



## The Gate

*Dann A. Stouten*

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## **The Gate** Dann A. Stouten

When an ad for a vacation cottage catches the eye of a man on the edge of burnout, he impulsively sets off to visit the property while his wife and daughters are away. When he arrives and is ushered through the gate, he finds something far different from the typical vacation retreat. In fact, it seems he may have found the back door to heaven. The proprietor and people from his past welcome him with food, rest, and conversation until what started out as a little escape from everyday life turns into an experience he will never forget.

## **The Gate Details**

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Author : Dann A. Stouten

Format : Paperback 245 pages

Genre : Christian Fiction, Christian, Fiction, Fantasy, Contemporary

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## From Reader Review The Gate for online ebook

### Kate Stouten says

Dann Stouten is a great story teller! I didn't want to put this one down.

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### Cheryl says

Schuyler Hunt had planned a trip for him and his wife until it turned into a girl's weekend. Now Schuyler is left wondering what to do with his free time. Schuyler sees an ad on the internet for a cottage called Angel's Gate in God's county. Schuyler thinks this might be the perfect place to retire in so that their grandchildren can visit. Schuyler decides to take a look at the cottage while the girls are off to play. Once at Angel's Gate Schuyler will get an life changing event.

Right away when you read this book you will see some similarities with The Shack by Mr. William P. Young. However while each book takes a man and has him speaking with God in a shack or cottage in this case and teaches him lessons that is where the commonality ends.

In this book Schuyler also is visited by old friends that have since passed but have important lessons to teach Schuyler. The lessons are the following: Choices, Perseverance, Questions, Encouragement, Priorities, Self-examination, Forgiveness, Potential, Hope, Limitations, Evil, and Communion. While I did enjoy reading this book, it did not have as strong a lasting impression as the Shack did. Still The Gate is a good first novel by Mr. Stouten.

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### Meagan Myhren-bennett says

The Gate

By Dann A. Stouten

The Gate has an interesting premise and it does not disappoint. Schuyler Hunt, or Sky as his friends and family call him has had his vacation plans take an unexpected turn. Instead of a week off and a few days to get away with his wife, Sky was on his own when his wife and three adult daughters decided to turn the trip into a girls' shopping excursion in Chicago.

I personally can't imagine spending a week-end shopping, so I'm obviously of the same mind as Sky (and most likely a disappointment to my grandmother on that score!). Give me a good book any day over shopping and The Gift definitely fits the criteria.

When an online ad for an old inn catches his eye, Sky checks it out over his week-end off. What was merely curiosity is about to become a turning point in Sky's life. As various people from his past visit and reminisce with him they leave him bits of wisdom that will effect changes in how he sees and lives life.

The Gate reminds me of two movies that I've seen The Five People You Meet in Heaven and The Ultimate Gift. But The Gift is better in that you get to understand Sky - his thoughts, the decisions that shaped him into who he is today In short you discover who he is and how his decisions shaped his life. If you could

interact face to face with God in a down to earth setting from your childhood would you choose to? This is what Sky has to decide - will he spend time with God and become more or will he return home trapped in his mediocre, ordinary, lukewarm Christian life.

Some of the insights that most resonated with me are:

- 1) that we all have ups and downs in our story,
- 2) time is an unrenowable resource,
- 3) answers take time and wisdom takes endurance,
- 4) don't waste your time trying to impress acquaintances focus this time instead on your family,
- 5) love and forgiveness are a choice, a choice that reflects your heart.

The Gift is a book that truly is a gift in that it speaks to the human heart, which we all have. It is never too late for any heart to be touched until God says it is too late and He gives us a lifetime to find it. This is a book that you will want to read again and to share with your family and friends. I would love to take a trip to Angel's Gate - the back door to God's country and The Gift will give you a glimpse into it.

I received a copy of this book from the publisher for the purpose of this review and my honest opinion.

Available April 2013 at your favorite bookseller from Revell, a division of Baker Publishing Group.

