



The Ten Thousand Doors of January

Written by Alix E. Harrow

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The Ten Thousand Doors of January

The Ten Thousand Doors of January

By Alix E. Harrow

The Ten Thousand Doors Of January

In the early 1900s, a young woman embarks on a fantastical journey of self-discovery after finding a mysterious book in this captivating and lyrical debut.

The Ten Thousand Things

In a sprawling mansion filled with peculiar treasures, January Scaller is a curiosity herself. As the ward of the wealthy Mr. Locke, she feels little different from the artifacts that decorate the halls: carefully maintained, largely ignored, and utterly out of place.

The Ten Thousand Doors of January

The Ten Thousand Islands

Then she finds a strange book. A book that carries the scent of other worlds, and tells a tale of secret doors, of love, adventure and danger. Each page turn reveals impossible truths about the world and January discovers a story increasingly entwined with her own.

The Ten Thousand Things Buddhism

Lush and richly imagined, a tale of impossible journeys, unforgettable love, and the enduring power of stories awaits in Alix E. Harrow's spellbinding debut—step inside and discover its magic.

I almost didn't write this review.

I felt that to speak of this book would be to contain what it did to me, to diminish it somehow. And I didn't want to do that. The Ten Thousand Doors of January is almost less a novel than an experience: never have I felt more like I was part of things, moved by the same current, like my soul had disconnected from my body and drifted among fictional souls in a mist somewhere between fantasy and reality.

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It seemed hardly credible when I finished reading that I couldn't follow the words back to a world where this wasn't mere fiction. Of course the sensible part of me informed me, patiently, that none of it had any more bearing on real life than a dream, yet in the surreal fuzziness of the night, I felt on a bone-deep, irrational, completely unshakable level—the possibility that I might turn a key, open a door and unlock the mysteries of the world. Even the morning's clarity couldn't snatch that away.

You see—to read The Ten Thousand Doors of January is to fill your whole life with it. Those minutes—hours—that my gaze was connected to the page, were the only moments in my day that I felt anything at all. Which is why I feel that to share this account, or give anything away, would do a disservice to a reader just coming to this novel, but suffice it to say this:

It all started, as great tales often do, with a book. The rush of turning a page and a story beginning.

But that isn't the true beginning of this story. Perhaps it is more apt to say that it all started with a Door. (Really, though. Semantics.)

January Scaller grew up uneasily lodged with the immensely wealthy Cornelius Locke, her childhood a half-painted picture without her father in it while he disappeared for days, months, to buy off with Locke's gold coins—more often, plunder—marvels and oddities that emerged every day from

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rumors and fables carried by travelers across oceans and deserts to fire the imaginations of rich folk around the world. For years, January was as molten glass in Locke's hands, to be spun into the (dutiful, docile, un-temerarious) shape he liked, and with the pall of every goodbye, what once used to be fluent between January and her father soon became incomprehensible, and far more difficult to translate. Now consumed by a sense of dreary imprisonment within Locke's sprawling mansion and suffering an undimmed longing for an absentee father, January's spirit grew feeble, as though some river within herself had long since dried.

Until one day, January Scaller stumbles upon a book, and she is suddenly lost and found and wandering, all at once.

Following the threads of history through its tangle, January reads about locked Doors that opened at your knock if you put enough faith into the turn of your key, about young girls who wished for surprises around each road's turning and yearned for adventure with a hard, physical longing, like a craving for air underwater, and young boys who could never really step back from brinks no matter how perilous was the drop and whom the world almost no longer held a place (or a Door, for that matter) to hide from. Stories that made January feel that the world went on so much further than she could see, and carried with them the faint scent of "if not freedom, then the coiled charge of its possibility.

When one enters a door, one must be brave enough to see the other side.

Like a lighthouse at sea drawing us to safety, *The Ten Thousand Doors of January* is a tonic for anyone who feels the world is too much sometimes.

Harrow has written a jewel of a novel that grips readers from the opening sentence, and the author's gifts as a writer are unmistakable, as keen as an unsheathed blade. She delivers a pleurably devoured piece of prose, but placed within a novel about people who all have a whiff of the unwanted silently hovering about them, and a forlorn wish for belonging lodged within them, finding each other across worlds guided by nothing but the small, sickly faith they keep between them, she creates a story saturated with so much yearning and ache.

And even more than the plot, the characters, the astoundingly unique turns of phrase, and the skill with which the author brings the intersecting storylines to a resounding ending that was both healing and fraught with pain, what I loved most about this book "and what I will remember most ardently about it" is the way the author succeeds in giving the desperate earnestness of her storytelling the quality of a memory, so that her words ring as resonantly as aged wood. And although I knew none of it was real, I also knew it wasn't not real, and the two knowings drunkenly chased circles in my mind, dizzying me. And therein, I think, lies the book's biggest triumph: in its ability to convince and compel, to conjure up the indescribable "the unfathomable" through language, to make you believe. To show you a door and hand you a key and invite you to embrace the thrilling and sickening lurch of the drop.

