

## Extension Activities

- 1. The Tale Behind the Fairy Tale.** *The Thirteenth Princess* is a retelling of the classic fairy tale *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*. Research the history of the original story. Then read the version recorded by the Brothers Grimm and compare and contrast it with Diane Zahler's rendering. What does Diane Zahler change, and what does she keep the same? Which version do you prefer? Why? Reimagine one of your favorite fairy tales by writing your own version of it.
- 2. Word Revelations.** Illustrate a scene or place that Diane Zahler describes in *The Thirteenth Princess* using the artistic medium of your choice. Possible subjects for your artwork include the castle where the royal family lives (chapter 1), Babette's cottage in the woods (chapter 4), the princesses dancing in the ballroom under the lake (chapter 8), or the princesses' bedroom going up in flames (chapter 10). Incorporate quotations from the text directly into your art to support your artistic choices.
- 3. Cakes and Cookies and Pies, Oh My!** Zita loves baking because she knows it pleases her father. Ask each member of your reading group to bake a favorite dish to bring in and share. After enjoying your group's delicacies, work together to create fairy tale-inspired names for the various baked goods, and then compile the recipes together in a fairy tale cookbook. Create multiple copies so that everyone in the group can have his or her own.
- 4. Magical Medleys.** Zita, Breckin, and Milek are enchanted by the beautiful music that plays in the ballroom under the lake. With other members of your reading group, assemble a short medley of song clips to mesmerize and enchant listeners. Choose songs to which you can imagine a dozen princesses twirling about a ballroom floor. Share your magical medley with the rest of the group—and even try dancing to it.



Philip Sicker

## About the Author

**Diane Zahler** has always loved fairy tales. As a little girl, she pored over picture books about evil stepmothers and magic charms. At her first job in the children's room at the public library, she sneaked stories of witches and their curses from the shelves and hid in corners to savor them. Working in children's book publishing, she seized any fairy tales that passed by her desk and took them home to read. When she wrote textbooks, she slipped princesses and enchantments into lessons on action verbs and serial commas. Now she lives with her husband, son, and dog in New York's Harlem Valley, in an old farmhouse held together by magic spells and duct tape, writing fairy tales of her own.

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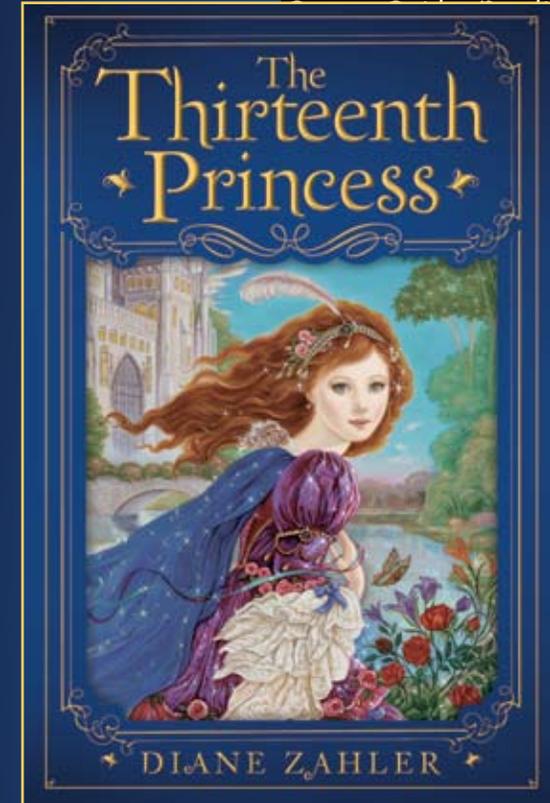
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## Reading Group Guide



## The Thirteenth Princess BY DIANE ZAHLER

