



The Toadhouse Trilogy

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Aine (pronounced "Aw-nee") believes herself to be a regular teenager in 1930s Alabama, but when a blue-eyed monster named Biblos attacks, she discovers that the reclusive woman raising her isn't really her grandmother and that she's been living inside a book for the past five years. With her blind brother, Spenser, she flees the pages of the novel she's called home, one terrifying step ahead of Biblos' black magic. Her only chance at survival lies in beating him to the three objects that he desires more than life.

As she undertakes her strange and dangerous odyssey, Aine must choose between a family she doesn't remember and her growing attraction to a mysterious young man named Gilgamesh. Only through treacherous adventures into The Time Machine, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, A Tale of Two Cities, and the epic Indian saga The Ramayana will she learn her true heritage and restore the balance of the worlds... if she can stay alive.

The Toadhouse Trilogy Details

Date : Published July 17th 2012 by Toadhouse Books

ISBN : 9780615644578

Author : Jess Lourey , J.H. Lourey , Jessica Lourey

Format : Paperback 300 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Adventure, Coming Of Age

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From Reader Review The Toadhouse Trilogy for online ebook

Melissa Frye says

What criteria do you use in choosing a book? For me, genre plays a very small role; I look for a promise from the story. Just like people, books are capable of making and breaking promises.

Synopsis taken from Goodreads:

Aine (pronounced "Aw-nee") believes herself to be a regular teenager in 1930s Alabama, but when a blue-eyed monster named Biblos attacks, she discovers that the reclusive woman raising her isn't really her grandmother and that she's been living inside a book for the past five years. With her blind brother, Spenser, she flees the pages of the novel she's called home, one terrifying step ahead of Biblos' black magic. Her only chance at survival lies in beating him to the three objects that he desires more than life.

As she undertakes her strange and dangerous odyssey, Aine must choose between a family she doesn't remember and her growing attraction to a mysterious young man named Gilgamesh. Only through treacherous adventures into The Time Machine, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, A Tale of Two Cities, and the epic Indian saga The Ramayana will she learn her true heritage and restore the balance of the worlds... if she can stay alive.

When I read the blurb for Book One of **The Toadhouse Trilogy** the promise of adventure hooked me. Imagine stepping into the pages of your favorite books searching for clues, a treasure hunt through stories both serene and scary.

Now imagine taking this journey with someone you dislike. That's what happened to me when I plunged into this novel. The main character, Aine, hampered the novelty of the story. She elicited no sympathy from me, which made my journey less enjoyable.

This book wasn't all bad; I give *Jess Lourey* credit for her imagination. However, it could have been much better. Something seemed to hold the characters and story back; the plot unraveled in a contrived manner.

This is the first installment and maybe the next two books will fulfill the promise I expected from this one. Book one fell flat, cheated me. I doubt I'll seek out future installments of the trilogy.

Adelina says

Loved loved loved this book! Creating worlds on this level is an extraordinary talent. Everything has to fit together, and Jess has done a fine job of connecting the pieces. It's rare I read the first book of a series before the rest are out. The reason being for this right here! I don't want to wait until June of NEXT YEAR for book 2! It's just not fair Jess, I'm hanging in suspense!

As Aine and her brother travel between books, I often found myself guessing which one they were jumping into next. When any characters name is mentioned I was trying to remember what book they came from. The one thing I learned most from this book, is that I need to read more classics. There was only one character I knew for sure her book, before the author tells you, and that was Aine's mom.

The Toadhouse Trilogy is a wonderful work of fiction that brings the world of fiction to life. If you've ever wanted to know what it was like to live inside your favorite novel, you must check out The Toadhouse Trilogy today!

Thanks Jess for the recommended reading at the end of your book. My to-read pile has just grown by 10!