The Ten Thousand Doors of January

So, if you ever wondered how it would feel to stand on the threshold of a living dream, I promise this book is your key.

My long years of research have taught me that all stories, even the meanest folktales, matter. They are artifacts and palimpsests, riddles and histories. They are the red threads that we may follow out of the labyrinth. It is my hope that this story is your thread, and at the end of it you find a door.

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The Ten Thousand Doors of January

The Ten Thousand Harold Coyle

ARC provided by the publisher "Orbit" in exchange for an honest review.

4.5/5 stars

Gorgeous and magical; it's not a stretch to call *The Ten Thousand Doors of January* a magnificent physical manifestation of a grimoire.

Orbit did it again. *The Ten Thousand Doors of January* has shot to the top of my TBR since the moment I saw the cover and heard about the premise; I was charmed and can safely say that I don't think I've read many books as beautifully written as this novel. I've been saying this over and over. ARC provided by the publisher "Orbit" in exchange for an honest review.

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Orbit did it again. *The Ten Thousand Doors of January* has shot to the top of my TBR since the moment I saw the cover and heard about the premise; I was charmed and can safely say that I don't think I've read many books as beautifully written as this novel. I've been saying this over and over again for a while now; when it comes to modern SFF debuts, just read everything that Orbit publishes. SFF books published by Orbit these days has a strong chance to satisfy your reading preferences and this novel amplified that notion. I would also like to give a shout out to Emily Byron, who made sure this book reached me for my review, and Maddie Hall, the one in charge of the design behind the ARC packaging of this book; easily the most beautiful ARC package I've ever received.

Picture: My ARC of *The Ten Thousand Doors of January*

The Ten Thousand Doors of January revolves around January Scaller. January was seven years old when she first found a Door. Years later, January starts forgetting about her brief encounter with that Door, until one day she stumbles upon a book. Reading the book changes everything as she begins to discover the truths and revelations surrounding her worlds, and the Door she found when she was a kid. This is not an action-packed book; if you read this book expecting warfare and intricate battle scenes, you'll be sorely disappointed. Instead of filling the pages with action and brutality, Harrow opted for dazzling readers with everlasting stories of wonder brimming with a nostalgic and elegant atmosphere. This is a novel about a book, about stories, and about escapism.

The Ten Thousand Doors of January

“How fitting, that the most terrifying time in my life should require me to do what I do best: escape into a book.”

I truly believe that escapism, for me, is not only a want but a necessity. Whether this is in the form of video games, movies, or reading; they’re all a form of art that makes our harsh realities saner and more livable. *The Ten Thousand Doors of January* felt like a letter written by a voracious reader to another reader. From the very first page, I was immediately struck with the notion that this book will resonate a lot with me and each page gradually continued to strongly enhance that early impression. I just can’t help but say that this is a book that must be read by most readers as long as you’re okay with not having battle scenes in your stories.

“He consumed books as if they were as necessary to his health as bread and water, but they were rarely the books he had been assigned.”

Harrow implemented the importance of stories into the plot wonderfully. Family, love, and adventures were also some of the main themes contained in the novel. A book has the power to change a reader’s perception; to be more open-minded and knowledgeable; to experience adventure and transport us to a different world; reading or writing is magic and many of us are capable of it.

“Books can smell of cheap thrills or painstaking scholarship, of literary weight or unsolved mysteries. This one smelled unlike any book I’ve ever held! It smelled like adventure itself had been harvested in the wild, distilled to a fine wine, and splashed across each page.”

As someone who’s born in January, I found the main character and the meaning behind her name to be a huge plus of the book. This doesn’t mean that you HAVE to be born in January to appreciate it. Names have a power, a meaning, and life of its own; these were discussed within the book and I enjoyed reading them all. Most importantly, January is a heroine that resonated with me. There weren’t a lot of characters, but I found the characterizations splendidly written. Each character has a distinctive personality and attitude that felt genuine and flawed.

“It’s a profoundly strange feeling, to stumble across someone whose desires are shaped so closely to your own, like reaching toward your reflection in a mirror and finding warm flesh under your fingertips. If you should ever be lucky enough to find that magical, fearful symmetry, I hope you’re brave enough to grab it with both hands and not let go.”

If you’ve seen reviews of this book before, you’ll probably notice that the majority of them—whether they loved the book or not overall—agreed that the prose is beautiful; I definitely agree with this statement with all my heart. Seriously, Harrow has a highly-polished prose that totally didn’t feel like a debut effort. The prose was lush, lyrical, enchanting, gorgeous, and immersive. This novel marks the dawn of a new fantasy author with immaculate prose that’s very rare to find in the genre. The contemplative and philosophical nature of the writing made me wish I can tell you all the resplendent phrases I’ve stumbled upon. Words easily translated into imagery; every locale and

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scene were visualized in my head. I'm in disbelief that this is a debut, the author has such an immense subjugation over the structure of words. I can't wait for you to find out how spectacularly written this book was.

