



The Society of Thirteen

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[Val Randall](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

BfK Rating:

4

This densely woven story begins dramatically and continues in the same vein. Two penniless, street-wise thirteen year old orphans, Tom and Esther, are asked by the mysterious Lord Ringmore to deliver letters to members of The Society of Thirteen, who delve into the secrets of magic and the occult and who seek the spell which grants eternal life.

Tom and Esther soon find themselves at the heart of this quest as they are made aware of their own powers of conjoury, the ancient art of summoning magic from the heart of the Earth itself. They are directed to their powers by a cat and a magpie, both with the power of speech, which are the familiars of two great conjurers who wish to return to their human forms and, like Ringmore, are prepared to use the children for their own ends. The story is ripe with betrayal and manipulation, its structure often mirroring the magic it describes. Former Alliances are broken, friendships destroyed and, in Tom's case, personalities are supplanted by the desire to possess the ultimate power - which is also the ultimate curse. Tom's desire for power and revenge changes him until he rejects Esther and it is not until her life is in danger that he realises the damage which his obsession has done.

The single-chapter Prologue and Epilogue deal very briefly with the modern-day story of Amy, who creates her own history from what she learns in the cemetery about the long-dead members of The Society of Thirteen. However, the arrival in the Epilogue of a speaking magpie who tempts her with mysterious symbols both makes clear the link to the main story and the fact that story and history are inextricably woven together, a theme which is explored throughout this well-crafted narrative.

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