
The
WEATHERWELL
VASHTI HARDY
With illustrations by
Natalie Smillie

The Weather Well



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Barrington Stoke

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For the fabulous Egremont Primary
Griffin wardens

CONTENTS

1	A Sticky Situation	1
2	Oakwell	11
3	Thunder Snow	21
4	The Trail	32
5	Riley	44
6	The Weather Machine	54
7	Back to the Gate	62
8	Fighting Weather with Weather	71
9	Together	77
10	Back on Track	84
11	All is “Well”	96

1

A Sticky Situation



Tools and gadgets covered the floor of the Griffin map room.

"Hold still, Watson," said Grace. The robot raven was perched on the web-blaster Grace was working on. She had invented it to catch criminals in a safe and easy way. The only problem was that she'd been working on it for a month, and it still didn't fire correctly.

Grace frowned, looking at the web-blaster through her magnifying goggles. "There has to be a reason it's not working," she said. Sweat

trickled down her brow. It was the hottest July on record in Copperport, and the heat was making it hard to concentrate.

Beside Grace, Tom was stitching a small battery into the material of some gloves.

"Let me finish connecting this pair of self-heating gloves, then I'll help," he said.

"Why are you inventing self-heating gloves in the height of summer, Tom?" Grace asked, giving him a surprised glance. "It's a zillion degrees out there."

"I've wanted to finish them for a while, and it won't be summer for ever," Tom replied. "These gloves will come in very handy on winter calls."

"How about inventing an ice-cream machine instead?" suggested Grace. She unscrewed a bolt on the web-blaster and wondered if she

should get changed into her swimsuit to be cooler.

"I agree with Tom. It's good to be prepared," Watson said, nodding with approval in Tom's direction.

"Well, you're a robot, so you don't feel temperature," Grace said. "You have no idea what it's like to melt."

"Grace, you're hardly melting with seven fans in the room," Watson retorted.

"Seven hundred fans would be better. For once I hope we don't get any calls today because I can't bear the thought of putting on a warden suit."

"I've finished the gloves," said Tom. "What do you think's the problem with your web-blaster?"

“There’s something going on with the trigger here.” Grace tapped it with her screwdriver.

“Ah, look, it’s just a loose spring,” said Tom. “If you pop it back into place, it should—”

“I see it!” Grace said. She wasted no time and replaced the spring. The machine pinged and the trigger released, launching Watson across the room followed by a white tangle of web. He landed with a splat on the portrait of Great Grandma Griffin, covered in sticky web.

Grace clasped her hand to her mouth. “Oops! Sorry, Watson,” she said.

“A little warning would have been nice,” Watson muttered in a muffled voice.

Grace’s mum, Ann Griffin, breezed into the map room with a tray of frozen lollies and rattling iced drinks. She was closely followed by Bren, Grace’s brother.

"Urgh, this heat is horrible," said Bren. "Can't we teleport to the frozen north to go ice skating?"



"Then who would mind the map?" said Mum. "I thought we could all do with these." She offered the lollies to the three young wardens. Then she noticed Watson and released him from the web, peeling it away from the picture frame. "Be careful of Great Grandma Griffin, Watson."

"Yes, Watson, you really should be more careful," said Grace with a wink, stuffing an ice lolly in her mouth.

"Pah! Cheeky," said Watson, plucking sticky web from his feathers.

Great Grandma Griffin was the inventor of the famous Griffin map. It had teleporting technology and was used when the people of Moreland sent calls for help. When a call came in, one of the map's many electrical gates would flash. The Griffin family, who were the wardens of the map, could then teleport into the map and travel anywhere in Moreland to assist.

"I see you got the web-blaster working," said Bren.

Mum sat in a chair beside the great Griffin map and fanned herself with her notebook. "Good job, wardens," she said. Then Mum looked to the map, where one of the gates had started flashing sapphire-blue.

"There's a call coming in from Oakwell."

Grace's eyes lit up. "Oakwell?" she said.

"I'll go," said Bren.

"No!" blurted Grace.

Tom glanced at Grace and Bren with surprise. They both seemed overly keen. "I thought you said it was too hot to take a call," Tom said.

"It's just that we've not been to Oakwell in a couple of years, and they have the best seasonal markets!" said Grace.

“Indeed,” said Watson, flying to her. “Isn’t it their annual summer market about now?”

“Yes, I think you’re right,” said Grace. “And the ice cream there is amazing!”

“But you’ve just had a lolly,” said Bren.

“I need all of the ice cream in Moreland to cope with this weather!” said Grace.

“All right, you and Tom can take the call,” said Mum. “But make sure you’ve completed your warden duties in Oakwell before you head to the market.”

“Of course,” said Grace.

“Bren, you can stay here and help me,” Mum said.

“Fine by me. It’s too hot to move. Or I might sneak off and search for an ice rink! Just imagine gliding in the cool air.” Bren sighed.

Grace and Tom hurried towards the map.

"Yes, you stay here dreaming of ice skating, and we'll go and do the real work," Grace teased Bren.

Mum cleared her throat. "Er, put your uniforms on, please."

"But it's roasting!" Grace complained.

"Shorts and T-shirts are not regulation," Mum replied. "We have a reputation to uphold. Plus, you don't know what tools you'll need."

Grace pulled her brown jumpsuit over her summer clothes. The Griffin golden gate logo glimmered on the chest pocket. The many pockets in the jumpsuit were filled with tools to help her in her warden duties. She put the newly working web-blaster in her backpack as it was too big for any of her pockets.

Tom put his notebook and a re-compass in one of his pockets. The re-compass was a small device that would teleport them back home after they'd solved the problem.

Grace jotted their destination on the pad next to the map and Watson flew to her shoulder. She took Tom's hand and reached for the gate in the north of Moreland marked "Oakwell".

In an instant they were surrounded by bright blue crackling light. Their bodies felt as if they were being pulled in many directions as they teleported into the map.