



## The Princess of Cortova

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## **The Princess of Cortova** Diane Stanley

With tensions rising between the kingdoms of Westria and Austlind, Molly and Tobias accompany King Alaric to Cortova, where he hopes to form an alliance with King Gonzalo—an alliance that would be sealed by Alaric's marriage to Gonzalo's daughter, Elizabetta. But the devious Gonzalo has many surprises up his sleeve, beginning with the revelation that Alaric is not the only suitor.

As the days pass, Alaric is trapped in a nightmarish bidding war, in which the price keeps spiraling up and the terms become ever more outrageous, yet he can't afford to walk away. Then comes the first attempt on Alaric's life.

Through it all, Molly is powerless to help him, for her magical Gift sends her nothing now but terrible forebodings, and visions of an enormous cat who speaks in metaphors of chess. As for Princess Elizabetta, who is as clever as she is beautiful—is she really Molly's friend, or just another player in her father's crafty game?

The thrilling story that began with the acclaimed novels *The Silver Bowl* and *The Cup and the Crown* comes to a spectacular and surprising conclusion in *The Princess of Cortova*

## **The Princess of Cortova Details**

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Author : Diane Stanley

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## From Reader Review The Princess of Cortova for online ebook

### Laree says

Oh this book made me mad! I love the series - it was a fascinating fun time. But urgh! Don't kill of the guy I was in love with! And on what PLANET had she ever been in love with the king? There was NEVER anything that made me think she preferred him - not once in the whole trilogy!

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### Nancy says

Princess Elizabetta, daughter of King Gonzalo, agrees to wed the suitor of his choice in return for the throne after her father dies. Her younger brother is in line to succeed but with his erratic behavior, he wouldn't be a wise selection. Gonzalo, having ulterior motives, invites two rival kings to vie for her hand in marriage. King Alaric will do his duty if chosen. The other suitor, son of King Reynard, would be Elizabetta's lesser choice. Her father pits one against the other in a dangerous game that has his kingdom at stake. Fortunately, Alaric has his friends Molly and Tobias along to protect him. But can they save him from treachery and assassins sent his way? This fast-paced tale, third book in a trilogy, is a pleasant diversion and can be read as a standalone.

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### meeners says

when i first started reading this (the third and last book in the silver bowl trilogy) i kept wondering if i had missed a book in-between, or if i had accidentally picked up a book by an entirely different author, just because there was such a huge disjunct between the events of book 2 and those of book 3. then, towards the middle of the book, i began to feel a strange sense of *deja vu* - and eventually realized that, in structure and intent, it felt quite a lot like megan whalen turner's *the queen of attolia* (starting first and foremost with the echoed title). a lot like, but not quite . . . as if this were a watered-down, rushed-out version with a much lighter impact.

perhaps that's an unfair comparison, as mwt's thief series is arguably one of the most masterfully written YA fantasy series to come out of the past 15 years (yes, you heard me! and i'm not gonna take it back, nuh uh), but i think even without it this book would have felt incomplete - or perhaps insubstantial is the better word. entertaining, but ultimately insubstantial.

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### Stacey Raymond says

This series just gets worse. The magic once again completely changes in this book. After spending all of book two on the main POV's heritage, and her learning about her "special unique magical power," I would think her magic would be more present and more useful. But no, her magic just stopped working for the most part.

At the end it was rage and anger that sparked her magical power into being. In book 2 it was her fear and

anger as well. Neither fear nor anger will aid a person in thinking clearly or in being in control of themselves to accomplish anything good. It isn't empowering or inspiring. Yet anger and fear is what allows the main character to harness and use her power. Not so in real life. Fear and anger will only inspire people to be irrational, loud, and rash. And her magic was dormant while she watched one of the boys in her love triangle die through vision. Her fear and anger, for some reason, didn't get stung enough until after he died. How convenient for a tidy ending to the love triangle.

The new characters are extreme in the man-ifying of the women, and the sis-ifying of men. Woman empowerment is fine, but not at the expense of lessening men and their manhood. Also the villains were too simplified.

