


ABHORSEN



GARTH
NIX



THE LAST HOPE FOR THE LIVING

from the international bestselling author of *Sabriel* and *Lirael*

PRAISE FOR
GARTH NIX'S
OLD KINGDOM TRILOGY

'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.'

Philip Pullman

'Weaving horror and fantasy into a rich, original story, Nix creates complex and fascinating lores, rituals and tools of necromancy ... a powerful, gripping quest story.'

The Age

'Sabriel has a fast pace, drama, vivid descriptions, excitement and humour. Packs of putrefying zombies, too. What more could you want?'

Susan Price, The Guardian

'The reader's absorption into the intrigue, magic and dazzling richness of the worlds and characters created by Nix is irresistible pleasure.'

Australian Review of Books

DISCOVER MORE ABOUT GARTH NIX AT:

www.allenandunwin.com

Other books by Garth Nix

Shades Children
The Ragwitch
Across the Wall

The Old Kingdom trilogy
Sabriel
Lirael
Abhorsen

The Keys to the Kingdom series
Mister Monday
Grim Tuesday
Drowned Wednesday
Sir Thursday

Abhorsen




ALLEN & UNWIN

This edition published in 2006

First published in the USA by HarperCollinsPublishers 2003

Copyright © Garth Nix, 2003

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher. The *Australian Copyright Act 1968* (the Act) allows a maximum of one chapter or ten per cent of this book, whichever is the greater, to be photocopied by any educational institution for its educational purposes provided that the educational institution (or body that administers it) has given a remuneration notice to Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) under the Act.

Allen & Unwin
83 Alexander St
Crows Nest NSW 2065
Australia
Phone: (61 2) 8425 0100
Fax: (61 2) 9906 2218
Email: info@allenandunwin.com
Web: www.allenandunwin.com

National Library of Australia
Cataloguing-in-Publication entry:

Nix, Garth, 1963- .
Abhorsen.

ISBN 9781741750201 (pbk).

ISBN 1 74175 020 2 (pbk).

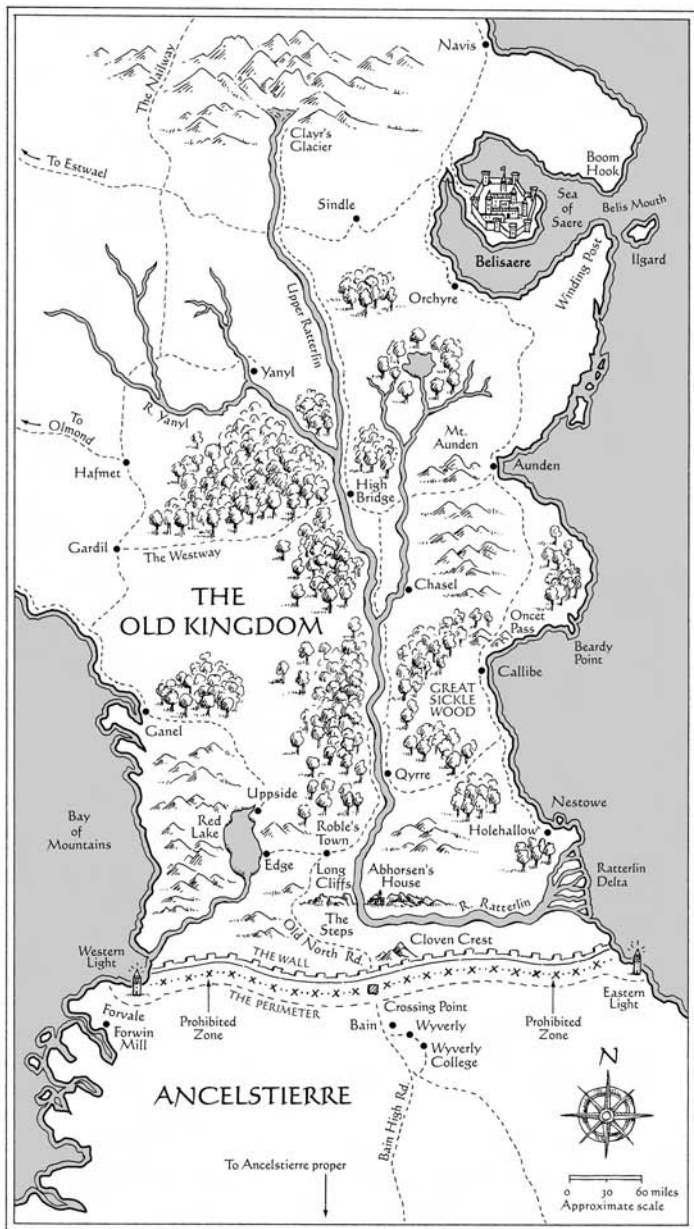
1. Fantasy fiction. I. Title. (Series : Old Kingdom trilogy ; bk. 3).

