DO NOT PANIC THE PIXIES

Books by Michelle Robinson

Do Not Disturb the Dragons

Do Not Mess with the Mermaids

Do Not Panic the Pixies



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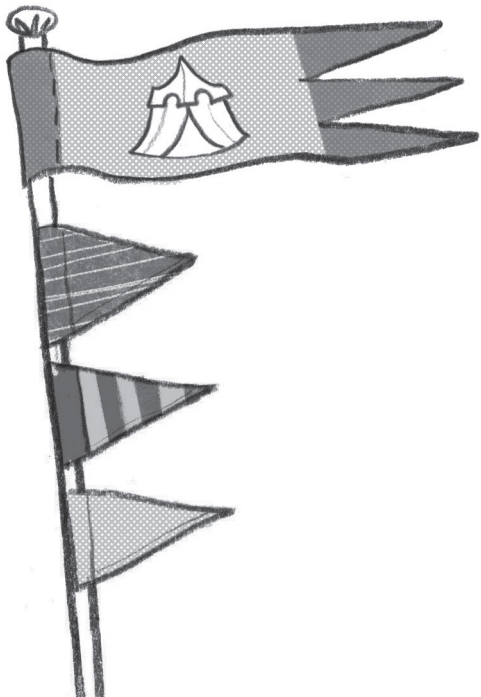
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For Hannah

– MR

To Neve and Alex, always

– SD



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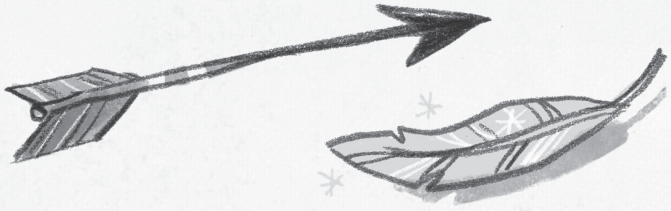
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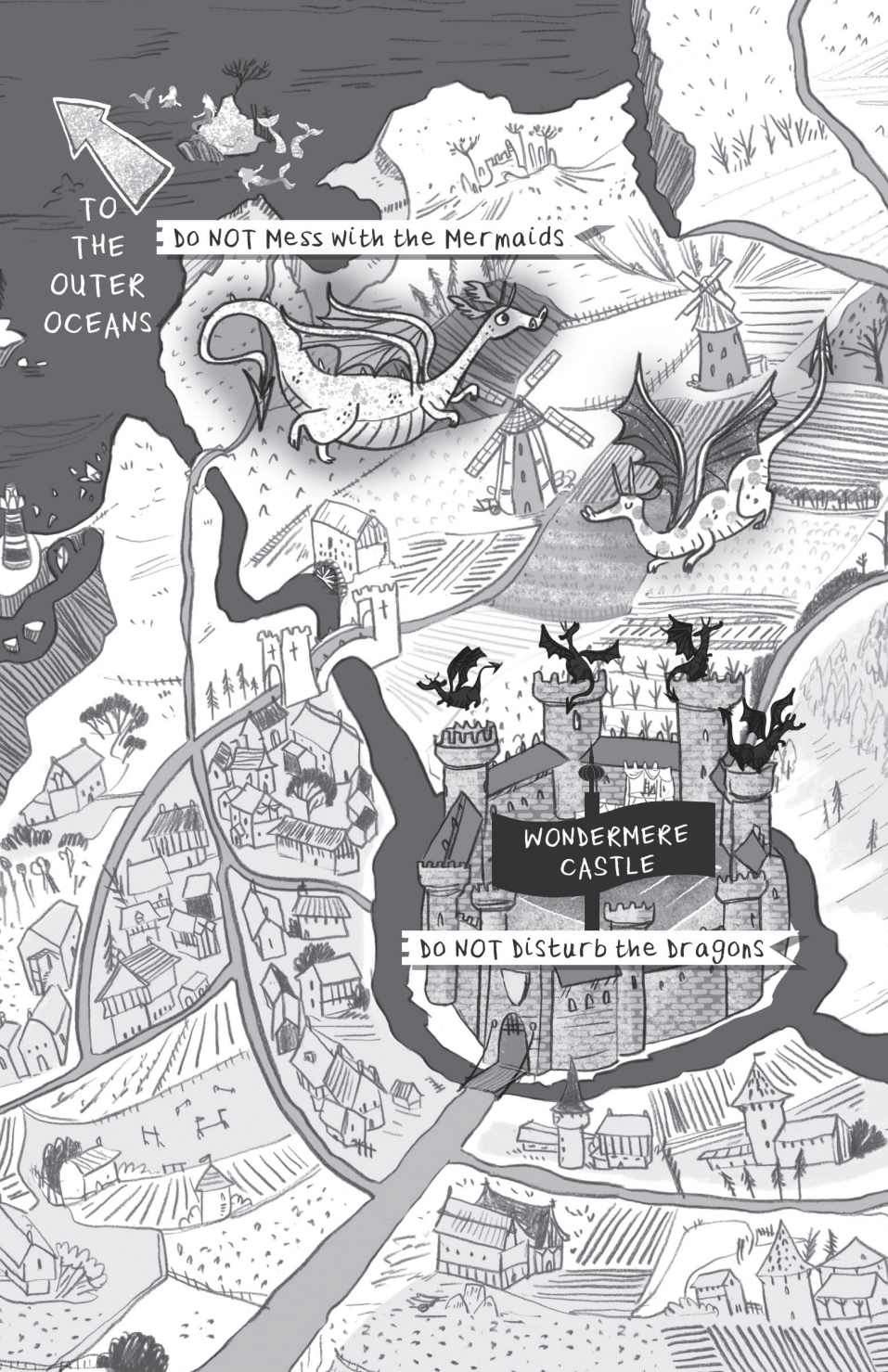
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TO THE OUTER OCEANS
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WONDERMERE CASTLE
DO NOT Disturb the Dragons


