

Four on the Run Activity Pack
For young readers, schools and
libraries

Learn, create and have fun with
our four friends: Flash, Lady,
Maxie and Fergie!



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- Text from the book © Sophie Masson
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Introduction

In this activity pack, you will find:

- Background notes on how the author and illustrator created the story and pictures
- Discussion and research activities
- Writing and art activities
- Colouring-in pages
- Lots of fun!

About the book

Meet Maxie, Lady, Flash and Fergie: four friends who just happen to have wheels 😊. When they go on the run to escape the scrap-yard, they head into more excitement—and trouble!—than they ever imagined.

From two acclaimed creators comes a lively, funny story of friendship and adventure that will delight young readers 5-8.

ISBN 9780648194576

RRP \$13.99, 72 pages.



About the author

Brought up in France and Australia, Sophie Masson is the award-winning author of over 70 books for children, young adults and adults. Her most recent books are *The Snowman's Wish* (illustrated by Ronak Taher, Dirt Lane Press, 2020); and *A House of Mud* (illustrated by Katrina Fisher, Little Pink Dog Books, 2020). In 2019, Sophie received an AM award in the Order of Australia honours list.

Her website is at
www.sophiemasson.org.



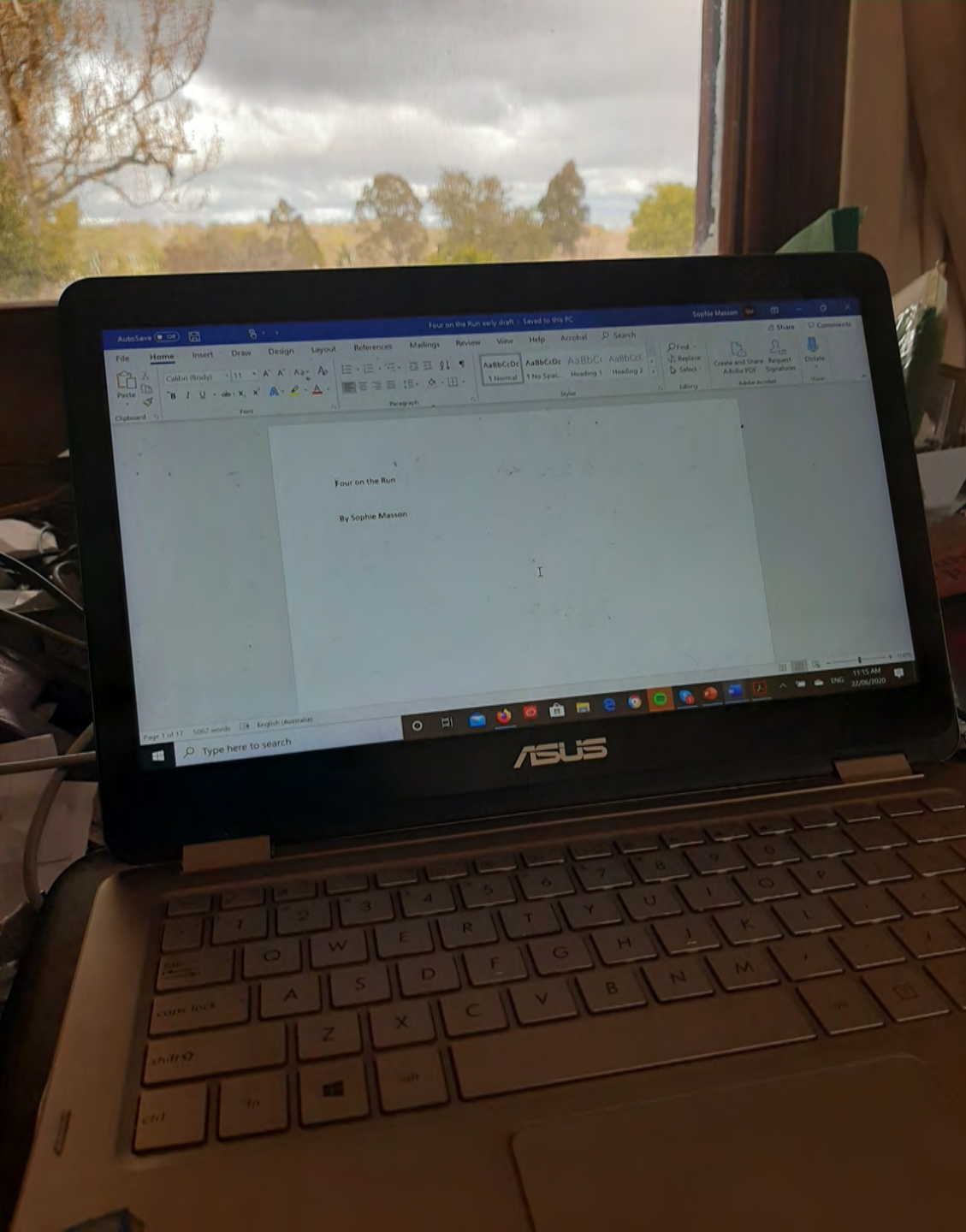
About the illustrator

Cheryl Orsini has illustrated over 20 picture books including *Caravan Fran* (Lothian Books/Hachette Australia), *The Tales of Mrs Mancini* (ABC Books) *The ABC Book of Cars, Trains, Boats and Planes* (ABC Books), and *Pom Pom, Where Are You?* (Viking/Penguin).

Her illustrations are also sought after by Australian magazines including *Gardening Australia* and *The School Magazine*.

Her website is at www.cherylorsini.com





Where did the idea come from?

We asked author Sophie Masson to tell us a bit about the background and inspiration of the story.

Sophie says: I've always been fascinated by vintage cars, from the time I was little and used to love looking at old family photos of my grandfather and his family—they owned fabulous cars, like the one in this picture!



This is a photo of my grandfather Robert Masson as a young man, driving *his* grandmother around in her amazing car!



I'm still fascinated, and love looking at old vintage vehicles at shows and rallies.

And so do other members of my family, including the younger ones!

‘Vintage’ by the way means that they aren’t from our times, but are vehicles—cars, motorbikes, buses, trucks, tractors—that are quite old, and some are VERY old! They look different to modern vehicles, don’t they?

