



TEEN SERVICES COMMUNITY SERVICE TEEN BOOK REVIEW

The Door To January By Gillian French Reviewed by Stephanie Sentochnik

Name: Stephanie Sentochnik

Grade: 8

Book Title: The Door To January

Author: Gillian French

Number of Pages: 191

Rating (on a scale of 1-5): 4/5

Character List:

- **Natalie:** Natalie is a junior in high school and has just moved back to her hometown after being in England for 2 years. She is living with her cousin Teddy and her Aunt Cilla for the summer.
- **Teddy:** Teddy is Natalie's cousin and has always been close with her. Teddy is Natalie's partner in crime in the story because they are always together and always have each other's backs.
- **Aunt Cilla:** Aunt Cilla is Natalie's Aunt and Teddy's mother who runs the town diner and has always lived in Bernier, Maine. She is the "cool mom" you always wanted.
- **Lowell:** Lowell is one of Natalie and Teddy's old bullies. He was always the ring leader of the group but, as Natalie finds out, he actually has matured a bit and isn't really a bully anymore.
- **Jason:** Jason is also one of the old bullies but, unlike Lowell, he is still the same taunting and mean kid that he used to be.

Review:

The Door to January by Gillian French is about a girl named Natalie who is visiting her hometown of Bernier, Maine for the summer. She is staying with her cousin Teddy, who she has always been close with, and her Aunt Cilla. The reason she left Maine in the first place is because of an incident caused by her childhood bullies: Jason, Grace, Lowell, and Peter. They always bullied Natalie and Teddy. After school, Natalie and Teddy had a hiding place in the woods where they could escape from all their school problems. One day, the bullies found their hiding spot and Jason brought one of his dad's guns to "scare" Natalie and Teddy. Both of them ran as they heard a gunshot behind them, later finding out that Peter had been shot. None of the other 3 bullies would take the blame, so Peter's death went unsolved.

That was two years ago. Now, Natalie has bigger problems. Ever since she moved away from Maine, she's been having the same vivid nightmare about a house in the woods of her hometown. It's been pulling her towards it, forcing her to go inside and go through a door. When she goes through the door, she hears voices calling her name as she walks down the dirt road to where Peter was shot. These dreams have been intriguing her, so when she gets to Bernier, she tells Teddy all about them and how they have been pulling her to go further through the door to January. Then the two, Teddy hesitant, go to the house every day to explore. They are surprised to find the door in Natalie's dreams is nonexistent in real life. They decide to set up a voice recorder to see if there are any ghosts and prove that that's what

Natalie is hearing in her dreams. To their surprise, they don't hear the voices she's used to, hearing instead a little girl running away from her abusive brother. It sounds like they're actually in the house with them. Natalie follows the sound of the footsteps and she is suddenly surrounded by a blue light and she disappears before Teddy's eyes.

Natalie has now somehow time traveled into 1948, and she has the ability to know what each person in the house is thinking. She sees the girl, whose name is Raisa, hiding in a closet from her brother. But this is only the start of it. Every time Teddy and Natalie enter the house, blue light surrounds Natalie, and she sees more of the past as she uncovers more about the house and why it's calling out to her.

I liked this book because the characters were very easy to relate to. Natalie is a teenager who has a sense of humor that is easy to understand and an outgoing personality. Teddy is also easy to relate to because he is more of a hesitant and smart character so anybody reading can have someone to root for. Another reason I enjoyed this book is because it isn't that long, but it's still a good story. If you're looking for a quick read, this is the perfect book for you. This book is a thriller as well, so I would recommend this book to people who enjoy paranormal activity. The plot of the story was another pro of this book. There was always something new happening so it made you want to read more. The reader was also finding out more about Natalie's past as well as what's happening in the present.

The Door to January had a nice flow to it. I could easily understand what was happening in the story, but I could not predict what was happening next. I felt like the author really took the old fashioned time travel by time machine idea and twisted it in a more modern way by making the "time machine" an old house with a lot of history. Out of all the fiction books I've read about time traveling and paranormal activity, this is probably one of the best presented.