“Words and their meanings have weight the world of matter, shaping and reshaping realities through a most ancient alchemy. Even my own writings—so damnably powerless—may have just enough power to reach the right person and tell the right truth, and change the nature of things.”

Alluring passages comprising meticulously chosen words were conjured and evident in every page; Harrow exhibited storytelling skill that gives justice to the saying that the pen is mightier than the sword. *The Ten Thousand Doors of January* is one of the most beautifully-written debuts I've ever read; a big contender for the new tale as old as time, and a must-read fantasy book for every reader who loves books and enjoys reading a superb elaboration of stories and escapism. Every story opens a door, and every door opens a story. Once you opened the door behind the cover of this book, you'll be happily compelled to search every nook and cranny of the story before you're able to close the door again. An eternal charm lies in January's adventure, and believe me when I say that you need to get the key to open the magic door called *The Ten Thousand Doors of January* as soon as possible.

“Let that be a lesson to you: if you are too good and too quiet for too long, it will cost you. It will always cost, in the end.”

Official release date: September 12th, 2019 (UK) and September 10th, 2019 (US)

You can pre-order the book from: [Amazon UK](#) | [Amazon US](#) | [Book Depository](#) (Free shipping)

The quotes in this review were taken from an ARC and are subject to change upon publication.

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NOW AVAILABLE!!!

i mean, it's a perfect book.

that should be the alpha and the omega of this book review, because you've probably already read the synopsis, and if it takes more than that to convince you of this book's desirability, I'm sure I don't have the words to do it.

if you like seanan mcguire's wayward children series, you will probably enjoy this. obviously, they both involve doorways to other worlds, young(ish) protagonists, and adventure, but their more significant shared characteristi **NOW AVAILABLE!!!**

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The Ten Thousand Doors of January

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if you like seanan mcguire's wayward children series, you will probably enjoy this. obviously, they both involve doorways to other worlds, young(ish) protagonists, and adventure, but their more significant shared characteristics are tonal haunting and yearning and saddish; themes of displacement and otherness and an aching inability to fit into the world, how it feels to be an in-between sort of thing.

it also made me think of The Book of Speculation and Saga, with how it handles its themes of fate, family and separation, and in its use of books and letters to carry the narrative. all of these books have given me a very specific and rare kind of sadness-shiver, and i'm always gladdened to encounter another source.

it is a formidable debut—the concept, the characters, the language; she's got it all on lock; there's a richness to her prose that sparkles up off the page and there's a VERY GOOD DOG named bad. even the romantic subplot, which ordinarily activates my eyeroll-muscles, was perfect and understated and my eyeballs remained unrolled.

there are enough unfinished edges and unexplored territory that this could easily expand into a second book or series, but i kind of don't want it to. i definitely want her to write more words for me to read, but the bittersweet ambiguity of the ending is perfect and i want to just close the book and leave them to work the rest out unobserved.

i mean, it's a perfect book.

it's some top-notch book schwag when even the mailing envelope is fancy

this is the debut novel by the woman who wrote Autobiography of a Traitor and a Half-Savage, which i LOVED, and is one of those free tor shorts you can read here while you wait for this book to come out.

oh, and now MORE! a bookmark handmade by alix e. harrow herself! am i charmed? i AM!

The Ten Thousand Doors of January

my TBR stack might just kill me, but i will die happy. and squashed. happy and squashed.

come to my blog! ...more

The Ten Thousand Day War

ETA: On the Fantasy Literature website, at the link, there's a truly fascinating and insightful interview with this author, Alix Harrow.

All the stars! Final review, first posted on Fantasy Literature (along with my co-reviewer Marion's excellent review):

The Ten Thousand Doors of January is perched at the top of the mountain of portal fantasies that I've read in my life. It's set apart by Alix E. Harrow's intelligent and truly gorgeous writing, unique characters – including true friends and a fierce ETA: On the Fantasy Literature website, at the link, there's a truly fascinating and insightful interview with this author, Alix Harrow.

All the stars! Final review, first posted on Fantasy Literature (along with my co-reviewer Marion's excellent review):

The Ten Thousand Doors of January is perched at the top of the mountain of portal fantasies that I've read in my life. It's set apart by Alix E. Harrow's intelligent and truly gorgeous writing, unique characters – including true friends and a fiercely loyal dog – and a complex and twisty plot, combined with thoughtful consideration of racial and class prejudice, powerful men who make rules to benefit themselves, and other social issues.

