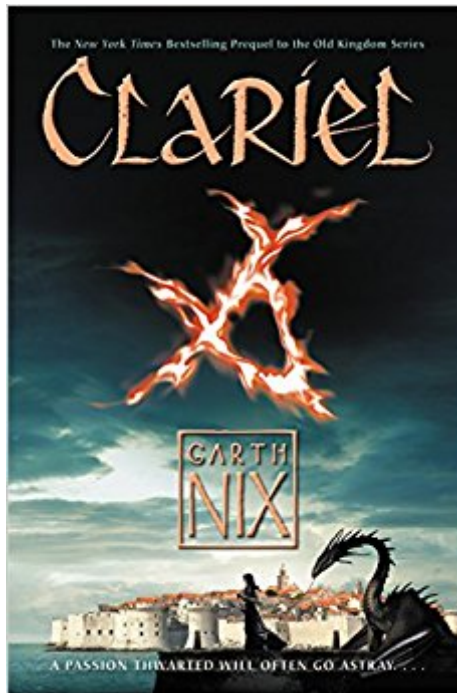




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# Clariel: The Lost Abhorsen (Old Kingdom)



## Synopsis

Award-winning author Garth Nix returns to the Old Kingdom with a thrilling prequel complete with dark magic, royalty, dangerous action, a strong heroine, and flawless world building. This epic fantasy adventure is destined to be a classic and is perfect for fans of Rae Carson, Kristin Cashore, Scott Westerfeld, and Cassandra Clare. Clariel is the daughter of one of the most notable families in the Old Kingdom, with blood relations to the Abhorsen and, most important, to the King. She dreams of living a simple life but discovers this is hard to achieve when a dangerous Free Magic creature is loose in the city, her parents want to marry her off to a killer, and there is a plot brewing against the old and withdrawn King Orrikan. When Clariel is drawn into the efforts to find and capture the creature, she finds hidden sorcery within herself, yet it is magic that carries great dangers. Can she rise above the temptation of power, escape the unwanted marriage, and save the King?

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Between striking characters—from the heroic if not entirely competent young Abhorsen-in-Waiting, Belatiel, to the enigmatic, catlike Mogget—and Nix’s brilliantly complex magic system, this superb tale is exactly the book fans of the series have been awaiting.” (Publishers Weekly (starred review)) “Clariel is a deeply sympathetic character faced with complicated choices, the consequences of which are frighteningly uncertain as she is pulled between the wild Free Magic and the disciplined Charter. A bittersweet story.” (Booklist

(starred review))“Nix pens a compelling character in Clariel while his skill in rendering both politics and magic is strong. This excellent work can be enjoyed independently of the other Old Kingdom novels, but will certainly draw readers to those works.” (School Library Journal (starred review))“Nix’s tale provides a complete experience unto itself. But his focus on this strong character whose overriding passion is to go her own way provides a hugely satisfying background to the other Abhorsen books. A suspenseful prequel to the much-loved Abhorsen books, showcasing the independent Clariel.” (Shelf Awareness (starred review))“Beautifully written, magnificently imagined, and wholly original, Clariel is Garth Nix’s finest work yet.” (Holly Black, New York Times bestselling author of The Coldest Girl in Coldtown)“The old magic returns in this sterling prequel to one of YA’s classic series.” (Scott Westerfeld, New York Times bestselling author of the Uglies series and Afterworlds)“A brilliant return to the Old Kingdom--one of the most exciting and original magical worlds ever devised.” (Alison Goodman, New York Times bestselling author of Eon and Eona)“A thunderstorm of a tale, bitter and brutal but dazzling in its ferocity.” (Kirkus Reviews)“Fans will treasure this long-awaited opportunity to return to a much-loved world, built with as much originality and richness as ever.” (Horn Book Magazine)“Nix fans will surely rejoice at this sharp, gripping prequel to his beloved fantasy trilogy of Sabriel, Lirael and Abhorsen. The beauty of a prequel is that it will not only present unknown scenarios even to the most intense devotees but also pave a path for new fans to dive into the existing trilogy.” (Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books)Praise for SABRIEL: “Sabriel is a winner, a fantasy that reads like realism. Here is a world with the same solidity and four dimensional authority as our own, created with invention, clarity, and intelligence. I congratulate Garth Nix. And I look forward to reading his next piece of work.” (Philip Pullman)Praise for LIRAE: “What makes Lirael a delight is the magic that Nix brings to his story and to his characters.” (Publishers Weekly (starred review))“Riveting.” (Kirkus Reviews (starred review))Praise for ABHORSEN: “Breathtaking, bittersweet, and utterly unforgettable.” (Kirkus Reviews (starred review))