LAKE WONDERMERE
DO NOT SWIM
Pixie Pastures
DO NOT Panic the Pixies
TO GIANT COUNTRY
Forest Market
DO NOT Haggle
Bram's Tree House
DO NOT Loiter
WONDERMERE FOREST
NORTH
EAST
SOUTH
WEST



1

DO NOT FORGET YOUR UNDER-WONDERS

The dragons were unlikely to get any rest today, no matter how badly they needed it.

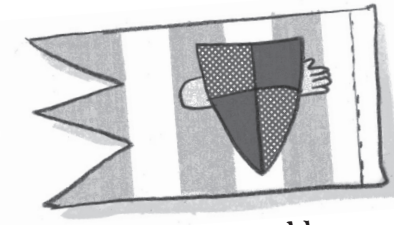
They'd spent the whole night flying, covering the length and breadth of the realm in search of glittering gemstones. But even now – tucked in their nests on the turrets of Wondermere Castle, the sun warming their scales – they couldn't get to sleep.

They wriggled and they shifted. They tossed and they turned. They buried their heads beneath their wings. It was no use. There was simply too much noise coming from the courtyard below.

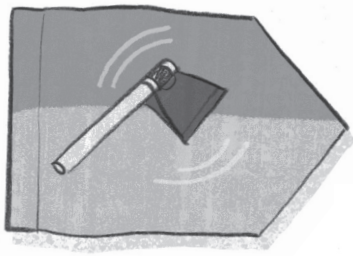


The castle was bustling with young knights preparing for Questival. They clattered across the cobbles, loading up their unicorns with backpacks, sleeping bags, saucepans and rolled-up tents.

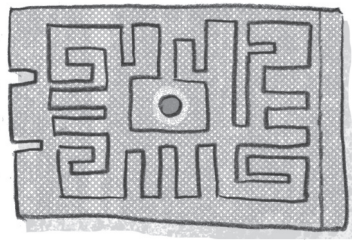
Questival was every young knight's first taste of questing in the great outdoors. For one wonderful weekend, they could camp under the stars and try out skills like



shield-wielding,



axe-throwing,



maze-solving



and flame-dodging.

Grace Wonder couldn't wait to get stuck in.

'Can you believe we're actually going?' Grace said to her sister, Princess Portia. 'It's so cool that everyone's invited!'

'I thought Dad would *never* agree to let girls join in,' said Portia. 'Let alone everyone else as well.'

Portia was busy tying her sleeping bag to Sprinkles's saddle. Her beautifully turned-out unicorn stood perfectly still while she tightened the buckles and straps. 'I hope we get enough time to try all the different challenges,' she said.