Photo by Sophie Masson

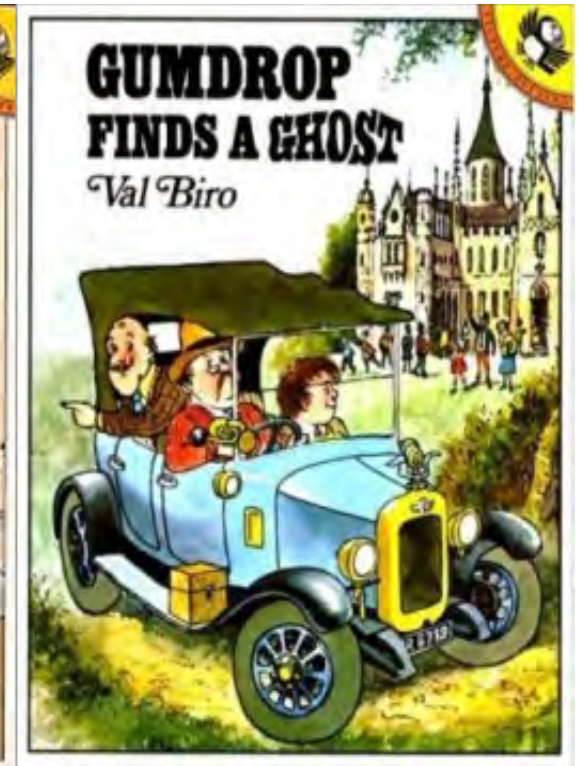
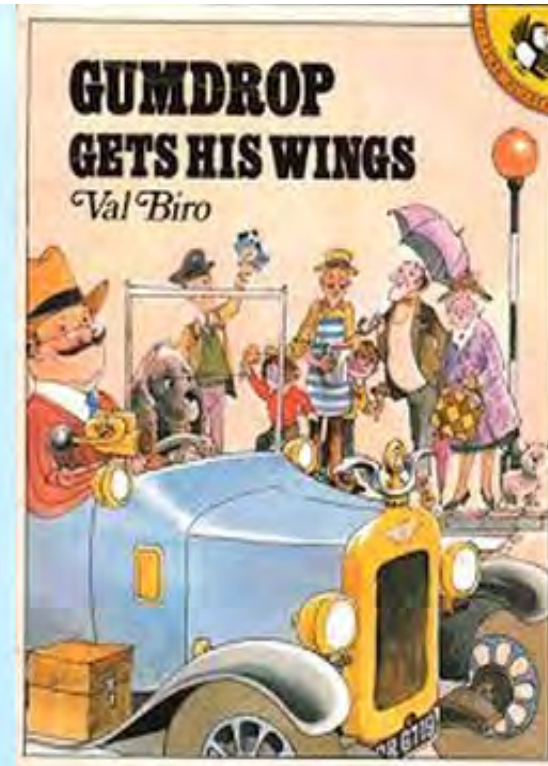
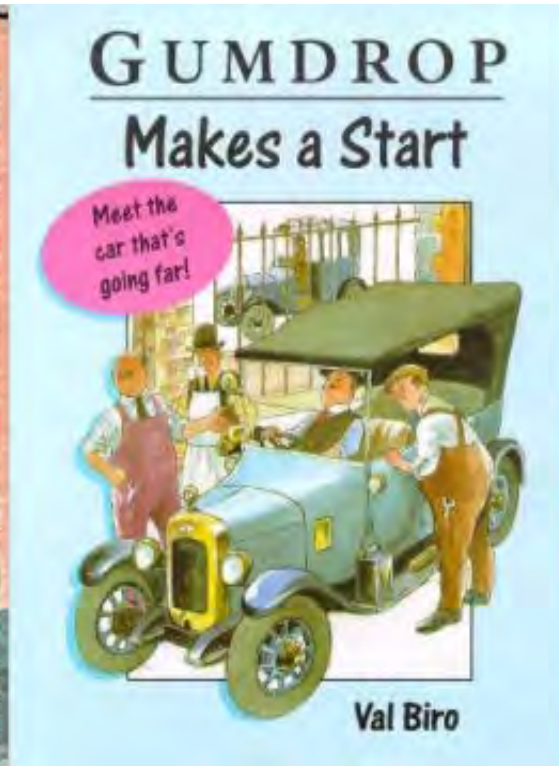
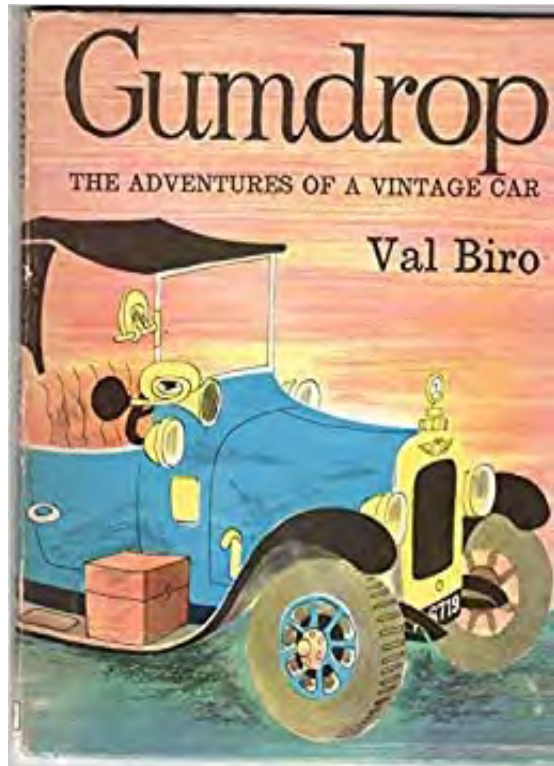
Another inspiration was
a story I loved as a child,
*The Four Musicians of
Bremen*

It's a story about four old
farm animals who run away
when they find out they are
going to be sold, and who
manage to outwit a wicked
gang of robbers.

Here's a statue of them in
Bremen, the town in Germany
where the story came from.



And then there are these classic books our kids loved when they were little—books about a special vintage car who has amazing adventures...



Fur on the Run
Notes on Characters:

Maxie - She is green, a bit like
a beetle (based on VW Beetle)

Flash - vintage motorbike with red &
black flashes

Lady - Beautiful old vintage car, like
a Chevy Bel Air or Cadillac

Gergie - Old grey Fergus - trace
of curse!

