

The Thirteenth Princess

Diane Zahler

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The classic fairy tale of *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* takes on a fresh twist that includes the youngest, unwanted thirteenth princess, Zita. As red-haired, green-eyed Zita grows up in the palace as a servant, she slowly uncovers the truth of her past by questioning Cook and various other servants. Once she discovers her true identity, Zita approaches the princesses as she sees them in the halls, gradually becoming acquainted with the sisters she never knew. Soon after Zita starts to feel like family among her sisters, an odd thing begins to happen with them; the twelve princesses begin to appear weary and tired. They get put on bed rest and doctors are called, but the princesses' mysterious ailment just gets worse. Zita makes it her goal, with the company of three other friends, to uncover the magic behind this cursed illness before her sisters begin to die.

The Thirteenth Princess is an enchanting, cute read for 4th to 7th grade readers. I enjoyed this book from beginning to end; this book would make a great gift for little sisters or other young girls. Although the eldest twelve princess names are a hassle to keep straight, all the characters developed in the story are very realistic and relatable. From the dark-heartedness of an evil witch to the magic of a first love, all aspects of this book fully captured my heart. Although I already am a junior in high school, the charm of a cute fairy tale pulled me in. *The Thirteenth Princess* is a story that will bring readers back to their childhood dreams of knights and castles, leaving them with a smile on their face once they finish.