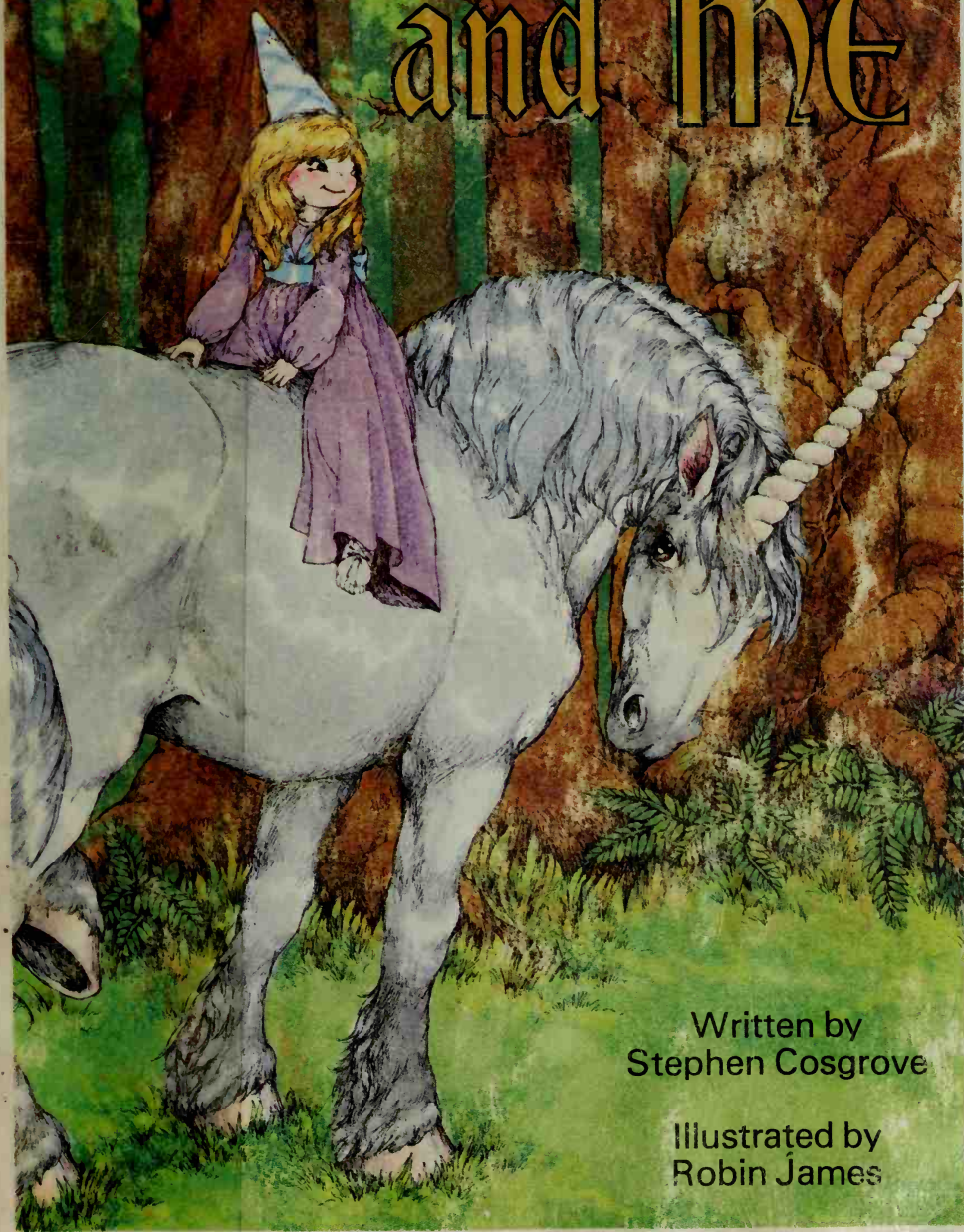


MORGAN and ME



Written by
Stephen Cosgrove

Illustrated by
Robin James

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Dedicated to Robin James and
Morgan, her horse, who I hope will
always live in The Land of Later . . .