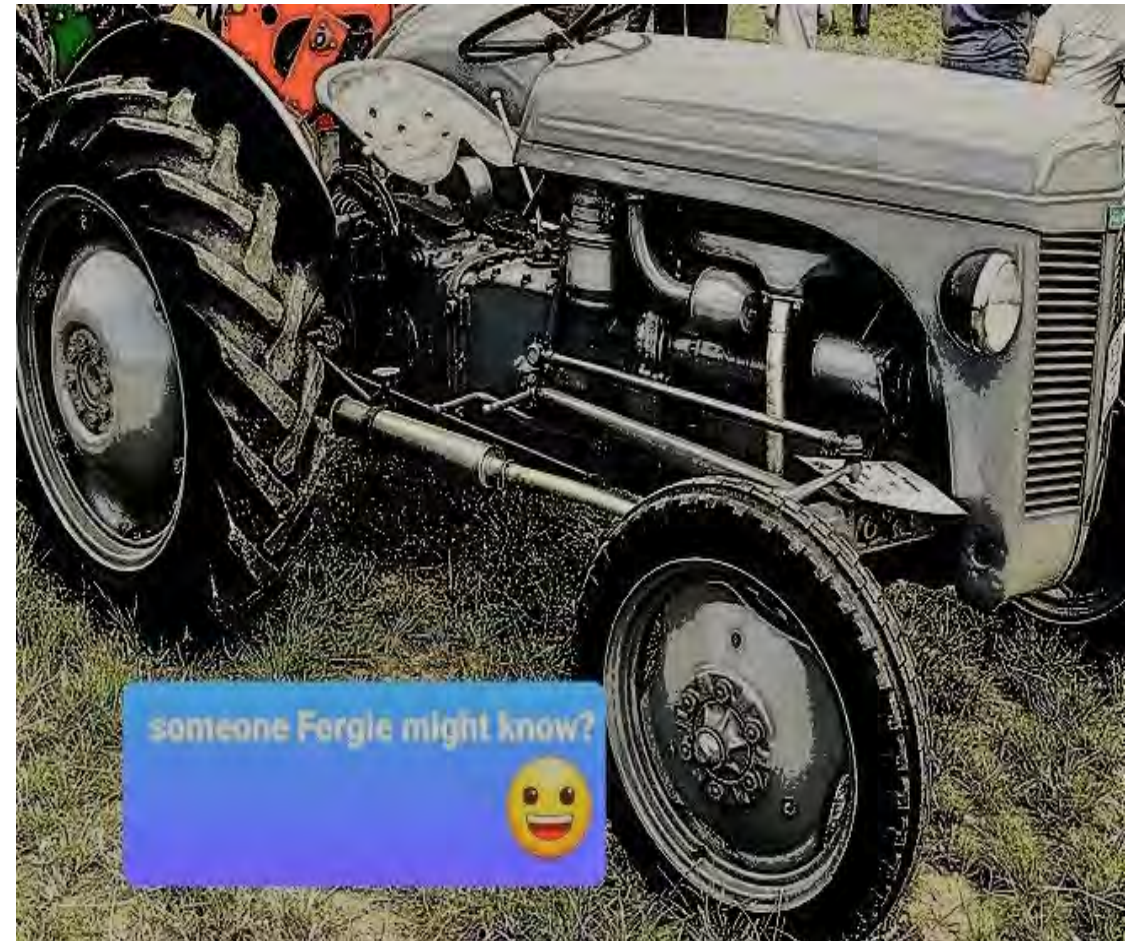
Writing the story

Sophie tells us about how she wrote the story and created the characters

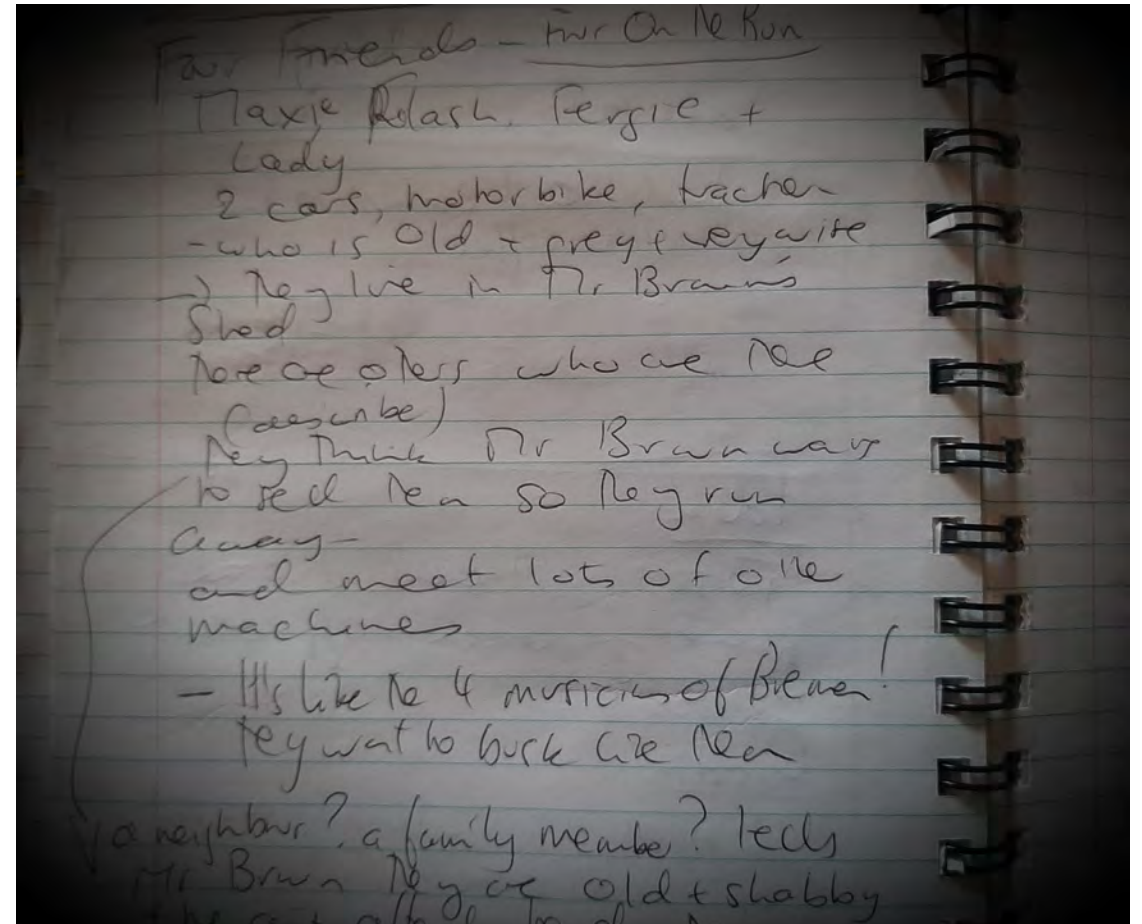
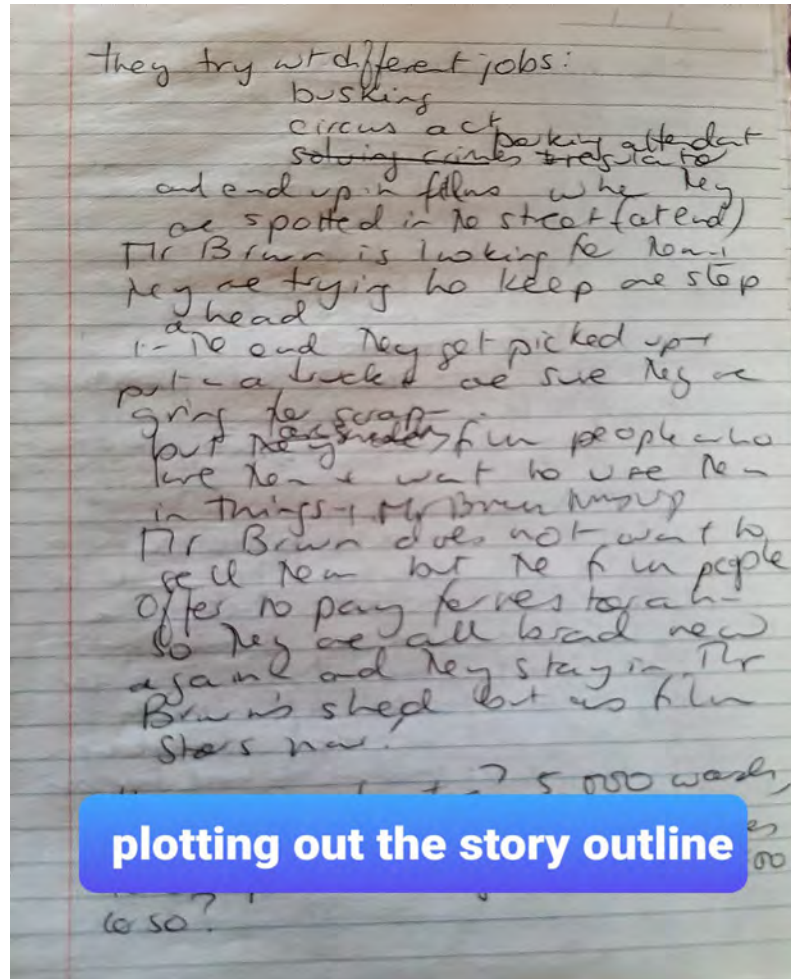
When I started creating the characters of Maxie, Fergie, Flash and Lady, I thought about some real-life vintage vehicles—like these



