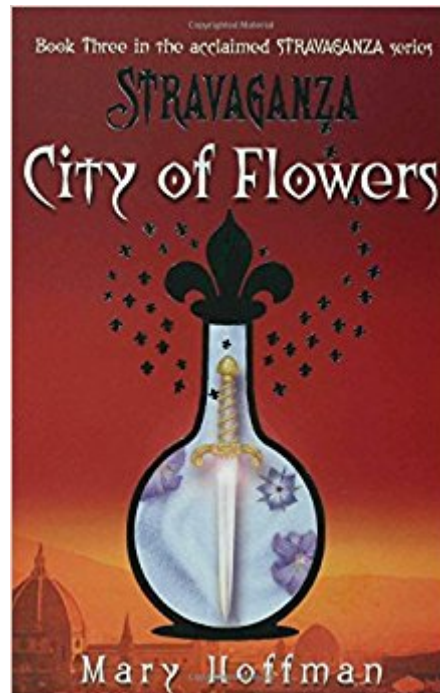




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Stravaganza: City Of Flowers



Synopsis

The latest story in the Stravaganza series unravels amid ever-more-dangerous politics and intrigue. Sky, a new Stravagante, is whisked away from his dreary life in London to Giglia, the Talian version of Florence. Featuring favorite characters from the first two titles in the series, including Georgia and Falco, as well as a host of exciting new characters, this breathtaking adventure will not disappoint. But beware—in the beautiful City of Flowers, much that seems beautiful is in fact poisonous...

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up—In this third installment in the series, Sky Meadows, a London teen, finds himself drawn magically to a land called Talia, which resembles Italy of the 1500s. Brought to the city of Giglia by a monk named Brother Sulien, Sky learns that he is one of a secret fellowship of Stravaganti, people who can travel between certain times, places, and dimensions. Sky, along with several other London Stravaganti teenagers, quickly becomes enmeshed in Giglian intrigue; when the ruthless Duke Niccolò di Chimici decides not only to marry off all his sons in a grand ceremony, but also to ask for the unwilling Duchessa Arianna Rossi's hand in marriage, a feud erupts, and the Stravaganti have their hands full trying to halt the bloodshed. Readers who are new to the series will have a hard time keeping the bewilderingly large cast of characters straight and will have many questions about issues that fans of the series already understand or take for granted—why does Arianna always wear a mask? How are the Stravaganti "chosen?" Sky,

son of a white single mom and an absent black rock star, is an engaging character with worries of his own, and the world of Talia is presented in vivid sensory detail that immediately sweeps readers into the story. Arianna is not a particularly compelling character in this installment, but the swirling intrigue, romance, and deadly feuding will keep fans happy. A must if you already have the first two books in your collection. --Eva Mitnick, Los Angeles Public Library Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Gr. 7-10. This sequel to *Stravaganza: City of Masks* (2002) and *Stravaganza: City of Stars* (2003) introduces Sky, a 17-year-old biracial boy who takes care of his ailing mother. Like the young people in the previous books, Sky finds a talisman and travels from modern London to sixteenth-century Talia, an alternate-history Italy. Sky befriends a monk and soon finds himself in the midst of political intrigue and mortal danger. With many characters from the earlier books converging for a quadruple marriage ceremony involving members of the ruling di Chimici (Medici) family, the cast becomes so large that a helpful three-page list of "Dramatis Personae" is appended, along with a detailed note on the Medici/di Chimici connection. Although Hoffman writes well, keeping the many strands of story tightly woven and managing the shifts of time and place with ease, the explanatory references slow the story's movement, especially in the beginning. Still, Sky emerges as an engaging character, and the series' many fans will welcome this opportunity to revisit Talia through his involving story. Carolyn Phelan Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Before you buy the City Of Flowers...1. You absolutely must read the City of Masks. No ifs, Ands, or Buts. Not reading the City of Masks first will lead to "strange" side effects such as mass confusion, unwarranted raised eyebrows, and moments when you feel like there was something you should have picked up on, and maybe it was important..because it was. And possible weight gain due to the fact feeling like I'm being a dunce and can't figure it out makes me feel like corn muffins. Yum.2. I read this before the city of stars. Not recommended. While you will be able to follow it well, there were so many spoilers for CoS that it was ruined for me..my own fault, but still. Possible, but not recommended.3. Quite probably the best in the series.Like all the Stravagante, Sky is misreble, and when he finds a perfume bottle, when he goes to bed, he is transfered to Talia, and alternate dimension of ancient Italy. He is transforted to Giglia, the heart of the Di Chimici. This was originally meant to be a trilogy, so this book was incredibly well rounded, and it was enjoyable, and I savored

every second of it. Now, we all know if you want to end a threesome of books FOR REAL, somebody has to die. And have their ashes scattered in space to insure no surprise comebacks (Really? You didn't die in that huge explosion..oh..so..timetraveling people handed you a fireproof suit and you fell into the plotdevice timehole? Gotcha) Three more books came out *yay* and they all worked. This not only had the most action from the first three, it had the most character development, and made it clear the diplomatic issues were very important. Excellent novel, and like CoS, it brought back, in my opinion, two of the best characters, Falco and Gaetano :)

Such a fun series! And this book was no exception!

