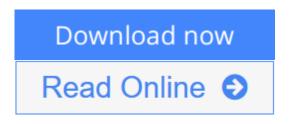


The Kings and Queens of Roam: A Novel

By Daniel Wallace



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From the celebrated author of *Big Fish* comes an imaginative, moving novel about two sisters, their dark legacy, and the magical town that entwines them.

Helen and Rachel McCallister, who live in a town called Roam, are as different as sisters can be: Helen, older, bitter, and conniving; Rachel, beautiful, naïve—and blind. When their parents die suddenly, Rachel has to rely on Helen for everything, but Helen embraces her role in all the wrong ways, convincing Rachel that the world is a dark and dangerous place she couldn't possibly survive on her own...or so Helen believes, until Rachel makes a surprising choice that turns both their worlds upside down.

In this new novel, southern literary master Daniel Wallace returns to the tradition of tall tales and folklore made memorable in his bestselling novel *Big Fish*. Wildly inventive and beautifully written, *The Kings and Queens of Roam* is a big-hearted tale of family and the ties that bind.

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Editorial Review

From **Booklist**

Starred Review Somewhere in the deepest, wildest part of America, there is a place called Roam. Once a thriving mill town founded by unscrupulous silk merchant Elijah McCallister, it is now a virtual ghost town. Of the few people remaining, none are more curious than Helen and Rachel McCallister, Elijah's great-granddaughters. Like sisters out of the Brothers Grimm, they are as different as chalk and cheese. Rachel is beautiful, trusting, kind, and blind. Helen is as hideous inside as she is out, a vindictive harpy whose shrewish behavior and tortured visage isolate her in self-imposed exile. So jealous is she of her sister's beauty that, after their parents die and Rachel is left solely in her care, Helen vengefully tells the most vicious lies to keep Rachel in her thrall: that Rachel is ugly; that the world is a gothic and dangerous place; that no roads lead into or out of Roam. Like a maiden princess locked in the witch's castle, Rachel accepts her fate until the day she discovers she can orchestrate her escape. Teeming with dwarfs and giants, feral dogs, and wily spirits, Wallace's eerie fairy tale for grown-ups is a melancholy yet enchanting pastiche of love, loss, redemption, and revenge. --Carol Haggas

Review

"Darkly funny and wildly inventive . . . There's a wealth of enchantment here—curses, an evil sister, a miraculous spring, teetotaling ghosts, and, most importantly, the transformative magic of loss." (*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*)

"Masterful... Wallace gives nothing short of a bravura performance in the art of storytelling.... Balances the primary goal of storytelling with the underlying one of providing inspiration and insight, and he achieves both aims spectacularly.... [A] complex and gratifying yarn." (*Indy Week*)

"Do you remember *Big Fish*, the wonderful novel by Daniel Wallace and the movie it inspired? They made us suspend disbelief and go into a magical world of stories and characters. Wallace has done it again in his latest novel, *The Kings and Queens of Roam*, which is full of the magic he uses to draw us into his worlds of imagination." (*Richmond County Daily Journal*)

"From the first line of Daniel Wallace's new novel *The Kings and Queens of Roam*, it's clear a sweeping story is about to unfold. . . . Wallace ensures that forgiveness and redemption are part of the balance in this richly imagined world." (*Asheville Citizen-Times*)

"Wallace has imagined yet another extraordinary fantasy world filled with odd and colorful souls—both living and dead, tragic and comic." (*Birmingham News*)

"Wallace illustrates the power words have to make worlds, both in the tragic whimsy of the world his words create and in the sad, scary world one character builds for another." (*Jackson Free Press*)

"A fabled book much like Wallace's debut novel, Big Fish." (Memphis Flyer)

"Wallace has returned to many of the . . . techniques of *Big Fish*. . . . We are in the land of the tall tale, the fable, fantasy and fairy tale—and not the tooth fairy kind where there is no down side, just the delivery of a silver coin in the night, but the Brothers Grimm variety, laced with darkness, anxiety, bad behavior, guilt, envy, and pain." (*Alabama Public Radio*)

"A tall-tale jaunt . . . A whimsical, tender tale about friendship, trust and the price of second chances." (*BookPage*)

"Wallace's eerie fairy tale for grown-ups is a melancholy yet enchanting pastiche of love, loss, redemption, and revenge." (*Booklist (starred review)*)

"An imaginative, sentimental modern-day tall tale . . . Wallace's far-fetched, rollicking yarn, written in the vein of Manly Wade Wellman and Fred Chappell, consistently engages the reader." (*Publishers Weekly*)

"A fanciful story layered in symbolism and ripe with lyrical language." (Kirkus Reviews)

"Daniel Wallace is one of our most masterful storytellers and his latest creation, *The Kings and Queens of Roam*, is brimming with his brilliant visions and wise observations about life. Part fairytale, part myth and legend, the city of Roam and her inhabitants--both living and dead--materialize in ways that are equal parts comedy and tragedy. At the heart of it all are two sisters: Rachel and Helen, the twists and turns of their relationship leading the reader on a journey that ultimately is a moral tale--one of grief and forgiveness and the meaning of love." (Jill McCorkle, author of Life After Life)

"Full of adventure, ghosts, steam-punk industrialists, silk-traders, wild dogs, and mysterious lumberjacks, Daniel Wallace's *The Kings and Queens of Roam* is touched with both magic and whimsy. I paused just as often to savor the beauty of Wallace's sentences as I did to wipe away tears at his characters' predicaments. An epic and modern fairy tale of sisters and friendship, *The Kings and Queens of Roam* is about the lies we tell, to ourselves and to each other, and how those stories go on to shape the world around us." (Hannah Tinti, author of The Good Thief)

"There is much magic in Daniel Wallace's superb new novel--curses, caves, even a haunted wood--but the most impressive magic is Wallace's understanding of the human heart's depths and vagaries. *The Kings and Queens of Roam* is a fairy tale for adults." (Ron Rash, author of Nothing Gold Can Stay)

"Reading *The Kings and Queens of Roam* is like living, for a few hundred pages, in another world: beautiful, epic, tragic, and ultimately redemptive. In Roam Daniel Wallace has created his own Macondo. This is his best novel yet." (Wesley Stace, author of Charles Jessold, Considered as a Murderer)

About the Author

Daniel Wallace is the author of five novels. His first, *Big Fish*, was made into a motion picture of the same name by Tim Burton in 2003, and a musical version on Broadway in 2013. He is a contributing editor to *Garden & Gun* magazine and is the J. Ross MacDonald Distinguished Professor of English at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where he teaches and directs the Creative Writing Program. Visit his website at DanielWallace.org.

Users Review

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