Amie McCracken says

The Toadhouse Trilogy: Book One by Jess Lourey is an adventure for readers. If you've ever wanted to hop into stories like they were real worlds, pick this one up. Aine and her brother Spenser don't realize it, but they are living in a book. And they have an adventure awaiting them that takes them to places like The Time Machine and The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

This book was so refreshing. It completely swept me away and didn't let up until the very end. It was never too easy for the characters (which I find happening a lot in adventure/fantasy fiction). As the characters travel through the books, Jess comments and analyzes the stories but without making it feel like an essay. She simply points out things that one would not typically notice, like how Mr. Hyde looks like each person's worst nightmare and that is what makes him ugly.

I had disappointments. We never find out which book they begin in (though a hint is mentioned in the back of the book). The narrator jumps from character to character when it is not truly an omniscient narrator. The ending seemed a tad bit deflated, only because the object they were searching for was not something that was planted early on in the story or was a well-known object from a well-known story so that the reader could employ a bit of detective work.

All in all, I loved this one. I can't wait to see the next two.

I received this book from the author for review.

Pop Bop says

Fuzzy Around the Edges, But So Well Written

There are now enough books out there about heroes who pop into and out of books that it seems to me you have to do something new, interesting or at least well crafted to stand out from the crowd. I thought the plotting and detail in this book was a bit vague and fuzzy around the edges, but the characters were so appealing and the quality of the writing was so high I was happy to skip over or through the bumpy spots.

MILD SPOILER: The blurbs already disclose that Aine and her brother Spenser are being hidden from a monstrous villain and that once discovered they are transported from book to book on an escape/quest. O.K., you say. Been there, done that. But wait.

First off, the author plays around with a number of different styles and approaches. We have a lyrical but full-of-dread prologue. Then a quiet patch while Aine and Spenser are established and before the villain appears. Then the world is turned topsy turvy, and a fantastical escape is described. Then we start book hopping. Sometimes the pace is slow and the language beautifully descriptive. Sometimes there is stirring

conflict, (lots of blood and middle grade violence; this villain is nasty). Scary parts are really pretty scary. But then we get reflective Aine and have a sort of teen angst thing going, but that's just brief because Aine is also a brave no-nonsense action heroine. As I say, lots of moods and lots of approaches, which keeps everything fresh and unpredictable.

There are a few other appealing aspects as well. I'm really tired of sibling rivalry and kvetching, because it usually just drags down the storytelling. Here, Aine has a tender and protective attitude toward Spenser, and I found their interactions authentic and touching. Spenser also has a bit of a Yoda/Neo kind of feel, which introduced childlike calm at all the right times. Nice touch there. The other interesting aspect of the tale was the author's choice of which books to enter. The Voyages of Sinbad? The Ramayana? The Time Machine? These are somewhat off the beaten path, and opening up the world of books to less commonly encountered volumes was a nice touch.

As to the plot, well some info is withheld too long, so you need a patient reader. There is a bit of monologuing and a fair number of "overheard" expository conversations, but for this reader level I actually think that's O.K. This is the first of three planned books and I don't see another coming soon. (This one came out in 2012 and it's now 2016.) This book basically wraps up at a natural breaking point in the quest, but leaves more quest to go and some loose ends about who some of the secondary characters are and what exactly is going on. The result is that there isn't so much a "cliffhanger" as there is a "breather". I'm O.K. with that and don't hunger for volume 2 for closure.

So, well-written, appealing characters, some breathless action and some nice scene setting and book jumping. This was fun.

(Please note that I found this book a while ago while browsing Amazon Kindle freebies. I have no connection at all to either the author or the publisher of this book.)

Mel (Daily Prophecy) says

Also on <http://thedailyprophecy.blogspot.com>

The rating is totally based on the fact that I had the idea that I'm just a bit too old for this book. That's it. The story is great, the characters are lovely and there is nothing wrong with the writing style. If I was a couple of years younger, I would have loved it.

The story starts in Tir Na Nog and we get to meet a little girl and her brother at Ogham's, a special tree. She ran away from a party, but there is someone else: Fear Darrig and he tells her something frightening. The reign of King Finvarra will come to a very bad end at the hand of the marked child.

