



The Door to January

Gillian French

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It's a nightmare. And it's killing her.

Ever since sixteen-year-old Natalie Payson moved away from her hometown of Bernier, Maine, she's had nightmares. And not just the usual ones. These are inside her, pulling her, calling her back, drawing her to a door, a house, a place, a time. Full of fear, full of danger. So this summer, Natalie's going back to Bernier to face up to a few things: the reason she left town in the first place, the boy she's trying hard not to trust, and the door in her dreams.

But once she steps through the door, into a murky past, she's entangled in someone else's world. And only Natalie can help right the wrongs of both the past and the present.

The Door to January Details

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Author : Gillian French

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From Reader Review The Door to January for online ebook

Chelsea Humphrey says

When I first discovered *The Door to January* in my mailbox I immediately fell in love with the cover. I am always on the lookout for Young Adult novels that are a quick read and don't require a long term investment on my end, and this one fit the bill perfectly. The blurb is fairly vague and I wasn't 100% sure what the book would involve, but I was intrigued and excited to have found a story that felt so different than what is being published in the genre today. Initially I assumed the book had something to do with ghosts of the past, but I wasn't aware that it was more along the lines of a mainstream Sci-Fi than a haunting. I say this because I found it refreshing and unique as opposed to the same old tale I was expecting; you know, the one we've seen multiple times over for teens? Not so here!

The beginning had a slow start, one that established the setting and characters before jumping into the plot full on. I thoroughly enjoyed the pacing and found the characters likable and relatable, people we could root for. Because of the slow building suspense and snippets of action, the story is definitely character driven but not boring in the least. The aspect of time travel being crafted into such a modern concept through nightmares really hooked my attention; sometimes dueling POVs can get messy but I felt this is what kept the book glued together and functioning as it should. I know some readers are turned off by the idea of time travel, as it seems too much outside their comfort zone, but this novel felt more like a historical thriller geared toward a young adult audience. It's difficult to explain, but *The Door to January* isn't easily classified in any 1-2 genres.

If you're looking for a unique read that will spice up your usual schedule and style of books, I highly recommend giving this one a go. This novel was ever-changing; every time I thought I had it pinned down it grew and matured and turned in a direction I wasn't quite expecting. I think that fans of speculative fiction with a focus on characters of a younger age will really enjoy this; there are some difficult topics covered with the kidnapping of young girls, but I felt it was tastefully done and nothing was over the top in a gratuitous form with graphic content. I'm really excited to see what others think of this one; add this to your fall reading list as it's quick, exciting, and different!

***Many thanks to the publisher for providing my copy; it was a pleasure to provide my honest thoughts here.**

Mrs.Morgan says

2.5 Stars

So, not as good as *Grit*. *Grit* had really great characterization that I felt *The Door to January* was missing. This is also not my typical read; which wouldn't make it good or bad on its own, but coupled with a few missing pieces, forced the lean to *not as good* even further.

The Door to January is a paranormal thriller about a girl who cannot escape the town in which she grew up, nor a house that she has a connection to, but can't figure out how or why. This story flips between the "now" and the 1940's. I have to admit that I enjoyed that part - the storyline within the 1940's was compelling - but not enough to float the entire book, *for me* .

The premise was pretty creative, but the characters didn't stay with me like I wanted them to. Also, the beginning was way more tedious than I needed or wanted it to be, and for a pretty little book (my copy only had like 190 pages), it seemed way too long for me to be waiting for the story to really get started. French did seem to execute the ending well, but it wasn't an all out shocking moment like I think she expected it to be - if you followed the story as you went, you had already asked yourself the question that she proposed on the last page.

Overall, not a *bad* read, but I was still left looking for more.

Tony says

I seriously struggled to get into and ultimately finish Gillian French's paranormal thriller "The Door to January" and although two genres were blended together well enough I found myself drifting off whenever central character Natalie had one of her uninvolved dreams. Natalie and her cousin have returned to their old town after a few years away as she feels the nightmares she is plagued by are connected to a violent incident which led her to leaving the town in the first place.

Along the way she stumbles upon another mystery involving an abandoned house which becomes central to the plot. Although there was nothing wrong with the writing I found the book pedestrian and the different fonts to signify the varying time sequences, including the murders in the 1940s, particularly irritating. The mysteries come together well enough, and the characters develop, but once again I wondered who exactly this book was aimed at? I just cannot see teenagers engaging with it at all as there was little to tap into and I think it will struggle to find both a niche and an audience. There wasn't much on offer here except for some paranormal suspense, which again came across as another book aimed at a female audience. And where was the horror? I must have missed it.

Kendall • thegeekyyogi says

The Door To January is part coming of age, part mystery and part ghost story, oooooo. Considered a paranormal thriller this book has all of the makings for the perfect ghost story! Sixteen-year-old Natalie Payson is being drawn back to the home town her and her parents fled, after a terrible incident occurred, by a barrage of plaguing nightmares. Dangerous and mysterious things are pulling her back to Bernier, Maine, to an abandoned house and disembodied voice which she can no longer ignore. Natalie chooses to return, to face up to all of the terrible things she's been trying to forget and to unravel the murky past of a frightening mystery. Stepping through the frosted door appears to be the only way that Natalie can right the wrongs of both the past and the present, but will she accomplish all this before it's too late?