January Scaller is a young girl in early 20th century America, living in the mansion of Mr. Locke, a wealthy collector of rare and unique items. January's mother is missing and presumed dead, while January's father Julian spends months on end traveling the globe in search of Mr. Locke's rare items. And perhaps, searching for something more. Because January and her father are both aware that there are Doors – portals to different worlds – and Julian, a black man, has a particular reason for searching out these Doors.

Meanwhile, January is being raised by the mysterious Mr. Locke, a man she both loves and fears, though she tries to convince herself that the fear is unreasonable. With her cedarwood-colored skin, January has never entirely fit into the world of wealth and privilege that she inhabits with Mr. Locke. But she has a strong-willed companion, Jane Irimu, sent to her by her father, and a protective dog, Bad (short for Sinbad, and it's clear that both versions of his name are appropriate – though he's bad only to the hidebound or evil characters), given to her by her equally loyal friend Samuel.

Just before her seventeenth birthday, January finds a strange book titled The Ten Thousand Doors that purports to be a monograph on passages and portals between worlds. Primarily, though, it's about the life and adventures of a young woman named Adelaid Lee Larson (Ade), who finds some Doors of her own. Books can smell of cheap thrills or painstaking scholarship, of literary weight or unsolved mysteries.

The Ten Thousand Doors of January

This one smelled unlike any book I'd ever held. Cinnamon and coal smoke, catacombs and loam. Damp seaside evenings and sweat-slick noontimes beneath palm fronds. It smelled as if it had been in the mail for longer than any one parcel could be, circling the world for years and accumulating layers of smells like a tramp wearing too many clothes.

It smelled like adventure itself had been harvested in the wild, distilled to a fine wine, and splashed across each page. And then one day January makes the mistake of mentioning Doors to Mr. Locke!

I loved Harrow's meditations on the nature of doors that she weaves into the text: they're portals, of course, passageways to adventure or love, but also a symbol of healthy change and openness. And occasionally doors are books or even words ("Sometimes I feel that there are doors lurking in the creases of every sentence, with periods for knobs and verbs for hinges").

Characters' names have power in this book: Mr. Locke is, unsurprisingly, antithetical to open magical doors and passageways; the irimu is a creature of African legend, sometimes called a were-leopard. The unprepossessing name Scaller might be (I conjecture here) derived from "scall," a scabby disorder of the scalp, or the sculling of a rowboat; or, perhaps, something more that's initially hidden from both the reader's and January's understanding.

Through January and other characters, Harrow warns of the dangers of being too good, too quiet, and too accepting of the status quo. The will to be polite, to maintain civility and normalcy, is fearfully strong. I wonder sometimes how much evil is permitted to run unchecked simply because it would be rude to interrupt it. The entire book is an encouragement to take action. If I have any complaint at all, it's that sometimes the narrator is overtly preachy where I would have preferred a more subtle approach (footnote 6, I'm looking at you). But the overall message, to have the courage to do what needs to be done, and to "run through every open Door and tell stories when you return," is an overwhelmingly positive one.

The Ten Thousand Doors of January is a magical entry to a wondrous universe. Don't miss the chance to walk through this doorway!

Initial post: Cheers! I finally got the NetGalley ARC for this book! I was beating the bushes on this one because I really wanted it (I emailed the author and the publisher last week as well as putting in a NetGalley request, which they had ignored for a couple of months. One of those methods finally worked). :) ...more

If there is a part of you that has always felt there is magic in the world ever since childhood, despite voices to the contrary, and have a penchant for the whimsical, then Alix Harrow has written the perfect novel for you. It is a story of doors, portals if you will, existing in places of particular resonance, stepping through the void, into fables, folklore, adventure, love and sanctuary, and the infinite power of words and stories. In 1901, at the age of 7, the red skinned, wilful and cantankerous If there is a part of you that

The Ten Thousand Doors of January

has always felt there is magic in the world ever since childhood, despite voices to the contrary, and have a penchant for the whimsical, then Alix Harrow has written the perfect novel for you. It is a story of doors, portals if you will, existing in places of particular resonance, stepping through the void, into fables, folklore, adventure, love and sanctuary, and the infinite power of words and stories. In 1901, at the age of 7, the red skinned, wilful and cantankerous January Scaller lives with her guardian, the enormously wealthy, white and powerful William Locke on a sprawling estate, in a house crammed full of stolen treasures in his collections, mostly acquired by her black father on his global adventures, occasionally returning, whilst she stays behind in Vermont. January is in Kentucky when she encounters her first door, but Locke does not believe her and she is punished. In her efforts to please him she grows up trying to be a good girl, curbing her natural instincts and desires, to conform to his stringent expectations.