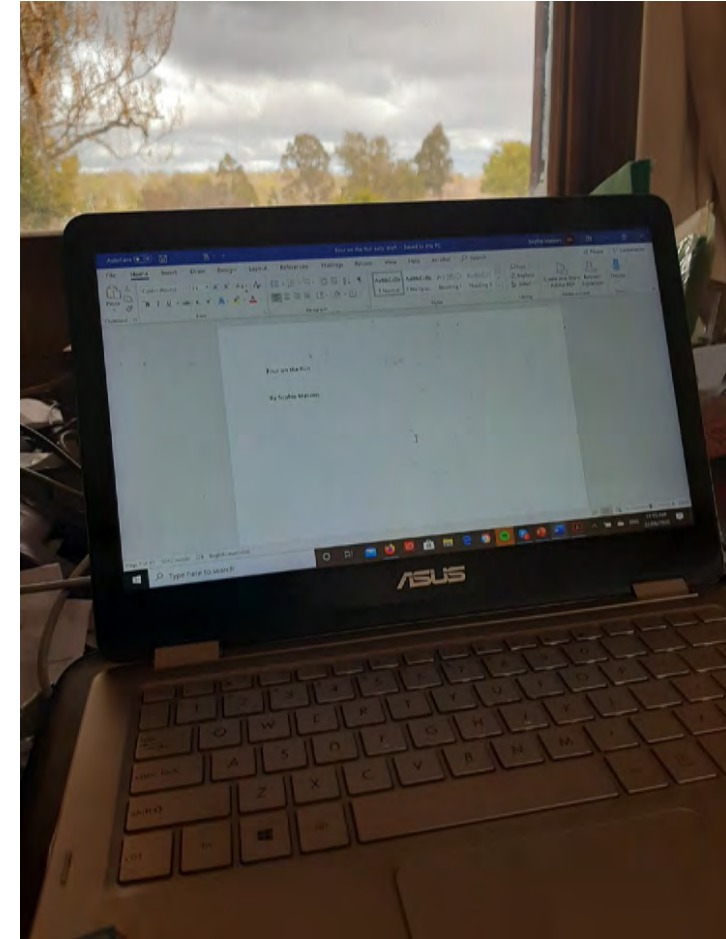
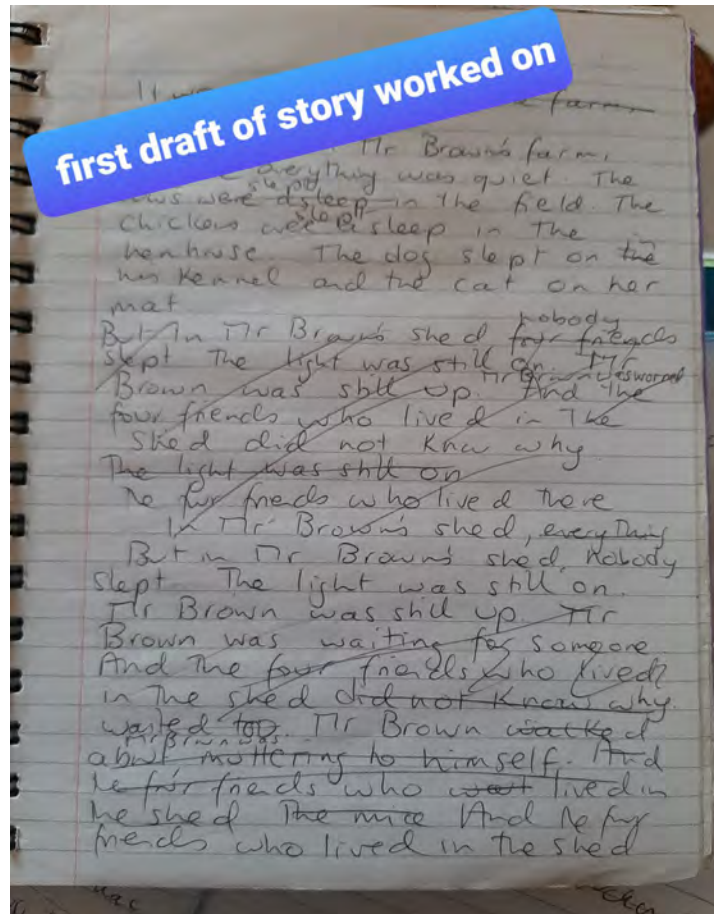
And these...