Do you ever lie on your back and gaze at the sky, wishing you were something other than you are?

In a far corner of The Land of Later, there was a beautiful princess who was always dreaming of being someone other than herself. When her chores in the castle were to be done, she could be found lying on her back, dreaming of paupers, princesses and dew drops.

She would dream she was a pauper . . . for she was. She would dream she was a princess . . . for she was. And she would dream she was a dew drop, but she really wasn't a dew drop.



One day as she was watching the clouds puff and billow across the sky, her father shouted at her from the castle, "I've told you before to clean your room. Now I find you've done nothing all day but dream!"

"I'll be there in a minute," she shouted, but instead of minding her father, she decided to take a walk in the woods.

"I don't need to clean up my room right now," she thought as she walked along the path. "I'll do it . . . but just a little later."



She walked deeper and deeper into the forest. The trees made a beautiful canopy over her head. The moss at her feet felt like a velvet carpet.

“I should go back before I get lost. I’ll go back . . . but just a little later.” She walked on and on into the forest.

“I should find something to eat, for I am so very hungry. I’ll look for food . . . but just a little later.”



The forest became darker, and the path became twisted and gnarled. Brambles were tearing at her clothing, but the little princess knew the path must be prettier up ahead. Besides, she could always turn around and go back later. As she walked farther, the dark shadows began closing in around her.



After what had seemed hours and hours of walking, she saw a glimmer of sunlight streaking through the branches. "That must be a meadow," she said. With that, she hurried through the stickers and darkness to the sunlight ahead.



Happily she stepped into the clearing. "What a beautiful meadow!" she thought. "There are flowers growing in every corner. And the clover . . . just smell the clover!"

The princess was absolutely delighted. Never had she seen anything quite so beautiful. She was still hungry and she knew she had to get home. But she could always do that . . . just a little later.



She was having so much fun that she had run around the meadow nearly four times before she noticed a large shape leaning against a tree. She stopped and looked. Standing next to the tree was the largest unicorn she had ever seen.

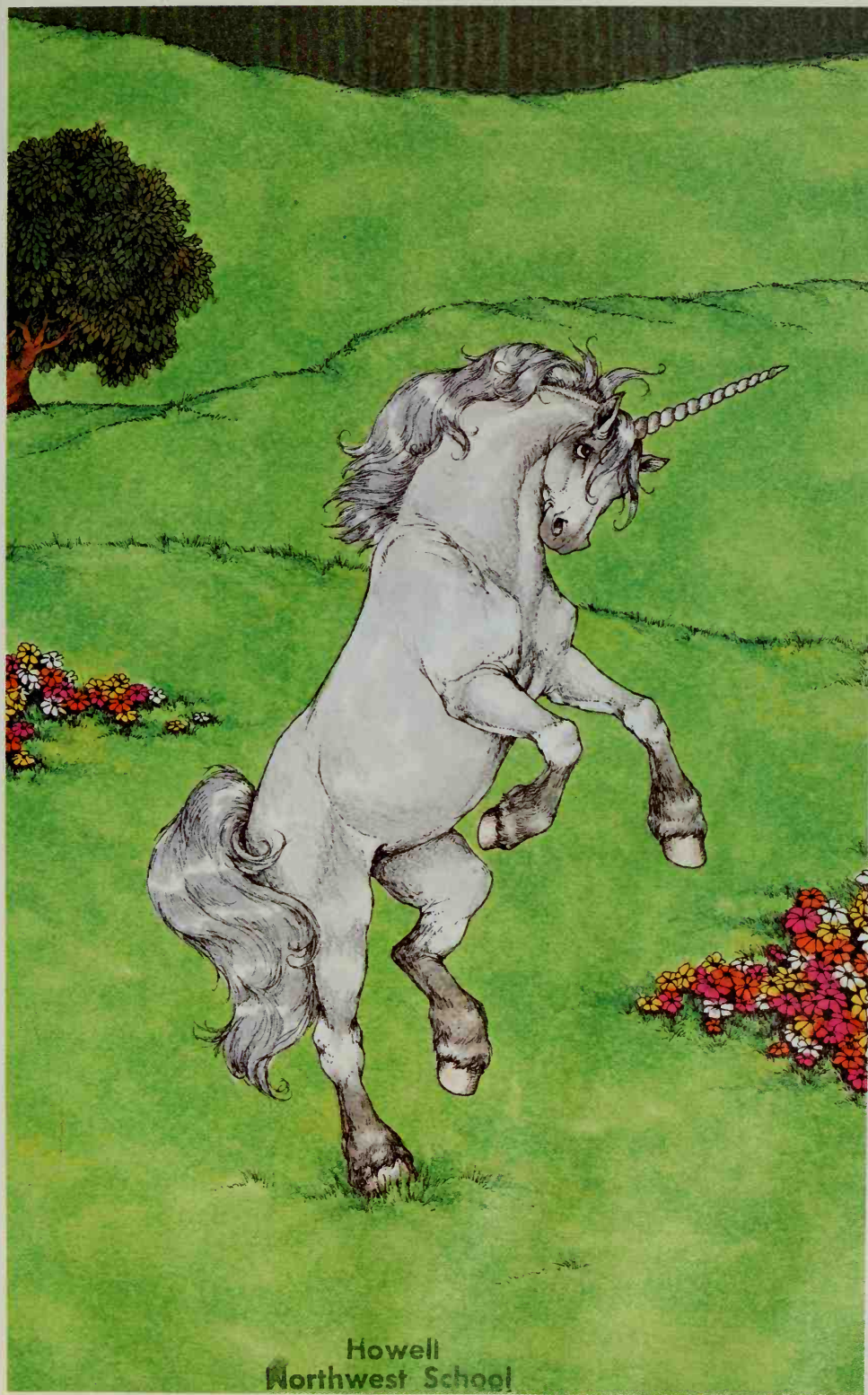
The princess was a little frightened. She had always loved horses, zebras and giraffes, and a unicorn was much like a horse. Boldly she walked right up to him and asked, "Why are you standing there, Mr. Unicorn?" Then she noticed that the unicorn's beautiful pearl horn was caught in a branch of the tree.