A823.3

Printed in Australia by McPherson's Printing Group

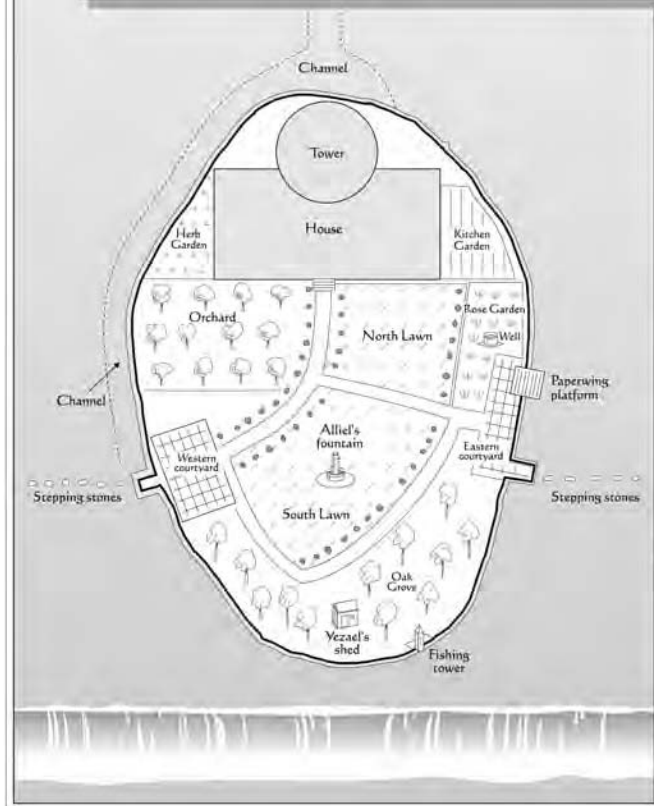
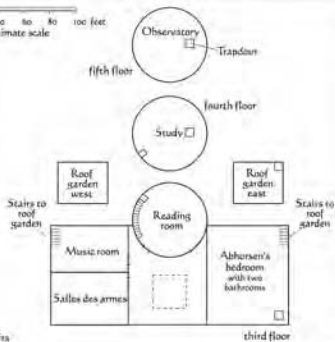
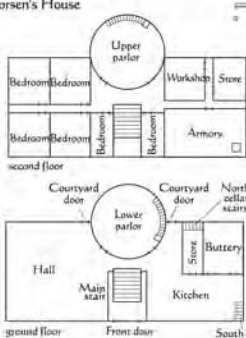
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

To Anna and Thomas Henry Nix



Abhorsen's House

0 20 40 60 80 100 feet
Approximate scale



This page intentionally left blank



prologue

Fog rose from the river, great billows of white weaving into the soot and smoke of the city of Corvere, to become the hybrid thing that the more popular newspapers called smog and *The Times* "miasmatic fog". Cold, dank and foul-smelling, it was dangerous by any name. At its thickest, it could smother, and it could transform the faintest hint of a cough into pneumonia.

But the unhealthiness of the fog was not its chief danger. That came from its other primary feature. The Corvere fog was a concealer, a veil that shrouded the city's vaunted gaslights and confused both eyes and ears. When the fog lay on the city, all streets were dark, all echoes strange, and everywhere set for murder and mayhem.

"The fog shows no signs of lifting," reported Damed, principal bodyguard to King Touchstone. His voice showed his dislike of the fog even though he knew it was only a natural phenomenon, a blend of industrial pollution and river mist. Back in their home, the Old Kingdom, such fogs were often created by Free Magic sorcerers. "Also, the... telephone... is not