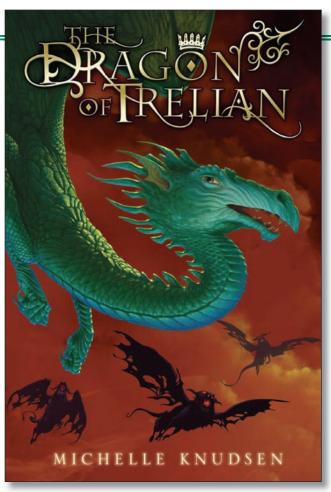
A conversation with

MICHELLE KNUDSEN

author of





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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.



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!

