

Into the Labyrinth



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Princess Sylvie and her family, characters in the out-of-print storybook introduced in *The Great Good Thing*, are overjoyed when their tale is republished. This sequel, *Into the Labyrinth* by Roderick Townley, explores the special challenges and unimaginable threats faced by the characters when they are uploaded onto the World Wide Web. Ages 10-up.

Grade 4-8-The premise of this novel is that readers don't read a story, they hear a story as it is acted out by its characters, and "if the characters aren't there, living and suffering on the page before you, nothing makes sense." In this sequel to *The Great Good Thing* (Atheneum, 2001), Princess Sylvie's adventure story has been republished, and she and the other characters have to adjust to their new popularity as Sylvie's quest to do one "great good thing" before her marriage is repeated to reader after reader. After their story is uploaded to the Internet, the characters have to adjust to their new digital existence, and they start experiencing "wordpools," holes and changes in their story that endanger their existence. The protagonist ventures into the World Wide Web, visiting a variety of sites where she is offered real but tasteless cookies, to find and confront the force responsible for the wordpools. While minor characters remain flat, Sylvie is an appealing, thoughtful, and involving heroine, pulling the

fast-paced plot to its satisfying conclusion. Like William J. Brooke's Teller of Tales (HarperTrophy, 1995), this story looks at the possible stories behind what we read, offering a picture of a world where seeing a screen saver or a scroll bar from the inside seems logical. Townley provides enough background to help readers unfamiliar with the first book while not distracting from his story.

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