



City of Swords

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Desperately unhappy, Laura has resorted to self-harming. But Laura is a Stravagante, somebody who can travel in time and space. When she finds her talisman, a small silver dagger, she stravagates to 16th-century Fortezza, a town similar to Lucca in Italy, where she meets her Stravagante, who is a swordsmith.

City of Swords Details

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From Reader Review City of Swords for online ebook

Carole says

You can't end the series here! There has to be another book!

I will try not to spoil, but although there were some faults (I'm not sure there's enough character development for the newest Stravagante who has a much more complex story than the others) this ended on such a cliffhanger. Okay, there was a degree of resolution surrounding our favourites, but then a huge plot development that will rock Talia, and to a lesser extent Islington.

I neeee more!

Sabryna says

Super disappointed in this book. Even though my expectations were rather low after reading some reviews.

Things I did not like:

- Laura and Ludo... Like, what? I could maybe believe in Laura acting the way she did being a teenager, but Ludo is supposed to be like, 24? And don't Taliens kind of have to grow up faster anyways? Luciano for example. I didn't like Laura too much, but I kind of expected that. But I found myself very annoyed with any and all decisions Ludo made. So you finally found your long lost, noble half sisters, and your way of introduction is to start a civil war? Which you then back out of because a girl you've known for like, a week, gets injured? And not even because of the civil war?! Laaaaaame. I feel like it was very out of character for him. I would have like to see him befriend Lucia and support her instead. Maybe going against something Fabrizio wanted, since there needs to be some sort of di Chimici conflict in every book.
- Mortimer Stravagating. What was the point of that? It would have been just as effective for him to find out about Talia from being suspicious about the portrait of Georgia. Unless, there is a point to him being a Stravaganti in a new book? Is there even one? It makes sense that there should be.
- Fabrizio was kind of an idiot in this one. I thought he was more appropriately villainous in City of Ships. In this, I didn't think he posed a threat at all. He didn't really do too much except get mad all over the place. He reminded me of a villain in a cartoon, gets mad when he doesn't get his way and starts doing evil things.
- I was hoping that (assuming this was the last book) that there would be something resolved with all the tensions between the di Chimici and the Stravaganti, because it's mostly just Fabrizio, Rinaldo and sort of Fillippo who really hate them. I thought there was going to be something with Nick, especially as all his relatives are starting to learn about him not really dying. Or that with Rodolfo and Luciano offering their services to Fabrizio, they would change his mind.
- the Civil War. Why didn't they end up offering to help Fabrizio? That would have made for some more interesting tensions.
- the ending. What? Ludo translates just like that? Now what? There's going to be a time shift again? So everyone just go home. The end. What?! And Luciano and Arianna are too caught up in wedding bliss, that they're just like, "Whatevs. You all sort it out. We just got married." I mean, being married is great and all, but it doesn't cause you not to care about major crises that affect your Secret Society and all your friends.

Things I Liked:

- Lucia and Guido. Totally saw that coming, but I thought it was sweet.
- the cats. Dunno why, but I enjoyed them.

- the wedding! Although, not the ending. Actually, I think the wedding could have been better. But I'm glad they are married.
- hearing more from Alfonso of Volana and the Pope. I liked the appearances of the other di Chimici relatives.

Overall, I thought this book had some good starting points, some interesting ideas, but those ideas didn't pan out at all. It felt very rushed, like there was a big deadline looming so Mary Hoffman just threw this book together as a filler. Which maybe I will forgive if there are other books coming. There's potential here... But sadly, City of Swords did not live up to the many possibilities.

Sophia says

I can not believe this series are finished. I Think it came together all nicely and I didn't have that big a problem with Laura and Ludo. I Think it was wonderful that everyone got to go back and that we got more from the early stories. Loved it!

The Book Queen says

This book is a delight, as all of them are, but I have two major problems with this one that definitely spoiled my enjoyment of the book.

