



## Have Sword, Will Travel

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It is strange enough that Odo and Eleanor have stumbled upon a sword in a dried-up river outside their village. It is even stranger that Odo is able to remove it from where it's buried. And it's REMARKABLY strange when the sword starts to talk.

Odo and Eleanor have unearthed Biter, a famous fighter from earlier times. By finding Biter, Odo instantly becomes a knight - a role he is exquisitely unsuited for. Eleanor, however, would make a PERFECT knight - but she's not the one with the sword.

**Finding Biter is only the start - boy, girl, and sword must soon go on a quest to save their kingdom from threats in both human and dragon form, in this new fantasy triumph from Garth Nix and Sean Williams.**

## **Have Sword, Will Travel Details**

Date : Published October 31st 2017 by Scholastic Press

ISBN : 9780545259026

Author : Garth Nix , Sean Williams

Format : Hardcover 274 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Childrens, Middle Grade, Dragons, Adventure, Fiction, Young Adult

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## From Reader Review Have Sword, Will Travel for online ebook

### Billie says

A quick, fun read about magic swords and bandits and dragons and best friends. It's also funny and occasionally silly and will keep readers entertained from start to finish. It also has some good messages to convey about not making assumptions based on appearance and gender equality and stuff, but they never get in the way of or distract from the story.

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### Douglas Debner says

This is a book for non-thinking readers. A lot of what happens in this book is just stupid. Two kids, Odo and Eleanor, find a talking magic sword and immediately are coerced into thinking of themselves as a knight and a squire and leaving on a mission to kill a dragon. The adults they inform of their plans just point out the need for provisions and a map and let them go. No one thinks to say "Don't you think you ought to practice with that sword first?"

[BTW, the following contains SPOILERS because, frankly, this book deserves to be spoiled.]

If anything the villains are worse. A disgraced female knight has taken up with bandits. She has the bandits harass a town and then she shows up and pretends to drive them off. Then she strips the town of all its valuables as compensation for her services. Why? Why not just rob the town? In theory it is to avoid the attention of the king's army, but somehow this knight got her bandits to build a dam first. Because bandits are known for their dam building. And how does drying up a river not garner the attention of the king? Furthermore, the knight then heads down the dried up river to run her extortion scheme. So, essentially, the knight is driving away, by drought, the people she is intending to prey upon.

Odo and Eleanor essentially accomplish nothing by skill. Having been taken in by the knight, who claims to be on her way to slay the dragon, Odo and Eleanor turn for home. Then, against all common sense and decency, Eleanor sneaks away from Odo in the middle of the night to approach the female knight about becoming her squire. Never mind that the female knight has already made it clear that Odo and Eleanor are unwanted. Then, for no real reason since Eleanor is still clueless, she decides to sneak into the knight's camp instead of just walking in, where by a miracle akin to winning several lotteries in a row, Eleanor is able to overhear the female knight confess her evil plans. Eleanor then escape the camp unnoticed.

Next Odo and Eleanor, who still don't really know the full story, return to their dragon hunt because now they know the female knight isn't going to deal with their imagined dragon problem. In attempting to sneak up on the dragon Odo and Eleanor end up in exactly the right place to free a slave who can tell them the rest of the story. Then Odo and Eleanor, who have been worried about killing bad guys with their magic sword, blow up the dam potentially killing hundreds of innocents. Odo and Eleanor acknowledge the possibility that blowing up the dam will kill innocents but then immediately dismissed **BASED ON THE GUESS THAT THOSE PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY LEFT THEIR HOMES. I LACK THE WORDS TO ADEQUATELY DESCRIBE THIS LEVEL OF STUPIDITY.**

The way the things pan out, Odo and Eleanor know the villainous female knight will attack their home village so they construct a raft to beat her home. The restored river is flowing too fast and Odo and Eleanor are unable to stop at their home village. **CONVENIENTLY ENOUGH**, when they do manage to get ashore they are deposited in the rear of the villainous knight's attack on another fortified town. Even though the

female knight has shown she is easily able to defeat Odo and Eleanor before, this time she loses. BUT, THAT ISN'T CONVENIENT ENOUGH. So then the dragon shows up, turns out to be a good dragon and sets all to right.

Bottom line: This is essentially a long-winded children's fairy tale. Possible 10 to 15 year olds might enjoy it but anyone who actually wants a good book will be disappointed.

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### **Ashleigh says**

Review to come - loved it!

