

A Ring of Riddles

Beatrice Bowles

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In Beatrice Bowles's fantastical coming-of-age story *A Ring of Riddles*, a fifteen-year-old girl receives a mysterious ring at her grandmother's funeral.

A Ring of Riddles contains several subplots that are introduced early in the novel and which come to fruition toward its end. A phone call in the first act foreshadows a major turning point in the denouement; and upon arriving in Paris, Greta befriends a pair of French teenagers who play a pivotal role in an unexpected ending.

Greta's godmother, Tia, plays a large role in many of her quests to discover more about the ring, which is imbued with powers beyond Greta's control and understanding. Tia is a writer who lives in a lavish apartment in Paris, where Greta stays while her tenth-grade class is on a school trip to France. While accompanying Tia on a rendezvous with producer Alan Barbe-Torte, Greta uncovers more than just the secrets of her ring.

Greta is a strong heroine beside whom some others, including her friends from school and an archetypal villain, seem less dimensional. In comparison, Greta's persistence, personality, and vivaciousness allow her to shine. She begins to transition from a discontented teenager into an independent and courageous young woman with the help of her godmother and a teenage actor, Tommy de Ropp, who becomes her love interest. Occasional, simple phrases in French lend dimension to the book's conversations, and Greta's internal monologue is deep. She introduces sensory details as she takes in the sights and sounds of the new city.

Steeped in fairy tales and folklore, *A Ring of Riddles* is a delightful fantasy novel full of adventure and intrigue.

CAITLIN CACCIATORE (November / December 2023)

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