1) Laura and Ludo's love story. I remember I quite liked it the last time I read this book a little over a year ago, and I think it makes sense that all of the romance books and romantic subplots I've read since then have made me kind of sick of it. This is one of the best (worst) examples of instalove ever; they literally meet twice, each time for about five minutes, and suddenly she declares she's in love with him. It just really pisses me off how their relationship has no growth or background whatsoever, they just meet and immediately 'fall in love'. The rest of the relationships in this series are all well developed and I can get behind them all; I know that most of them have multiple books before they get together, but I just really don't like this ship. I also don't like where their relationship ends: (view spoiler)

2) The ending. It's not as bad as I remember it being, but I definitely think there should be an extra fifty or so pages - or even better, another book. Because the way I see it, Luciano and Arianna getting married doesn't solve every problem this world has - the whole series is about the fight between the Stravaganti and the di Chimici, so it makes sense for the book to end with a reconciliation or some definite end to this feud. Except that doesn't happen; it cuts off at a fairly awkward place so we don't know what happens to the Stravaganti. The civil war in Fortezza was *supposed* to bring the two sides together and calm Fabrizio down, but it never actually happened and Fabrizio was never aware of their supposed "alliance". So the Stravaganti are in the same position as they were at the beginning of the series - in great danger from the di Chimici. Yes, Fortezza and the other independent cities are safe, but the people in the Order themselves - least of all Luciano - are not. So I think some sort of conclusion to this storyline would greatly help. My theories after the jump: (view spoiler)

Despite those issues, still an excellent addition to the series, although I don't like to think of it as the end.

Ashley Brooke says

'City of Swords', what to say... Let me start with this: I really do love the Stravaganza series as a whole. Everything from the characters to the settings to the overall concept-- I love it. 'City of Swords' is the sixth and final book in this under appreciated series. I'll miss jumping into Talia with the Stravaganti for many reasons, most of all because every time I opened a Stravaganza book, it felt like I was back in Italy!

On to 'City of Swords'... Is it my favorite of the series? No. Is it as engaging and entertaining as other Stravaganza books? No. Is it a good read for those who have read the books before it? Yes. Is it a fitting close to a fantastic series? Minus a few loose ends, I think so.

The writing style used in 'Swords' seemed different to me than the books before it. The downsides of the novel for me? The majority of the story was spent in the real world, rather than Talia. Also, we learned what was going on through long paragraphs of explanation, as opposed to seeing the action or learning it through dialogue. I didn't find Laura's character to be as fleshed out as the rest and her story, strangely enough, didn't hold as much as importance as I would have expected. The romance was between Laura and a certain someone was a nice addition to the story, but we, as readers, didn't get to see it develop enough to care as much as we should about it, I think.

Besides those concerns (that mostly had to do with Laura's plotline), I loved the interaction between the past stravaganti and loved, loved, loved everything that had to do with Luciano! His parts made me smile!

Do I wish this had been a more solid read? Of course. However, I'm glad I've taken these trips to Talia, seeing such wonderful places and meeting fun, interesting characters. I'll definitely miss following new Stavaganti into the new and unknown that is Talia.

Katja says

The final book in the series is always the tricky one. It can either be good and you end up crying because it's over or it's bad and you wish you'd never read it. I cried like a baby at the end of this one. Finally another love story! I could really relate to Laura and was so proud when she found her inner strength. And Ludo, come on, isn't he just the sweetest? I just wish there was more I could read about them. Regarding the ending, I kind of got a feeling something like that would happen. (view spoiler) The only remark I have regarding the love story, is that it was too fast. They just see each other and fall in love? *sigh* come on, it doesn't happen like that, ever. And once again there is so much going on, with all the people in London and Talia and then (view spoiler) - this was just too much. Again, I missed Nick and Georgia, wished Sky and Matt would kinda disappear (although I am so happy Sky is no longer with that awful girl Alice), and that I would get more of Ludo and Laura. I am so so so very curious what happens next with those two but I think I'll just have to make up their story in my head. *sobbing* I hate endings, especially when it comes to series because you live in this world for such a long time and it really stays with you and then it's just over. Oh well, thank goodness I have a big imagination. At least I can prolongue the stay for a while.

Veronica Morfi says

Rating: 5/5

I can't believe that this series is over. I started reading it back in 2004, when I was 14 and I immediately fell in love with the characters and the world. I really don't want it to be over...

This last book introduces us to another Stravagante, Laura. Being a Stravagante means that with the help of her talisman she can travel from our world to a parallel world, at a country, Talia, that is very similar to 16th-century Italy. Laura, just like the previous Stravaganti before her, is unhappy in her life, she is actually a cutter, and when she finds her talisman, she gets transported to Talia. The city she finds herself in is on the verge of a very important change. The previous ruler has just died and his daughter is about to take his place, but another heir shows up and the city is divided in two. Only one side can win this war and Laura has her side already picked even though she finds herself in love with the enemy side.