"My name is Morgan," he said, "and if you have a moment, I will tell you my tale."



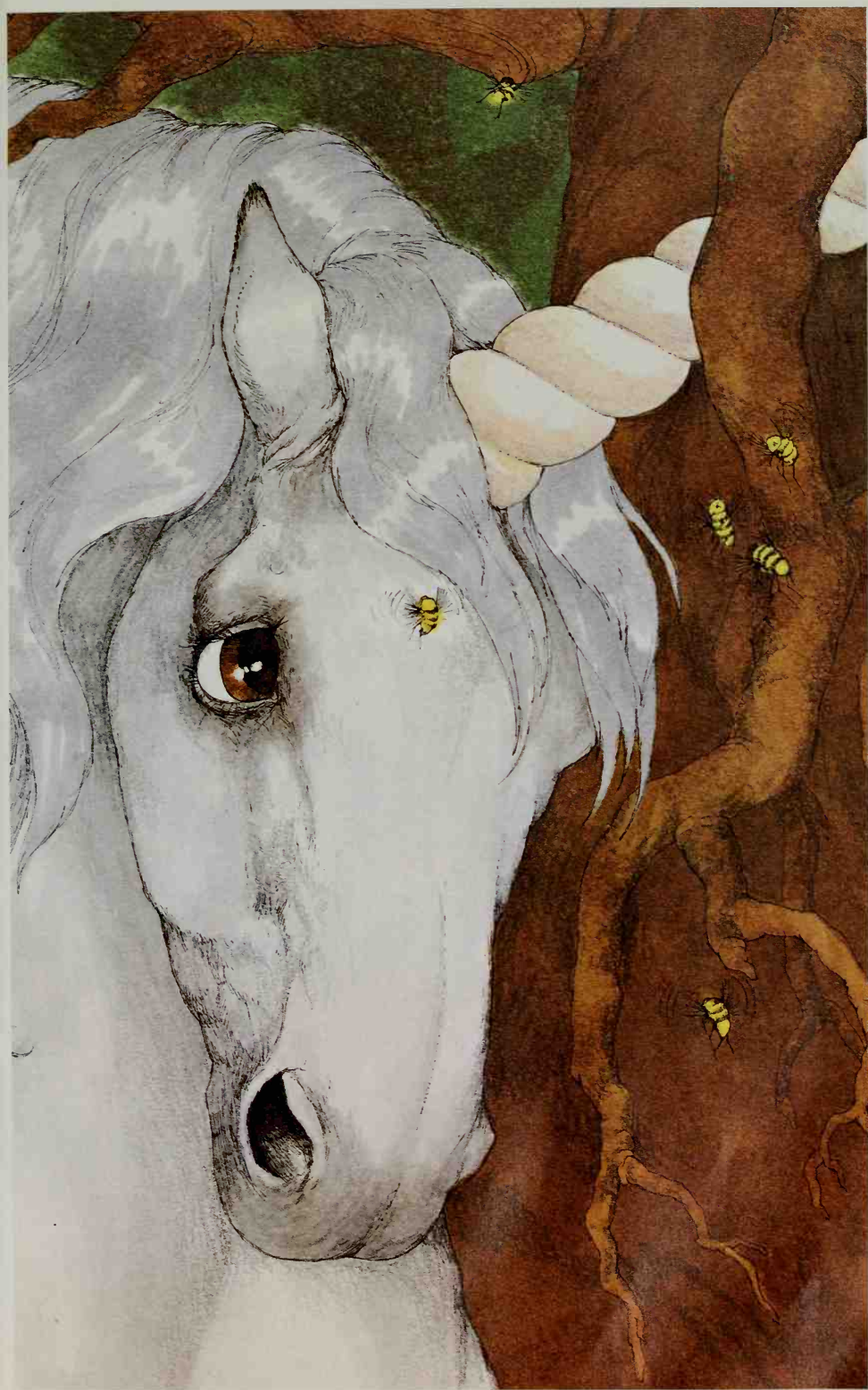
It seems that Morgan was a fun-loving and playful unicorn. Day after day he would play tag with the bumblebees in the meadow. One day as he was frisking about, trying to catch a bumblebee, one landed right on his horn. Morgan was shocked at having the bumblebee so close and he looked up to see what it was doing.

Now, we all know that if we don't watch where we're going, we'll run into something. Sure enough, Morgan ran right into the tree and stuck his horn into the branch.



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Desperately the bumblebees gathered around and tried to set Morgan free. But it was to no avail. Morgan was left all alone in the shadow of the tree . . . helplessly stuck.



Morgan asked the little princess if she would free him. If she would only help, Morgan promised to be hers for all of his days.

The princess thought for a moment and said, "I'm sorry you got stuck in the tree, Morgan. I know I should help you, and I will . . . but just a little later."



Thoughtlessly the little princess played at her leisure, and when she became bored she decided that she would help Morgan. She found a very thorny rose bush and carefully broke off a branch. Gently she climbed up on Morgan's back, and using the rose branch as a saw, began to cut through the limb. At last Morgan was free.



Morgan was very grateful. Even though the little princess had taken her time, Morgan followed her obediently through the clover.

The little princess was having so much fun that she didn't see the lily pond in the middle of the meadow. Slipping on the bank, she fell headlong into the water. Coughing and sputtering, she crawled onto a lily pad and called for Morgan to help her.

Morgan tossed his mane, smiled a wise smile and said, "I'm sorry you fell into the pond, Princess. I know I should help you and I will . . . but just a little later."

"But I'll catch cold sitting on this lily pad," said the princess. "Won't you please help me now?"



Sadly the princess thought a moment. Then she remembered all the times that her father had asked her to clean her room and she had always put it off until later. She even knew how Morgan must have felt when she told him she'd help him . . . later.

With a tear in her eye and a lump in her throat, she said, "Morgan, I'm sorry for always living in the Land of Later. Please help me. I promise always to do what should be done now, instead of 'just a little later'."

Morgan nodded his head and slowly lowered his great horn so the princess could climb from the water.

Then and forever after, Morgan and the little princess were the closest of close friends.



