

Gatehouse: The Door to Canellin

E. H. Jones

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One minute, fifteen-year-old Wes Bellamy is wallowing in self-pity over a suspension from school. The next, he's tumbling into another world through a portal in "a little house where he knew there shouldn't be one." The little house, with its Wizard, is the House of Doors in E. H. Jones' masterful young-adult novel. It's also the gateway into the time-warped world of Canellin to which Wes has been thrust on a mission to kill the Great Dragon. It's high adventure, great entertainment, and a highly recommended introduction to the Gatehouse series written by this computer technician with a talent for sci-fi, fantasy, and horror novels.

As a classic clash between good and evil, Jones' well-plotted story has wonderful twists and turns to catch and hold a reader's interest. The stellar cover art colorfully depicts the fearsome and fiery Dragon and the enormity of Wes's task in facing it. But Wes has help, both natural and magical. His single parent father Ryan, for whom Wes feels he has been a disappointment, soon joins him on his quest. And then there is the ensemble cast of uniquely portrayed characters that inhabit Canellin: Diaticus knows magic and healing, Luther knows the arts of warfare, and his daughter, Jiane, knows more than enough to be an unofficial Blademaster and to turn a flabby Ryan into a proficient swordsman. Street urchin Elarie, with her inexplicable attraction to Wes, knows about thievery and how to help Wes and his friends break into the Tower of Lore to steal artifacts to enhance Wes's newly-found skills of magic and spells. Gideon's an older soldier and Wes's surrogate father and mentor. Lastly, Anton is another warrior with special skills. And, as the band travels by land and sea, they discover secrets, display courage, and battle inner demons as well as the Dragon's scaly dragonmen, spies, and the disasters of storms and volcanic eruptions. Through it all, Wes comes of age and gains increasing proficiency in performing the spells, incantations, and teletransportations he learns from his newly found book of Magic 101 and a magic stone.

The battles and confrontations are as riveting as they are page-turning, even as the final clash with the Dragon approaches and one of Wes's closest companions is killed by his own renegade son before Wes can muster the power to banish the demon and "send it hopefully back where it came from."

But while Wes and his dad make it safely back to whence they came, and develop a much better rapport due to Wes's new-found maturity, the Wizard at the Gatehouse warns them, "We'll be seeing each other again before too long." And, with the publication of *Gatehouse: The Door to Justice* set for fall 2011, the wait won't be too long at all, and presumably, well worth it.

M. WAYNE CUNNINGHAM KAMLOOPS (July 8, 2011)

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