January is a strange oddity, only tolerated by the outside world riven with racism because she accompanies the man of substance that is Locke, the Chairman of the Archaeological Society, on his business trips. He informs her ' Power, my dear, has a language, a currency....and a color', as she grows up lonely, with only one, below the radar, non-fictional friend, Samuel Zappia, who gives her a beloved dog, (Sin)Bad. Until Jane arrives, a brave and courageous Amazon woman, sent to protect January by her father. A griefstricken and drunk January responds with unpalatable truths to Locke and his much vaunted Archaeological Society, an act which is to shatter the world as she knows it. In the gripping narrative, the lives of Adelaide Larson and Yule Ian (Julian) are outlined culminating in a meeting that triggers adventures, journeys through doors and dedicated scholarly research that results in a remarkable book, The Ten Thousand Doors, which falls in the hands of January, with its shocking revelations. As January is ferociously hunted and facing grave dangers, will she be able to find the inner resources to fight the deadly threats?

Harrow writes a bewitching story, about powerful underhand forces that are determined to eliminate all threats to the existing political establishment, about family, loss, grief, and a coming of age tale. The characterisation is stellar, a January facing life altering challenges, and her poignant battles to fight the ingrained responses instilled in her from childhood, and I adored Jane, Samuel and the loyal Bad. This is an enchanting read, lyrical, full of charm, that manages to connect with our inner desires and belief that there is magic and hope out there, although perhaps it is unlikely to appeal to those who have a more sceptical nature. An unmissable read for those who adore this type of fantasy, brilliant, colourful, vibrant, with echoes of the darkest of fairytales, and infused with the grim realities of our contemporary world when it comes to issues of race. Highly recommended. Many thanks to Little, Brown for an ARC.
...more

The Ten Thousand Hour Rule

Seeing the cover? - Want it!

Seeing the synopsis? - Need it!

Realising it is about escaping the reality? - Well, run a DNA test cuz I and this book relate for sure

5 thousand stars first for wonderful, amazing illustration on the cover and five thousand stars go for rest of the heart throbbing, one of the most creative, colorful, joyful journeys to many different imaginary portals you can never imagine to visit!

FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELT, OPEN YOUR EYES, READY TO COUNT TO 10 THOUSAND!

This is amazing combination of McGuire's Wayward Children Series and Stephen King's Dark Tower series!

BLURB: Seven years old January's revelation of finding a door opens to Faeri 5 thousand stars first for wonderful, amazing illustration on the cover and five thousand stars go for rest of the heart throbbing, one of the most creative, colorful, joyful journeys to many different imaginary portals you can never imagine to visit!

FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELT, OPEN YOUR EYES, READY TO COUNT TO 10 THOUSAND!

This is amazing combination of McGuire's Wayward Children Series and Stephen King's Dark Tower series!

BLURB: Seven years old January's revelation of finding a door opens to Faerie, Atlantis, Valhalla, and the places never found on a map. Of course I'm intrigued and wanted to learn more!

HEROINE: January is definitely; brave, witty, sarcastic, loyal, gifted, young heroine. It's enjoyable how she compares herself with regular book heroines with her great sense of humor!

FAVORITE CHARACTERS: Of course the badass, loyal, brave dog!

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS: Mr. Locke, blood freezing, teeth grinding, nerve bending villain who deserves to be putted on a dart chart so you can be more concentrated to hit the target!

Jane is memorable Amazon woman! Straightforward, tough, protector.

Samuel: sweet, loyal, romantic, impossible not to love and care for!

And January's parents and their love story are definitely heartbreaking! I sighed so many times

The Ten Thousand Doors of January

when I'm reading their parts!

WRITING STYLE: Pacing was not fast but not too slow! It keeps your attention alert and hooked you from the first page, you don't want to stop, want to learn more and more till your head starts to turn because you passed your sleep time five hours ago and you start to see the sunrise and you realize it's too late to go to the bed so you'd better finish the book!

ENDING: When I close a book and see my smile like Cheshire cat cover my face all night, it means I'm so satisfied with the ending. So yes! It's the best emotional, joyful, smart ending to this unconventional, creative, well-crafted, remarkable story!

FANTASY LOVERS, GOOD STORY CHASERS, PORTAL TRAVELERS, this book is highly recommended for you! ...more

The Ten Thousand Doors of January

The Ten Thousand Doors Of January Review

In the summer of 1901, at the age of seven, January Scaller found a Door. You know the kind of door—they lead to Faerie, to Valhalla, to Atlantis, to all the places never found on a map.

These portal fantasy premises get me EVERY TIME. This sounds a bit like McGuire's Wayward Children series, which I love. Also exciting that this comes highly recommend by Josiah Bancroft ðŸ˜• Can't wait!

ARC provided in exchange for honest review ðŸ˜•

NOW PUBLISHED

The blurb from NetGalley:

EVERY STORY OPENS A DOOR

In a sprawling mansion filled with peculiar treasures, January Scaller is a curiosity herself. As the ward of the wealthy Mr. Locke, she feels little different from the artifacts that decorate the halls: carefully maintained, largely ignored and utterly out of place.