I really enjoyed the story in City of Swords. Two sides fighting for a city. I couldn't help but support both sides of the war. And Laura was a pretty good heroine too, not my favourite Stravagante, but still a good one. She grew so much through the book, overcame her troubles and took control of her life. It was really good to see her change. Of course we got to see all the rest of the Stravaganti. We were also introduced to yet another Talian city, which was as magical as the rest of them.

I don't know what else to say about this book or this series. It has been a great journey that I am sad to see it end. But still I am glad I picked City of Masks up, all those years ago, because it was love at first sight.

Rinoa Heartilly says

Peeps, I've got a feeling that this isn't the end yet. And just FYI, yes goddammit, Ferdinando is fat. Thank you Mary Hoffman for reminding me every time they speak of him.

Actual review to probably come tomorrow.

Nina says

So near, and yet so far...

This book had so much potential. The plot was fabulous, but sadly the characters, especially the main character, were slightly underdeveloped. I read the entire book wondering why the character does the things she does, only to find out about a traumatic experience of hers in the last few pages. This would ordinarily not have been a problem, had the author played further into the character's emotions. We are told what happens in the story, but we never really get into the minds of characters, which is what bothers me. The story seemed really rushed, which is sad, because it had potential to be amazing. There are many opportunities for the romantic relationship between two main characters to be more thoroughly developed, but the most intense passion we get is a brief kiss. It also makes little sense how these characters at first seem to be as infatuated with one another as two fifteen-year-olds, and suddenly, their relationship is at the point where lifelong decisions are made. I think it all just happened too quickly, and we still never got into the minds of these characters, and thus, never understood their love, which appeared to me more like childish infatuation, rather than the material on which serious decisions are made. Otherwise, I really did enjoy the book. I loved the action, the unforeseen twists in the plot, and the way everything worked out in the end. I

also liked to see the characters from the past books interacting, and as a result, I was upset by how short the book was.

Jessica Tucker says

I absolutely loved this book! (Do not read on if you haven't read this book.) Although the siege did seem to end very quickly, it set up for a whole stream of events that were absolutely nail-biting in my case. And the part where Ludo got shot was just so...scary and sad! And then all the Stravaganti stravagante so they can come to Luciano and Arianna's wedding and Laura decides to stay with Ludo! Finally, FINALLY Luciano and Arianna got married! But Ludo wasn't going to make it so Laura went back to her world and brought back a talisman and then went back to Bellezza and stravaganted with Ludo back to her world. She takes him to the hospital and he's going to be all right but the way it ended: Ug! Mary Hoffman has to write more! Sure I found it somewhat satisfactory but Laura and Ludo's relationship can grow and there are still lots of city-states left! This can not be the end of this ridiculously good series! It just can't be!

Vilja says

Nopealukuinen, etenee edellisistä kirjoista tutulla kaavalla. Renessanssiajan Talia on edelleen kiehtova ympäristö. Eniten tökki Lauran ja Ludon insta-love. Ihan kiva päätösosa sarjalle.

Laraemilie says

City of swords is the last book of the Stravaganza series so far. As the fans of the series will probably be used to by now, we follow an unhappy teenager on his trips to sixteenth century Talia, where he has a mission to accomplish. This time, we get to know Laura, who cuts herself in order to feel better. It is then quite a surprise to see her transported to Fortezza, where she meets her Stravagante, a swordsmith. But in Talia, Laura has a lot to think about, as civil was is about to destroy the city, and she must chose her side before it is too late... which is not an easy task when everybody expects her to fight against a charming man. I must start by saying that, although I enjoyed this book overall, it is definitely not the best one in the series and I was a little disappointed. The beginning was quite strange, as we met the other English Stravaganti before Laura. It was a way of changing the style a little, as Isabel, Georgia, Nick and Sky had guessed that Laura would be the one receiving the talisman, but I felt it was taking the reader's attention off her. As the story goes on, this feeling only became stronger; I never really felt I was discovering Fortezza with Laura. I rather listened to her telling her adventures to her new friends, which made it less interesting and lively as in the previous books.