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### **Andi says**

When Sky arrives at the cottage, one he didn't book, he is met with several people from his past to guide him during his stay at the cottage.

He gets a glimpse into heaven. This book has been compared to The Shack, which it is clearly not! I read The Shack and hated it for many reasons. This book is more than any thing William P Young could even think to write. Dann writes a book that is definitely ministering and comforting.

He has a great way with words and imagery.

I highly recommend this book!

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### **Kathleen (Kat) Smith says**

Heaven is a very real place. As believers, we have the hope and faith of believing that when this life ends, our eternal one ends. Dann A. Stouten in his debut novel shares one such experience of Schuyler Hunt, who takes a journey one afternoon while his wife and daughters head out for a all-girls shopping trip to inquire about a cottage for sale. This cottage reminds him of the one from his childhood and might just be the perfect thing to consider making a purchase on to help his own family share in his favorite times at the lake!

Sky needs this time alone not only to reflect on his favorite times at the cottage, but also to get away from the stress of always coming to the aid of her younger brother Ben. It always seems like Sky has bailed Ben out of one financial mess after another and this time is no exception. Ben has overspent on the line of credit the bank has extended on the used car lot his brother now manages. Instead of immediately coming to his rescue again, he simply needs to take some time to consider just what to do, and another perfect reason for this trip.

Only when he arrives, he gets more than he bargained for when he arrives at the entrance of the property in a rain storm and gets his car stuck in the mud. Knowing it's late, he decides to sleep in the car until morning. When he arrives at the real estate office, he meets Michael DeAngelo who tells Sky, they have been

expecting him. Sky figures his wife has made these arrangements and thinks nothing of his comment. He is escorted into the cottage, where he meets Ahbee who makes him an amazing breakfast. Ahbee tells him that he is about to get a true taste of heaven, but doesn't understand all the implications just yet. He thinks Ahbee is taking about the home made cinnamon rolls he made for breakfast. Sky thinks he truly has gotten away from all the cares of home and is now in God's country. Ahbee tells him that he is and he will be learning quite a few things during his stay at the cottage, but whether he stays or not is his choice.

What Sky is about to encounter will truly be a heavenly experience as he enters Angel's Gate and spends some time at the cottage reflects on God's interaction in his life and the people who have moved on to heaven are now given a rare moment in time to share something that God wants each of them to pass along to Sky in his quest for answers to the problems in his life. There are so many great and inspirational quotes it is too hard to list them all here, but trust me, once you pick this one up, you will also find yourself on your own journey into a small slice of heaven!

This novel reminded me so much of Mitch Albom's One More Day in which the main character Sky finds himself in heaven where he gets to visit with those who have died for a day. His mother, grandparents, friends and mentors all share a bit of heavenly wisdom along with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit to encourage and inspire Sky to become a much better person with the time he has left on earth. He remembers that "time is an unrenewable resource that should never be wasted," and spends the "time" he is here learning from those who have gone before them. This is such a wonderful novel that gives us all a glance into what heaven might be like and cause us to live our lives with the time we have left on earth, with more passion, purpose and love. I'd rate this one a 5 out of 5 stars.

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## **Mark says**

I absolutely hated The Shack, and found it to be heretical and it dragged God down to a level He should not be dragged down to, not to mention the cursing in the book. Therefore, I am always leery of reading a book that is compared to that book, but so far have liked the books that are compared to it. This book was said to be reminiscent of The Shack, so I almost passed on it, but decided to give it a try. It is a little similar to The Shack, and possibly to The Five People You Meet In Heaven, which I have not read, but know the premise of.

The main character, Schuyler, goes to check out a vacation cottage and it turns out be Heaven. He gets to spend time with Jesus and God the Father. Unlike the author of The Shack, I didn't feel the author pulled God or Jesus down to an improper level. I wasn't sure about the Holy Spirit being portrayed as a woman, and that kind of bothered me, although Scripture doesn't give a masculine pronoun to the Holy Spirit.

