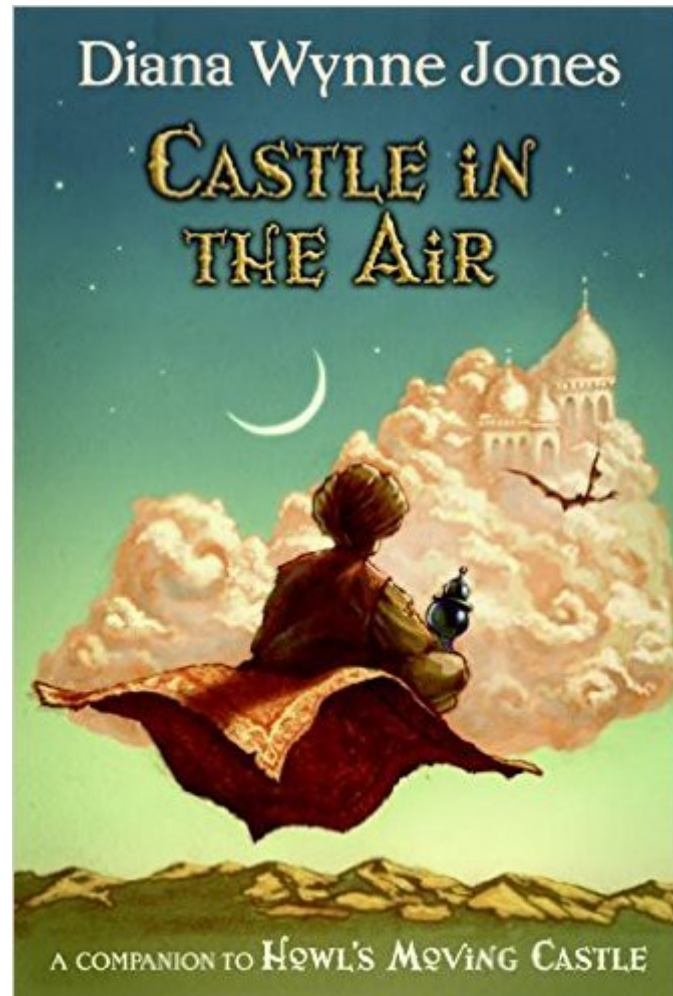




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# Castle In The Air



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## Synopsis

Young merchant Abdullah leads a humble life. Or he did until a stranger sold him a threadbare and disagreeable magic carpet. Now Abdullah is caught in the middle of his grand daydreams. Waking one night in a luxurious garden, he meets and falls instantly in love with the beautiful and clever Flower-in-the-Night. But a wicked djinn sweeps the princess away right before Abdullah's eyes, leaving the young man no choice but to follow. This is no ordinary quest, however, for Flower-in-the-Night isn't all the djinn has stolen. Abdullah will have the so-called help of the cantankerous carpet, a cranky genie in a bottle, a dishonest soldier, and a very opinionated black cat. Will this motley crew be able to find the djinn's mysterious dwelling and rescue a castle full of princesses?

## Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Abdullah the rug merchant leaves his humdrum life far behind when he purchases a threadbare magic carpet from a mysterious stranger. Almost immediately, Abdullah is whisked off on a series of adventures that bear an uncanny resemblance to his own daydreams. He meets the love of his life only to have her kidnapped by a fierce djinn. With the help of the magic carpet--and an ornery genie--Abdullah sets out to rescue his bride-to-be. His travels take him to the fairy tale land of Ingary, the setting of this novel's predecessor, *Howl's Moving Castle*. As usual, Jones has

constructed a wonderfully complicated plot, chock-full of magical mayhem. However, while her other interconnected novels ( *Charmed Life* , *The Magicians of Caprona* and *The Lives of Christopher Chant* ) can be read on their own, the final third of Abdullah's story is likely to confuse readers not already acquainted with the characters introduced in the first book. Those familiar with Ingary will welcome the chance to return and catch up on the doings of its exuberant inhabitants. Ages 12-up. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Grade 6 Up-- In this sequel to *Howl's Moving Castle* (Greenwillow, 1986), Jones once again exercises her talent for humor in a lively fantasy adventure. It is not necessary to read *Howl* first; the story stands strongly on its own. In fact, fans of Jones' earlier book may be puzzled at first as to what the connection could be . . . until they glimpse hovering on the horizon a castlelike cloud . . . or is it a cloudlike castle? At any rate, the story begins as Abdullah, a humble carpet merchant in the marketplace of Zanzib, acquires a flying carpet and lands in the midst of a series of fantastic adventures. The cast of characters includes an evil djinn, beautiful princesses, a genie in a bottle, women-turned-cats, and soldiers-turned-frogs. This is the *Arabian Nights* with a twist. Readers may be breathless from the rapid changes of scene and quick pace of events, but they won't put down the book until they figure out all its secrets. --Ruth S. Vose, San Francisco Public Library Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book is advertised as a sequel to "*Howl's Moving Castle*" and it took quite a long while for me to understand why -- *Howl*, *Sophie*, *Calcifer*, and the crew were not mentioned for much of the book! However, this book has a charm all its own and should be enjoyable for anyone who liked "*Howl's Moving Castle*." The writing style is similar, certain parts of the setting are familiar (especially at the end), and it's a light, quick read (even for adults, although every bit of it is suitable for young readers, as well -- no adult language or situations to worry about). Please note that our main character, Abdullah, is given to rather flowery language; excessive flattery is part of his essential nature. Surprisingly often, this language is effective at achieving Abdullah's goals. I also like the subtext there, that Abdullah doesn't really mean even half of what he says, but is willing to say it if he thinks it will get the job done. There *are* some stereotypes/tropes at work here, and they bear mentioning. They're quite overused at this point in time, although this book was originally written more than 20 years ago. Our story starts in a bazaar with a carpet merchant named Abdullah, in a

