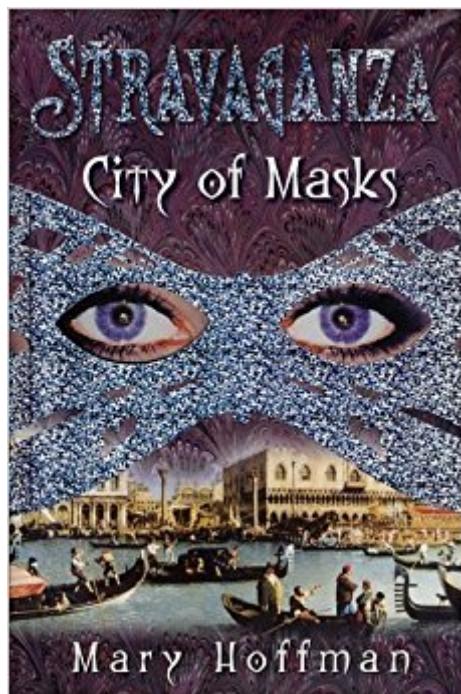


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# Stravaganza City Of Masks



## **Synopsis**

During the day, Lucien battles cancer in his modern, normal life. But at night, he becomes a Stravagante, a time-traveler of sorts who finds himself in Belleza, a city parallel to old Venice. Befriended by a local girl and protected by an older Stravagante, Lucien uncovers a plot to murder the city's beloved ruler, the Duchessa. But to save the Duchessa and the city Lucien risks losing his only chance to return home to his family and his real life. The well-paced, thick-with-plot story will hook the reader immediately and not let go until the superb, unexpected end. City of Masks is the first in a three-book arc from the gifted Mary Hoffman.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 920L (What's this?)

Series: Stravaganza

Hardcover: 256 pages

Publisher: Bloomsbury USA Childrens; First U.S. ed edition (September 21, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1582347913

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Product Dimensions: 4.5 x 9.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 73 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,572,049 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #61 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Renaissance #91 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Renaissance #18129 in Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

From the British author of the Amazing Grace books comes a novel, the first in a trilogy, about a teen stricken with brain cancer who travels between two worlds. In modern-day London, Lucien Mulholland undergoes chemotherapy treatments, but when he falls asleep clutching a mysterious book his father has given him, he is transported, or "stravagated," to an enchanting 16th-century Venice-like city called Belleza, in the country Talia. Lucien can return only if he can get hold of the book again. In this colorful other world, rich with court intrigues and magic, he feels vibrantly alive,

as opposed to his pain-ridden days back in England; his hair has grown back and he eats with relish. Bellezza is also where, as "Luciano," he meets lovely 15-year-old Arianna and Rodolfo, who created the book that acts as Lucien's "stravagation" talisman. Rodolfo explains that a stravagante is "a wanderer between worlds," and also the history of this magical travel. Now the secret brotherhood dedicated to keeping the two worlds separate is being challenged by a faction with evil intent. Soon "Luciano" is caught up in their power struggle and learns there is a cost when one cannot stravagate properly. The Renaissance backdrop sets an elegant mood for the time-travel toggling. This complex, at times slow-moving and somber story line may disturb some middle-graders, but the novel will likely intrigue more sophisticated readers, especially with its undercurrents of sexual tension. Ages 10-up. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 7 Up-Arianna wants to be a mandolier, but in 16th-century Bellezza, the city on the water in Talia ruled by the Duchessa, the training is open only to boys. Meanwhile, in 21st-century England, Lucien is coping with the aftereffects of chemotherapy. Holding onto a notebook rescued from the trash brings him strange dreams of a Venetian-like city, and soon he is in Arianna's world. She is outraged when he is chosen to enter the Scuola Mandoliera, and he plunges feet first into life in Bellezza, where he can escape his sick body. With the notebook, Lucien/Luciano "stravagates" between his home and the past, and is soon burning the candle at both ends. He soon becomes fast friends with Arianna and apprentice to Rodolfo, a favorite of the Duchessa whom Luciano rescues from an assassination attempt. Hoffman has created a dazzling world; vibrant characters; and a wondrous story of politics, intrigue, and youthful romance. Though some of the plot twists are hardly surprising, getting through them is rewarding. The author's gift for detail brings life to cathedrals, lagoons, and lace, and some of her parallels to Venice are clever, such as a Bridge of Sorrow instead of the Bridge of Sighs. As the book draws to a close, Lucien dies in England, but continues to live in the past. Readers of this fascinating novel will be thrilled to learn that it is the first in a trilogy. Patricia A. Dollisch, DeKalb County Public Library, Decatur, GA Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Please understand that all my reviews focus on the interests of my middle school students. I have had the second book of this series in my in-class library for years but only recently had the money to complete the series. That led me to finally reading the first book. Wow. What a read! Kids will love it when they try it. A plot that is easy to follow but still twists and turns and surprises! A fully realized alternate reality that is impressively real. A hero that is vulnerable but brave. A remarkably eloquent

treatment of a teenager who is battling cancer. A heroine who is fiesty and independent in a male-dominated society. This is the kind of book that as a reading teacher I long for: a book the whole family can read and enjoy together. I love it when my kids and their parents are reading the same book. I will warn you of one thing: if you are a parent, the ending will move you. I don't think that gives anything away, at least not anything for which the foreshadowing in the book does not prepare you. Recommended to grown-ups and kids alike.

an awesome young adult book. One of my favorites. I read this 10 years ago, and it has stuck with me -- to me that is the mark of a good book.

This whole series is great... It's not a super complicated plot line, but I find the characters easy to relate to. I love the time transition from modern to historical and the parallels between them. I'm not a big historical buff, but even I found the historical content interesting because it was relevant to the story... not an indulgence of the author. I highly recommend this whole series to anyone who loves time travels or fantasy book.

The series 'Stravaganza' is fresh and unique. I really felt for the characters and could visualize the settings. City of Masks is entertaining and exciting. I couldn't put it down. I loved all the characters and the unique settings. I finished the first book wanting more.

I read this book years ago when I was a freshman in high school. Now, I'm a 19 year old history major, and I still keep an eye out for any new installments in the series. It's a wonderful read, and a very interesting story line. I'm a big historical fiction lover, and I adore the fact that this book combines history with fantasy and real life. It's fabulous. Hoffman continues the story in the following books. Yes, the stories are all different, but she still manages to connect them in one way or another. It makes reading them that much more enjoyable. Arianna and Luciano make you want to enter Bellezza as well, combined with the author's description and the walks that her two main characters take. In a way, the reader can find some type of connection with each character. I HIGHLY suggest and recommend that you read this book if you like history and fantasy. There's a good balance of both without the fantasy being too overwhelming and overpowering.

My favorite saga growing up. It was great to introduce it to my niece.

Arrived earlier than expected! Im happy with the book! Thank you

Great escape! In so many ways!

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