Once I had my characters, I began working on the story outline—what was going to happen in it, what adventures the four friends would have!



And then I was ready to start the story draft: the very beginning of it I wrote by hand in my notebook, then went onto the computer for the rest

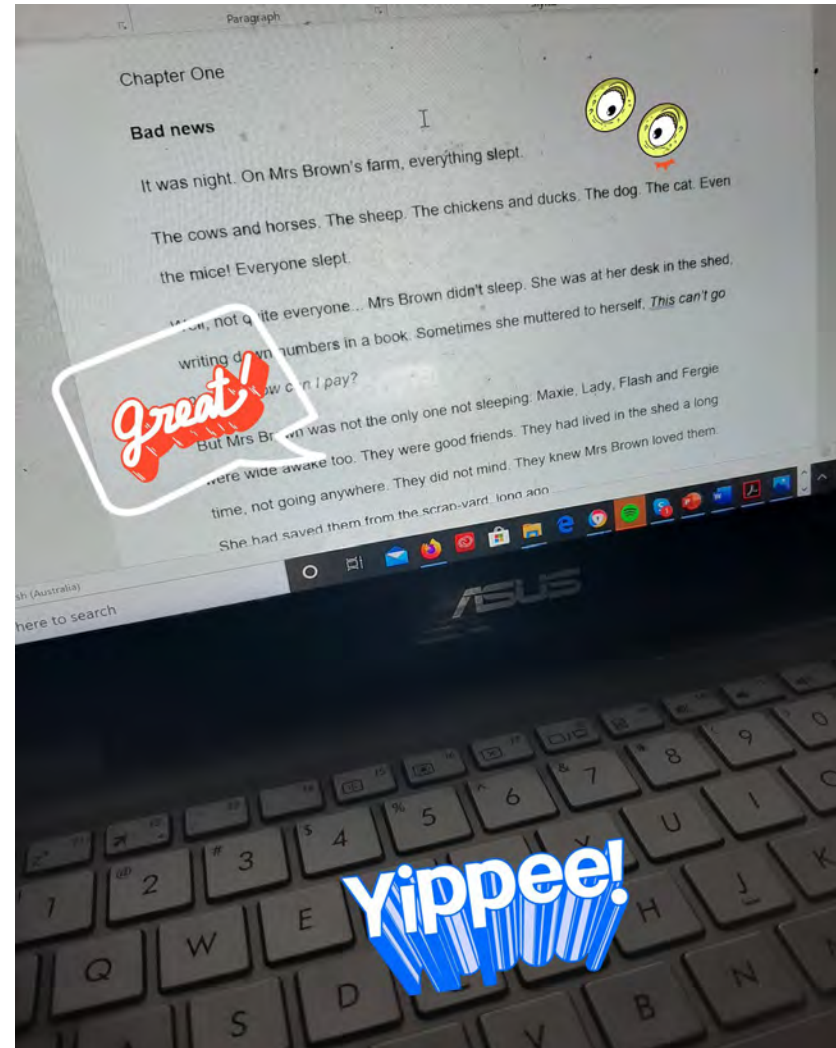


I wrote the draft story three or four times, and as I did, a few things changed

For example:

- The farm dog and cat originally had names but I took those out because after the very beginning(when all they were doing was sleeping, anyway 😊) they did not have any part in the story
- I made the first chapter shorter
- I changed the name of the film producer at the end, from Oscar Oliver of Oliver Productions to Paul Peachey of Peachey Productions!

Finally it was finished and sent to the publisher...and the next stage of the book began.