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### **Andrew Greenlaw-Houldsworth says**

Slam dunk. I've always been a fan of Nix (particularly the Keys to the Kingdom and Abhorsen series) and Williams only made the writing better! This is a fantastic first adventure full of magic, danger, and wit. I particularly enjoyed the lack of sexism, and the lovable cast of characters. Feels like a story I grew up with, in the spirit of Wrede or Rowling, but more Wrede, who's a better writer, so there you go.

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### **Clare O'Beara says**

This is a very enjoyable book for young readers, four and a half stars. I like particularly that every role is equal opportunity, from hero to villain, from talking sword to occupations like miller.

Our two young heroes find an old enchanted sword in the dried-up riverbed. The sword talks, nicely in a gothic script, which will help if you are reading aloud. As the sword Biter insists on dubbing his finder a knight - to the miller's son's dismay, and the annoyance of his girl pal who really does want to be a knight - this starts an adventure. Mainly, the young people decide to go and investigate the drying up of the river. Tales have come from upstream of a blockage and a dragon. Water shortage is an incredibly topical subject so I have to commend the authors for bringing environmental awareness and water scarcity into the tale.

I would give five stars if not for some strong coincidences and convenient occurrences; the two youngsters are very brave but things do just go their way a lot. Also, why hasn't the king (who is at the end expected to deal with some bandits) done anything about the river blockage, dragon and bandits? However, it's for kids. Vocabulary is very varied and well used including terms for armour and weaponry.

I bought this in the normal way at Octocon. This is an unbiased review.

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### **Kat says**

This was cute! A fun adventure story that middle grade readers will enjoy. I listened to some of the audiobook which was also enjoyable. Would recommend to adventure fans looking for a quick read.

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## Cameron Chaney says

*Have Sword, Will Travel* by Garth Nix & Sean Williams is the first book in a new middle-grade fantasy series... a start to yet another series, yay. It is about two kids who find an enchanted sword, and then go on adventures with it. That's the basic plot of the story and it doesn't really steer away from that. It's just a simple, cute fantasy-adventure.

I had to read this for my library review group. I like fantasy and thought this looked to be a fun read, but I didn't connect to the characters and the story itself didn't hold my interest. It's not that it is a bad book, but I don't think it was really for me. I like fantasy stories to have a darker edge. *Have Sword* may have been going for more of a *Princess Bride* kind of story, but I don't feel it succeeded.

Overall, this might be fun for kids but I don't think I'll continue on with the series myself.

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## Roy says

Breezed through this in no time. Simple fantasy story about 2 friends who find talking sword and go on an adventure. Nothing overly original or 5 star but dialogue is witty, pace is great and characters quite charming. Obviously a YA type fantasy novel but could appeal to readers who have kids in their young to mid teens. Has great themes that aren't too adult minded. Made me chuckle a few times. Will probably pick up the 2nd when it arrives if I want a light quick easy fantasy read.

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## Will says

A fantasy adventure involving two children, Eleanor and Odo, and a magical talking sword called Hildebrand FoeBiter. Biter is an inspired creation - obliging but overbearing, always on the ready to avenge the slightest wrong, imagined or real. A classic sidekick in other words, keen of edge but less so in the brains department. Conveniently, he doesn't so much talk as **declaim portentously in boldy-face** - very handy when reading to my 7 and 11-year old granddaughters who were both enthralled by the characters and adventures in this book.

Odo is knighted by Biter, though it turns out he isn't actually authorized to do that, and Eleanor becomes his squire - though she in fact wants to be a knight far more than does Odo. I'm glad to say too that there's no distinction made between male or female roles in Nix's book.

Their quest is to find out who is causing the life-giving river through their village to dry up, and of course dragons of the most fearsome kind are suspected. On their journey they encounter the usual array of underworld creatures, cowed serfs, tyrannical overlords and the like - one of the more colourful is Sir Saskia, an imposing and proud female knight, whom Eleanor would love to emulate of course, but of possibly dubious character. (Though the 7-year-old had her fingered from the start!)

The only reason I didn't give this 5 stars was the ending which was a bit anticlimactic (view spoiler), and that was followed by an Epilogue which was nothing more than a trailer for the next book in this series. Really, that's no way to end an adventure, even if you intend there to be another!

