

The Dragon's Tooth (Ashtown Burials #1)

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N. D. Wilson, author of *Leepike Ridge* and *100 Cupboards*, returns with an action-packed adventure that will captivate fans of both *Percy Jackson* and *Indiana Jones* with lost civilizations, ancient secrets, and buried treasure.

For two years, Cyrus and Antigone Smith have run a sagging roadside motel with their older brother, Daniel. Nothing ever seems to happen. Then a strange old man with bone tattoos arrives, demanding a specific room.

Less than 24 hours later, the old man is dead. The motel has burned, and Daniel is missing. And Cyrus and Antigone are kneeling in a crowded hall, swearing an oath to an order of explorers who have long served as caretakers of the world's secrets, keepers of powerful relics from lost civilizations, and jailers to unkillable criminals who have terrorized the world for millennia.

Guest Reviewer: James Dashner on *The Dragon's Tooth* by N.D. Wilson

James Dashner is the New York Times bestselling author of *The Maze Runner* trilogy and *The 13th Reality* series.

The Dragon's Tooth by N. D. Wilson isn't a run-of-the-mill fantasy book for kids. Original, captivating, funny, and suspenseful, it's a book that will appeal to all ages. And it's certainly not run-of-the-mill.

The Smith children (Dan, Antigone, and Cyrus) run the Archer Motel, living on waffles and periodically visiting their comatose mother in the hospital. With their father dead, they are pretty much on their own. Things quickly get exciting when a strange man with bones tattooed all over his body comes to the motel demanding to stay in room 111. He shows twelve-year-old Cyrus a lightning bug encased in glass that has dangerous capabilities. After much mayhem the motel is destroyed in a fire, and Cyrus's older brother, Dan, goes missing. Cyrus is given some very powerful keys and a shard of a tooth. Antigone and Cyrus travel to Ashtown, where they learn about the Order of Brendan, which has existed for fifteen centuries, and that they're considered Acolytes, with some learning to do before they advance. As you can see, there's a lot going on to keep you reading!

One of the elements I really enjoyed about the book is all the cool imagery that Wilson introduces. Quick Water is a substance that, when shared between two people, allows them to see where the other is. It ends up being helpful to Antigone as she searches for her brother. There's a room with planks hanging from the ceiling to walk on so as to avoid the Whip Spiders. And there's Patricia, a serpent that turns invisible when she swallows her tail. She helps Cyrus to conceal the special keys he's been given.

To say this book is action-packed would be an understatement. It starts quickly and keeps a steady pace right to the climax and ending. The story is well-crafted, with vibrant characters and interesting places. I especially appreciated the way Wilson develops the siblings. The brother/ sister relationship is very authentic, and the dialogue believable. I'm really looking forward to the second installment!

A Letter from Author N. D. Wilson

I love history--and not just the official in-every-textbook stuff (though I enjoy that too). I love the classics of adventure--especially classics magical or piratical or exploratory. I love Latin and maps and running till I'm exhausted and hot days and my grandfather's old leather flight jacket (which he lost). I have explored tombs in Jerusalem and back alleys in London. I have been lost in the tunnels of Brussels (with a van full of children), and I have been robbed in Rome (it was easy, anyone can do it). But my adventures are nothing compared to the adventures of men like Lewis and Clark and Magellan and Brendan the Navigator, and I can't help but be stunned by what they were able to accomplish without our technological crutches and gifts (and internal combustion engines).

I love books that give me a thirst to step outside and blink in the sun (or blink in the rain), books that make me put on my boots or my shoes or my sandals, that make me want to climb, to dive, to dig, to have staring contests with anthills, to hold crabs or touch sharks or search out even fatter books.

Escapism in fiction can be a beautiful thing. But that's not the only thing I hope to create. If kids around the world pass through *The Dragon's Tooth* and become friends with Cyrus and Antigone Smith and form clubs and sit in circles to role-play with dice and wish they had more interesting lives, then I will have failed. But if they dream of learning to sail, to swim, to fly, if they dream of running faster than they've ever run and studying Latin (or Greek or Persian or Creole), if they walk outside and realize that their world is more wonderful, more surprising, more dangerous, and more exciting than anything I could ever create, if they discover that they themselves could become more interesting than any character I could ever shape, then I will have succeeded.

In *The Dragon's Tooth*, I season my story with a pirate cook and flight lessons and truly electric lightning bugs and an old motel beside a quiet road in Wisconsin. I add one or two of history's rogues (and whip spiders and a bull shark named Lilly and a giant snapping turtle named Leon), and then I put it all on a sizzling end-of-summer barbecue and serve it with lemonade.

Taste. Eat. I hope you like. But if you don't, step outside and look at the sky. Right now, you're standing on a ball that is hurtling through space at Mach 86. And that ball of fire up there in the blue is slinging us around like we're on a string. Birds really can fly. And sing. The ocean is real. The platypus is no myth. Caterpillars turn into soup (and yes, that soup turns into butterflies). This is our fantasy world, and it is the world into which I hope my readers escape.

N. D. WILSON is the bestselling author of the 100 Cupboards series and Leepike Ridge. Once, in the fourth grade, he split his buddy's arrow while shooting at a mattress from twenty yards. Now he writes at the top of a tall, skinny house, where he lives with a blue-eyed girl he stole from the ocean, their five young explorers, two tortoises, and one snake.

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