



The Puzzle Ring

Kate Forsyth

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Hannah Rose was not quite 13 years old when she discovered her family was cursed. . . .

The arrival of a mysterious letter changes Hannah's life forever. One day she is an ordinary teenage girl. The next day she discovers she is heir to a castle in the Scottish highlands—a castle that was cursed more than four hundred and forty years ago.

The curse has haunted her family for generations, culminating in the disappearance of Hannah's father the day after she was born. A prophecy tells of a Red Rose who will save a Black Rose, solve the puzzle ring, and break the curse. Red-haired Hannah is determined to be the one.

Yet, to break the curse, she must go back in time to the last tumultuous days of Mary, Queen of Scots . . . a time when witches were burnt and queens were betrayed and the dark forces of wild magic still stalked the land. . . .

The Puzzle Ring Details

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Author : Kate Forsyth

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From Reader Review The Puzzle Ring for online ebook

Eibhleann (Jodie) Gardiner says

This was the last of my "just trying out the fantasy genre" books and I have to say it was really good. The others were okay and did get my interest but these aren't the most amazing books I've read or the most complex. It took me all of two seconds to work out where the first loop of the puzzle ring was hidden and the character had to be told by the person who hid it. Mind you she was 12 and I'm 21 but still.

You can definitely tell this book is intended for a younger audience close to the ages of the main characters around 12. But that doesn't mean adults like me couldn't enjoy it, it was a good read I like how she used historical facts and scientific theories in the book. And how she doesn't dumb-down things, there were words in there that I didn't know the meaning of, so it was good I learnt a few things.

Her story ties in well with the true events and her characters are believable people ... Well Roz got on my nerves a bit with the whole close minded fairies aren't real what not bit. But that might be because I had spent the whole book reading about them and imagining all the things the characters did the their realm so I was expecting her to be more inclined to the whole thing. But hey she was a science teacher after all. The plot is easy follow and some mysteries are quite fun to work out on your own or just wait for them to be revealed it would be up to you. Since I read a lot of fiction crime novels I always like to try and work who the bad guy is and what this piece of the puzzle means.

I also like how the author didn't expect you to know all about the background like what exactly fairies are and how they are depicted in Scottish mythology, or what happened during the reign of Mary Queen of the Scots or much about the landscape of Scotland. She explained all these things in great detail and even taught me how to do cryptic crosswords (which is us something I've always wanted to know). So in short this is a good book for a quick weekend read I think on a nice sunny day outside or even on a rainy weekend where's isn't a lot to do and you have some hot chocolate. I would suggest this try flipping to the back of the book bake the cake there and then read. May just improve the atmosphere a little wish I thought of it while I was reading it.

Becky says

The Puzzle Ring is written in the vein of great traditional fantasies. In the information that came with the book, it was likened to the Chronicles of Narnia and I certainly think it has that daring magical adventure feel to it. Hannah is living in Australia with her mum Roz when a mysterious letter arrives addressed to the Countess of Wintersloe. Roz soon admits that back in Scotland Hannah would in fact have the title of Lady. Her father was a Lord but he disappeared the night after her birth. Hannah begs her mum to take her back to Scotland. She is excited by the possibility of a big adventure. And thus our story begins as we return with Hannah to the land of her father and journey into the mystery of The Puzzle Ring.

I wish I had read this book back when I was ten years old. I think I would have read it again and again. Hannah is a great heroine who is determined to break the family curse. The story is brimming over with traditional tales of Celtic mythology, of fireside stories and magical dreams. I most certainly would love (even now) to suddenly discover I am actually a Scottish Lady and am the heir to a castle or grand house. I spent most of my childhood dreaming of magical adventures like this. Many characters in this story had a great appeal. Donovan for his rebellious streak and love of nature and wildlife. Angus for his sixteenth century ways. Linnet for her courage. Roz for reminding me of my sister and her love of all things science.

There is a character for everyone in this book.

The scenes that take place in the time of Mary Queen of Scots were thoroughly entertaining and this is where Max became a comic genius for me. I kept laughing out loud at his gruesome facts. I think he must have swallowed a Horrible Histories book and this makes the book have a real appeal for boys too.

Overall, The Puzzle Ring is a mysterious and magical adventure. It called to the child within me and made me feel ten again. Forsyth expertly played on the fears of the target audience as the characters tell stories around the fire. This is a wonderful epic fantasy which will take you on a journey into the past and into the Otherworld. It reminded me of my childhood dreams and I will be buying a copy of this for the school library. I am convinced it will be a hit with the 10-12 age group.