country where men can have multiple wives and there are things like djinn and magic carpets. Abdullah's story bears something of a resemblance to Aladdin's story (the Disney version, which is the only version I'm really familiar with), although Abdullah's genie isn't as friendly -- he's fallen in love with a princess (called "Flower-in-theNight") who's totally inaccessible as a marriage partner based on Abdullah's social station. Meanwhile, Abdullah's extended family has other plans for him -- marriage to two relatives of his father's first wife (not his mother), whom he has absolutely no desire to marry. And then Abdullah's princess is abducted, prompting Abdullah to leave town to save her (and conveniently avoid his relatives at the same time). As a character, Abdullah is pretty well-developed. He daydreams a lot, he exhibits bravery and cleverness when needed, he makes a lot of resolutions involving the genie whose bottle he's acquired, only to drop those resolutions later on, and he really tries to come through for his friends. Because he's the POV character for pretty much the entire book, he's really the only character who's fully fleshed out, although we do encounter some old friends from "Howl's Moving Castle" along the way (we don't always realize this at first, however). I love it when Abdullah tells little lies -- for example, to his traveling companion, a soldier -- and then tries to justify them (for example, by saying he'll ask the genie "tomorrow" for those lies to become truth, though he never quite gets around to asking for some of the things he promises to ask). Things have a way of working themselves out, regardless. (I also like Abdullah's relationship with *his* genie.) Two of the things that stand out for me are the little moments of humor (regarding Abdullah's relatives, or some cats that show up later, or a couple of other elements sprinkled throughout the book) and the final confrontation. The climax in this book is just as madcap as it was in "Howl's Moving Castle." There are tons of people in a small room, a lot of noise, and quick action -- it's a lot of fun to read. (I'm already a good way through book 3 and am looking forward to a similar scene!) Magic will be familiar to anyone who has read the previous book. People can be enchanted to have different appearances (and forbidden to speak about the enchantment). Sophie's subtle abilities are relied upon near the end, as well -- so it would definitely be fitting to read the first book before getting to this one. That way you'll have an understanding of what sorts of things she can do. You wouldn't necessarily recognize her work as magic if you read this book without reading the previous one. There aren't really a lot of limits to what magic can do, but neither are we, as readers, ever expected to believe something totally unrealistic (at least, not in the context of the world the author has created). The setting feels familiar, although it isn't particularly special. Zanzib, the country Abdullah hails from, is a generic Middle Eastern desert sort of place. Abdullah and a companion spend a long time traveling, and then we make it back to the town where much of "Howl's Moving Castle" was set. We *do* encounter Howl's castle again (there are some clues that

you should be able to pick up on), and a couple of roadside inns. It's just a change for me from the previous book, where the castle was the star. In the end, I liked this book, although I didn't like it quite as much as volume 1. I thought Abdullah had some great qualities as a character, despite the stereotypes. I liked revisiting characters from the previous book. I thought the final confrontation and ending were great. I just wasn't quite as enthusiastic about some of the tropes. However, this is still a fun book and well worth a read if you liked "Howl's Moving Castle."

Abdullah lives his life buying and selling carpets in the far-away land of Zanzib peacefully (or as peacefully as he can with the constant interruptions by the family of his father's first wife) until one day a man comes into his tent offering to sell Abdullah a shabby looking carpet. The carpet, the man claimed, was magic. This magic carpet takes Abdullah on a night flight into a beautiful garden where he meets the love of his life, Flower-in-the-Night. Before the two are married, though, a giant Djinn steals Flower-in-the-Night and takes her to his brother at a flying castle in the sky. And so begins Abdullah's adventure to rescue his princess and love with the help of an old soldier, the carpet, and two cats. Following "Howl's Moving Castle" Diana Wynne Jones takes readers into a land near Ingary and into the life of another wonderful journey with Abdullah. She weaves the two stories together with a brief view of Sophie and Howl near the end and taking us back to the land we roamed under the care of Calcifer.

another great book that is sort-of a sequel to Howl's moving castle. I do wish we had stuck to Sophie's and Howl's life together but this book's focus is on some new characters and their budding relationship and adventures. It may be a weird comparison but it was a bit like reading "The Horse and His Boy" after finishing the Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe. You wish the story focused on the original beloved characters but you end up loving the new ones just as much and do get glimpses into the original character's lives. That's probably not the best description but it's a good book!

it's very hard to choose any of your multiple choice descriptions. the book was in another dimension. in our troubled times, this story took me right away to somewhere so amazing and strange--and utterly delightful.

As an author myself, I tend to be good at guessing what's going to happen next. This book had me wondering (although admittedly I wasn't looking deep). It was a pleasure to read and had me smiling

away throughout. It was a fun read and I'm looking forward to reading the next book. I'd recommend it to anyone and everyone.

What a wonderful book... DWJ hits it out of the park... A new tale, a new Cast of memorable and endearing characters mixed in with some of the usual suspects of the first book A fun plot, a fun dose of suspense, and a delightful sprinkle of twists and turns I give it FIVE well deserved stars

While I loved the first book in this series, Howl's Moving Castle, as with so many series, the second one did not live up to expectations. In the first book the characters were really interesting and funny. I loved them. In this book, I kept waiting to fall in love, but it never happened. And the characters from the first book only make cameo appearances in this one. If I had read this first, I would never have proceeded to the next book in the series. It's not a bad book, but it's nothing to write home about either.

An amazing novel! Dyana Wynne Jones does it again with this novel! A great gift for any reader looking for a light-hearted and captivating read!

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