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# Conrad's fate

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Jones, Diana Wynne. *Conrad's Fate*. Greenwillow Books, 2005. ISBN 0060747439. \$16.99. 384 p.

Reviewer: Janet Francis

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fantasy fiction;

Subject: Magic--Juvenile fiction; Witchcraft--Juvenile fiction; Fantasy--Juvenile fiction; Book--Reviews;

One of the most substantial and reliable fantasy writers of Great Britain, Jones has nevertheless succumbed to the siren call of a series (The Chrestomanci Books) and stumbled a little in its depths. All of these books operate in alternate worlds and all have extraordinary levels of imagination, humor, character and intrigue. Somehow, this story of Conrad (who spends the entire action deluded by his trust of authority, relatives and close associates) falls short of the excitement level of the previous four books and seems to spend a good deal of time in loving description of the physical confusion of an enchanted landscape that keeps shifting format.

Conrad is sent to the city on top of the hill from his village to work in the reigning aristocrat's establishment and in addition to the shifting architecture, the reader gets a detailed rundown of how palace servants step up to maintain the place. In transit, Conrad becomes a close friend to Christopher Chant (a character who has traveled through the other books). Of course, Conrad (who has been told he is suffering from a deadly fate because of something he did in a former life) is commissioned to stop the evil at the top without knowing who, what or why and, of course, everything is ironed out in the end with some surprises, but the journey is not as fascinating as Jones is capable of making it. Although still much better than the average magic story, this book will appeal more to fans than to the casual reader.