm."

Janey's face glowed and she smiled dreamily as she looked up into the sky. "I'll never forget Miss Flint bouncing on top of that wild horse screaming 'Whoa, Horsey!'"

"Yeah," Tom grinned. "Or the sight of her legs kicking in the air when she pitched into that pile of horse manure."

"Or the one thousand lines we had to write 'I will never mention horses in this classroom again,'" added Bobby Garcia.

"Anyway," Tom said, "how can Mr. Shirley get Miss Flint to let us go?"

"Leave that up to me," Paul replied.

There are levels of meanness at Haywood Elementary School. It used to be that Miss Flint, the fourth grade teacher, was the meanest teacher in the school. The kids in her class endured the year though because their schemes of revenge brought them a little bit of satisfaction during the school year. In Don Sawyer's second book of Miss Flint stories, the students are still suffering the consequences of Miss Flint's strict rules and boring lessons, but now they have Mr. Hackmore and Mr. Porcer to deal with as well. One man is a liar and a chocolate thief, and the other man is dangerously careless with fire and with hearts. With these two tormentors in the school, even Miss Flint is in danger. And although Miss Flint still evokes feelings of anger and annoyance in her students, they later develop a new feeling for Miss Flint - one of protectiveness!

Miss Flint did substitute pizza day with carrot day and limited the class field trip to the nearby museum, but her students are willing to overlook these transgressions when they sense she is in danger. One student says "I can't believe I'm saying this. But you're right. We've got to help Miss Flint." As usual, the students' plans are carefully calculated down to the smallest details, and in this case, the smallest details involve bad smells and pre-recorded animal noises. But as happens in the first book of stories, all the careful

planning in the world cannot prevent certain glitches from occurring. When the students try to get rid of Miss Flint and her horrible teaching practices for a few days, they end up with a replacement teacher who is much worse, and when they try to transform Miss Flint into a more pleasant teacher, they end up with the worst possible result!

Following the format of his first book, *The Meanest Teacher in the World*, Don Sawyer segues into each Miss Flint story via a conversation between 10-year-old Farish and her father. Farish sometimes has bad days at school, but not as bad as the ones her father had! He is the one in this book with the Miss Flint stories to tell, and when he does, he has a captive audience in Farish!

The seven chapters in this book are each illustrated with two to four black and white illustrations. A few of the illustrations are small in size and run into the gutter of the book. Unfortunately, this distracts from the enjoyment of the page. The full page illustrations are a nice addition to the story though. By appearing before each story begins, the illustrations give the reader a hint of what's about to happen.

Don Sawyer writes with a sense of humor children can understand. He also brings a little authenticity to the Miss Flint stories as he evidently had a teacher like Miss Flint when he was in grade four. The new characters in this book add novelty to this latest collection of stories, and their actions allow Don to reveal the different sides of many of his main characters. Fans won't be disappointed.

Don Sawyer, who lives in Salmon Arm, BC, has taught on both coasts of Canada and has written articles, a nonfiction book, a young adult book and many children's books. The past 15 years of his life have been devoted to teaching and managing development projects in West Africa. Born in England, Bob Beeson illustrated the first collection of Miss Flint stories as well as the picture books *Bubblemania* and *I Can Fly!* Additionally, he's the author of several picture books, including *Ten Little Circus Mice* and *What Time is it, Mr. Wolf?* Today, he lives in the Shuswap region of British Columbia.

Recommended.

Tanya Boudreau is a librarian at the Cold Lake Public Library in Cold Lake, AB.

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