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## Kirra says

What's better than stumbling upon an ancient sword lying in a river? Well, how about stumbling upon an ancient sword in a river, pulling it out and having it yell at you! *Have Sword, Will Travel* is the beginning of a compelling adventure featuring Odo, Eleanor and an enchanted, talking sword named Biter. Odo and Eleanor have grown up with a quiet village life and Odo is content with their day-to-day activities but Eleanor has always dreamed of being a knight, saving people and doing something larger than that. So, she's clearly delighted when Odo is the one to awaken the sword and is knighted himself whilst she is named his squire!

It seems it was destined for Odo to find this sword though because for some reason the river that flows down through the villages is drying up and the suspect behind it is none other than an infamous, fearsome dragon much older than the children who have been tasked to defeat it by Biter. Odo, Sir Odo now, is hopeless at first and honestly a little uninterested in being a knight at all while Eleanor is discouraged that she wasn't the one knighted but she's still going to be a good friend and assist Odo on his quest because it's still an adventure they can share together.

Eleanor and Odo were an impressive duo and I love that they had a great friendship that grew over the course of the book throughout troubling times that challenged them. Odo really struggled with his newfound responsibility while Eleanor was sometimes challenged with the jealousy she felt over being his squire and not the knight herself. Despite their own issues they still worked as a fantastic team together and they are now a favourite duo of mine! You also cannot forget a huge part of this book, the enchanted sword that started their epic adventure! Biter just sounds like the coolest thing ever as a talking sword should be but the sword was also dangerous and mysterious so you weren't really sure if it was a good or bad thing for the duo because it constantly got them into hot water!

There were also some other characters I found interesting that you have to read about in this book to love/despise like Urthkin, Sir Saskia and Runnel! I loved when Odo and Eleanor met the Urthkin because it didn't go at all how I expected and it was just fantastic how it was yet another example of how this book used wit over violence. Sir Saskia was also a notable character as a famous female knight and a hero to Eleanor while Runnel carried terrifying turn of events for the group! I can honestly say I can't wait to see what happens to all of the characters in the next book as well as the fearsome dragon!

The cover of this book is also more beautiful than I can say because it's so shiny and golden! I loved the writing style in this book as well because I really couldn't tell the difference between what was written by the co-writers Garth Nix and Sean Williams. This is the first book I've read from either of the authors despite having their books on my TBR for ages and I was not disappointed at all in this fantastic book so I'll definitely be reading more from this duo. Another fantastic thing about this book is that it's children's fiction that could be read by all ages because it was a pure delight of adventure with plenty of wit and humour. This book surprised me at every turn and I loved that it was an adventure set in a medieval setting with knights, dragons, curses and enchanted swords that is perfectly aimed for younger children but was also wonderfully written from skilled authors that can cater to any age. I'm so excited to continue this series and that ending was so unexpected!

*(Thanks to Allen & Unwin for a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. Have Sword, Will Travel is out on the 25th of October, 2017!)*

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### **Ms. Yingling says**

Typical medievalish fantasy with dragons and talking swords, although there are women knights as well as millers. I'm not sure how I feel about this. Since it's a fantasy world, I guess it's okay, but it doesn't reflect the reality of the middle ages, so I'm conflicted. Not my cup of tea, but it's a good length and my fantasy readers will love it. Has sort of a Gerald Morris vibe, and that series does very well.

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### **Jamie says**

Cute story, interesting plot, ended on a bit of a cliff hanger

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### **Mary Catelli says**

Odo and Eleanor, poking about in a river that was rapidly sinking despite the rain, were looking for eels. What they found was a magical sword.

It cut Odo's finger, and the blood roused it - the blood of a true knight. Except he's not. So the sword knights him on the spot. And with one thing and another, Eleanor becomes his squire, and they set out to find out why the river is failing.

A light high fantasy ensues.

It involves Eleanor's father rebuking the sword for asking for his name without giving his own first, as the stranger; a woman who lives in a chapel; the draconian origin of a firestarter, a duel and a wrestling move; something that smokes like a dragon; the question of armor; what a certain knight is like, and more.

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### **Leah says**

This was a fun read. I liked the fantasy and wit. The characters were interesting, and there was a lot of action, which made this a quick read. I am hoping for another book involving this duo.

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### **DemetraP says**

It's a kids book, but "Have Sword, Will Travel" is awesome. Very funny, with a talking enchanted sword. Garth Nix wrote the Sabriel series (one of my keeper shelf series) with a necromancer and a talking cat too.

I liked all the humor and the adventure.

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