

***Visiting Hell's Gates: A Novel of Perseverance***  
**By Gary L. Germany**

As reviewed by New York Time best-selling author Ellen Tanner Marsh

Leukemia, the most common cancer of the blood, strikes more than 30,000 Americans every year. The disease is certainly not limited to the United States alone; China reports over 40,000 new incidents annually, over half of whom are children. Yet leukemia also receives relatively little coverage in the media in comparison to more well-known diseases, such as breast cancer and AIDS. There are several forms of leukemia and many symptoms, including suppression of blood platelet and white blood cell production, which require, among other forms of treatment, transfusions with red blood cells and platelets from donors.

While progress has been made in battling this disease, it is a devastating health problem, and the emotional impact upon patients and families can be difficult to imagine for anyone who has not experienced the dreaded "C-word" before. This is one of many reasons why there is value in learning what it really means to be stricken with any life-threatening disease, and to see how it can turn an individual's life upside down, even if treatment proves successful.

*Visiting Hell's Gates: A Novel of Perseverance*, written by Gary L. Germany, may be a work of fiction, and yet it rings with the authenticity that can only be captured and conveyed by someone quite familiar with this dreaded disease. The story focuses on the experiences of Jery, a young man who receives word of his diagnosis and is then quickly plunged into a fear-soaked world of failing health, shockingly high physician and hospital bills, tangled medical bureaucracy, health practitioners who sometimes can only prescribe hope, and medications that simply compound one's worries with a laundry list of drastic side effects.

Although the story is told in the third person, the emotional intensity of Jery's experiences, as well as the endless rounds of tests, transfusions, and exhaustion, is conveyed with a crisp starkness that makes clear to any reader the extent of his worries and desperation. This alone is well worth the read, although Germany provides admirable insight into a number of challenges surrounding this devastating disease.

*Visiting Hell's Gates: A Novel of Perseverance* is nobly dedicated to all donors, a nice touch on the part of the author which demonstrates that, even in the depths of fighting a disease that could understandably foster great self-pity, the appreciation for the efforts of others can flourish undiminished.

For anyone who wishes to gain a better sense of what cancer patients experience when they receive their diagnosis and begin that long and arduous journey down the road of living with and fighting cancer, this book is highly recommended.