Clariel is the daughter of one of the most notable families in the Old Kingdom, with blood relations to the Abhorsen and, most importantly, to the King. When her family moves to the city of Belisaere, there are rumors that her mother is next in line for the throne. However, Clariel wants no part of it—a natural hunter, all she ever thinks about is escaping the city’s confining walls and

journeying back to the quiet, green world of the Great Forest. But many forces conspire against Clariel's dream. A dangerous Free Magic creature is loose in the city, her parents want to marry her off to a killer, and there is a plot brewing against the old and withdrawn King Orrikan. When Clariel is drawn into the efforts to find and capture the creature, she finds hidden sorcery within herself, yet it is magic that carries great dangers. Can she rise above the temptation of power, escape the unwanted marriage, and save the King? In Clariel, New York Times bestselling author Garth Nix weaves a story that is as rich and compelling as the original Abhorsen novels. Clariel, prelude to the Abhorsen trilogy, is set approximately six hundred years before the birth of Sabriel. Devoted Old Kingdom fans and new readers alike will clamor for this epic fantasy adventure. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Not what I thought I would get. I feel "lost Abhorsen" is kind of a huge lie. I loved it. I thought it was a great addition to the series. I'm just somewhat waiting for her actual story. Spoilers: Where did she go as Chloir? Was she called to become Abhorsen? What happened to her cousin and her uncle and the other people who were in line before her? If she was interested in Free Magic how could she have ever been an Abhorsen? Anyway. Perhaps we'll find out more in Goldenhand when I can get a chance to purchase that.

I enjoyed this book - the setting and characters were very engaging, if very sad. If you like Nix's other works, you will definitely enjoy this, though it definitely reads more as a "side" story instead of a "main" entry in the Abhorsen series. It's been a while since I have read Nix's other books from this world (several years at least) so I had some trouble placing the events of Clariel within the timeline at first. Perhaps that's why I was a little disappointed in Clariel's ultimate fate. \*\*\*\*\*SPOILERS BELOW\*\*\*\*\* She seemed like a very refreshingly different protagonist (a ruthless young woman not interested in romance - perhaps asexual even, her berserk strength, her questioning The Charter vs Free Magic, etc) so I was hopeful that she could somehow redeem herself in the end. Her instead unambiguous fall was exceptionally sad and while it did not feel forced necessarily, I personally left me a bit unfulfilled. I know not all protagonists become heroes or get "happy endings" but it was still rather heart-breaking! It was a little disappointing to see her just devolve into villainy basically on accident and not really of her own will. A young grumpy loner with wild "abnormal" powers turns into a villain? Not exactly the most original twist, but I kept hoping it wouldn't come to pass. It would have been nice to see her succeed despite her screw ups and learn how to coexist with free magic in some significant way - or at least hoped we she would get to her forest and live happily for a

couple of years (maybe she did??) before ultimately succumbing to the temptation of necromancy... I was probably fooling myself, especially with a subtitle like "The Lost Abhorsen" on this book. Again, overall I really enjoyed the story, it's just it's conclusion left me wanting.

When I found out about this book, I couldn't wait to preorder! I've been a Sabriel fan since picking up the series in 8th grade (About 2003 or 2004). I read this one and then reread the rest of the series as well. On to the review of this book though! (Without spoilers) While it didn't go the path I thought it would (No pun intended ;) ), I genuinely loved this book. It gave us some tiny bits of long awaited backstory and connected us to Clariel on a different level from Sabriel or Lirael as Clariel is neither a direct Charter magic user nor a direct Abhorsen. I was personally able to connect to her being trapped in a big city and wanting out, as it reflects this country girl's own plight. I really can't say much else without it being spoiler city, but I honestly loved this book and it'd be a wonderful stand-alone since you wouldn't need to know lore from the 'previous' books since this is a prequel. I enjoyed being able to go further in to the past than Touchstone's memory did and see the city of Belisaere through words and the new map added to the front of the book!

So disappointing. I re-read SABRIEL in anticipation of this, and 14 years from the first time I picked that book up when I was 12, the quality held up as a mature, atmospheric, entertainingly dark fantasy. Unfortunately I realized very quickly into CLARIEL that Garth Nix's writing style has changed - he's spent the past decade or so writing books for children and that's clearly reflected in the pages of CLARIEL. The characters are mostly forgettable, and the protagonist is unlikeable and juvenile. Even Mogget comes off as a shade of his (future) self. Nix tries to make you care about the characters and Clariel's situation but the plot has no urgency - it took me weeks to read due to loss of interest and when I finished, I could barely muster a "so what?". The most tragic thing about this is I know that Nix is capable of so much more, especially with this world he has built.

I happened upon Clariel as I was re-reading the Old Kingdom series on my Kindle. I was excited to have a prequel as I figured that there would be insight on the happenings before Sabriel. I was somewhat surprised as it has quite a bit more gore in it, and is almost entirely missing the "death" theme compared to the sequels. The book also faces more Free magic and less Charter magic. The main character lacks even the slightest change making her completely boring, not to mention that almost 99% of what she says or thinks would be considered complaining. Unlike Sabriel and Lirael whom both "grow into" or "accept" their destiny, Clariel chooses to run instead. It got so bad that I

soon flat out hated her. The book goes nowhere for the first 4/5. I had this feeling that it wasn't going to end and there would be a "to be continued" on the last page. I was really hoping for something less straightforward. To add insult to injury, it becomes immediately clear of the protagonist's future before the book even ends. There are a few characters that are mentioned frequently yet make no-to-little appearance. There's at least one character in the book who Clariel interacts with, but falls off the face of The Old Kingdom. Garth does explore sex more in Clariel, but nothing too graphic or enough to make it uncomfortable, or anything like a romance. Overall, this book did not live up to the standard of The Old Kingdom Trilogy, and would have set me off course had I read this 15 years ago. I rarely discourage anybody from reading a book and this would be no exception, but don't expect it to be anything glamorous.

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