

A conversation with
**MICHELLE
KNUDSEN**

author of

**THE
DRAGON
OF TRELIAN**



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What inspired you to make the transition from picture books to middle-grade fiction?

I've wanted to write fantasy novels ever since I fell in love with them as a young reader. I don't think of it as a transition. I'm still writing picture books and other kinds of stories, too, but there is a special kind of pleasure involved in working on a novel. I loved getting to spend so much time in the world of this novel, getting to know the characters and figuring out what was going to happen. It was definitely a challenge for me, though. It took me a long time to write the first draft, and there was a lot for me to learn along the way.



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What attracted you to writing fantasy for children?

Many of the books that I loved most growing up were fantasy novels. Middle-grade years can be hard for kids sometimes, and whenever I needed to escape for a while, there were places I could go to in my favorite books, and characters who became like friends to me. I didn't want to read about "real life" at those times. I wanted to be somewhere else, where there was magic and adventure and whole worlds that were new and different and exciting. Now when I think of story ideas, I usually find myself writing things that my middle-grade self would have wanted to read. I hope my stories will appeal to kids today who want to visit other worlds the way I did. (And still do — I still read more fantasy and science fiction than anything else.)



*Are any of the characters in **The Dragon of Trelian** based on people you know?*

Nope. I'm not sure where my characters come from exactly, but I don't think I have ever based a character on someone from real life. Not consciously, at least!

Is there anything especially challenging about writing fantasy as compared to other genres?

World-building can be a complicated business. I'm the kind of writer who likes to jump into a story early and figure things out as I go along, but when you're making up a whole world, you've got to be careful to keep track of everything! There was a point in the revision process where I had to go back and figure out significant events that had happened hundreds of years earlier, because I knew they would have an impact on the current events of the novel, and I had to make sure the timing and history all worked out.

*What would you like readers to take away from **The Dragon of Trelian** after they've read it?*

A burning desire to turn back to the first page and read it again!

Is there a follow-up planned?

Yes! I'm working right now on trying to figure out the details for a sequel. There is definitely some unfinished business in Trelian, and I'm excited to get back there and spend some more time with Meg and Calen and everyone else. I hope readers will be, too!