

We Do Not Welcome Our Ten-Year-Old Overlord

By Garth Nix



From master storyteller Garth Nix comes the thrilling tale of a strange object with the potential to destroy the world, and what happens when it falls into the wrong hands. Perfect for fans of *Stranger Things*.

RECOMMENDED FOR

9–13 (Upper Primary and Lower Secondary)

THEMES

Dungeons & Dragons, aliens, science-fiction, speculative fiction, fantasy

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SYNOPSIS

All Kim wants to do is play Dungeons & Dragons with his friends and ride his bike around the local lake. But he has always lived in the shadow of his younger sister. Eila is a prodigy, and everyone talks about how smart she is, though in Kim's eyes, she has no common sense. So when Eila finds an enigmatic, otherworldly globe which gives her astonishing powers, Kim not only has to save his sister from herself, he might also have to save the world from his sister!

With his trademark creeping menace and a strong sense of 1970s nostalgia, bestselling fantasy author Garth Nix (*Sabriel, Mister Monday, The Left-Handed Booksellers of London*) has expertly crafted this pacy and exciting standalone middle-grade novel.

AUTHOR MOTIVATION

In a sense, this book began a very long time ago on a summer evening in Canberra, when I was out cycling with friends and we saw what we thought was a severed head in the shallow water of the lake, near where Canberra Hospital was (now the National Museum). On investigation, it turned out to be a rock and lake weed, not a strange visitor, and we were older than the characters in this story, being sixteen or seventeen. But the seed was sown.

I played a lot of Dungeons and Dragons as a child in the 1970s and ran a campaign from the ages of thirteen to eighteen for several friends from school. During that time, I developed a whole game world, and made a lot of maps, particularly for a kind of gazetteer, or guidebook, I made for the players when I was fifteen. The town of Opir, mentioned in Kim's campaign, was actually somewhere my players never visited!

Garth Nix

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Garth Nix has been a full-time writer since 2001, but has also worked as a literary agent, marketing consultant, book editor, book publicist, book sales representative, bookseller, and as a part-time soldier in the Australian Army Reserve. Garth's books include the Old Kingdom fantasy series; science fiction novels *Shade's Children* and *A Confusion of Princes*; fantasy novels *Angel Mage*; *The Left-Handed Booksellers of London* and its sequel *The Sinister*

Booksellers of Bath; and a Regency romance with magic, *Newt's Emerald*. His novels for children include *The Ragwitch*; the six books of The Seventh Tower sequence; The Keys to the Kingdom series; and *Frogkisser!*. His short fiction includes more than 60 published stories, some of them collected in *Across the Wall*, *To Hold the Bridge* and *Sir Hereward and Mister Fitz*. He has co-written several books with Sean Williams, including the Troubletwisters series; Spirit Animals Book Three: *Blood Ties*; *Have Sword, Will Travel*; and *Let Sleeping Dragons Lie*. More than seven million copies of Garth's books have been sold around the world, they have appeared on the bestseller lists of *The New York Times*, *Publishers Weekly*, *The Bookseller* and others, and his work has been translated into 42 languages. He has won multiple Aurealis Awards, the ABIA Award, the Ditmar Award, the Mythopoeic Award, CBCA Honour Book, and has been shortlisted for the Lodestar, the Locus Awards, the Shirley Jackson Award and others.

IN-CLASS DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Cover Discussion Questions

Before reading *We Do Not Welcome Our Ten-Year-Old Overlord*, look closely at the book's cover and answer the following questions:

- What do you think the title might mean? What does the word 'Overlord' mean? Do the words 'Ten-Year-Old' in front of it seem unusual to you?
- How does the light shining from below the young girl's face make her appear?
- Look closely at the author's name. How has the designer conveyed a sense of eeriness here?
- Do the colours used on the cover complement or take away from the overall creepy feeling?
- What genre of book would you expect with a cover like this?
- Does the cover draw you in and make you want to read the novel?

Characterisation

Read to the end of Chapter Three and think about everything that you have learned about Kim, Bennie, Eila and Madir. Make a list of words to describe each character and find examples of things each says, thinks or does in the first three chapters that illustrate each word. For example, you might describe Eila as *super smart* and use the example of when she is arguing with Kim about telling their parents about the globe: 'It isn't rational' (page 15).

- How do you think Eila would describe her older brother?

Names

Names are very important to Kim and Eila's parents. They have given their children unusual first and middle names and have changed their own from Peggy and Gary Jones to Marie and Darwin Basalt. What does this suggest about the type of people they are? Look up the term 'etymology'. What is the etymology of Chimera (Kim) and Eileithyia (Eila)? Can you think of any reasons why Garth Nix might have chosen those specific names?

Setting

- Why might Garth Nix have decided to set the story in an alternate version of Canberra in 1975?
- How does placing an unusual or supernatural event within such an ordinary suburban setting amplify the contrast between the mundane and the extraordinary?

Foreshadowing

'Foreshadowing' is when the author gives you hints about what will happen later on in their story. Name three key scenes in the story that foreshadow that Aster might be planning on destroying the world.

Dungeons & Dragons

"That's why we have to keep thinking," said Theo. "Observe. Plan. Act. That's what I do in D and D. As Altmoor." (page 136)

Dungeons & Dragons is a tabletop role-playing game where players create characters and embark on imaginative adventures that are guided by a set of rules and a game master who narrates the story and controls the game's environment.

- Other than the key characters enjoying Dungeons & Dragons, what is the significance of the game to the story?

Structure

Many of the most famous stories in books and film share a common structure. One popular structure is called the Hero's Journey and is based on a theory by Joseph Campbell. Another is called Pixar's Story Spine. Map the major events of *We Do Not Welcome Our Ten-Year-Old Overlord* against both methods. Do the events fit either? Is one better than the other? Explain your reasoning.