But her quiet existence is shattered when she stumbles across a strange book. A book that carries the scent of other worlds and tells a tale of secret doors, of love, adv NOW PUBLISHED

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But her quiet existence is shattered when she stumbles across a strange book. A book that carries the scent of other worlds and tells a tale of secret doors, of love, adventure and danger. Each page reveals more impossible truths about the world, and January discovers a story increasingly entwined with her own.

This was a beautiful read. I was thoroughly enchanted by it. The story follows a girl called January... I loved this name for her because of its origins with the god Janus and how he looked both forwards and backwards, bridging doorways.

January's father travels constantly. He works for a man named Mr. Locke and is tasked with locating all manner of unusual objects and trinkets for this wealthy man. January is therefore left at home in Locke house where she is akin to Mr. Locke's ward... But her life doesn't feel as if it's her own. She feels like a fish out of water so to speak. Until one day she discovers a book about Doors between worlds... And her world is never the same again.

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I so enjoyed this story. It was simply charming. I do love books within books and this really had a great plot with how the "book within the book" ultimately connected with January's own story. The plot had everything I love; adventure, a quest, a love story for the ages, magic, secret societies, good guys, bad guys, a trusty canine companion... I was basically in heaven!

January herself was a wonderful character. I loved how this book portrayed her as ultimately being quite spunky but at the beginning having her be rather more subdued echoing how she was being treated as Mr Locke's ward. Her character arc was very interesting to read about in how it explored how societal views on racial differences, pertaining to skin colour and wealth, affected January at the different stages of her quest in the novel. I also enjoyed how this book didn't shy away from upturning gender stereotypes and made the main female characters feel like incredibly authentic women who could be both soft and strong. These topics really added a sense of gravitas to the whole proceedings.

This is the type of book that makes you long for the story to be real. I long to believe that there are doors between our world and elsewhere. That these doors can transport us to places that we couldn't even possibly imagine. Places that are exquisitely beautiful and yet ordinary at the same time. Places where people live lives entirely different to our own... And yet are entirely the same in that they share our need for love, family, companionship...

'The Ten Thousand Doors of January' is a book for people who are still children at heart. People who want to believe in fairytale and magic. It's a book that really calls to mind that way that you feel about reading when you are a little kid; when imagination and story know no limits. I don't mean to say that the book or the story are any way childish but reading it just evokes that childish gleefulness of getting completely lost within the pages of your book.

I highly recommend it to lovers of historical fiction who like a little bit of magical realism sprinkled in with the storyline.

Four and a half stars

An e-copy of this book was kindly provided to me by the publisher, Orbit/Little Brown Book Group UK, via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

For more reviews and book related chat check out my blog [...more](#)

The Ten Thousand Book

"Maybe you've even seen one for yourself, standing half-ajar and rotted in an old church, or oiled and shining in a brick wall. Maybe, if you're one of those fanciful persons who find their feet running toward unexpected places, you've even walked through one and found yourself in a very unexpected place indeed."

January is a young girl torn between two worlds. Her parentage makes her special, yet people see what they want to see, dictated by the (twisted) preconceived notions of the early 20th-century society. "Maybe you've even seen one for yourself, standing half-ajar and rotted in an old church, or oiled and shining in a brick wall. Maybe, if you're one of those fanciful persons who find their feet running toward unexpected places, you've even walked through one and found yourself in a very unexpected place indeed."

January is a young girl torn between two worlds. Her parentage makes her special, yet people see what they want to see, dictated by the (twisted) preconceived notions of the early 20th-century society. Motherless and with an absent father, January tries to find an escape and a purpose to satisfy her ever-searching mind and soul. And then, doors start appearing. Doors leading to different worlds, doors hiding adventure and danger. And, perhaps, the key that leads to her past and her family.

"Those of you who are more than casually familiar with books—those of you who spend your free afternoons in frusty bookshops, who offer furtive, kindly strokes along the spines of familiar titles—understand that page raffling is an essential element in the process of introducing oneself to a new book. It isn't about reading the words; it's about reading the smell, which wafts through the pages in a cloud of dust and wool pulp. It might smell expensive and well bound, or it might smell of tissue-thin paper and blurred two-colour print, or of fifty years unread in the home of a tobacco-smoking old man. Books can smell of cheap thrills or painstaking scholarship, of literary weight or unsolved mysteries."

If nothing else, this novel is rich in beautiful bookish references. I found some of the most powerful descriptions of the impact of books in our lives, the way they shape our souls, the difference we unwittingly form in relation to people who don't touch a book, remaining prisoners of the telly and their mundane microcosm. Books make us soar, imagination runs wild and doors open, leading to new worlds and new characters that become our company. Some momentary, others become friends and loves for life. January discovers a new life through a book of Ten Thousand Doors, aided by a brave young woman.

