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# Ragwitch, The

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

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Published 15 years ago in Nix's native Australia, *The Ragwitch* is a stand-alone fantasy for older readers. It is perhaps telling that it is only published now in the UK, after he has achieved success and reputation with the *Old Kingdom* series (Sabriel etc). *The Ragwitch* has your classic elements of fantasy ? magic, good against evil, children going to other lands, children finding out about themselves from wise people along the way ? but it doesn't all hang together and feels muddled. Julia finds a ragdoll in a crow's nest and becomes literally possessed by it so that she is inside the mind and body of this bewitched doll that is actually the evil ?Ragwitch?. *The Ragwitch* needs Julia to come back and finish off her battles in her land. Her brother follows Julia to this land in order to save her. They then each have their own adventures against evil, meeting wise and good people along the way, culminating in the Ragwitch being overwhelmed and the good witch who she once was getting her mind and body back.

The plot feels confused and there are often too many new names and new creatures to understand who is what all the time. Nix also seems confused about who he is aiming the novel at ? girls through the character of Julia or boys through her brother Paul? Some of the ideas, to do with the mind, self and soul, are quite sophisticated, but need further thinking through to make them stand up to young teenagers yet simplifying so as not to get too in the way of the plot for ten-year-olds. There are violent episodes, described in detail, which would give sensitive children of any age nightmares, but the crux of the plot depending on a bloated, giant ragdoll makes it unattractive to older, particularly male readers. OD

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