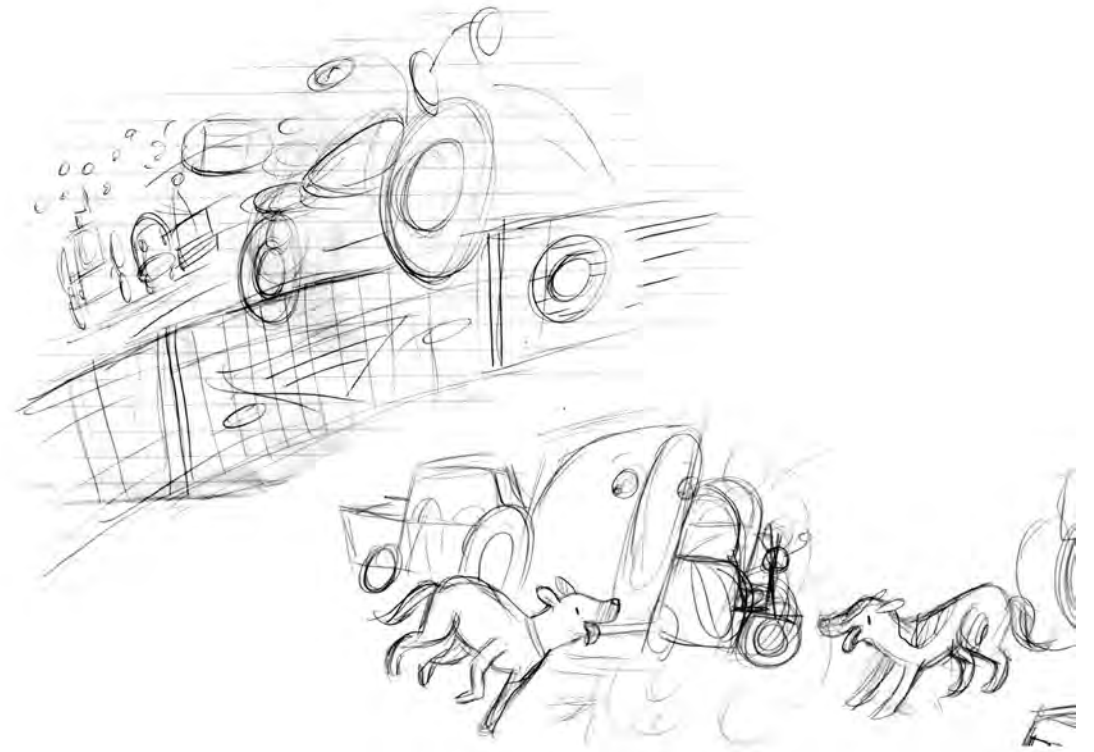
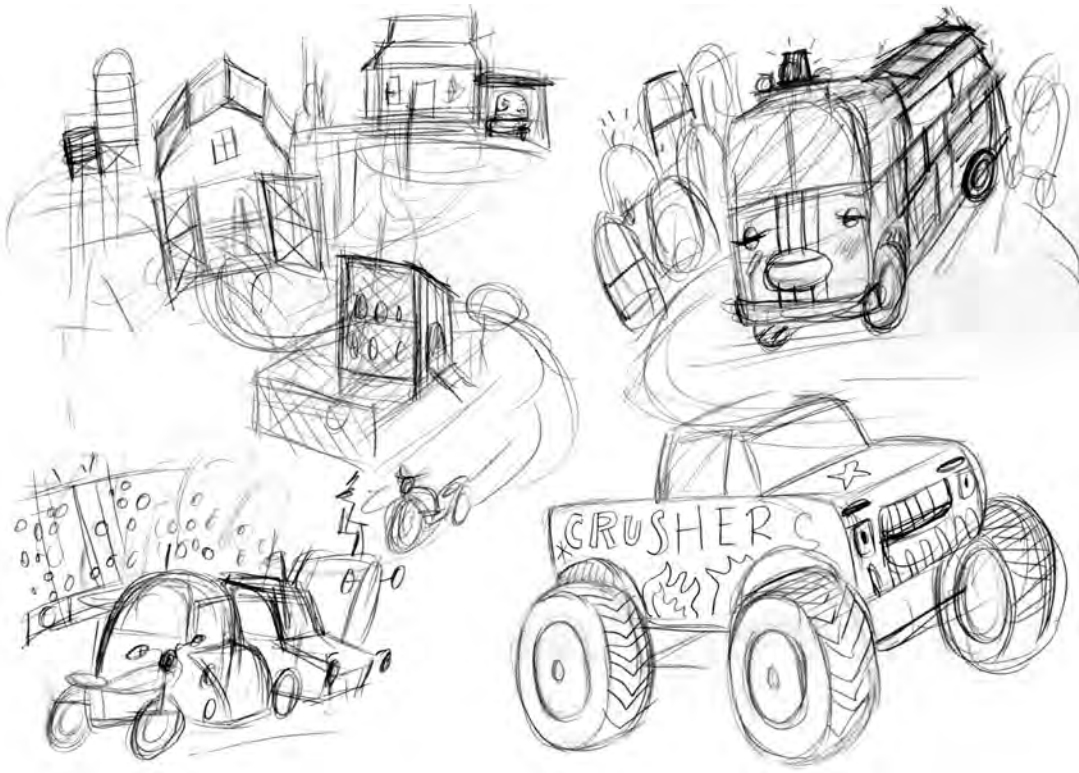
Creating the illustrations

We asked illustrator Cheryl Orsini to tell us a bit about how she went about creating the illustrations for the book.

Cheryl says: First, I read the text and start doing very, very rough drawings as the images come to mind.



I try to fill every bit of an A4 paper with these ideas..



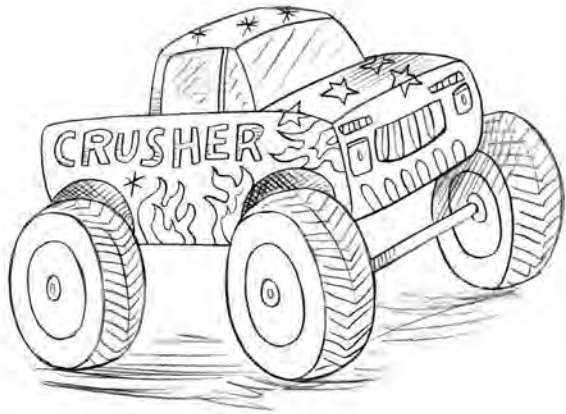
Then I scan these and in Photoshop I move them around, re-size them, rotate them, until I feel like the illustration starts to have some balance.



Then I print those out and use that as a basis for the rough drawings that I share with the author and publisher.

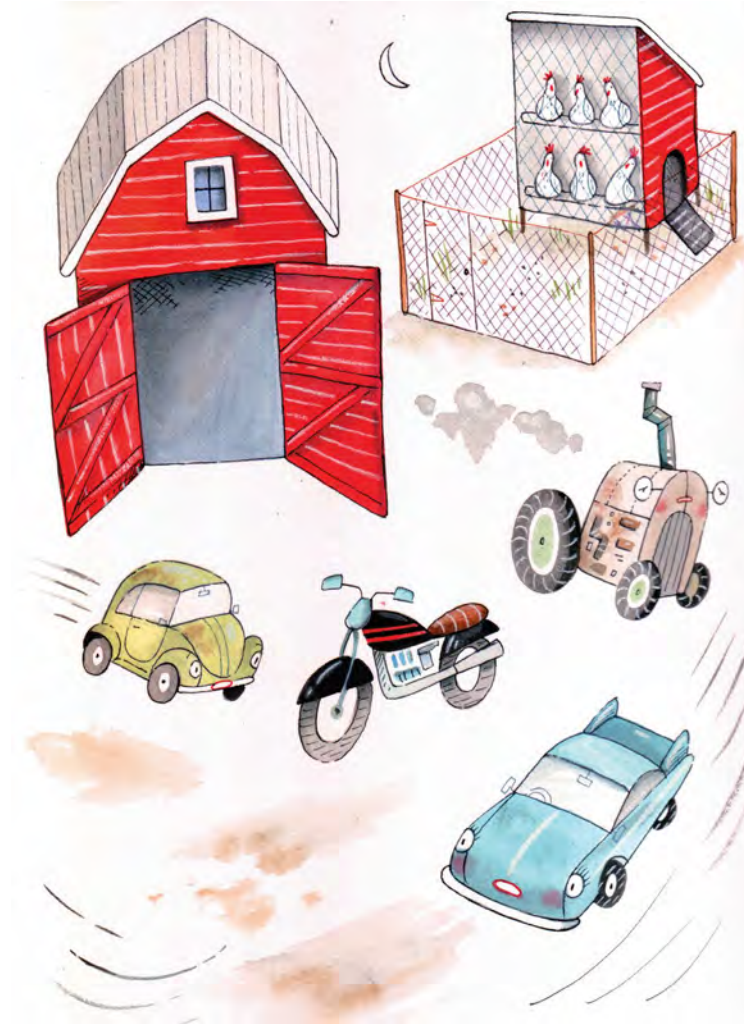


Once the drawings have been approved I then finish them in readiness for the designer to use in the layout.