The same adjectives can be used to characterize January and Jane, two memorable characters that become the perfect companions for such a story. They are faithful to their course, fearless and realistic. But for me, the crown jewel is Ade. Ade and Jul's relationship is beautiful and moving and it touched me so much that once Ade was kept out of the picture, I began to lose interest... At times the narration drags and the dialogue becomes too contemporary, arguably unfaithful to the era depicted. Certain

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incidents and twists were repetitive and predictable. Once January discovers her past, the writing and the story slow down. In addition, certain parts of the plot seem too neatly wrapped and others were left loose.

I am certain that Fantasy lovers will adore this novel. It was definitely a satisfying and unusual read but it didn't particularly stick with me. Which is fine, not all books can enter the Favourites squad. The writing was beautiful and the themes powerful but I lost focus and grew tired towards the final chapters. Therefore, four stars from me.

"[...] my long years of research have taught me that all stories, even the meanest folktales, matter. They are artifacts and palimpsests, riddles and histories. They are the read threads that we may follow out of the labyrinth. It is my hope that this story is your thread, and at the end of it you will find a door."

Many thanks to Orbit and NetGalley for the ARC in exchange for an honest review.

My reviews can also be found on <https://theopinionatedreaderblog.wordpress.com/> ...more

You can find this review and more at Novel Notions.

Actual rating: way more than 5 stars.

I received a copy of this book from the publisher (Orbit/Redhook) in exchange for an honest review. All opinions expressed in this review are completely my own.

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The Ten Thousand Doors of January is quite possibly the most achingly beautiful novel Iâ€™ve ever read, and I find it mind-boggling that anything this lovely could possibly be a debut novel. There are a scant handful of novels Iâ€™ve experienced in my life (The Name of the Wind, The Resurrection of Joan Ashby, and The Night Circus come to mind) that were breathtaking debuts of this caliber, and they remain my very favorite books Iâ€™ve ever had the pleasure of reading. Iâ€™m so incredibly happy to add Alix E. Harrowâ€™s novel to that list.

â€œIf we address stories as archeological sites, and dust through their layers with meticulous care, we find at some level there is always a doorway. A dividing point between here and there, mundane and

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magical. It is at the moment when the doors open, when things flow between worlds, that stories happen.â€•

As soon as the synopsis and cover art (isnâ€™t that cover almost painfully pretty?) for this book became public, *Ten Thousand Doors* immediately catapulted to my most anticipated book of 2019. I preordered it for my birthday in February, even though itâ€™s not scheduled to be released until September. Imagine my delight when, less than a week ago, I returned home from church to find an envelope featuring this bookâ€™s stunning artwork waiting for me on my doorstep. Iâ€™ve never received a more beautiful ARC, and this is the first time I have ever seen a galley delivered in special packaging such as I saw on my stoop. My husband laughed when I darted out of the car before it was even fully in park, leaving my phone and house key and everything else in the vehicle because I was so insanely excited. I tried desperately to pace myself, trying not to read more than 50 pages or so per day so that the book would last as long as possible. Alas, I was hopelessly incapable of sticking to that pace and found the story drawing to a close far too quickly.

â€œYou see, doors are many things: fissures and cracks, ways between, mysteries and borders. But more than anything else, doors are change.â€•

When you have such a high level of excitement going into a book, itâ€™s very hard to temper your expectations and not be disappointed. And yet, I never once felt disappointed in *Ten Thousand Doors*. From page one, I fell in love with January Scaller. When we first meet January, she is seven years old and, though her father is living, finds herself being raised by Mr. Locke, his benefactor, as her father travels the world, searching for exotic treasures to bring back to his employer. January is wild and sullen and headstrong and oddly colored, an unfortunate circumstance considering the time and place in which she lives. Worst of all, sheâ€™s imaginative. Throughout her childhood years, she is herded and tamed into submission by Mr. Locke and militant nursemaids, and sees less and less of her father. But though she has been bent by her benefactor, she has managed to remain unbroken, and finds many opportunities to test and marvel at the strength of her own character.

â€œI escaped outdoors (see how that word slips into even the most mundane of sentences? Sometimes I feel there are doors lurking in the creases of every sentence, with periods for knobs and verbs for hinges).â€•

What I loved the most about January was how alive she seemed. From the very beginning, she had an incredibly strong, distinctive voice, and an open honesty to her character that made her wonderfully believable. Sheâ€™s far from perfect, and thatâ€™s what makes her so engaging. The amount of character development packed into less than 400 pages is astounding. I loved watching this fiery little girl grow into a woman and recapture that spark that had been smothered within her. January has also been blessed with a trio of amazing friends who will do anything in their power to aid her on her quest. I donâ€™t want to describe them and inadvertently take anything away from the reading experiences of others, so Iâ€™ll just say that theyâ€™re all three brave and loyal and steadfast, but in radically different ways. Iâ€™m so impressed that Harrow was able to imbue even her side characters with such heaping amounts of personality and believability.