I liked the book, really liked it. There are some nuggets of truth in this fiction novel that are sticking with me, such as "Christianity isn't about escaping the world, it is about changing it." And that it isn't our job to bring people on earth to Heaven. Our job is to bring Heaven to earth, to live in a way that makes people want our faith.

This is one of those books that thought it is fiction, is more than fiction. It has a lot of things in it that make you think and desire your walk with God to be different and better. I'm sure there are those who might consider the book "preachy", as there are many who seem to think Christian fiction should just entertain. I disagree. The highest compliment that could be given to a Christian novel, in my opinion, is that it goes

beyond entertaining and interesting, and either brings the reader closer to God, or convicts him or her to do better. This is one of those books. I would definitely recommend it. If you haven't read *The Shack* and are thinking about it, read this instead.

I have never been a fan of the first person point of view in fiction, but some authors can make me like it more than others. This book was written from the first person point of view, and I actually feel it worked better for this book. Regardless, it is a great novel that has the possibility to change the reader for the better.

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### **Kev Willoughby says**

A unique book that will help you put your present in its proper context with your past and your future. I couldn't put it down until I finished it. This book will give you hope and help you to pinpoint purpose in your circumstances and direction in your daily choices.

I saw little pieces of some of my favorite other books in this one. It was very much like Andy Andrews' "The Traveler's Gift," because each of the characters in the story, one at a time, had a life lesson to impart to the protagonist, Sky. However, instead of using historical figures to teach the lessons, the stars of this story were much closer and precious to Sky, and because of those personal connections, the lessons were more meaningful, impactful, and emotional.

This book also incorporates a bit of mysteriousness through the characters of Ahbee, Josh, and Rae, who are very similar in nature to the character of Jones in Andy Andrews' "The Noticer." Those three direct the action and guide Sky to wisdom and understanding.

The recollections that Sky has as he encounters each character from his past are reminiscent of the narrative and setting in John Grisham's "The Painted House," as Sky begins to appreciate, only in retrospect, how simple and special his life has been with his family.

Finally, the imagery in this book seems to have shades of Randy Alcorn's must-read book, "Heaven," as Sky gets a preview of things to come in his life as he prepares for the future ahead of him.

I loved this book, and it's hard to believe that this was a first novel for author Dann Stouten. It is well-written and will keep your interest throughout. Stouten makes it easy for the reader to see himself/herself as Sky, and the message is clear: success in this life is not about accolades or the accumulation of material wealth. It's about people. It's about our relationships. It's about forgiveness and reconciliation and hope and encouragement. It's about not giving up and not leaving anyone behind.

Buy this book, read it, and give it to someone else to enjoy today. This one will plant seeds.

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### **Victor Gentile says**

Dann A. Stouten in his new book, "The Gate" published by Revell takes us into the life of Schuyler Hunt.

From the back cover: Every life is a story. Schuyler Hunt is about to come face-to-face with the author of his.

When a planned getaway with his wife turns into a shopping trip for the girls, Schuyler Hunt finds himself looking for something else to do. An ad for a vacation cottage catches his eye, and he sets off in search of a much-needed break. When he arrives, he finds something far different from the typical summer home experience. In fact, he may have found a little slice of heaven.

The proprietor—along with a number of unexpected and yet familiar guests—welcomes him with food, rest, and conversation, until what started out as an escape from everyday life turns into something much, much more . . .