An important part of the plot takes place in England. I enjoyed this in City of Ships, but here I felt it was sometimes a little too much. However, meeting Vicky Mulholland and several other characters we know from the rest of the series was a nice experience – and turned out quite surprising in the end. What I particularly enjoyed was Laura's problem. We know from the first few pages that she resorts to self-harming, but there is much more to that than we would expect. Mary Hoffman really developed this aspect of her personality, much more than she did with any of the other characters, which was a good surprise.

Turning to the plot itself, I found it a little too predictable. There were a few twists and turns, but they did not seem that realistic and I was not thrilled as I normally am. Meeting the usual Stravaganti was nice again, but they had not changed a lot, which I found rather disappointing. On the other hand, having Arianna and

Luciano talk about their wedding was great and it was a good strategy to maintain the reader's attention: Will they finally manage to get married?

I have given quite a lot of negative point about City of Swords, but I do not want you to think that I did not like it or that I would not recommend it to you. It is a great story; I just felt it did not quite live up to what I expected after five successful previous books – especially the fifth one. However, if I had to give a single reason to convince you to read it, I would say: the ending. As I said before, I was not living the story with the characters, but felt I was only a spectator. The action is sometimes quite slow, but in the last few pages, the pace clearly gets quicker. And suddenly, everything is over, before you even realise it. The ending remains nevertheless open, and each reader has to wonder... Will there be a seventh book?

Soscha de Klerk says

Oh my god.

To my very very big and happy surprise I found it today in the American Book Center Amsterdam. I thought it would be released in august! it looks awesome but I'm gonna wait reading it and first finish the book I'm currently reading. I will probably start reading it this week though.

more coming!

11-7-12:

started reading.

19-7-12

So I have finished a few days ago but hadn't had time to write my review yet.

It was really really good but I had to give four stars, because the book had ups and downs.

The down part was that sometimes it lacked detail, especially in the beginning. I thought the first 100 pages needed at least 50 more pages to make it more exciting and to make it more into a whole, to make the storyline flow better.

Then the up part was that I liked all the storylines in the book. I'm going to talk about that later. And what I thought was really good, was the ending. I don't think we have ever had such a exciting last 50 or 20 pages. So many things happened but just so mind gripping. And I think the ending had quite a cliffhanger, so I really hope this means that there will be at least a seventh (and hopefully 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 will come eventually).

So, here comes the spoiler part! I think I'm just gonna talk about everything I come up with, hopefully in the right order, cause I haven't got the book with me right now.

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well. Let's start with Laura. We know that every person that finds a talisman has some sort of personal issue. With Laura this was her self harming and I like this. Well, not because I like people who cut themselves but this added something to the story, some extra storyline, more than the others, because she also ends up in the

hospital and stuff.

What I really missed in this book, was some time with Laura in Talia. You barely ever read about her just walking through the city with Fabio and he showing her the city of Lucca. Whenever she went to stravagate you'd read about her arriving there and then thinking about Ludo and then you read the next part and you find the kids sitting and Laura talking about her visit in stead of living her visit, like you would read about Isabel ging with flavia and sailing with Andrea (City of Ships).

God there is just way too much to talk about and too little time... I'll come back to it soon!

PS: So I checked the site (Stravaganza & Mary Hoffman) but there is nothing about a 7th book. If anybody knows anything about it, please tell me!

Kitty says

So happy this is coming out...ive been waiting for LONG time, 2012 seems like a long time! Thank you so much for writing this!

Marjolein says

Read all my reviews on <http://urlphantomhive.booklikes.com>

As a kid I loved the first three books of the Stravaganza series. But as I grew older I felt it wasn't really a series that grows with you when I was reading the second trilogy. It took several years to finally finish the series.

It was a super fast read, I finished it within four hours of returning home from the library (and cooked in between as well!). I've always liked the series, but was a bit wary to read this last book. All books have followed the same kind of formula, and I've grown a bit tired of it. In this book they emphasize how much everything is the same for all of them, but it made me sigh. The story was interesting as ever, there is very little which can ruin a renaissance Italy setting for me. Expect lots of intrigues (fun!) and a lot of not so subtle explaining of the intrigues (not fun).

I do think that if I was twelve years old again and reading this complete series, I would have loved it from start to finish. But as it is, I've become way more critical of my reads than I was ten years ago and also it still really has the feel of a children's book over it.
