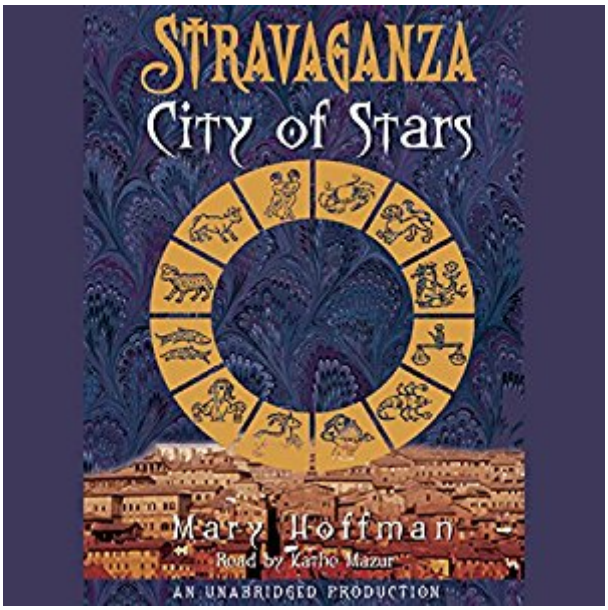
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City Of Stars: Stravaganza, Book 2



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Synopsis

Dreaming of a city with flying horses was one thing.... But coming face to face with someone she knew to be dead - that was something else again. Georgia would love nothing more than to raise horses every day and avoid her annoying stepbrother at all costs. But she could never have guessed that a tiny, antique winged horse figurine would be the key to her escape to another world and another time. When Georgia arrives in a 16th-century city called Remora, she is plunged into a dangerous and treacherous world of horse-racing, family honor, and deadly rivalry. And there, as a new Stravagante, Georgia will have a dramatic and extraordinary role to play....

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

love this entire series!!! would totally appeal to the harry potter fans. I CANNOT PUT IT DOWN whenever I get one of these...lost sleep, but enjoyable reading!

Great read. Especially for those about to travel to Italy. Gives an alternative Italy on a separate plain to ours, however the time travel element is fascinating and well played out. I love the historical mix up of ages and knowledge. An excellent very readable series which can be read independently and still enjoyed.

One of my favorite series. Keeps you intrigued the whole time. Great characters and great plot. Hope you enjoy it.

"City of Stars" is the second in Mary Hoffman's Stravaganza series (of which there are currently five installments), following on fromÃ Â City Of Masks. The basic premise of the story is based on people known as the Stravagante: a select group of individuals from our world who can transport in their sleep to the country of Talia, an alternative version of Italy in the sixteenth century. Armed with a unique talisman that enables passage between the worlds, the young Stravagante inevitably find themselves caught up in the political intrigue and power mongering that goes on in the beautiful cities of Talia, whilst simultaneously trying to deal with the repercussions of their normal lives in the waking world.The previous book centered on a terminally ill boy called Lucien and his permanent transition into the city of Belleza in which he is able to live out his life free of cancer, even if it means leaving his family behind him. In this sequel the perspective shifts to a shy, quirky girl called Georgia O'Grady who is trying to cope with her mother's remarriage and the presence of a bullying stepbrother in the house. She has just saved up enough money to buy a beautiful winged horse ornament at the local antique store. Unbeknownst to her it is a talisman that allows her to transport to Talia that very night.Specifically, to the capital of Talia: the city of Remora. Here the city is divided up into twelve wards, each aligning to a sign of the Zodiac, where rivalry between each faction is rife. This unrest provides a breeding ground for the likes of the ambition di Chimici family to work their manipulations. They have long-since desired to add the free city of Belleza to their ever-growing republic, and are all set to rig the annual Remoran horse race in order to consolidate their reputation of superiority among the people.But on the same night that Georgia appears in the city, a miracle is born in the stables of the Ram: the first winged foal in over a hundred years, one that bears an eerie similarity to the small model that Georgia carries with her.What follows is a story of horse-racing, political machinations, family dramas (in both worlds), and a coming-of-age story for our young protagonist. In fact, it's quite a mish-mash of several disparate story-threads which are only tangentially related to each other, making it not quite up to the standard ofÃ Â City Of Masks. To be honest, I found the plot rather slow-going considering the narrative kept switching from one arc to the next, with no real sense of urgency in any of them. Though it's certainly as vibrant and sensory as the previous book, it would have helped had there been one central storyline instead of half-a-dozen subplots, including Georgia trying to deal with her stepbrother's bullying, the upcoming horse race, the Duchessa of Belleza's marriage propositions, the theft of the winged horse, and the meeting of the Stravagantes with two young members of the di Chimici family, including one that is desperate for Georgia's help.Falco di Chimici is a young boy crippled by a riding accident who is entranced by Lucien's tale of recuperation in Talia. He believes that could he travel to Georgia's world he would be able to overcome his injuries with the help of the more advanced healthcare, and