“The Gate” is an allegory. Earlier in my life I hated allegories because I couldn’t figure them out. Dann Stouten has made this allegory easy so he took all the stress away. The ad for Paradise Realty reads, “Angel’s Gate – the back door to God’s country”, and the realtor is Michael DeAngelo. That should give you some idea of what is to come. Each chapter is a topic that is discussed between Schuyler and the guests that come and visit him for the week that he is at the cabin. Schuyler tells us at the beginning that things can layer up on you, like putting rocks in your knapsack. The first rock you can handle but after a while they begin to weigh you down and other people notice. That is the point of this book. It is about the choices we make and how they can pile up on us and can crush us if we don’t allow God to come and help empty our knapsack. “The Gate” is a lot of fun and relaxing as well. Sit back in your favorite chair, have an iced tea handy and read and enjoy this book allowing God to talk to you. You’ll be glad you did.

If you would like to listen to interviews with other authors and professionals please go to [www.kingdomhighlights.org](http://www.kingdomhighlights.org) where they are available On Demand.

To listen to 24 hours non-stop, commercial free Christian music please visit our internet radio station [www.kingdomairwaves.org](http://www.kingdomairwaves.org)

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from Revell. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission’s 16 CFR, Part 255 : “Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising.”

“Available April 2013 at your favorite bookseller from Revell, a division of Baker Publishing Group.”

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## **Lisa Johnson says**

Title: The Gate  
Author: Dann A. Stouten  
Pages: 245  
Year: 2013  
Publisher: Revell

Have you ever wondered what heaven would be like? I know I have, and this story gives us an idea of what it could be like. The story is in the contemporary fiction genre. The author has given his readers a very interesting story idea, and his manner of carrying forth that idea is very creative.

Schuyler Hunt or Sky as he goes by now is a middle-age man whose three children have grown up and left home. He operates his own Christian counseling service, but feels the stress of life weighing him down. He is also under stress due to his relationship with his younger brother. He needs a break and decides to possibly rent a cottage his parents used to rent when he was a boy. He has such fond memories of the month he and his family spent in the cottage every summer. He longs to recapture some of the feelings of that time in his life. I can certainly relate to that. How about you?

When Sky arrives at the cottage, he meets several people from his past. They come to him one at a time and some leave him with a message to carry back with him when he leaves while others encourage patience, endurance and no procrastinating. At first Sky is puzzled and confused, but then decides to go with the flow and enjoy meeting people from his past who have gone to heaven before him. While there, one of his former friends says, "When we stop doing what God made us to do, we sort of get swallowed up by the busyness of life, and then whatever goals, dreams, and aspirations we might have had can evaporate. Our souls get trampled on by the lesser things of life."

I liked this book because it was so creative, and it made me feel like I was right there in the moment. The story flows easily. The word descriptions will make the reader able to see what the author is talking about in his/her own mind. The details are vivid. The scenery portrayed is idyllic and reminded me of many lazy summer days as a child. I liked the down-to-earth characters of Josh and Ahbee, aka Jesus and God. They were so approachable, friendly, caring and not intimidating. Overall, a very interesting and captivating story that entertains.

My rating is 4 stars.

Note: I received a complimentary copy for an honest review of this book. The opinions shared in this review are solely my responsibility. Other reviews can be read at <http://seekingwithallyurheart.blogspot...> Also follow me on Twitter @lcjohnson1988, FaceBook at <https://www.facebook.com/lisa.johnson...>

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### **Truman Ragland says**

How bad is this book? Very bad.

It is, at best, a cheap, B-grade rip-off of "The Shack." At worst- it's a trite piece of work- imagine John Bunyon's famous "Pilgrims Progress" except 100 times worse. Now you have "The Gate." It is littered with bad theology, contrived characters, a myopic plot, and sad, religious cliches.

Not worth the \$15 I spent. Ultimately, I found it unsatisfying to say the least.

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### **Janelle says**

Don't know what to do with this book. I've read the first one and a half chapters, and while I'm sure it has lots of good things to say, I predict half of the book will story and half preaching. The lesson may be good, but I bore easily. I guess I'll stick it on my virtual shelf and maybe come back to it when I have more patience.