Jessica McDonald says

This is probably the most read book on my shelf :D I never get bored of it! Great storyline! Great characters! Great setting (I LOVE Scotland!)

Cat says

This was a fantastic book! I was enchanted right from the cover (which is beautiful!) until the last page. Kate Forsyth is a fabulous writer and really knows how to weave a story. Magic, history and faerie lore all nicely woven together. It's a great stand-alone novel, though there's an opening that would allow for a second book if it should happen.

I did not want to put this down - so I guess it's a good thing I woke up at 2AM and couldn't get back to sleep - I finished the book in one night!

Faerie says

I found this book in a free library box at the community garden - squee. I opened the cover to find an illustration of the witches wheel of the year and so I knew this was the book for me. It's a children's book but it's magik and I love to read them because life is harsh and stressful and these magikal little books are like portals to gentle spaces of wonder for the heart. I'm looking forward to reading more from Kate Forsyth.

Steph Bowe says

The Puzzle Ring is a fantastically imaginative fantasy novel that I'd recommend to readers between nine and twelve, as well as older readers who don't mind reading books with younger protagonists. I think if I were five or six years younger, this is the kind of book I'd've read over and over again - I'm giving it to my little sister to read, and I'm sure she'll love it.

It's fantastically gripping, and has elements of action and historical fiction. There was a lot going on in The

Puzzle Ring - time travel, a curse, magic - but everything was tied together beautifully. At times Hannah was somewhat annoying, but she also had a great attitude and was easy to relate to (and pretty much all the young girls I know have a fantasy of living in their own castle. And grown-ups as well).

I highly recommend The Puzzle Ring for the 9-to-12 crowd, and all lovers of middle grade fantasy, historical fiction and folklore. A truly wonderful read.

Kaye R says

I did a course at the Sydney Writer's Centre recently with Kate Forsyth as the facilitator. I had to confess at the time I had not read any of her books. I picked the Puzzle Ring to start with as regrettably it was the only one of her books my local library stocked.

I very much enjoyed this young adult fantasy about 13 yo Hannah, an Australian girl who receives a letter from her Scottish grandmother to come and visit her at her ancestral Scottish castle. When Hannah arrives, she learns that her family is cursed and it is up to her and her group of friends to travel back in time to the reign of Mary Queen of Scots, where she must solve a series of riddles and reunite the 4 pieces of the puzzle ring to break the curse!

The writer does a wonderful job of intricately weaving fantasy and real historical facts, creating almost an air of plausibility about the plot, which is not easy in this genre. Her writing is beautifully descriptive and the reader gets a real sense of what living in 16th century Scotland would have been like. The characters are all likeable and realistic, with the exception of Hannah's mother, who doesn't have much to do, and could almost have been left out altogether.

It was a great read, and I was quite sad to see it end.

Sophie says

The Puzzle Ring is an exciting and engaging fantasy adventure that captures your imagination and takes you to places you'll never believe you could go.

Hannah is a girl who dreams of magic and adventure. And, boy, does she get it! Her love of all things fairies, secrets and mysteries is infectious and Hannah's brightness, loyalty and determination make her my kind of girl. I'd like to swap her for my younger sister, actually! One of my favourite things about Hannah is her cleverness and ability to solve all of the riddles and make up the rhyming spells. I was stunned by Kate Forsyth's skill in turning them out in such a way that they flowed effortlessly. They must have taken her ages!

The atmosphere of *The Puzzle Ring* was electric. It was action-packed, fuelled with adrenalin and you never knew what was around the next corner. There was a flurry of history, magic, mystery and secrets and the plethora of mythical creatures only enhanced this. There were witches, fairies, kelpies, dwarves, giants, gargoyles and so many more. I was in my element!

But my favourite thing about *The Puzzle Ring* was Hannah, Donovan, Max and Scarlett's journey back to the reign of Mary, Queen of Scots. The historical detail! You could tell that Kate Forsyth really did her research

on medieval Scotland: the smells, the clothes, the food, the beliefs and the superstitions were so precise. I briefly thought that I'd like to go with Hannah to the Queen's court, but then three very important things came to mind: there was no hot running water, no flushing toilets and I can't sing or play a musical instrument so I wouldn't actually be allowed in anyway. I think I'll be better off firmly in the 21st Century and leaving the time-travelling to Hannah!

I loved *The Puzzle Ring* much more than I expected to and I'll definitely be checking out more of Kate Forsyth's books.

