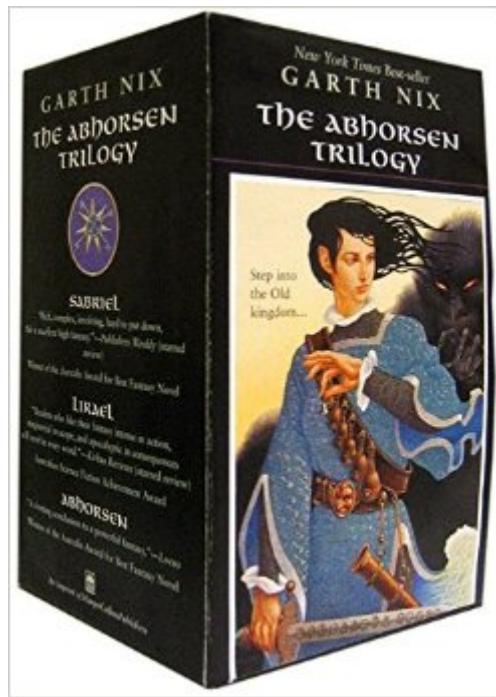


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The Abhorsen Trilogy Box Set



Synopsis

To preserve life, the Abhorsen must enter Death

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Garth Nix delves into the dark heart of high fantasy in the Abhorsen Trilogy, three interconnected fantasies about a family of necromancers who lay the dead -- and forces of evil -- to rest. Humour, detailed writing and deep characters, along with a richly-realized world, make this a classic-in-the-making. "Sabriel" is the story of a teenage girl living happily at a girl's school, while her necromancer father (the Abhorsen) roams around putting the dead to rest. All that changes when a sending brings her father's sword and bells, meaning that he is dead or incapacitated. So Sabriel takes on her father's duties, accompanied by a Free Magic cat and a mysterious young prince, and battles the specter of a horrible evil creature that is reaching out from death to snare her. "Lirael" takes us to the cold citadel of the Clayr, a race of seers. Young Lirael is depressed because she doesn't have the gift of Sight yet, even though everybody else her age does. But things take a sinister turn when she sets a horrifying, bloodthirsty creature loose, and must work -- with the help of the mysterious Disreputable Dog -- to get rid of it. But what Lirael doesn't know is that the outside world is in danger too, from a sinister new enemy. "Abhorsen" brings the series to an explosive conclusion. Lirael and her nephew Sameth -- along with "cat" Mogget and the Disreputable Dog -- are in danger from the Dead. What's more, the Destroyer Orannis has escaped from his prison and is being assisted by an evil necromancer and the Dead called Chlorr -- and an unfortunate pal of Sameth's. Now Lirael must call on her destiny as the future Abhorsen, and kill the Destroyer.

For those of you who feel that dragons, unicorns, and bards are a bit overdone nowadays, this fantasy trilogy offers up a heroine who binds the dead with a bandolier of bells. The Geography of Death is lovingly delineated, from the prologue where Sabriel is born and dies and is rescued from the First Gate of Death by her father, to the third book in the trilogy, where the new Abhorsen braves Death in the form of a river, a waterfall, pools of black water, strange currents that suck the spirit from the flesh. Sabriel herself is an English schoolgirl, recently graduated from Wyverley Academy with a "first in English, equal first in Music, third in Mathematics, seventh in Science, second in Fighting Arts and fourth in Etiquette. She had also been a runaway first in Magic..." A visitation from the Dead sends Sabriel on a quest through the magical Old Kingdom, in order to reunite her father's body with his spirit which is trapped within the Fourth Gate of Death. She has to do battle with a really nasty necromancer-Adept, and rescue a prince who is a bit of a figurehead at first but who finally develops into a memorable character in his own right. Sabriel is both helped and hindered by a very non-cuddly cat named Mogget. "Lirael" is the middle book this remarkable fantasy series. If I ever die and go to fantasy heaven, I hope it resembles Nix's immense library beneath glacier and mountain, where each door opens into a separate mystery. In the catacombs beneath the library, Lirael discovers how to turn herself into an ice otter or a barking owl, reads "The Book of Remembrance and Forgetting", and duels with the monstrous Stilken. However, "Lirael" isn't just about Lirael.

As in "Sabriel" and "Lirael," Death is a riverine chasm from which the dead can be called back to the living by powerful necromancers. Only the Abhorsen (Sabriel) or the Abhorsen-in-waiting (Lirael) can pass from life into the river of Death, through the eight Gates of fog, whirlpools, waterfalls, and shadow, and do magical combat with the necromancers in their own dark realm... Well, the Disreputable Dog can splash into Death, too and in "Abhorsen" you'll find out who she really is, along with Mogget the bad-tempered cat (who reminds me of some of the grouchier Jack Lemon characters). "Abhorsen" is a worthy conclusion to Nix's Old Kingdom trilogy. Read "Sabriel" and "Lirael" before undertaking "Abhorsen," so that you can familiarize yourself with the Philosophy and Geography of Death. Nix isn't into summarization or repetition. He plunges his reader right into a whirlpool of death, animated corpses, and Charter magic. If you don't already know such characters as the Disreputable Dog, the necromancer Hedge, or his bone-headed companion, Nick, you might never figure out what's going on. This book is a direct continuation of "Lirael," with the ex-assistant librarian and her companion, Prince Sameth carrying on the battle against Hedge and the evil he is

digging up at Red Lake. Although Prince Sameth was meant to be the Abhorsen-in-Waiting, heir to the powers of 'The Book of the Dead' and the seven bells, Lirael now takes up that role, and Sam seeks his destiny as a descendant of the mysterious Wallmakers, who built the barrier between the magical Old Kingdom and the mundane kingdom of Ancelstierre. The two will need all of the magic they can conjure up against an enemy that threatens not only the Charter, but all living beings.

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