



The Castle of Tangled Magic

Books Reviewed:

[The Castle of Tangled Magic](#) [1]

Issue:

[245](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Diana Barnes](#) [3]

NewsChoice:

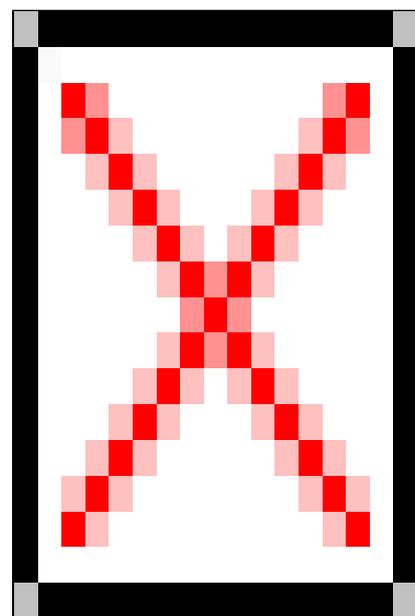
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Book

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4



Sophie Anderson, author of **The House with Chicken Legs** and **The Girl Who Speaks Bear** grew up with stories told by her mother and her Prussian grandmother, and delves into this heritage again to furnish this very exciting story with many elements of folktales and magic.

Thirteen-year old Olia, short for Magnolia, lives in a castle with her parents, her beloved Grandma, whom she calls Babusya, and her new baby sister, Rosa. The castle is the only remnant of a once-royal family, and it sits on a hill overlooking the village where Olia's friends, twins, Luka and Dinara, live. When a storm hits the castle, but not the village, Babusya knows that something is wrong, and Olia, who can see magical things, is the person who can possibly fix it. Castle Mila, wonderfully illustrated on the cover by Saara Soderlund, has many domes, but some are supposedly inaccessible. Of course, with the help of her friends, Olia finds a way to get into the Sun Dome, which later leads her to the Land of Forbidden Magic. Aided by the *domovoi*, Feliks, the guardian of the castle who lives behind the stove, and armed with a bag of Babusya's *bulochki*, poppy seed buns, Olia must put right the wrong done by her ancestor

Ludmila, restore normal life and save her family. She meets many magical creatures, including the *rusalka*, a water sprite, the giant, Golov, who turns out to be friendly and in need of help, and a house with chicken legs where Deda Yaga lives. She has to use all her courage and ingenuity, and her knowledge of riddles, to put things right. She sometimes does the wrong thing, and is often frightened and worried about the tremendous responsibility she has, and this is all too credible. Eventually, with the help of all her friends, both magical and human, and needing them to believe in magic, she returns to her family, and although some things can never be the same again, she has found out what is important.

Russian words are always explained, and the background is very interesting, both the magic and the food - the reader may be intrigued by a *sharlotka*, an apple cake something like what we call Apple Charlotte - and the magical domes, including Air, Earth, Fire and Water, are little worlds of their own in which Olia has various adventures. Sophie Anderson's imagination is wide-ranging and ingenious, her writing flows easily, and this is a real page-turner.

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[2] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk-www.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/245>

[3] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk-www.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/diana-barnes>