Ritika Chhabra says

I stumbled across Hannah Rose one fine day, when she was home early due to her meeting with the principal. Of course, I too was shocked on discovering the letter that she found in her letter box! Of course, I too was willing to go and visit this grandmother of hers, who was also the heir of the castle! Of course, I was excited! My first day with her, at her grandmother's place was quite horrible. Yes, Linnet was friendly, way too friendly I must say, and grandma was extra mysterious about the curse, yet that girl, Scarlet, she was irritating. I tried being friends with her, but never mind. During all of the pages of the book, I appreciated Donovan's part the most. Yes, I saw, Donovan's past seemed to be extra-mysterious. And it was quite astonishing when, in the end, I found him to be Hannah's cousin, because as a matter of fact, I had expected some other destiny for him. Yes, I expected him to be a bit related to the true heir, but not in the way he was. I expected him to be RELATED to her, and not to BE the one, himself. I was shocked! Yes, Forsyth is good at twists! And I appreciate that. Anyway, the best part, no, the sweetest part of the novel--Gosh! It was when Hannah's dad is finally home! And the most hilarious one...the most hilarious one was when he told where he kept the last piece of the puzzle ring! LOL..i was amazed! I had toured alongside Hannah to everywhere she took me to find the pieces of the ring, and never once in my mind had I thought that the piece her dad found would be stuck in Roz's fingers. I had never expected her to be his "double rose". And well...I had never expected many of the things that happened. And I think that is why I found the book exciting! I loved it! Hope to read more of Forsyth in the near future :)

Note: The entire review above is the reviewer's own perspective. No one has any right to say unethical terms merely because of the change in opinion

Laura says

I Thought that the "Puzzle Ring" was great!
I loved the mystery, the adventure and the setting.I enjoy stories that take the character into mysterious worlds so this was right up my alley! Kate Forsyth did a great job with the discription and the story was GREAT!
I loved it!I would recomend it to anyone who enjoys a good story!

La Coccinelle says

I'm a bit conflicted about this book. I've been wanting to read it for ages, and when I got an e-book reader, I finally had a chance to do so (the paperback edition is not easy to come by in North America, so I read this

book as a PDF). At first, I thought it was going to be an interesting fantasy, full of fairy myths and legends and historical goodies. The book did have all of those things (especially in the author's note at the end)... but it just didn't hold my interest, and I couldn't wait for it to be over.

I think the main issue that I had was that, going into it, I thought it was a young adult book. It's not. It falls squarely in the middle grade category. Even then, it wasn't as good as I thought it could have been. Certain passages had me cringing. Adverb abuse was obvious. The characters were one-dimensional, and the foreshadowing was pretty heavy handed. Aside from Hannah needing to find the pieces of the puzzle ring, she also had to figure out which one of her friends was the "child of true blood". I figured it out so early that the rest of the book didn't hold many surprises. I also thought there were too many characters. Max, for example, seemed like an afterthought, and I often wasn't sure where he was half the time. I didn't particularly like any of the kids, and Roz's stubborn skepticism was particularly aggravating.

As for the plot, I felt it dragged on for far too long. I know I should have expected a long story when the plot involves finding four pieces of a ring that were flung in the four directions of the compass, but still... The sub-plot about Mary, Queen of Scots was almost unnecessary and only added more pages to an already overlong novel. I think it could have worked just as well as a plain fantasy story. Include the time travel, by all means, but leave out the political and historical intrigues; they weren't really needed.

I might have loved this book when I was about 11, but reading it as an adult was a bit excruciating. Some middle grade books can be done really well and show the immaturity of the child protagonists without making you want to slap them. Unfortunately, this book failed to do so, and didn't live up to my high expectations. Unless you're actually in middle school and like historical fiction, I'd say give this one a pass.

<http://theladybugreads.blogspot.ca/20...>

Jenny / Wondrous Reads says

I can't believe this book has been out there for so long, and I'd never even heard of it! It's a magical fantasy that travels through time, and is exactly the kind of story I love to lose myself in.

I loved all the mythology and history included in Hannah's adventure, especially when it concerned Mary, Queen of Scots. To mix the Queen's life with Scottish faerie lore was just brilliant, and it made for an edge-of-your-seat read. I'm a fan of time travel anyway, though I had no idea it was part of The Puzzle Ring. I also didn't realise it was a book about fairies and magic, so I had a great surprise when I finally cottoned on.

Kate Forsyth's characters are well-rounded and easy to like, and each has little quirks that set them apart from one other. Linnet is my favourite, but to say why would give more away than I should, so I'll just say that she's a charming old lady with a lot of useful knowledge. Hannah herself is also a fantastic character, with more intelligence and quick-thinking than I'm sure I had when I was thirteen. Of course, I was never pitted against the fair folk, so I've never needed to speak in rhyme or decode cryptic clues. It's just as well really, as I don't think I would have been half as good as Hannah!

