

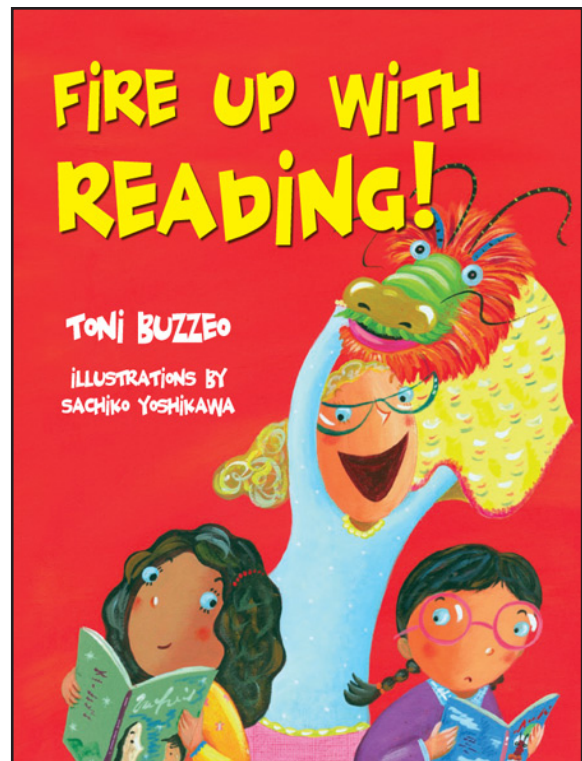
Fire Up With Reading: A Mrs. Skorupski Story

by Toni Buzzeo

Read the book aloud to children first, so that they can enjoy the illustrations and become familiar with the story. Then, hand out a set of photocopied scripts to eleven students. (Note that Raymond's part is perfect for a challenged reader and that Mrs. Miller has only a few lines.) Ask the remaining children to be the audience. If you have plenty of time set aside, allow students to practice their parts individually or as a group until they are reading fluently. If time is limited, have performers face the audience and simply read their parts on the first run-through. Once all readers are comfortable with their parts, have a second reading with the opportunity to use props or costumes if desired, and to act out the story while reading.

Roles

- Patty
- Carmen
- Mr. Moriarty
- Mr. Dickinson
- Mrs. Skorupski
- Mom
- Mrs. Miller
- Raymond
- Narrator One
- Narrator Two
- Narrator Three



Adapted from the book *Fire Up with Reading* by Toni Buzzeo, illustrated by Sachiko Yoshikawa. UpstartBooks, 2007.

Fire Up With Reading Script

- Narrator One:** On the first day of school, a dragon danced down the center aisle of the Liberty School auditorium.
- Patty:** I noticed fire engine tights. I spotted a dragon ring on the left pinky.
- Carmen:** Good grief, Patty Lee!
- Narrator Two:** Carmen Rosa Peña poked Patty hard.
- Carmen:** Who is THAT?
- Patty:** (*Whisper.*) It's Mrs. Skorupski. You can tell by her accessories.
- Narrator Three:** The librarian climbed the stairs to the stage.
- Narrator One:** Her dragon head bobbed.
- Narrator Two:** Her dragon head sparkled.
- Patty:** It looked a lot like the head of the Chinese New Year dragon dancing through the streets of my old Chinatown home.
- Narrator Three:** She handed the principal, Mr. Moriarty, a rolled-up scroll.
- Mr. Moriarty:** Hear ye! Hear ye!
- Narrator One:** He unfurled the scroll.
- Mr. Moriarty:** Commencing this day, September 2, Liberty School shall fire up with reading.
- Narrator Two:** Mrs. Skorupski struck a huge brass gong.
- Patty:** I shivered as the deep sound rang through the auditorium.
- Mr. Moriarty:** I hereby challenge you to READ!
- Narrator Three:** Carmen sat up straighter.
- Narrator One:** Kids around them whispered.
- Narrator Two:** The gong chimed again.

Mr. Moriarty: All reading shall be measured in minutes. Futhermore, the teacher of the Top Reading Class shall be declared the Dragon-headed Teacher. He or she shall wear the dragon head in our Read Across America Day parade on March 2—precisely six months from today.

Patty: My new teacher, Mr. Dickinson, caught my eye and winked. I ducked behind my hair.

Narrator Three: Carmen jumped out of her seat and chanted.

Carmen: Mr. Dickinson! Mr. Dickinson!

