



2009

### The Thirteenth Princess

Tessa McMillan

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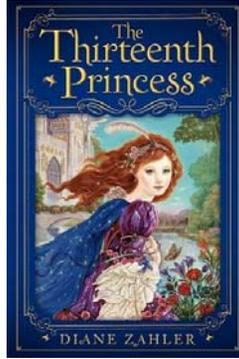
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Zahler, Diane. *The Thirteenth Princess*. HarperCollins, 2010. ISBN 9780061824982. \$15.99. 243 p.

Reviewer: Tessa McMillan

Reading Level: Primary, Intermediate, Young adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fantasy fiction;

Subject: Princesses--Juvenile fiction; Household employees--Juvenile fiction; Magic--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

As a young child, Zita thought she was just an orphan girl who grew up as a household servant to the king and his twelve daughters. But when Zita asks Cook who her mother was, a new life unfurls before her. She is the thirteenth child to the king. Unfortunately, her mother at her birth, and the king blamed Zita for his wife's death. In secret, the twelve sisters begin to develop a relationship with Zita. One day Zita's sisters become ill for no reason. After some investigating, Zita discovers that her sisters have been enchanted by the sorceress, Taika, to dance all night with imaginary princes in a mirage kingdom. Taika wants to slowly kill off all the girls so that she can have the king all to herself. Through the help of her friends Breckin and Milek, Zita stops the enchantment. Her father sacrifices himself to defeat Taika and keep all his daughters safe.

Zahler's take on the twelve dancing princesses' story is exciting, refreshing, and entertaining. This book, along with Jessica Day George's *Princess of the Midnight Ball*, can be compared together while doing a fairy tale unit. Teachers can use these and other fairy tale based novels to show students how to interpret the Grimm stories in different ways.

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