Clarion Review

Young Adult Fiction

The Triskaidek
Basil Sprig
Camp Fae Press
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Four Stars (out of Five)

Alley Willowood is excited to reach the thirteenth day of the thirteenth month after her thirteenth year. She knows that the day will be special, and she intends to spend it "chasing the white rabbit," which is how she describes days spent wandering and exploring. She and her two best friends, Munchkin and Gin, decide to go to a new store called Thirteen Kites, which is located at 1313 Thirteenth Avenue. When they get there, Alley finds that she is the thirteenth customer and she wins a special kite made of thirteen panels with thirteen sticks. This is the start of author Basil Sprig's novel, *The Triskaidek*, the story of a young girl who discovers that she is a fairy.

When Alley takes her kite out to fly, she is shocked when it turns into a magical sun bird that carries her high into a tree house in the clouds and informs her that she has a special mission to perform. When she returns home, her mom tells her that she has signed Alley up for Camp Fae. Only when Alley gets there does she discover that it is a camp for fairies. Alley must learn what it means to be a fairy while trying to complete her mission to save the Blue Blimey from the evil Durka Knaf.

The Triskaidek is a light and whimsical story. The plot is interesting, and the hows and whys of magic are well thought-out. Sprig describes the story's magical system succinctly, writing, "Fairy magic makes things work in predictable ways, but you can't always find the line between what is magic and what is just nature…really magic is just an extension of nature, and nature an extension of magic." The characters are appealing, and they interact with one another as one might expect from teenagers—sometimes they are kind and sometimes they are cruel.

Unfortunately, there is no explanation about how Alley, who is 100% fairy, came to live the life of a human. There is also a question about her friend Munchkin. He is attending camp right next to Camp Fae and, like Alley, undergoes a great deal of self discovery throughout the

story. The coincidence of his circumstances is difficult to believe.

In the end, *The Triskaidek* is a fun read. There is a sense of familiarity in this story about a young person discovering that they have special talents and being whisked away to learn magic and fight evil, but the plot is actually quite original. Young readers will find themselves looking forward to the sequel.

Catherine Thureson