Patty: Mr. Moriarty cleared his throat.

Mr. Moriarty: The Top Reader in each grade shall also march in the dragon costume.

Patty: My head swirled. The dragon costume!

Narrator One: Carmen pumped her fist.

Carmen: Wooo-wooo-wooo!

Patty: Why does *she* have to be a fourth grader too?

Narrator Two: Down the hallway, huge green paper dragons filled the wall space between the classrooms.

Narrator Three: Carmen pointed to a large fishbowl of shiny paper dragon scales.

Carmen: Hey, Mr. Dickinson, look at this!

Narrator One: The sticker on the bowl read: Each dragon scale represents 30 minutes of reading. The first class to paste up all 5,000 dragon scales will have fire-breathing dragon status.

Mr. Dickinson: We can do it, Fourth Graders!

Patty: Instantly, I was dreaming about dancing the dragon dance right behind Mr. Dickinson.

Carmen: Forget it, Patty.

Narrator Two: Carmen poked her elbow into Patty's side then turned to the class.

Carmen: *I'll be the Top Fourth Grade Reader!*

Mr. Dickinson: We'll just wait and see, Carmen.

Narrator Three: By the end of the day, Liberty School was all fired up about reading.

Narrator One: The janitors and bus drivers were reading.

Narrator Two: The cafeteria ladies and crossing guards were reading.

Narrator Three: The kids and teachers were reading.

Mrs. Skorupski: All because of me!

Patty: That first week, Mrs. Skorupski helped me to discover new books and authors and to uncover old favorites. And she introduced me to entire library shelves I'd never explored before.

Mrs. Skorupski: Okily dokily. Go to it!

Narrator One: From then on, every day felt like a reading holiday to Patty.

Patty: I clocked at least two hours a day: over my oatmeal, while I brushed, during DEAR time and, of course, listening to Mr. Dickinson's read-aloud. I wanted to read even more, but my mom reminded me:

Mom: Exercise is as important as reading.

Patty: So I rode my bike or rollerbladed after school while Carmen read.

Carmen: I glued on twice as many dragon scales as Patty did.

Patty: I needed a plan.

Narrator Two: Tiny silver disks dangled from Mrs. Skorupski's ears.

Mrs. Skorupski: Patty Lee! I was hoping the Fourth Grade Reading Queen would visit the library today. What's up?

Patty: Carmen's reading minutes are up—again.

Mrs. Skorupski: She's sure a reading fiend this year. I'm proud of her.

Patty: Proud of *Carmen*, I thought. What about me?

Narrator Three: Patty pointed at the sign Mrs. Skorupski had hung last week. It said: Listened to a good book lately?

Patty: Does listening to audiobooks count?

Mrs. Skorupski: For Top Reader? Of course! Audio minutes count. Braille minutes count. All reading minutes count. Here, take two audiobooks!

Patty: Audiobooks were a great plan! During November, I read five fabulous books—while I biked, while I skated, even while I took a bath.

Mr. Dickinson: By winter vacation, our class had been Top Reading Class for four months in a row.

Patty: And I was 267 minutes ahead of Carmen Rosa Peña at last.

Narrator One: Patty left for the break determined to keep her lead.

Patty: On the first day back to school, we stickered our dragon with the last of the fishbowl scales.

Mr. Dickinson: (*Shout.*) Fire-breathers, you did it! Patty, run down to the library and get our librarian.

Patty: Mrs. Skorupski, our dragon needs fire.

Mrs. Skorupski: Okily dokily!

Narrator Two: Mrs. Skorupski's flame earrings dangled above the yards of yellow, red, and orange cellophane she carried down the hall.

Narrator Three: That day, Mrs. Skorupski announced the fire-breathing status of Mr. Dickinson's class on the intercom and the monthly Top Readers by grade.

Patty: I held my breath when she got to fourth grade.

Mrs. Skorupski: Carmen Rosa Peña.

Patty: Wait! What about my audiobook plan?

Narrator One: Carmen pulled an MP3 player from her backpack.

Carmen: Audio downloads from the public library. Mrs. Skorupski told me about it.

Patty: I scowled.

Narrator Two: Later, Patty stopped in to the library.

Patty: I'm desperate.

Narrator Three: She described her new plan to Mrs. Skorupski.

Mrs. Skorupski: I'll think on it.

Narrator One: On Friday morning, Mrs. Skorupski sent Patty a note.