An excellent young Adult series cleverly incorporating time travel from current day to an alternative Italy. The first in the series, City of Masks, hooked me. Each book can be read individually and thoroughly enjoyed. However reading the series explains a background from some of the characters. An interesting depiction of time travel and absorbing details about Italy. Unfortunately the title may be offputting for male readers, however the stories are all equally enjoyable for everyone.

I love this whole series!!!! I wish they would make a movie out of them! (movies...like Harry Potter series)

Who would not like to jump from one century to another and be a hero at the same time.Fun and fascinating.

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

This, the third book in the "Stravaganza" series, is almost twice the size of the first installment— City Of Masks—and I can't help but feel that its pacing suffers as a result. Though still rich in detail and description, "City of Flowers" feels rather sluggish at times, with none of the intrigue or urgency that filled the pages of its predecessors. It picks up considerably toward the end of the novel, with weddings and feuds and floods and murders most foul, but the getting there seems to take forever.The Stravaganza books are built on the conceit that certain people from our world are able to "stravagate" in their sleep to an alternative-world version of Italy, a country made

up of several city-states known collectively as Talia. There are several conditions in place for stravagation to occur: travellers first have to be in possession of a talisman specially chosen to allow transportation, they cannot stay in Talia overnight due to the fact their earthly bodies are in a comatose-state whilst they are away, and once they reach Talia they are identifiable by their lack of a shadow. Likewise, Talian citizens are able to stravagate into our world, and throughout the series Mary Hoffman has explored the implications and consequences of such journeys back and forth, adding new characters each time. This time the new Stravagante is Sky Meadows, a teenager who is being raised by a single mother. He has never met his father, a famous rock-singer known as the Rainbow Warrior (and how a rock singer builds a career on that name is a mystery to me). Older than his years, he struggles with his mother's mental illness as well as the usual tribulations of teenage life. But all that is about to change when he discovers a small glass bottle on his doorstep and falls asleep with it in his hands. He awakens in the city of Giglia among a brotherhood of scientist-friars who inform him that he is the latest in a line of Stravagante, brought to the city for an important though as yet unknown reason. It probably has something to do with the power-hungry Duke Niccolo and the rest of the di Chimici family, the antagonists of the previous books. Here in Giglia they are rivals with the equally wealthy Nucci family, and the upcoming joint-wedding of Niccolo's sons seems a perfect opportunity for the feud to break out. The stravagante band together in order to protect the wedding ceremony, little knowing how deep and bitter the rivalry really is between the two families. Meanwhile, Sky has his own problems back in the real world, what with his girlfriend getting suspicious over his new friendship with other Stravagante, his mother's ongoing illness, and his estranged father's unexpected arrival back into his life. As well as this there are other little subplots concerning various other characters, including the Duchesse Arianna of Bellezza and her unwelcome proposal from Duke Niccolo, Luciano's struggle with his secret feelings for Arianna, Nicolas's desire to return to Talia, and a young orphan boy's tribulations in the employment of long-time di Chimici spy: the man known as the Eel. Juggling all these plot-threads is a challenge that Hoffman handles admirably, but as mentioned, "City of Flowers" is the longest book yet, and sometimes gets bogged down with its vast array of characters. A family tree and dramatis personae have been included at the back of the book in order to keep track of everyone, and any reader who skips the previous two books will find themselves hopelessly lost. Sky himself, ostensibly meant to be the protagonist, is practically superfluous to the plot and doesn't really seem to do anything that could not be handled just as easily by the other stravagante (who are given certain powers hitherto unmentioned in the previous books) and not even Hoffman herself seems particularly interested in his backstory. He's certainly a much blander character than the others, and

I wonder if it would have been better to just stick with Luciano, Arianna, Georgia and Nicolas as the protagonists, since they all had much more poignant and interesting stories to tell. Still, Hoffman's world-building is still the main draw-card, as she vividly describes the city of Giglia and its surrounding area, filled with buildings, vineyards, churches, rivers and friaries. In her afterwords, in which she explains the inspiration for the di Chimici family was the de Medici, and the template for Giglia was Florence, I wasn't surprised to learn that she was actually in the city when writing the book. Also noteworthy is the way in which no character is purely good or evil, but rather a particular shade of grey. Even Duke Niccolo has his weaknesses and moments of genuine warmth, fear and humanity. Rather than a typical fantasy scenario of good versus evil, the "Stravaganza" books concern a human drama. Plenty of threads are tied up in this book, with the death of a significant character and definitive endings for at least two others. Nevertheless, there are more books that follow this one, and I'll be interested to see whether Hoffman continues with this massive cast, or whether she cuts down for the sake of simplicity. I loved reading *City Of Masks* and I hope that the series gets some of that first magic back again.

WOW! Mary Hoffman really concluded the series nicely! But I still like the second book, *City of Stars*, better. So, here's a summary: Sky goes to the same school as Georgia and Lucien (previous stravagantes) and Nicholas (who used to live in Talia, a parallel world of Italy). He finds a fragrant bottle left on his doorstep, and it turns out to be a talisman that takes him to a friar's- Brother Sulien-cell in Giglia (Florence in Italy). In Giglia, there are going to be four di Chimici weddings. There is probably going to be a murder there by the Nucci clan (a rival of the di Cimici) and the stravagantes are preparing for the danger. A lot of people of both Nucci and di Chimici families are either wounded or hurt, and Niccolo ends up challenging Luciano to a duel, which if I describe too much, will give everything away! There is a little bit of romance in this book too... and Georgia and Nicholas are going to go back. I would DEFINITELY recommend it!

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