Okay, so right off the bat I have to say that I really enjoyed this book. It's an extremely well done YA title that actually shows the characters in a realistic light for their age. There have been many YA's that I have read where the main character is 16 or 17, yet their actions seem more adult-like and far beyond what should be their maturity. I admit, sometimes this is fitting in a certain storyline, and there are certainly teenagers out there that act more mature for their age, but I also find it extremely refreshing when a 16-year-old actually acts like a 16-year-old, and honestly it was one of the best things about this book. Natalie has some very difficult issues thrust upon her shoulders, but she still handle them in a very teenage-like regard, not always handling things well, keeping secrets, but learning from her mistakes and growing as the story progresses.

Teddy, Natalie's cousin, also handles himself in a realistic teenage boy way, which I think makes this a great book for both boys and girls to read. Even the bullies in this book have the proper balance of maturity/immaturity that, in a way, made their actions all the more frightening.

This book (sort of) has alternating storylines, it switches between the present and then memories of the past, still in Natalie's point of view, all taking a place in the same small town, but Gillian weaves it all together just so. I actually really love the storyline of the past, as its main focus is a mysterious man and his younger sister who rarely leave the house and avoid interaction with neighbors as much as possible (how spooky). It has an immediate sense of foreboding, and as it's broken up over the length of the book, I found myself eager for all of the information I could get. Alternatively the story of the present is quite chilling and is a mystery that actually kept me guessing until the end. I was really pleased with this as I'm often able to figure out a mystery before the end, but the characters personalities keep everything wrapped up tight. In all fairness though I could have been too distracted by what the heck was happening to Natalie, because that has its own level of strangeness.

I will say that in the beginning I found the book to be a little rough, it felt like we jumped right into the story without much build up, but as I continued to read I came to understand why it was started that way, it left an air of mystery. Overall I found *The Door To January* to be quite compelling and I couldn't put it down! This is definitely a book I'll be recommending to friends and basically all of the young adults I come across. Oh! Also, if you live in Maine I think that you'll get particular enjoyment out of the familiar landscape and way of life. It's a fun spooky read and could easily capture the mind of anyone.

Enjoy!

P.S. On Thursday, September 7th, I will be posting an exclusive interview with the author Gillian French! Gillian is answering questions about the book, writing and some other fun stuff. If you're interesting you can find this on my blog www.thegeekyyogi.wordpress.com

S.M. Parker says

The Door to January is a masterfully crafted thriller, with a slow build that makes you question several timelines at once. Sound confusing? It's not. In the capable hands of French, the reader is simultaneously thrust into the conflicts—okay, horrors—of the present, recent past and historical past. These timelines are woven into one seamless narrative vine. French's writing is starkly beautiful and inherently echoes the grounded nature of Mainers. French's Yankee authenticity sings on every page, in every exchange of dialogue. Beyond the beauty and the brilliance, this book stole my breath—I read the entire second half of the novel with my heart in my throat. Gah! So good.

Liz says

Quick read so not a big time investment. I found the plot intriguing but the writing too fragmented leaving me trying to piece together events too often. It's hard to connect with any of the characters. I will say the story picked up in the second half but still very scattered in my opinion when it didn't have to be.

Annette says

The Door to January did not give me the thrills I was hoping for.

Natalie has nightmares about a traumatic event that happened two years ago. The nightmares aren't only about this event -- they are pulling her towards an old abandoned house in the town where she used to live. She feels compelled to go back to her old town for the summer and face her fears. She is staying with her aunt and her cousin, Teddy. Teddy is the only one who knows the real reason Natalie has returned.

Natalie and Teddy visit the old house and set up a recorder. Weird things begin to happen. There are really three POVs in *The Door to January*. We get Natalie's normal POV but also her dreams (which are in italics) and then she goes back in time for another POV. These sections from the past, where she is seeing the old inhabitants of the house, were not formatted correctly in the eARC. I'm sure that will be better in the final copy. The story lines all mesh together -- the past, the dreams, and the present -- to an exciting conclusion.

It's hard to put my finger on why *The Door to January* just didn't do it for me. I never felt much suspense or many thrills. I liked the premise and the way things from the past were slowly revealed. But it just wasn't believable to me. I think maybe the story needed more depth. It is very short, and things happened quickly. In this case, maybe a little too quickly. Natalie seemed to take things very much in stride. She should have been freaking out! That's what I mean by depth. We needed to get more time for reactions to each new revelation before the next one came along.

I'm being somewhat picky. I think for the intended audience, *The Door to January* would be appealing. And, like I said, it's a quick read and really moves. So this may be a good choice for reluctant readers.

Teresa says

Great mystery and ghost story. Must read!

Sarah says

(I received an advance copy of this book for free. Thanks to Bookmasters and Edelweiss.)

This was a YA story about a girl suffering from nightmares.

Natalie was an okay character, but I found it hard to connect with her.

