



Sabriel (Old Kingdom)

By Garth Nix

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Game of Thrones fans will love the *New York Times* bestselling Abhorsen series. *Sabriel*, the first installment in the trilogy, launched critically acclaimed author Garth Nix onto the fantasy scene as a rising star.

Since childhood, Sabriel has lived outside the walls of the Old Kingdom, away from the power of Free Magic, and away from the Dead who refuse to stay dead. But now her father, the Abhorsen, is missing, and Sabriel must cross into that world to find him. With Mogget, whose feline form hides a powerful, perhaps malevolent spirit, and Touchstone, a young Charter Mage, Sabriel travels deep into the Old Kingdom. There she confronts an evil that threatens much more than her life and comes face-to-face with her own hidden destiny. . . .

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Sabriel (Old Kingdom) By Garth Nix Bibliography

- Rank: #421932 in Books
- Brand: Harper Teen
- Published on: 2008-04-22
- Released on: 2008-04-22
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .76" w x 5.31" l, .66 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 336 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

After receiving a cryptic message from her father, Abhorsen, a necromancer trapped in Death, 18-year-old Sabriel sets off into the Old Kingdom. Fraught with peril and deadly trickery, her journey takes her to a world filled with parasitical spirits, Mordicants, and Shadow Hands. Unlike other necromancers, who raise the dead, Abhorsen lays the disturbed dead back to rest. This obliges him--and now Sabriel, who has taken on her father's title and duties--to slip over the border into the icy river of Death, sometimes battling the evil forces that lurk there, waiting for an opportunity to escape into the realm of the living. Desperate to find her father, and grimly determined to help save the Old Kingdom from destruction by the horrible forces of the evil undead, Sabriel endures almost impossible exhaustion, violent confrontations, and terrifying challenges to her supernatural abilities--and her destiny.

Garth Nix delves deep into the mystical underworld of necromancy, magic, and the monstrous undead. This tale is not for the faint of heart; imbedded in the classic good-versus-evil story line are subplots of grisly ghouls hungry for human life to perpetuate their stay in the world of the living, and dark, devastating secrets of betrayal and loss. Just *try* to put this book down. For more along this line, try Nix's later novel: *Shade's Children*. (Ages 12 and older) --*Emilie Coulter*

From Publishers Weekly

Sabriel is her last year at Wyverley College, a private school in Ancelstierre, where Magic does not work, but near the Border with the Old Kingdom, where it does. She and her father are also highly skilled necromancers, who fight the dead who seek to return to Life. But when her father is somehow trapped in Death, she must journey into the Old Kingdom to find him. She does not know that it is wracked by struggle (like that in Ursula LeGuin's *The Farthest Shore*)-a magician has brought chaos by refusing to die and hopes to use Sabriel and her father to further consolidate his power. Sabriel goes on a long journey throughout a densely imagined world, learning as she goes, and meeting such strange characters as Mogget, a raging natural force contained in the shape of a cat. She also develops a relationship with Touchstone, a young man who turns out to be as crucially involved as she is. Although Sabriel is possessed of much heavy knowledge ("A year ago, I turned the final page of *The Book of the Dead*. I don't feel young any more"), she is still a teenager and vulnerable where her father and love for Touchstone are concerned, making her a sympathetic heroine. Rich, complex, involving, hard to put down, this first novel, an Australian import, is excellent high fantasy. The suitably climactic ending leaves no loose ends, but readers will hope for a sequel. Ages 12-up. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From School Library Journal

Grade 7 Up-From her precarious start in life, fetched back from death by her father, Sabriel's life is fraught with challenges in Garth Nix's compelling but somewhat death-obsessed novel (HarperCollins, 1996). While still a schoolgirl, Sabriel learns that her father, the Abhorsen, whose task it is to keep the dead from escaping from the realm of the dead, is in dire peril or possibly dead. She sets out to rescue him and, in the process, fights terrible beings, finds her love, assumes the role of Abhorsen, and defeats the enemy whose evil threatens the Old Kingdom. Actor Tim Curry's outstanding reading draws every nuance of meaning from the text and gives added dramatic tone to an already sensation rich text. The action-filled story features a strong female who not only takes over her father's work, but in a sleeping beauty type reversal, rouses her young man from an enchanted sleep with a kiss (and a spell). It has much of the clever and often amusing invention that characterizes the Harry Potter books, and would be a good choice for his older fans. The tale requires experience with fantasy, and assumes an audience willing to accept many unexplained elements. Some

listeners may have trouble remembering the individual powers of the seven magic bells which are part of Sabriel's arsenal against the dead-easily referred back to in print, but in audio requiring a real effort of memory. None of this will deter fantasy lovers, who will greatly enjoy this beautifully recorded audiobook.

Louise Sherman, formerly Anna C. Scott School, Leonia, NJ

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Sam Holmes:

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