Buckle and Squash and the Monstrous Moat-Dragon

Lavender and Eliza live with their Grandma at Old Tumbledown Farm in the Middle of Nowhere?. Both sisters dream of escaping their mundane lives. Lavender loves fairy tales and dreams of being rescued by a Prince and living happily ever after; Eliza of adventures in distant lands vanquishing monsters and dragons. When Lavender decides to set off in search of her prince in the Forest of Toothy, Vicious and Flatulent Dragons she finds more than she bargained for, and Eliza is thrust into the middle of an adventure when she goes to her sister?s rescue. After both sisters are captured they put their heads together to find a clever way to escape their evil captor. Grandma?s obsession with the Black Death comes in handy here with an escape plan involving turnip soup, stick on beauty spots and a bag of flour.

We meet a host of characters in this story, including villainous, self indulgent Prince Mordmont with warts and a crumpled pink dressing gown, three wool obsessed wizards, a witch called Boris with dodgy knees, a long suffering goat called Gertrude, the smallest giant in the kingdom and quite a few dragons as well. This quirky adventure story is told at a lively pace. It is a humorous read, full of word play and literalist humour ?They came to a fork in the path which was confusing and then a spoon in the path which was even stranger?. There are asides to the reader from the narrator and Sidney the Tree. Visual jokes in the illustrations are used effectively as well; the scullery at Prince Mordment?s castle is full of ?skulls!

The title Buckle and Squash comes from wording on a coat of arms painted on a dusty old box in their bedroom. Maybe they really are a noble family? Only their long lost Grandpa can answer this question. The ending suggests there will be more adventures in store for Lavender and Eliza very soon; perhaps their next adventure will involve a search for Grandpa?

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