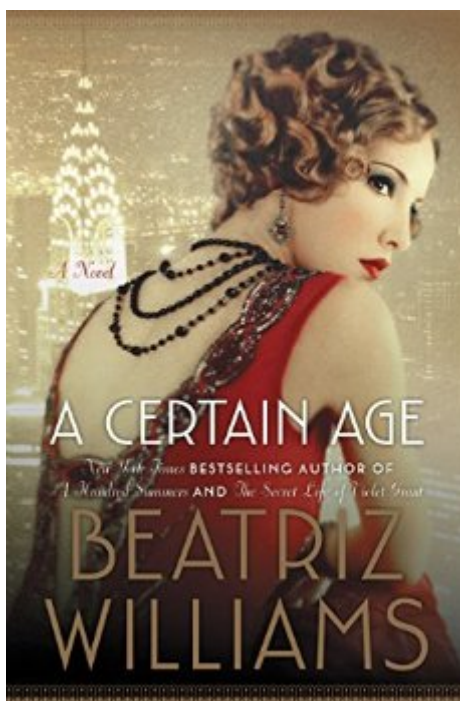


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# A Certain Age: A Novel



## Synopsis

The bestselling author of *A Hundred Summers* brings the Roaring Twenties brilliantly to life in this enchanting and compulsively readable tale of intrigue, romance, and scandal in New York Society, brimming with lush atmosphere, striking characters, and irresistible charm. As the freedom of the Jazz Age transforms New York City, the iridescent Mrs. Theresa Marshall of Fifth Avenue and Southampton, Long Island, has done the unthinkable: she's fallen in love with her young paramour, Captain Octavian Rofrano, a handsome aviator and hero of the Great War. An intense and deeply honorable man, Octavian is devoted to the beautiful socialite of a certain age and wants to marry her. While times are changing and she does adore the Boy, divorce for a woman of Theresa's wealth and social standing is out of the question, and there is no need; she has an understanding with Sylvo, her generous and well-respected philanderer husband. But their relationship subtly shifts when her bachelor brother, Ox, decides to tie the knot with the sweet younger daughter of a newly wealthy inventor. Engaging a longstanding family tradition, Theresa enlists the Boy to act as her brother's cavalier, presenting the family's diamond rose ring to Ox's intended, Miss Sophie Fortescue, and to check into the background of the little-known Fortescue family. When Octavian meets Sophie, he falls under the spell of the pretty ingénue, even as he uncovers a shocking family secret. As the love triangle of Theresa, Octavian, and Sophie progresses, it transforms into a saga of divided loyalties, dangerous revelations, and surprising twists that will lead to a shocking transgression . . . and eventually force Theresa to make a bittersweet choice. Full of the glamour, wit and delicious twists that are the hallmarks of Beatriz Williams's fiction and alternating between Sophie's spirited voice and Theresa's vibrant timbre, *A Certain Age* is a beguiling reinterpretation of Richard Strauss's comic opera *Der Rosenkavalier*, set against the sweeping decadence of Gatsby's New York.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I've been in a reader's drought. I picked up book after book and thought maybe I'd just read too many, in this genre especially, and just couldn't thoroughly enjoy one anymore. I've been craving great writing. I'm tired of picking up books and feeling that I've already read the story many times before, or that the book has so much filler and the author is just trying to get that particular book in some series completed. I'm tired of characters not coming to life for me, of them being a simple stereotype, rather than a carefully crafted unique individual. Well the drought is over. This book is a fantastic read. The author is gifted and the story and characters are so perfectly put together. There is an absolute maturity to the writing--I've read some of this author's other books since reading this one and this is the best. They've all been good but each has improved over the other.. If you are on the fence about whether you want this book or not, get it. You will be pleasantly satisfied. Now if you like the very graphic sexual romance novels, this won't be the one for you. It's about love and conflict and maturing - for all of the characters. I'm not going to go over the story because I don't actually like synopses in my reviews because I don't like to know too much about a story before I read it. I just like to know if one likes it and why. Well, I loved this book. Every sentence has a meaning and a purpose. Thus, you don't get lost in unnecessary details. The characters are people you grow to know and care about and they don't act "out of character" leaving a reader confused. They may do something unexpected but it is in keeping with what has happened and is happening in their lives at the time.

Before you sit down with Beatriz Williams' new novel, "A Certain Age", read the Wiki entry about the Richard Strauss opera, "Der Rosenkavalier". Williams has based her novel on the opera - with some minor deviations of plot and character. She has set the book in New York City in 1922, updating it from Maria Theresa's Vienna of the 1740's portrayed in Strauss's opera. "A Certain Age" is the story of an older woman/younger man and an older man/younger woman and the love and connections

between the two couples. There's a long-ago murder and a trial, dubbed by a society columnist as "The Trial of the Century" (soon, to be succeeded by other "Trials of the Century"). The foursome in the book, Theresa Marshall, locked into a marriage of convenience with an older husband; Octavian Rofrano, her younger lover who had been lauded for bravery in the Great War; and "Ox", Theresa's brother who wants to marry Sophie Fortesque, a young woman from a wealthy but sketchy background. Ox asks Rofrano to act as his "cavalier" and propose to Sophie, in his name. Sophie accepts the marriage proposal from Ox, but falls in love with the man who asked. Trouble ensues and backgrounds are exposed and a murder is discovered. Age and love win out in the end, which is as it should be. There have been many novels published recently using real people in fictional settings. I find it a bit disconcerting to read dialog and thoughts that I assume was made-up. This is the first time I've read a novel based on an opera, though, and I rather liked it. Beatriz Williams gives her characters breadth and emotions that surpass the short-hand used by necessity in an opera or a play.

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