â€œAt this point, youâ€™re thinking that this story isnâ€™t really about Doors, but about those more private, altogether more miraculous doors that can open between two hearts. Perhaps it is in the endâ€”I happen to believe that every story is a love story if you catch it at the right moment, slantwise in the light of duskâ€”but it wasnâ€™t then.â€•

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Something else that I loved about this book was its duality. Though January is our protagonist, we also trek right along with her as she reads through a magical book that she found in an antique trunk. The chapters of said magical book are very different in tone and voice than January's chapters, and I thoroughly enjoyed this added variance. January's insatiable need to see how that story ended increased my own desire to continue reading. I felt that the author and purpose of the little book were both a bit obvious, but that they were meant to be so, which ensured that the predictability of that particular information couldn't be in any way disappointing.

• If you are wondering why other worlds seem so brimful of magic compared to your own dreary Earth, consider how magical this world seems from another perspective. •

Between the magical book and the otherworldly Doors mentioned in the title, I was strongly reminded of two books that I adore: *Inkheart* and *Every Heart a Doorway*. However, as much as I dearly love the two aforementioned titles, *The Ten Thousand Doors of January* surpassed them both in my eyes by intermingling the things I love so much about both. As with *Inkheart*, *Ten Thousand Doors* makes much of not only books but the words with which they're crafted. And, as with *Every Heart a Doorway*, there are magical portals to a multitude of realms, hidden behind and beneath the mundane, and the search for these Doors is an all-consuming quest for certain characters involved. I won't talk more about January's Doors, as they are the backbone of her story and readers should learn about these portals as they read, but I love the entire idea of them and desperately wish I could find one of my own, and found them even more enticing than those in McGuire's *Every Heart a Doorway*.

• Worlds are too complex, too beautifully fractured to be named. •

Though I loved January and her friends, and I rooted for them as they faced down their foes, that was not my favorite element of this novel. And though the plot was everything I could hope for and more, keeping me enthralled and remaining at the forefront of my mind far after I had closed its pages, that was not my favorite aspect, either. The thing I loved most about this book was the absolutely exquisite prose. Harrow is more than an author; she is a Wordsmith, a sorceress wielding a pen in place of a wand. Her writing is effortlessly stunning and unconsciously literary. I've read a lot of literary fiction, and fantasy, and literary fiction trying to also be fantasy. I have found very few novels that managed to bridge the gap from literary fiction to fantasy in a compelling and convincing way, though I have found many fantasy authors who, in my opinion, can hold their own with any literary author. *The Ten Thousand Doors of January* is one of a mere handful of books that I've come across that could sit comfortably in either the literary or fantasy genre, and I think it beautifully combines both.

• Doors, he told her, are change, and change is a dangerous necessity. Doors are revolutions and upheavals, uncertainties and mysteries, axis points around which entire worlds can be turned. They are the beginnings and ending of every true story, the passages between that lead to adventures and madness and "here he smiled" even love. Without doors the world's would grow stagnant, calcified, storyless. •

Not only does Harrow have a gorgeous way with words, but she appreciates the building blocks of language in a way that I've rarely if ever seen in fiction. Something she did that I felt was incredibly unique was drawing attention to letters themselves. When a word is important, you capitalize it. And when you capitalize a word, that first letter suddenly becomes a representation of that word. At least, that is what Harrow points out through the eyes and mind of January. For example, when you capitalize the first letter of Villain, doesn't that V speak of daggers and fangs? That's what January thinks.

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When you read this book, which I desperately hope you will, watch for explanations of words like Door and Threshold, Companion and Home. They were such beautiful ideas that my heart kept them, and I know they will come back to me every time I come across these words.

Worlds were never meant to be prisons, locked and suffocating and safe. Worlds were supposed to be great rambling houses with all the windows thrown open and the wind and summer rain rushing through them, with magic passages in their closets and secret treasure chests in their attics.

This is among the longest reviews I've ever written, and I still feel that I haven't said enough. Or perhaps I've said too much. In either case, I hope I was able to convey how much I adore this book, and how deeply it touched me. For the first time in my adult life, I'm honestly contemplating rereading a book immediately, or at least within the same year. Maybe I'll hold out until release day, and experience it again when I receive my preordered copy. I haven't read a book twice in one year since I was in middle school. I can already tell that January is going to be one of my dearest friends, and that I'll be revisiting her often. The Ten Thousand Doors of January is a marvel, and I can't wait for the world to read it.

The quotations in the review above were taken from an advance reading copy and are subject to change upon the book's publication. ...more