Now, when the princess and Morgan have finished all their chores, they lie upon the grass and dream of being something other than what they are. They dream of paupers, princesses and dew drops. And sometimes . . . just so he won't scare anybody . . . Morgan doesn't wear his horn.



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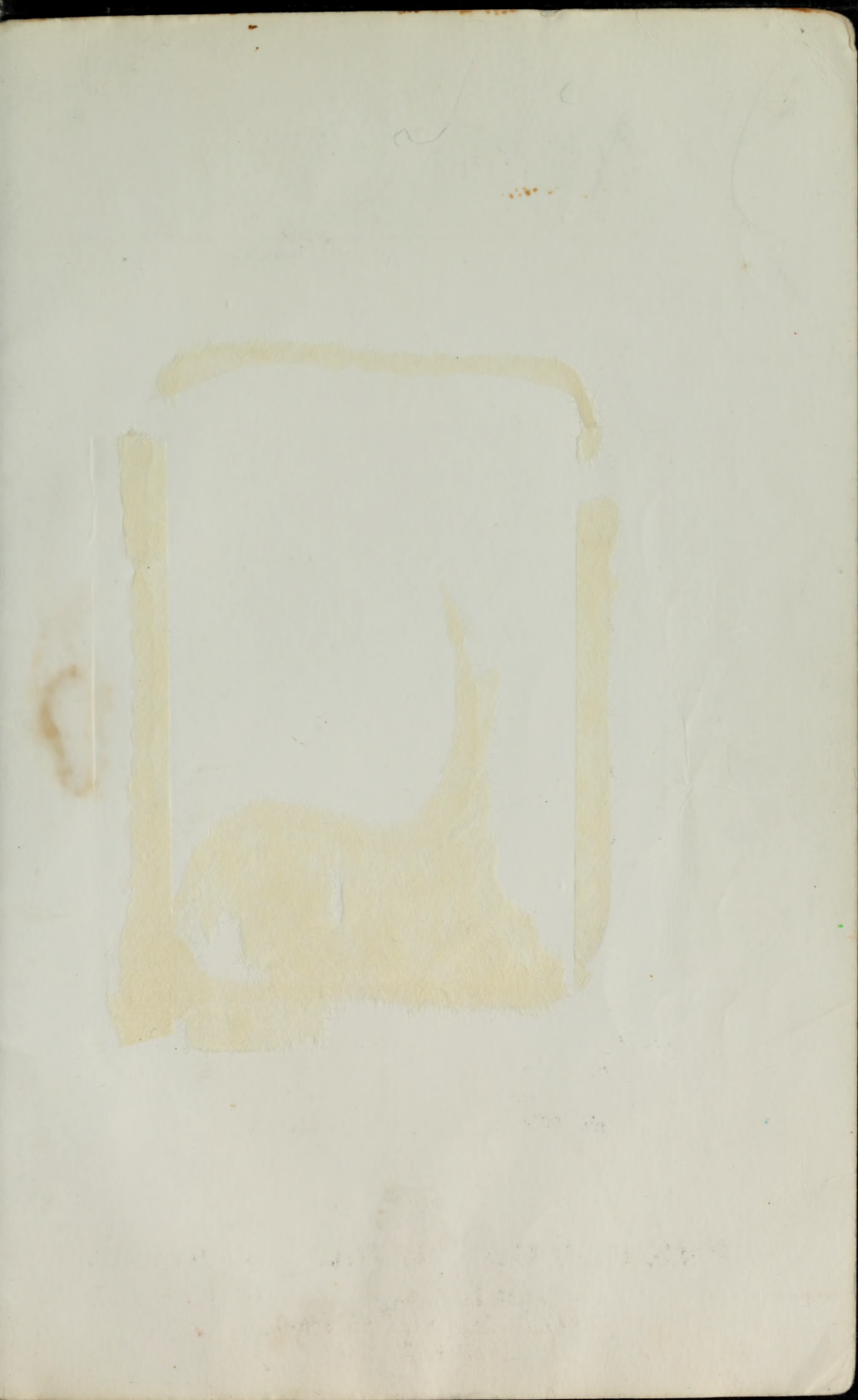
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