The storyline in this was about Natalie investigating a recurring dream that she was having by visiting the abandoned house where she believed the dream took place. She visited this house with her cousin Teddy, and set up a recording device which picked up some odd noises/talking, and there seemed to also be some history between Natalie and a local boy called Lowell. I didn't really find the story very engaging though, and when we started getting parts of the story set in 1948 I felt quite confused and even more disinterested.

I found the ending likewise a little confusing, and the final line only confused me further.

4.5 out of 10

Angie ? says

The Door to January is a little complicated. Natalie is having nightmares about the past. She goes back to her hometown to confront the nightmares and to try to make sense of them. Through Natalie's dreams and her exploration she finds that her past, the distant past and the present are all linked. This story is her path to understand how they are all linked and to clear up a couple of mysteries in the process.

The ending of the book is interesting; with the final sentence being one that makes you pause and reread it a couple of times. It leaves the door open (see what I did there!) to a sequel.

If you like a quick read, that delivers on the mystery, but isn't extremely complex gives this a try. If there were a sequel, I would read it.

Just a note - I am obsessed with book titles; I want to know why it was chose and if the actual title appears in the book. For this one, it seems that all of the events took place in January and Natalie is the door that links everything.

Lauren says

This was between 2.5-3 stars for me. I absolutely loved *Grit* that came out earlier this year and it's still one of my top favorites from 2017, but this book reads like it was the author's first book she wrote and it didn't get much editing. There was some choppy discussions and descriptions, and it felt like the reader got thrown into a fairly paranormal scenario without much explanation of terms getting thrown around like a "psychic fallout". Side note: what's up with so many YA authors publishing two books in 2017? Gillian French, Adam Silvera, Mindy McGinnis, Alan Gratz, Jason Reynolds (three books!!) etc. I'm not complaining, I've just never noticed this happen before...

Islandportpress says

It's not easy to write a thriller that keeps a reader on the edge of their seat but Gillian French does it. She deftly weaves a story that spans time to deliver authentic young adult characters and a believable (nail-biting) plot in a setting that will ring true to small town residents everywhere. You won't be able put this one down.

Ms. Yingling says

E ARC from Edelweiss Above the Treeline

Natalie moved from her hometown in Maine after an incident where one of her friends was shot, but no one could prove who did the shooting. She comes back for the summer to help her aunt out at her cafe, and also to investigate the nightmares that she is having. Her cousin Todd goes with her to a creepy house that is the setting of these dreams, and the two actually catch some "ghost" conversation on a voice recorder. More than that, Natalie gets sucked into the past and witnesses atrocities that happened to three young girls in the

1940s. She somehow feels that the girls want her to avenge their deaths, but she is in even more danger from the group of friends from the shooting incident. While one of them, Lowell, seems to have grown up, several of them are even more dysfunctional and scary. Will Natalie be able to figure out both the historical and current mysteries?

Strengths: I liked how the older and more current mysteries were presented together, and how one of them involved ghosts and the other involved friend drama. I would definitely buy this for a high school collection.

Weaknesses: Too much human-on-human violence. Girls are kidnapped, kept captive, and killed.

What I really think: I don't think I will buy this one. The kidnapping scenes were a bit much for middle school students.

Samantha (WLABB) says

Natalie's family fled Bernier after she and her cousin, Teddy, were attacked at gunpoint by local bullies. She had stayed away for three years, but felt a need to return in order to find out more about the nightmares that had been plaguing her. While back in Bernier, she "reunited" with her attackers, which awakened memories of that terrifying encounter, while also stumbling upon another mystery involving an abandoned house, which seems to call to her.

I really enjoyed this blend of mystery, time traveling, and the paranormal. The elements were blended in such a way, that they worked well together. At first, I thought this was just going to be about Natalie's nightmares and the house, which slowly divulged pieces of a string of murders that took place in the late 40s. But, these were not the only flashes of the past revealed to Natalie. She also began seeing snippets from that dreaded day in the woods, which left one of her former friends dead and his murder still unsolved. By dropping pieces of both mysteries and weaving them with a little friendship, romance, and confrontation, I was left with a lot to think about, but French wove them in such a way, that I enjoyed collecting the pieces and trying to figure it out.

I really liked the relationship between Teddy and Natalie. They had a great bond, which was tested, but still held up. I also liked the interactions between Natalie and Lowell, however, I wished we got to see more of them together. The relationship looked to be heading in a direction I was totally behind, but it was cut a little short.

French made quite an interesting decision at the very end of this book. She switched the perspective and put some ideas out there, which made me question a few of the things I thought I learned from the rest of the story. I would love to be able to discuss the ending with her, because I want to see if my thoughts jibe with her intentions.

Overall: A suspenseful tale with a touch of romance and the paranormal.

**I would like to thank the publisher for the advanced copy of this book.

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Laura says

Not sure how French managed to fit so much into such a short novel but she did it very successfully. Some of the supernatural elements were a bit cheesy for my tastes, but other parts were legit terrifying. Too many great things not to rate this highly. Would definitely read something else by this author.