For the colour artwork
on the cover,

I paint every part of this
separately and then I
piece it together in
Photoshop

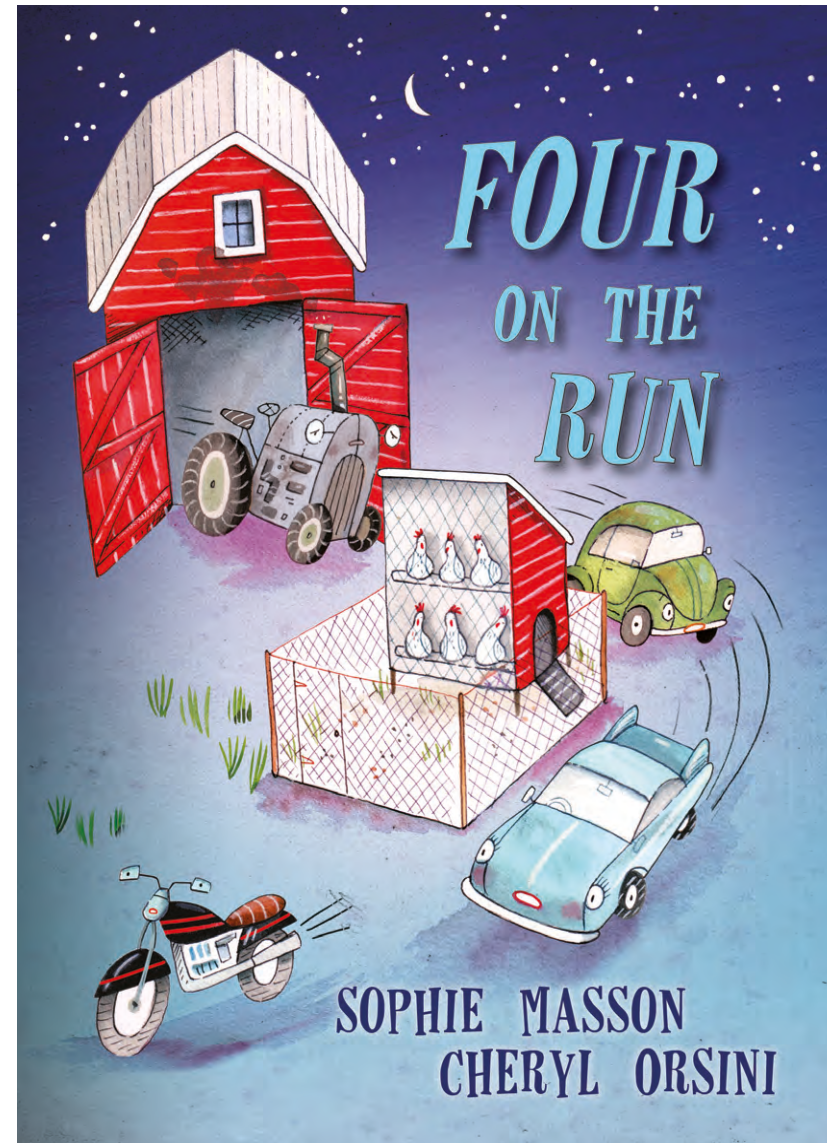


I add in a background
and some stars and it's
ready to go!



Finally the designer
sets to work

Creating the finished
cover, with all the words
you need to have there,
of course: the title,
author and illustrator.



After you've read the book, here are some discussion questions for you

What do you think would have happened if Boots had tried to go along with the four friends?

Why do dogs pretend not to understand what vehicles say?

What sort of roles do you think the four friends will play in Mr Peachey's film?

Research activities

- In her notes about the inspiration for the book, Sophie Masson says that the four friends are based on some real-life vehicles. See if you can find out something about those real-life inspirations: for example, Maxie is based on an old VW Beetle, and Fergie is based on a Ferguson TEA20 grey tractor.
- What other kinds of vintage vehicles do you think could be in Mr Peachey's film? Look up a site like <http://heritagemotoringcouncil.org.au/> to get some ideas
- Look up information about monster trucks. What sort of tricks do they perform in shows?



Creative writing and art activities: story starter 1

In the picture to the left, Maxie has created a traffic jam so the friends can get away from the police car.

There's lots of other vehicles in the picture--what are they thinking about what's going on? Write a little story from the point of view of one of the other vehicles stuck in the traffic jam.

Creative writing and art activities: story starter 2

Our four friends have lived in Mrs Brown's shed for a long time, ever since she saved them from the scrap yard.

But how did that happen? Where did they all come from? And why were the friends in the scrap yard in the first place?

Write a story which tells how they ended up in the scrap yard and how they were rescued by Mrs Brown, back then. You can illustrate it too, if you want.



Creative writing and art activities: a report

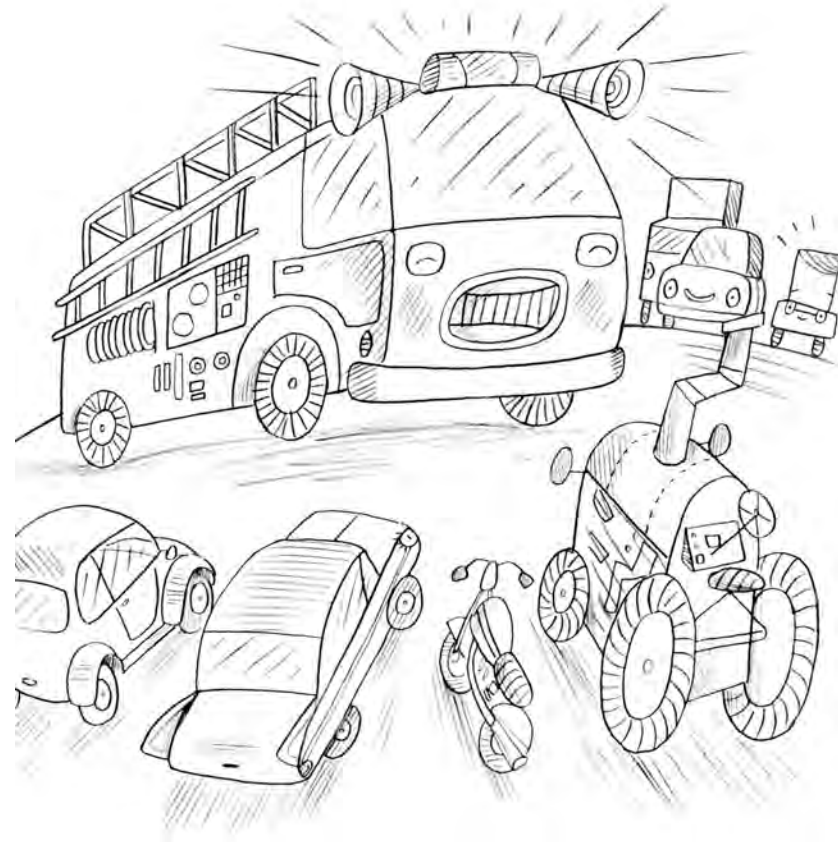
Write a report about what happened at the monster truck show from one or more of these points of view:

- Crusher
- Boots
- The police car
- The dogs(maybe they were watching through the fence!)
- You can also illustrate your report

Creative writing and art activities: make a poster

On the right you can see the famous popstar, Fiery O'Dash the fire engine, performing at a concert.

Create a colourful poster for his concert. You can draw it or paint it or collage it, whatever you like.



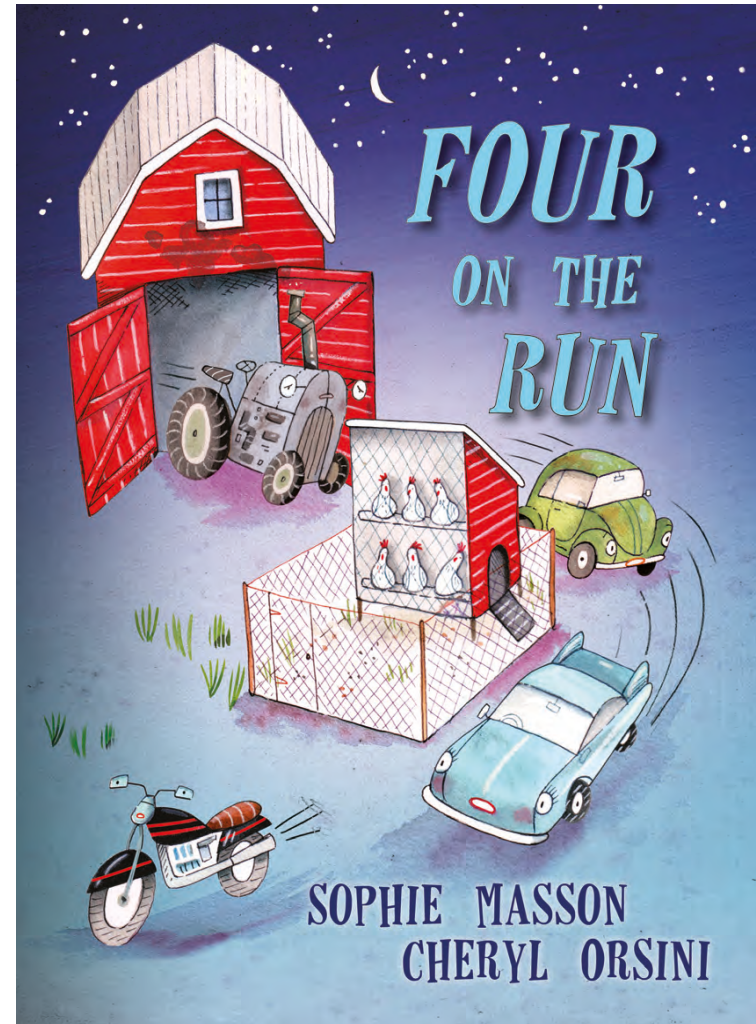
Spot the difference: the colour illustration on the front cover and the black and white one in chapter two are similar but not exactly the same- write down all the differences you can see!



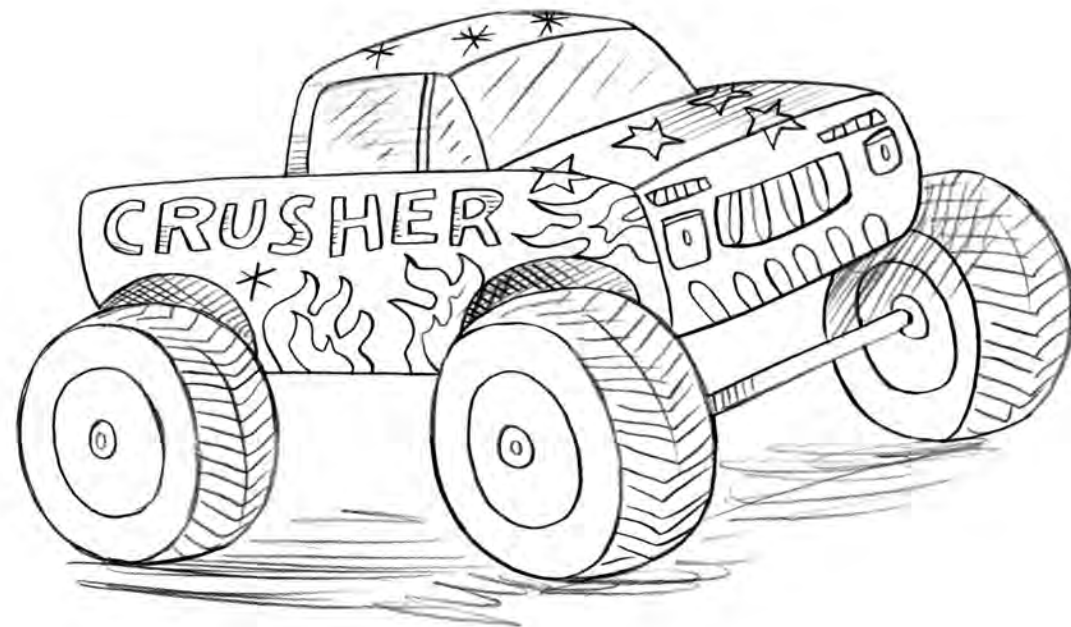
Colouring-in pages

In these pages you will find three of Cheryl's black and white illustrations, to colour in. These pages can be printed out—ask a parent or teacher to help you. The colouring-in pages are also available separately.

We would love to see your wonderful colouring-in, so if you like, take a photo of your work and send it to us by email at contact@christmaspresspicturebooks.com, and include your first name and age. We will post a selection of these at our website and on our Facebook and Instagram pages.









We hope you've enjoyed this activity pack!



Find out more about our books at
www.christmaspresspicturebooks.com

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