hatches a plan with Georgia and Lucien to leave his family and find a place for himself in their world. In what is a nice reversal of the previous book's scenario, it is someone from Talia who must learn to cope with the 21st century, and like the previous book, Hoffman manages to make it a difficult, poignant transition for everyone involved.Another interesting development that is built on fromÃ Â City Of MasksÃ Â is that the di Chimici family is now painted in shades of grey rather than the straight-up villains they were in the previous books. Characters like Falco and his brother Gaetano are sympathetic young men who disapprove of their family's political wrangling, and even the likes of patriarch Duke Niccolo di Chimici is allowed to show a softer side in the affection and grief he feels for his son.Hoffman always shows a deft touch with her characterization throughout, for even the horrid Russell (whose use of strong derogatory terms throughout the story may raise a few parental eyebrows) gets a glimmer of redemption at the book's conclusion. Of further interest is Hoffman's afterword in which she discusses some of the similarities between our world's version of certain Talian traditions, and how they were reshaped for the novel. She's clearly put a lot of time and effort into research and consistency, and it may pique the interest of many young readers into learning more about the Reinassance.Lastly, the whys and wherefores of the Stravagante phenomenon is shrouded in mystery, but there are a few hints scattered throughout "City of Stars" that suggests there is a rhyme and reason for certain people finding their way into Talia. I certainly hope this is explored further in previous books. In light of the final paragraph, I couldn't help but feel that much of what happens in "City of Stars" is setup for the next book,Ã Â City of Flowers. Though that left me a little cold, I'm still looking forward to what else is in store for this particular series.

I didn't enjoy this as much City of Masks, nor the following books (until City of Swords which got very muddled) Somehow found all the details about the layout of the city confusing rather interesting. And I And I couldn't buy into Georgia being so hurt by the stepbrothers mean remarks. I reread City of Masks after and it definitely is better at creating an environment and characters to visualize and like right from the start.

Normally I have to agree that sequels do not impress me as much as the debut novel, but when it came to the Stravaganza series, that was not the case. I thought that City of Masks was very good, but once I read City of Stars I was blown away. I found Georgia an interesting first character, and the fact that she knew Luciano in the twenty first century made for an entertaining plot line. The scenes with Falco were very entertaining. I was impressed by how unpredictable both this book, and the book before it were. I have just started the third book and am impressed already!

In the second installment of the Stravaganza series, we meet Georgia: a tom-boy school girl who is the newest person to join the Stravagante. Georgia soon becomes closely involved with the Stellata, the biggest horse race in Talia. There's rumor of a legendary winged horse that has been born to one of the contestants, but is true? And will the di Chimici find the horse and use it to tighten their grip on Talia forever?Although this is not quite as good as the first, it is still really good. In addition to seeing old favorite characters (inlcuding Lucien from the first book) we meet and follow several new ones as well giving the book a fresh, new quality. Also a new feature, we meet several di Chimici and are able to see more into the lives of these powerful political plotters. A satisfying continuation of the series, don't miss it.

This book deserves nothing less than than 5 stars! This is by far the best series I have read like ever! But you must read the first book or it will not have the same spark to it! Arianna,Rodolfo, Lucien,Silvia, Enrico and Guido are all back in this fast paced adventure. They are joined by another stravagante:a girl named Georgia,Flaco (DiChimici) , Geatano, Cesare, and Paolo. This book is definetly for all ages but especially for all those girls out there who dream of getting what seems impossible. Whatever you do don't read this before you read City of Masks. If you have, what are you waiting for??? Get to the bookstore ! If you've read this get the next book City of FLowers for more sparkling adventures! Viva la Stravaganza!!!!

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