We skip a lot of time and we get to meet this girl, Aine, again. Now she is sixteen years old and she lives with her blind brother Spenser and her grandmother Glori. She has a companion called Mondegreen. It appears to be a hard woman, although she is good for the children. She took them in after their mother left them – only Aine doesn't believe her. She wants to search for her mother once she is old enough. For now, she just like to play in the woods with her brother. He is blind, but that doesn't withhold him from swimming in the pool. When they hear someone scream, Spenser dives into the water and saves a drowning boy called Tru. They are friends right away.

Strange things are going to happen. There comes a message that says that 'Biblos has arrived' and Mondegreen introduces them to a boy named Gilgamesh. He owns a Toadhouse. Now, everything happens really fast. They must leave with Gilgamesh to get three keys, so they can return to their original book. Their mother is there waiting for them. Biblos is a monster and he also wants to get those keys, but they must stop him. He destroys every story he enters. Their world is actually a book and with the Toadhouse, they can travel to other stories.

"When what you find is true, the next object will be revealed to you. There are three, and they will bring you to your true family."

The first clue.

From that moment, we get to enter different stories with these characters. Gilgamesh is their protector and Tru must return soon, otherwise his story will end; and that's not a good thing. Biblos is after them, so they must hurry up. Where is the first object and can they find all the keys before Biblos catches them?

Opinion.

Aine doesn't have any friends and she is teased at school about everything; from the scars on her hands to her 'to green' eyes. I don't understand! She is funny, smart and sweet. She is very protective and I love the relationship between her and her brother. Spenser is awesome. He is easy to be around with and brave.

I really liked the idea of this book. Living inside a tale and being able to travel to your favorite stories. The background story – why Biblos is after them and why their mother is in another book – is perfectly performed. It's just like I said: I felt like I was a bit too old.

Patty says

This is a YA novel with a most intriguing premise; two children Aine and Spencer are living a normal childhood when it is all destroyed in a day. Everything they thought they knew about themselves turns out to be fiction and it turns out that they are living in a book. Yes, a storybook. They are being chased by a very evil character named Bilbos who is out to destroy them. A fairy by the name of Gilgamesh has been sent to protect them and help them find three "keys" so that they can open up their home kingdom and be reunited with their mother. To do this they travel through books - classics - in a vehicle called a Toadhouse.

Just go with it. This was a really magical book. The mythology was like nothing else I have ever read and I really couldn't put the book down. It's not a book to be taken seriously, it's a book to get lost in and just enjoy the ride. Ms. Lourey knows how to keep the suspense building and her characters are strong, brave and true. It's not all unicorns and lollipops either; lessons are learned, sometimes in very difficult ways.

The book is a stepping stone to get young readers interested in some of the great classics that have perhaps lost some luster; I adored the Odyssey but I only started reading Dickens as an adult. There is a reason these old stories are classics and reminding us of them is a good thing.

I will look forward to the next two chapters in the adventures of Aine and Spencer as Gilgamesh guides them towards their ultimate goal of home.

Katie says

The spellbinding magic woven into the pages of this book will transport you into a world full of adventure and mystery.

The writing was beautiful and really brought a magical quality to the story. The action was exciting and had me on the edge of my seat constantly. There were twists and turns throughout the entire book and they really kept me on my toes. I had a great time discovering more about Aine's and her true identity.

I had a lot of fun reading about some of my favorite classic books and seeing how Aine reacted to these different worlds.

Aine was a fun and relatable character. She was very courageous to battle on even when her whole world had been turned upside down and I had really admired that about her. She became a very dear character while reading this book and I couldn't help, but become afraid, happy, and even sad because of her.

Spenser was an interesting character and fun to get to know. He was a great brother and companion to Aine throughout her adventure.

Gilgamesh was a mystery for most of the book and was very interesting to read about. I loved getting to know him and figuring out more about him. I also found the romance between him and Aine to be really sweet.

This story is a true book lover's delight. If you have ever dreamed of transporting yourself into some of your favorite books then this is the story for you.

C.C. Thomas says

This is the kind of book that's right up my alley--a book about books! There are so very few of them (Inheart by Cornelia Funke, for example) and I loved it when I happen across them.

