

GARTH NIX  
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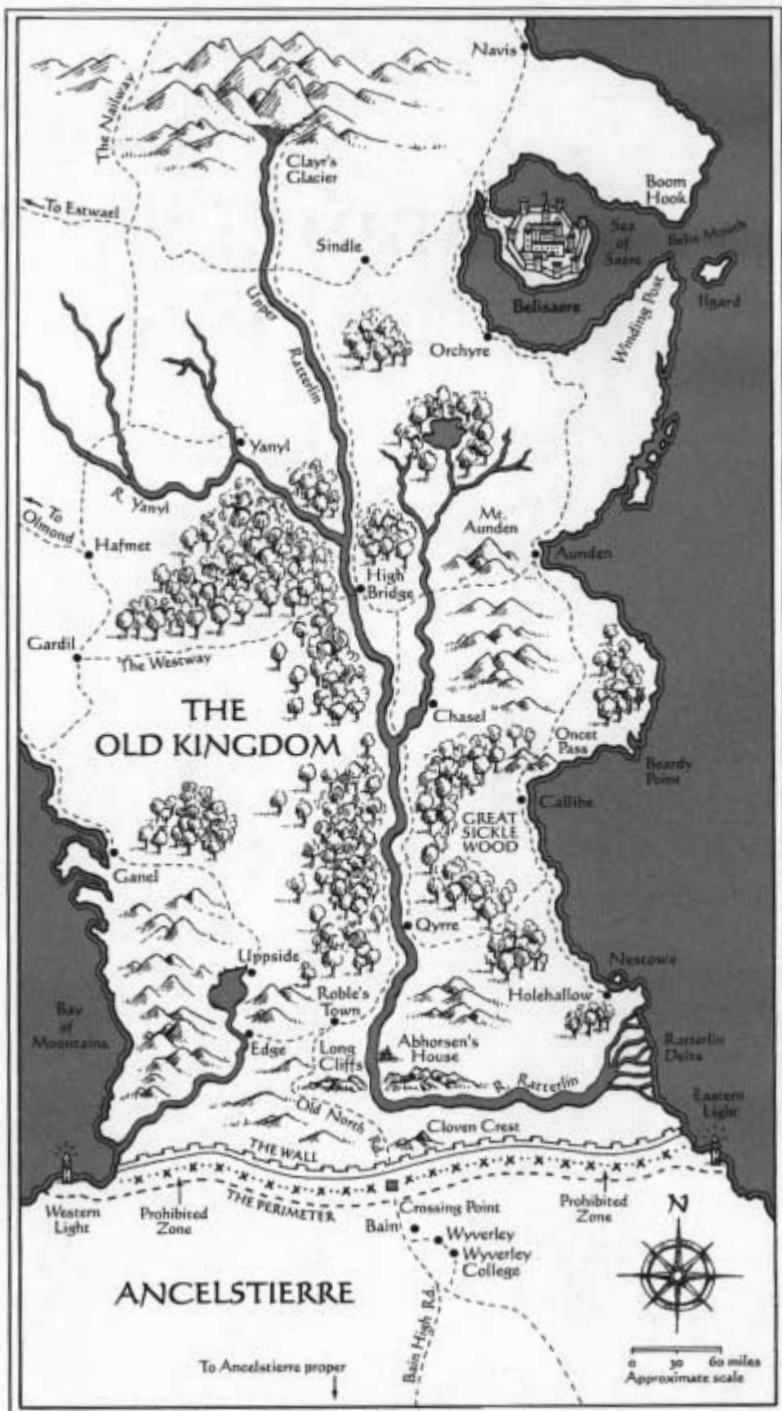
SEQUEL TO SABRIEL



# L I R A E L

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DAUGHTER OF THE CLAY



GARTH NIX  
**L I R A E L**  

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**DAUGHTER OF THE CLAYR**

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Ginee Seo, my editor at HarperCollins, is owed many thanks for her editorial advice, particularly for encouraging me to go back and tell more of Lirael's story.

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To Anna, my family and friends,  
and to the memory of Bytenix (1986–1999),  
the original Disreputable Dog

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## PROLOGUE

**IT WAS** a hot, steamy summer, and the mosquitoes swarmed everywhere, from their breeding grounds in the rotten, reedy shores of the Red Lake up to the foothills of Mount Abed. Small, bright-eyed birds swooped among the clouds of insects, eating their fill. Above them, birds of prey circled, to devour the smaller birds in turn.

But there was one place near the Red Lake where no mosquito or bird flew, and no grass or living thing would grow. A low hill, little more than two miles from the eastern shore. A mound of close-packed dirt and stones, stark and strange amidst the wild grassland that surrounded it, and the green forest that climbed the nearby hills.

The mound had no name. If one had ever appeared on a map of the Old Kingdom, the map was long lost. There had once been farms nearby, but never closer than a league. Even when people had lived there, they would neither look at the strange hill nor speak of it. The nearest town now was Edge, a precarious settlement that had never seen better days but had not yet given up hope of them. The townsfolk of Edge knew it was wise to avoid the eastern shore of the Red Lake. Even the animals of the forest and the meadow shunned the area around