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### **Louise says**

Story Description:

Baker Publishing Group|April 1, 2013|Trade Paperback|ISBN: 978-0-8007-2109-1

When an ad for a vacation cottage catches the eye of a man on the edge of burnout, he impulsively sets off to visit the property while his wife and daughters are away. When he arrives and is ushered through the gate, he finds something far different from the typical vacation retreat. In fact, it seems he may have found the back door to heaven. The proprietor and people from his past welcome him with food, rest, and conversation until

what started out as a little escape from everyday life turns into an experience he will never forget.

This imaginative novel explores the big questions we all have about what lies beyond this earthly life. Readers hungry for a taste of heaven will find in *The Gate* hope, encouragement, and pure joy.

"Book has been provided courtesy of Baker Publishing Group and Graf-Martin Communications, Inc. Available at your favourite bookseller from Revell, a division of Baker Publishing Group".

My Review:

Schuyler Hunt was perusing an ad on the internet for cabins and cottages when one caught his eye. It was a picture of an old inn that looked similar to the cottage he visited as a child but hadn't been to in over 40 years. The ad indicated that the "food and the view were heavenly..." When his wife, Carol and his daughters decided to turn a shopping spree into a get-a-way, Schuyler decided it would be the perfect time to visit the inn.

When he arrived he found a lot more than he bargained for and the meaning in the ad of the word "heaven" had a lot more meaning than he ever knew or could dream about.

Dann Stouten has penned a novel that really tweaks the reader's imagination. When I was reading "The Gate" I found myself wishing that I could have the same type of experience that Schuyler was having. Who knows, perhaps these types of inns/cottages really do exist in our world but we just haven't found them yet. "The Gate" may just give you some possible answers as to what might go on after we leave this world. This was a real feel good story!

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### **Marcia Zerance says**

In the authors acknowledgments her writes "I want to thank Kevin Harney for being my friend, for believing in my writing and for badgering people in the publishing world into giving the book a second look." I can see why the publishing world needed badgering, as this book is very poorly written, so flawed I found myself getting angry at a book that I had hoped to read as a spiritual read. Some chapters hold so many topics I feel they greatly lacked focus. I could not finish this book, life is too short, and there are so many great novels out there to be read. (Made it only half way through for full disclosure!)

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### **Maureen Timerman says**

What a profound, page turning read. It pulls your attention right from the start. Who wouldn't want the chance that was given to Schuyler Hunt. Of course, like him, I would have to be convinced to leave. Loved the play on names here....Paradise Reality with Agent Michael DeAngelo. We are experiencing answers, and in a most wonderful way. This tale makes you think...Satan is not God's equal...he never was, he was the same as Michael the Archangel...of course!!

Another thought that I picked up on and agree with is Life on Earth is Preschool for Eternity. Well said. If you don't read another book this year, this one will stay with you for the rest of your life. A total must read for a Christian. Love it!

I received this book through Revell's Book Blogger Program, and was not required to give a positive review.

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### **Lindsey Silvestrini says**

The Gate is a treasure for the mind and creates imagery that takes you to another place. I typically don't enjoy stories like this but Stouten has converted me with his magnificent exploration into life beyond death.

Schuyler Hunt goes away for a restful weekend by himself to a cottage that he visited as a child. Memories engulf him as he makes the trip but what awaits him is not at all what he expected. His hosts seem familiar yet strange at the same time. When he sees someone from his past that is still the same age he remembers him long after his death, he knows he is in for another world experience.

This reminded me a bit of Scrooge (minus the creepy guy) with different ghosts from the past visiting and imparting their wisdom. Schuyler has so much to learn and is intent to learn from those that have gone before him.

I admit I usually don't like this type of book for some reason. I'm such a realist it's hard for me to get into something so fantastical without thinking "oh right – that would never happen!" But thanks to Stouten's amazing writing and the way that the story unfolded,, I truly enjoyed this. Now I think I wish I could be as blessed to have an experience like this!

This story is imaginative and insightful with a depth that will touch you and imagery that will swallow you and take you to The Gate.

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