Narrator Two: It said: Your presence is requested in the library!

Patty: She waved me over to meet Mrs. Miller, a Kindergarten teacher.

Narrator Three: Mrs. Skorupski's helping-hands earrings swayed.

Mrs. Skorupski: Allow me to introduce Patty Lee.

Narrator One: Mrs. Miller shook Patty's hand.

Mrs. Miller: Raymond Woo really wants to be the kindergartener in that dragon costume. But he doesn't have anyone to read to him at home.

Patty: Oh! He's my neighbor. Maybe I could read to him.

Mrs. Skorupski and Mrs. Miller: Wonderful.

Narrator Two: Patty could always count on Mrs. Skorupski to help her with a plan.

Patty: After that, I read to Raymond every day during activity period. Then, I started visiting Raymond and his grandmother at home after dinner.

Narrator Three: By the end of January, Patty had pasted up twice as many scales as Carmen.

Narrator One: And she helped Raymond paste his scales on his Kindergarten class dragon, too.

Patty: When Mrs. Skorupski announced my name as the Top Fourth Grade Reader for January, Carmen glared at me.

Narrator Two: The next day Carmen wasn't in the cafeteria at lunch.

Narrator Three: She wasn't jumping Double Dutch at recess.

Narrator One: She wasn't even on the bus ride home.

Mom: Don't worry about it.

Patty: I walked next door to read to Raymond with his shiny smile and dragon costume dreams.

Narrator Two: February 29, Leap Day, was the last day of Fire Up with Reading.

Mr. Dickinson: Class, you can read all day.

Patty: I spent both my recess and activity period reading Chinese New Year books with photos of dragon costumes to Raymond.

Narrator Three: On March 1, Patty ran all the way to school and into the auditorium.

Narrator One: Mrs. Skorupski, holding the dragon head, made the final announcements.

Mrs. Skorupski: The Top Reading Class is Mr. Dickinson's Fourth Grade!

Narrator Two: Mr. Dickinson hopped up on his chair while his students cheered around him.

Narrator Three: Silence fell.

Mrs. Skorupski: Grade Five, a tie! Cindy Lord and Terry Farish.

Patty: I slipped out of my shoes so I could cross my toes.

Mrs. Skorupski: Grade Four.

Patty: I crossed my eyes, too.

Mrs. Skorupski: By only ninety minutes . . .

Patty: I held my breath.

Mrs. Skorupski: . . . Carmen Rosa Peña."

Patty: I gasped.

Narrator One: Carmen grinned at Patty.

Carmen: (*Whisper.*) Reading to the ELLs . . . thanks for the idea.

Patty: I turned away and pulled my hood up over my head. I nearly missed hearing the Kindergarten winner.

Mrs. Skorupski: . . . Raymond Woo.

Mr. Dickinson: (*Shout.*) You did it, Patty!

Narrator Two: Everyone turned toward Patty.

Patty: I burst into tears.

Mrs. Skorupski: I sent a note down to Patty after lunch.

Narrator Three: The note said: Your Library Media Specialist needs you!

Patty: I dragged down the hallway. Mrs. Skorupski, wearing dragon-head earrings, squatted next to Raymond.

Mrs. Skorupski: He won't walk in the dragon costume.

Patty: But Raymond, that's why you wanted to be Top Reader.

Narrator One: Raymond shook his head.

Raymond: (*Whisper.*) Too scared.

Narrator Two: Patty glanced over at Mrs. Skorupski.

Patty: What if I walk with you?

Narrator Three: Raymond jumped up, slipped his hand in Patty's, and did a little skip.

Raymond: Yay!

Mrs. Skorupski: Okily dokily!

Narrator One: At 8:30 a.m. on March 2, television cameras lined the front walk.

Mr. Dickinson: I wore the dragon head.

Narrator Two: Carmen was stuck in the middle.

Patty and Raymond: We wagged the tail.

Narrator Three: At the front door, Mr. Moriarty banged the gong.

Patty: Mrs. Skorupski led us through the neighborhood three times, wearing her fire engine tights, dragon ring, and dragon-head earrings.

Raymond: (*Shout.*) I love to read!

Patty: (*Shout.*) Me, too!

**Mr. Dickinson,
Patty, and Raymond:** Then we finished the dragon dance parade, all fired up with reading.

⋈⋈⋈⋈⋈ *The End* ⋈⋈⋈⋈⋈

Dragon Head



Dragon Tail