Aine and her brother Spenser live a very unconventional lifestyle. After their parents were killed, they were shuttled off to a grandmother they'd never met to live as virtual hermits in the woods of Missouri. Their existence is shattered when a monster invades their home. The monster is named Biblos and the only way to escape him is to put their trust in a man named Gilgamesh, who is clearly hiding some secrets of his own. Escape comes in the way of a toadhouse, a sort of magical time traveling machine, that can skip dimensions into books. What's a toadhouse? A house where toads live? That, and other details, aren't really fully explained.

That summary probably seemed a bit murky which is why I couldn't give the book more stars. The plot itself was a bit murky. Key information is either completely left out or given so late in the book that it makes truly understanding the characters and their motivations difficult. I did really love all the literary references and this will keep me coming back to the series for more. It is well-written with adventure, action, and thrills and has a mystery that will probably only be solved in the third book of this trilogy. Overall, I quite liked the book--it was something different, a breath of fresh air. The characters were engaging, if rather difficult to connect with. There's a lot I don't understand about the plot (why fairies...isn't it enough the story can skip through books? It seemed like too much of a stretch), but I am hoping future books might clear it up. If not, it's worth a read just to see which storybook the gang jumps into next.

Sarah says

3.5 stars.

(Source: Downloaded for free from Amazon.co.uk)

Aine and spencer have lived with their grandmother since their mother abandoned them. They have to spend most of their time outside of the house and out of their grandmothers way. Aine is determined to grow up, earn some money and track down her mother.

One day when they get home, their grandmother is behaving oddly. She sends them to town to buy salt, when she never allows them to go to town.

On their return they find the small house empty, and then someone begins knocking on the door and shouting out their names. Luckily their grandmother and her friend return in time to save them, but are killed in the process.

Aine and Spencer (and their friend Tru) are now running for their lives from the man called Biblos who killed their grandmother. With the help of a man called Gilgamesh, they try to escape, but Aine is disbelieving when the man expects them to get inside a toadhouse only a few inches high!

When it becomes clear that the toadhouse is magical, and that they are able to enter, Aine hopes that they are safe, but becomes annoyed when instead of giving her answers, Gilgamesh begins talking about magic keys and books that can be entered like houses.

What Aine is about to learn though is that she's really from a place called 'Tir Na Nog', and that she must find 3 keys in three works of literature to make it back there and keep herself and her brother safe.

Can Aine really do this? Who were her parents really? Was her grandmother really her grandmother? How is it possible to jump into and out of books?

This was a fab tale with a real fairy-tale feel.

The ideas were so unique! I have never read a book with the sort of ideas that this one has! I really liked how the author had really used her imagination and really thought about the small details in this book, and how she also managed to pull inspiration from other literary greats, without making things seem cliché.

It was also great to learn some things about novels that I have never read such as 'The Time Machine' by H. G. Wells, and 'The Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor' by Sir Richard Burton.

I loved how these other stories were so cleverly interwoven – I would never have thought of something like that!

Aine (rhymes with Bonnie), was such a strong female lead. She was so real and so intent on keeping her brother safe, and I really liked her. She felt like the sort of person you would want to be friends with, and I couldn't fault her for her intelligence and bravery – such a great character.

There was plenty of excitement and action in the story, and plenty of twists in the tale. I especially liked the ending. It seems that the next part of Aine and Spencers adventure will be no less difficult too!

Overall; a fairy tale sort of book with real unique ideas and a great lead character.

Annclaire says

“The Toadhouse Trilogy: Book one” mi è stato regalato dalla sua autrice, la gentilissima Jess Lourey. Mi aveva molto incuriosita la trama, così come lei me l’aveva presentata e ho accettato di recensire il libro in un impeto così come mi capita spesso. Sono molto felice di avere accettato perché è davvero molto carino.