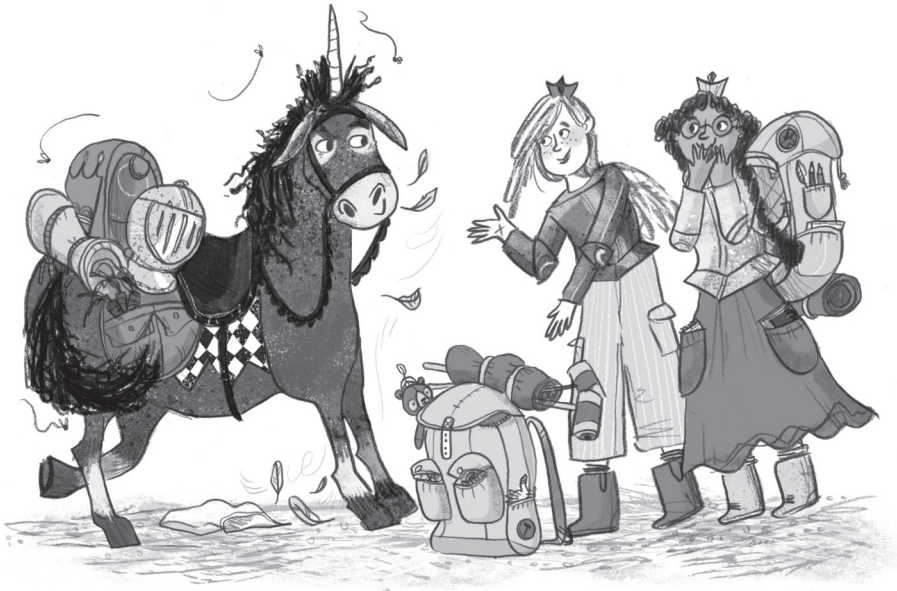
'*I* hope we have enough time to do them *twice*,' Grace said. 'Although if Poop gets his way, I won't be doing any at all …'

Her bad-tempered unicorn was in no mood to go camping. He refused to stand still,

bucked off the pillow she'd managed to tie to his saddle, then deliberately trod on her foot.

Grace wasn't bothered. She knew just how to get him to behave. 'I do hope Poop stays here all weekend,' she said, deliberately ignoring him. 'It will really annoy me if he comes along.'

Poop's ears pricked and a mischievous look lit up his face. He picked up Grace's backpack in his teeth and stomped his hoof on the cobbles, suddenly eager to get going.



Grace grinned. 'Let's try and get there early,' she said to Portia. 'I want to do my favourite quests at least three times!'

'Now, now, girls,' said Taffy Trafalgar, the girls' tutor, waddling towards them. The old troll wagged a furry finger at Grace. **'It's not about *how many* quests you undertake, it's about *how well you perform them*!'**

'Quite right, Taffy,' said King Wonder, following close behind.

The girls' father was still wearing his robe and pyjamas, sipping hot chocolate from a mug emblazoned, **REALM'S BEST DAD**. 'Questival is always a big deal, and this year it's more important than ever,' he said, casting a proud eye over the bustling courtyard.

‘The first-ever open-to-all Questival,’ said Taffy, hopping excitedly from one rabbity foot to another. ‘Now, every young knight, goblin and boggart can try their hand at questing!’

‘With more people learning more skills, Wondermere will be stronger than ever,’ the king agreed.

‘Right,’ said Grace absent-mindedly. In truth, she was worrying about Dennis. She couldn’t wait to go camping; she only wished she didn’t have to leave her baby dragon behind.

Grace had recently rescued his egg from the bottom of the castle moat. She’d taken care of him after he hatched, before returning him to the safety of his parents’ nest. Since then, Dennis had visited Grace every day. They’d formed an unbreakable bond.

Grace's imp friend, Bram Bramwell, was in the moat with Dennis right now, playing fetch with the cheeky little dragon. Bram had turned himself into an oversized rubber duck for the occasion, the better to cope with Dennis's enthusiastic splashing.

'I hope he'll be all right,' Grace said quietly.

'Which one?' Taffy chuckled. 'The dragon or the duck?'

'They'll *both* be fine,' said Portia firmly, giving her sister a quick hug. 'We're only away for two nights. Besides, they're *both* having a great time.'

The imp waved a rubber wing at the girls and smiled broadly, before – **CLAP!** – turning himself into a canoe.

