



***We Do Not Welcome Our
Ten-Year-Old Overlord***

by Garth Nix

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The Story

It's not fair. Kim's always lived in the shadow of his younger sister, Eila—which is not how it's supposed to be. Everyone talks about how smart Eila is . . . but, in Kim's eyes, she can still make mistakes. Big mistakes.

One day, Kim and Eila find an otherworldly object floating in a lake. Kim thinks it's bad news . . . especially when it communicates with Eila, and she decides to take it home. Soon she is calling it her friend, and in return it's giving her awesome powers over insects, animals, the weather, and . . . more.

These are powers no one should have—particularly not a ten-year-old girl who thinks she's always right. What can Kim and his group of gamer friends do against someone like that? And should they even try? Maybe Eila is right, and the entity is a friend.

Reading Group Questions

1. What would you have done if you'd found a floating object like Kim and Eila did? Would you have run away like Kim or taken it home like Eila? Why?
2. If you suddenly had the power to manipulate animals and people, what would you do with that power? Is there a line you wouldn't cross when using it?
3. Kim and his friends love playing Dungeons & Dragons. What kind of character would you choose to play if you were playing with them? Would you prefer to be the Dungeon Master, telling the story, or one of the players, following the story?
4. What do Kim and Eila learn in the end about having inhuman powers?
5. After reading the book, what do you think the title means?

About the Author



Photo © Garth Nix

Garth Nix is the bestselling author of many beloved novels and series, including the Old Kingdom series (starting with *Sabriel*), the Keys to the Kingdom series, *The Left-Handed Booksellers of London*, and *Frogkisser!* He lives in New South Wales, Australia. You can find out more about him at garthnix.com.

Author Q&A

I believe the opening scene of the book comes from you own experience believing a floating object to be something other than what it really was. Care to explain?

The opening scene is indeed inspired by a time when some friends and I were riding our bikes in the late evening, down by Lake Burley Griffin in my hometown, Canberra. The sun had set, but the light was lingering, and in that twilight we thought we saw something in the water. We didn't have flashlights or anything (this was decades before mobile phones) and in the dim light it looked like a severed head, with hair trailing behind it. After a lot of talking about who should go and see what it was, we agreed we would all wade in together to take a look. It turned out to be a rock with lakeweed wrapped around it, like hair, but it really looked like a head until we got up very close!

Among other things, this novel is a tribute to the glory of playing Dungeons & Dragons when you're a kid. How do you think D&D has helped with your own storytelling?

Being the DM of a D&D campaign from the age of twelve or so to eighteen, playing almost every week, was a tremendous apprenticeship in being a writer, in creating stories. Roleplaying games are about making a story *together*, but the DM has a key role in preparing the framework and bringing together everyone's contributions to create a satisfying narrative. It's not the same as writing fiction—if it was, the players would get very cross at not being able to make their own decisions—but it is very closely related and it is great training for how stories begin and how they work. Or not.

What are some of the books that you experienced as a young reader that inspired this book?

So many books have influenced my writing! This particular book I think owes something to the British writer Nicholas Fisk, who is sadly not much remembered these days, particularly *Grinny and Trillions*, Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*, and because, among other things, there is a sailing adventure on a lake, Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons*.

What advice do you have for young writers?

I give the same advice to young writers as to old ones! Read a lot, and read widely, both fiction and nonfiction of all kinds and genres. Write a lot. Again, it doesn't matter what kind of writing it is, it all helps you learn the craft and improve your skills. Try and complete things, because a finished poem, story, article, four page comic, role-playing scenario, entire novel, whatever it is, if it's finished you can do something with it, get it published, self publish it, share it with friends. Finished doesn't mean perfect, just complete in itself for now. And never give up. If you're serious about being a writer, the more you write, the more chances you will have for something to happen with your work.