Aine e Spencer sono due fratelli che vivono con la nonna Glori. Hanno un’esistenza serena riempita di libri e di passeggiate nel bosco in Alabama finché in riva al fiume non incontrano Tru, un bambino poco più grande di Spencer. Quel giorno la loro vita viene sconvolta dall’arrivo di un terribile nemico Biblos e la loro nonna si sacrifica e li lascia nelle mani di Gilgamesh rivelando una triste verità sulla loro vita e lasciando loro un compito. Devono recuperare tre oggetti, che saranno altrettanti indizi e chiavi per tornare nel loro paese nativo Tir Na Nog. Ma queste chiavi sono nascoste in alcuni libri. I due fratelli, Tru e Gilgamesh iniziano un viaggio pieno di pericoli alla ricerca dei tre oggetti, sempre minacciati da Biblos. Tra intrighi, avventure e misteri Aine riuscirà a scoprire la verità e tornare a casa?

La storia è molto originale proprio per il particolare del viaggio. Gilgamesh infatti conduce i ragazzi attraverso libri che conosciamo tutti, come “La macchina del tempo” di Welsh o “Dottor Jekyll e Mr. Hide” di Stevenson grazie ad una “toadhouse” una casa in miniatura ed è bellissimo vedere come riescono ad immettersi nella vita del libro e a comunicare con i personaggi che via via appaiono.

La storia viene raccontata dal punto di vista di Aine in terza persona ed è lei la protagonista anche se naturalmente gli altri hanno un ruolo fondamentale. Ognuno di loro ha delle caratteristiche che lo contraddistingue in maniera determinante.

Aine naturalmente è una ragazza sicura di sé abituata fin da piccolissima a prendersi cura del fratellino ed è disposta a compiere immensi sacrifici pur di vederlo in salvo. Accanita lettrice è capace di riconoscere al volo una storia e naturalmente si trova a dover fare i conti con i segreti del suo passato e memorie che non vogliono tornare a galla. Cerca in qualunque modo di tirare fuori informazioni da chiunque le capiti a tiro, coraggiosa e incredibilmente intelligente è sicuramente una perfetta eroina, con cui il lettore si riconosce immediatamente.

Spencer è il piccolino della situazione e pur essendo privato della vista ha un udito iper sviluppato e capace di far fronte al senso che gli manca. Anche lui incredibilmente intelligente, empatico, generoso e compassionevole non è un peso per Aine ma sicuramente un membro importante della squadra, capace di tirarla fuori dai guai.

Gilgamesh è il legame con la loro terra d’origine, un sopravvissuto e un combattente e anche lui nasconde molte cose che saranno chiare solo alla fine del libro. Naturalmente è incredibilmente affascinante e incuriosisce particolarmente Aine che si apre a sentimenti che le sono sconosciuti. Fidarsi per lei è quasi impossibile, ma Gilgamesh, il custode della toadhouse si rivelerà meritevole di fiducia, nonostante alcuni errori.

The villain, il cattivo Biblos è veramente cattivissimo e riesce a fare da contrasto ai “buoni” che lottano creando sfiducia e tradimenti. A volte i cattivi sembrano quasi buoni, o comunque hanno motivazioni che ti inducono a dargli comprensione. Ma un cattivo ben creato è fonte di soddisfazione, come in questo caso.

L’ambientazione magica è molto ben riuscita e coinvolgi diversi cambi di scenario a seconda della storia in cui si trovano i protagonisti. Piena di magia, anche se l’inizio risulta lento e poco incisivo, man mano che ci si immerge nella narrazione la Lourey riesce a creare una piccola meraviglia.

Il particolare da non dimenticare? Un paio di orecchini. Di chi sono e a cosa servono? Leggetelo e scopritelo.

Primo volume della serie, non posso che consigliare la lettura di questo libro a piccoli aspiranti avventurieri, una di quelle storie difficili da dimenticare una volta che si iniziano. Una fiaba nella fiaba, una commistione di vicende che creano un'unità impressionante dando al lettore un pizzico di curiosità per andare a scoprire i libri citati. Io d'altro canto aspetto di leggere il secondo libro.

Buona lettura guys!

Ringrazio infinitamente Jess Lourey per avermi concesso la bellissima opportunità di leggere questa storia in cambio della mia onesta opinione.