The Puzzle Ring takes you on a journey from Australia to modern day Scotland, and all the way back to 1567. It's an exciting story of magic and danger, and I loved every minute of it. Fans of Michelle Harrison's 13 Treasures will find this a must-read, as it's full of mystical creatures, family curses and lavish landscapes. What more could you want?

Sammee (I Want to Read That) says

This is such a great book – if I had read it when I was younger it would have been one of those books I read over and over again. It just has everything – great characters and a strong mythology all combined with wonderful writing. What more do you need?

I was gripped from the beginning. Hannah is a great character and I loved her attitude from the onset. Yes, I imagine she could be slightly annoying at times but she was plucky enough that I really believed she could break the curse. As soon as we get to Scotland we are introduced to more wonderful characters. I loved them all and find it hard to pick a favourite but I did fall in love with Donovan and his quite and gentle ways. Linnet was also great!

So much happens in this novel – magic, curses, time travel – and it all fits together seamlessly. I really believed in the world created here and it almost feels as if I could go to Scotland and find Wintersloe castle! The time travel aspect was my favourite and there was so much detail put into recreating the past – it really brought it alive and highlighted the differences from today.

As for the ending it is just brilliant! Everything fitted together and I was really happy with how it all ended. It is aimed at a younger audience than I usually read (and review here) but please don't let this put you off. I just loved it and can't recommend it highly enough. I think I'm now going to have to track down everything Kate Forsyth has written!

Maryanne says

My introduction to Kate Forsyth's wonderful children's fantasy writing - after which I gulped down 11 more of her books in row.

The Puzzle Ring has elements of history, of magic, of mystery and a quest. The plot is tight and satisfying, and the writing is as magical as any of Kate's own inventive magical creatures or objects. Like most of her stories, the character, Hannah, learns much about her own courage, kindness and persistence, and makes surprising friends and allies in the least expected places. She also discovers where she really belongs.

Kate Forsyth's stories always have the child or children driving the action and solving the mysteries, and The Puzzle Ring is another terrific offering.

Why have I not discovered this author earlier?

Antoinette M says

It's no secret that I love Kate Forsyth's writing. I devour everything of hers, including her books for children. I read all the Chain of Charms books to my daughter when they were published a few years ago, and they remain some of my daughter's favourite stories.

The Puzzle Ring (2009, Pan Macmillan) is another offering from Forsyth. And it's as ripping a children's yarn as you can find. My nearly 12 year old daughter and I both wanted to read this, so in the evenings we

would snuggle up on the couch and read it aloud to one another. This proved to be one of the best ways possible to enjoy this book. The story-telling is marvellous and vividly told. It lends itself beautifully to being told out loud. Each chapter would leave us hungry for more, and even though it was bed time, we often had to read "just one more chapter".

Hannah Rose is nearly 13 when she travels with her mother from Australia to Scotland in order to see her ailing great grandmother before she dies. Hannah is soon plunged into intrigue and adventure, discovering her family has been under a curse for hundreds of years. In order to break the curse Hannah must unravel the clues left to her by her father who disappeared soon after her birth. With the help of the three children she meets, Hannah embarks upon a perilous quest to find the missing puzzle ring, and restore her family's fortunes.

The characterisation in this book is wonderful - my daughter adored the children in the story - we found them likeable and funny. We also thought the friendship dynamics were lovely; so too the character arcs. The Puzzle Ring contains so many of the elements we love: it's a time-travelling children's adventure, it's also set in Scotland (both in the present day, and shifting to the 16th Century); and it's rich in historical detail as the story is set partially during the reign of Mary Queen of Scots, (she shows up in the story as well). The book contains all manner of mythical creatures, faeries, mystery, and magic. Most of all The Puzzle Ring is a daring quest narrative. It's a picaresque tale of the kind that children can embrace, because it promises all of the delicious independence and freedom that the imagination can offer.

Not only that, my daughter hugely appreciated the fact that there was a central female protagonist in a children's adventure story, and that "she's actually intelligent and kind, and not catty. She doesn't chase boys, and worry about how she looks all the time...which is soooo boring". I utterly agree. The Puzzle Ring was pitch-perfect for a 12 year old girl who has outgrown a lot of children's books, and likes a bit of darkness and drama, but who still wants to be a child, and enjoy children's adventure stories on a more sophisticated level.

The Puzzle Ring is a delight, and we were quite bereft when we finished the book. We wanted to remain with Hannah Rose and her friends in their world. The only solution was to go out and get hold of The Starthorn Tree, the first of another children's series by Kate Forsyth. We'll start that one this evening.