'Bram and Dennis will be just dandy,' said King Wonder. 'But who'll look after *you*? It feels like only yesterday you were tiny tots. Climbing the turrets, sliding down bannisters, swinging from the chandeliers …'

'We *did* do all of that yesterday,' Grace laughed. Her father's eyebrows shot up in concern.

'I could always go with them, sire?' Taffy suggested. 'I daresay Ross Rigglebottom and his team of trolls could use some extra help supervising the young campers …'

'Thanks, Taffy, but we can look after ourselves,' Portia said quickly.

'You've said it yourself, Dad,' Grace added, 'we're two of your most capable knights.'

The king looked uncertain. 'Have you both packed plenty of clean Under-Wonders?'

‘Of course,’ Grace said. ‘You really don’t need to worry. Besides, Portia’s read every book about Questival ever written.’

‘I’ve packed them all, too,’ said Portia, patting a bulging bag strapped to Sprinkles’s back.

‘And you’ve remembered your best mallets?’ their father asked.

‘Grace was top goal scorer in the troll-o league this season,’ Portia said. ‘Do you honestly think she’d forget to pack her mallet?’

‘I even packed a spare,’ Grace said proudly. ‘I’m aiming for top marks in the mallet-swinging quest!’

‘Questival’s not all fun and games, you know,’ said Taffy, peering at her over the top of his little round glasses. ‘It’s an

important part of Wondermerian culture!'

'There will be young people at Questival who don't know how knights ought to conduct themselves,' the king said. 'I'm relying on you two to set a good example.'

'We will,' Portia said, holding her hand to her chest. 'Knight's honour.'

'We'll be *awesome* at Questival,' Grace agreed. 'I *really* want to win the Golden Plume!'

'Ah, the Golden Plume,' King Wonder said wistfully. 'I wish *I'd* managed to win it when *I* went. I was desperate to be the best performing knight, but I just couldn't get the hang of bog-snorkelling.'

'Your father might still be in that bog if Sir Gregory hadn't pulled him out,' said Taffy seriously.

'I could've done it myself, given half a chance,' said King Wonder, blushing.

Grace frowned. 'Who's *Sir Gregory*?'

'Alas, that remains a mystery,' sighed the king. 'No one knew anything about him before he appeared at Questival and wowed everybody – and no one's seen him since.'



‘No one even knows what he looks like,’ said Taffy. ‘He never once removed his helmet. But he was a magnificent competitor.’

‘Which just proves that absolutely *anything* can happen,’ said the king briskly. ‘The winner could surprise us all. **Knights need all sorts of qualities to triumph …**’

Grace wasn’t sure about that. No one else stood a chance! She was sure to ace Questival, proving once and for all that she was more than just a girl and a princess – and an adopted one at that. She was also the realm’s best knight.

She sighed happily as she pictured herself riding home to Wondermere Castle, the Golden Plume proudly fluttering on top

of her helmet, and Poop nibbling her trousers …

'Nibbling my trousers?! Wait, what … ?' Grace's daydream evaporated as Poop sank his teeth into her bottom.

'OUCH, Poop!' she said, pushing his nose away. He gave a sulky snort and stuck out his lower lip.

'Cheer up, you big grump,' Grace said, heaving herself into the saddle. 'As soon as we're there, I'll give you a whole bag of roasted hazel gums.'

That did it. At the mention of his favourite treat, Poop broke into a trot. Portia followed on Sprinkles, with King Wonder and Taffy jogging alongside to keep up.

'You're sure you know the way?' the king asked, slopping hot chocolate from his mug.

'Through the forest, just beyond the market,' Portia said.

'Relax, Dad,' Grace said, rolling her eyes. 'We've checked the map a hundred times.'

'I can't wait to get to Pixie Pastures,' said Portia happily. 'It'll be great to see so many pixies on their home turf!'

'It's very good of them to welcome so many extra campers this year,' said Taffy, bouncing along. 'Be sure to treat their home with respect!'

'We will,' Grace promised. 'So long, Taffy! Bye, Dad! See you in a few days!'

'Good luck, girls,' said Taffy, waving as they passed through the castle gates. 'May your heads be blessed with the dung of a thousand dragons!'

'A thousand and *one*,' King Wonder called

after them, wiping a tear from his eye.

Grace couldn't keep the smile from her face. She was *actually going to Questival*!

'Giddy-up, Poop,' she said as they trotted into the forest. 'We have a Golden Plume to win!'