Recensione anche sul mio blog:
<http://pleaseanotherbook.tumblr.com/p...>

Helen Robare says

I liked it but...! Because I was visiting my grandsons and had no books to read while there, my youngest grandson gave me this book to read. While I was leery about reading "a kid's book", I was soon utterly absorbed. The first few pages were a bit confusing but after that, it got better and better. The young characters were well written and while others may have read books where characters were transported in and out of books, I never have so I found this concept to be a novel approach to a fantasy YA novel. I loved that the author used books like H.G. Well's Time Machine that I had read many times before as one of the choices for the young heroes to go into.

What I am severely disappointed in is that while this is billed as a trilogy, I could not find book 2 or 3 anywhere on the web so I assume the author hasn't written them yet. This is very disappointing since the copyright is 2012 and there has been plenty of time for the entire trilogy to be published and made available. So if anyone knows for sure if any of the future books HAVE been written, please let me know and include their names so I can buy them and finish the story.

Angela says

PDF via author for honest review

I found this to be a very interesting book indeed. I was very unsure what to really expect of it after reading the summary and a few reviews I read. This was a truly unique book about a journey the characters take from story to story and book to book to find the keys to get them back into the land where their parents are. They know nothing of their parents except that they left them with their Grandmother to raise and take care of them. They quickly learn that things and situations are not as they seem or they think. They actually are in a story and are in danger when a monster named Biblos finds them and attacks their home. To save them their Grandma tells them a clue to where they can find the first of three keys that will then take them to their parents. She doesn't have time to explain anything to them in detail because she is quickly in a battle for her

life and the lives of Aine and her little brother with Biblos. They go with Gilgamesh, a man they were told is safe and will help them, only to find out they knew nothing of their "Grandmother" because she really wasn't their Grandmother at all, but a protector of the children. The children are left with many questions that Gilgamesh can't or won't answer and the wonder of what is really going on. Who are their parents really and where do they come from? How can they have been in a book, how is that even possible? How can they find these keys to seek out their parents when they don't know where they are? Will they ever find out the answers to the many questions they now have or will Biblos get what he wants first by catching them? Will they survive at all?

As I said, this was a unique book, that was very interesting and very well written. I was worried that I would get confused or lost among all the different worlds/books they travel in and to, but I found it actually quite easy to follow and read. The characters were one of the best things about this book for me I think, they really made the book what it is. Aine came off a bit hard to like at times, but I think she just is her own being. Aine's litter brother, Spenser, who is blind is a fun character too that doesn't let anything get in his way...as long as he has the protection of his big sister. Tru is an odd duck of a character, he is a boy that kind of tags along on the journey because he was by their home when they were attacked and had to run away. Biblos was quite the terrifying character for me, wow! That's all I got for him, wow, what a mean and uncaring character. I found this book easy to read and easy to get drawn into with it's characters, settings, and plot. I have contemplated reading Lourey's other mystery books many times, but wasn't sure if I would like her writing, but after reading this book of hers, her other adult books are high on my list too now! Lourey is a fantastic and gifted author who makes the book come alive for readers of all ages. This was a young adult book, but can easily be enjoyed by all ages in my opinion. Toadhouse Trilogy Book One was full of adventure and mystery that just keeps you reading and engaged as a reader. The writing was descriptive enough too, to make it much more enjoyable and "play" more easily in the readers head while reading. I did think the first chapter or so was a bit slow starting, but it was quick to turn around into a fast moving, action packed journey. I really enjoyed reading this book and recommend it to anyone looking for a new and exciting journey to take.

4/5 Stars!

Paige says

I am a huge fan of this author's Murder by the Month series, but I was hesitant to pick this up for a few years. I was unsure how she would fare as a YA writer. There are few authors can write for both adults and youth and do it well so. So while the story drew my interest, I did hold off on picking it up for a long time. Then the author offered this book up as a freebie on Amazon a month or so ago. She did this because it was one of the ones she said she was most proud of. When that happened, I did take advantage of her generosity and one-clicking it.

This book did start off a bit slow and rough. There were a lot of things that were not explained in full detail. I didn't realize that the book the Aine and Spenser were in was Tom Sawyer and they were 'background' characters. I thought it was an original story that happened to take place in the same place and time as Twain's novel. Though that is also something that I can chalk that up to not reading between the lines well enough.

Once the traveling between the different books started, it was a quicker read. The pacing was well done but not too rushed. The dialogue between all four main characters was believable. Aine's one track mind about

everything did get annoying fast. But it was also believable being that she was fifteen years old. Her two main and consistent goals were to keep her brother safe and find their mother. So at least they were noble goals. She was also good at admitting her mistakes, even if the drama did seem a bit much at times. But again she was a teenager.

There were many nods to other pieces of literature apart from the ones the children visited. Lourey did a good job of keeping true to the original stories while putting her own touch on it. Biblos was a terrifying creature for children and grown-ups. There were also glimpses into his humanity, albeit very few and short. I think that, if the other books do get written and published, more of his story will develop as well as Gilgamesh. The seeds were planted for the idea that nothing and no one, hero or villain, is completely one-sided. There were events in this volume that were eye-opening experience for the children, and will likely continue, as they found out not everything, or everyone, is as it seems.

I am unsure if the author will finish this series but I hope she does. I feel there is a lot of promise here and it is a book that everyone can enjoy, especially those who have been life time readers.

Susan (The Book Bag) says

Wow! This is one awesome book! And guess what? It's a trilogy! So there is more to come!

Can you tell I am excited about this series? I loved it! The story starts off with a lot of action and questions to be answered. The reader can't help but to keep on reading to find out what is going to happen next. It is so confusing (in a good way) and there is so much to try to understand.

I immediately loved Aine and her gentle little brother, Spenser. Aine takes such good care of him and has ever since her mother disappeared and they went to stay with their Grandma Glori. As soon as Aine is old enough, she is going to set out to find their mother.

But then weird things start to happen and she finds out that her life is not what she thought it was. The children find out that they are living a story in a book and that the mean and ugly Biblos is after them. Grandma informs Aine and Spenser that they need to find three objects in order beat Biblos and survive. Book one of the trilogy is their adventure to find the first object.

They eventually meet Gilgamesh, a mysterious young man who has a toadhouse that they use to travel from story to story in search of the first object. In order to travel in the toadhouse they have to shrink down to fit inside. I loved that part of the story and would have loved to travel with them.

Another wonderful aspect of this story is that they have to travel from story to story to find the rods that Grandma Glori told them they needed to find. It was awesome to be reading about those stories within a story! A book-lovers dream!

And each chapter ended with a little cliffhanger which completely drew me into the story and made me want to read without stopping - just one more chapter..... please? And the ending? Total cliffhanger! I can't wait to read book two!!

I loved how this book takes us into the storybook world and explains how that world works. I personally am one who believes that toys come alive when we are sleeping and that storybook characters actually do take on lives of their own. It was great to let my imagination go wild while I was in this story!

Sheila says

Beautiful descriptions evoke 1930s Alabama in Jess Loury's *The ToadHouse Trilogy*. A brother and sister aren't quite the same as everybody else. And suddenly the world around them isn't quite the same as everyone imagined either. Touches of mystery foreshadow disaster, and that very strange first chapter begins to make sense. Then the story takes off, as does the Toadhouse.

The concept reminds me a little of Cornelia Funke's *Inheart*, with fictional characters proving as real as Aine and her brother. Together with the curious Gilgamesh, they pursue their quest through the pages of familiar novels, making this a wonderful book to remind young readers of the classics, entice them to read more, inspire literary conversation with their parents, and broaden their tastes—after all, who wouldn't want to read the *Time Machine*, *Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde*, *Sinbad* and more?

Jess Loury's novel is the first in a trilogy, but it's pleasingly complete in itself, enjoyably written and a nice smooth read. Occasional editing slips or unconvincing leaps of logic are easily excused. With the overactive guilt and suspicion of teenaged Aine nicely balanced by the childish exuberance of her blind brother, the overall effect is a fun story for middle-grade readers, filled with mystery, excitement, action, adventure, world-famous literary characters and the feel of a dark, almost grown-up fairy-tale—highly recommended.

Disclosure: I was lucky enough to buy a free copy. I really enjoyed the book.