The love triangle had a bad ending for a few reasons. 1-the girl never made a decision, the author just killed off one of the guys, and then she didn't really seem to want the guy that was left. 2-she didn't really love or want the guy left; she just agreed to marry the guy because he was all that was left. 3-she basically told the readers, that the guy who died would always be in her heart; and since the guy who died was chronologically in her heart 1st, that was his forever placement.

So basically the main character doesn't commit to either guy, and is mentally and emotionally unfaithful to the guy she did marry. What an attitude to start a marriage. If this is a common attitude it is no wonder we have so many divorces today. I didn't enjoy this book at all; especially the way she ended the book. The pace was race, race, race, then fall off a cliff, and tidy kind of happily ever after.

Just remembered one more thing... The new queen just decided to give some of her kingdom away out of friendship, completely ignoring political, or logical, or financial reasons. This new kingdom is supposedly out of money, has a valuable port, had threatened and abused it's power, and had lied to the other 2 kingdoms. Yet somehow the other 2 kingdoms in negotiations (one kingdom who is supposedly been trying to get his cousin's kingdom since book 1. The other kingdom had an assassination attempt multiple times on the king's life, the girl the king loved was sentenced to death on erroneous charges, and half of his men were killed), just end in peace treaty and leave happily.

This book was just frustrating and seriously disappointing.

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### **Juny says**

Good thing I wasn't a super fan of this trilogy because this was probably the most dissatisfying ending I have ever read.

Spoilers!!!!

Like, What is wrong with the author! To solve this messed up love triangle she kills off Tobias...And even though I was rooting for Alaric and Molly, which did happen, it was not satisfying. The ending was a complete dud. The book which all throughout never reached its full potential suddenly was like a children's roller coaster chugging along and then suddenly ran off a cliff and crashed to the bottom in complete ruin. Also super random with Moll's spirit animal cat turning ginormous and then eating the king. Holy cow man! Also I wasn't even sure throughout the book really how any of the characters felt, save for Tobias and he had probably two chapters to himself including him dying. Poor guy. But for realies, no feeling. The ending line is, "Of course I will." What kind of ending line is that!

The whole chess analogy was so so so blatantly obvious it shouldn't even be considered a metaphor or analogy or whatever she was going for.

Also I'm not a big fan of books that have chapter names...Would not recommend.

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### **Amy says**

[ And to just *kill* off the sweet guy and have her end up with someone I had no idea was even a romantic love interest....gosh. Don't *do* that to a girl! (hide spoiler)]

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### **Bailey says**

*"Alaric," Molly said, so softly that he had to lean forward to hear, "you know how, before a storm, the clouds build and grow dark, and the wind picks up and you feel in your bones that it's going to rain, and rain hard. Well, sometimes it's like that for me. I get a powerful foreboding of things to come. It looms over me like a storm cloud. That's how it's been these last days, since we set sail."*

-Molly

Stanely's last installment in the Silver Bowl trilogy, *The Princess of Cortova*, entwines you into the world of King Gonzalo's deceitful and conniving court. This third installment finds Alaric, Molly, and Tobias coming to Cortova hoping to create an alliance that will assure young Alaric's marriage to Elizabetta, the smart and beautiful princess native to this trading land, with the assistance of the Loving Cup that was brought forth in the previous book. Molly strangely has reoccurring feelings of grief and sorrow. Unsure of what they could possibly mean, she warns Alaric of them to no avail because of his stubborn personality. To Molly's despair, they arrive in Cortova to find that King Reynard, Alaric's sworn enemy and relation, also hopes to settle a deal with Gonzalo's precious daughter's hand in marriage with Rupert, his own son. Set against each other in a game of nightmares, Alaric and Rupert negotiate for Elizabetta's hand and an alliance that will benefit and turn the tide against the two feuding kingdoms. In little to no time, Alaric is poisoned, a devastating development in the story. Now, not only does the gang have to worry about the outcome between the terms of a possible alliance, but they must also look out for a murderer among their midst.

Diane writes in a coy fashion, tying in the relationships between chess and Molly's situation. *"The game of chess is like the game of war. In chess, as in war, there can be no victory without sacrifice."* With the foreboding visions of a cat and a game of chess, Molly is defenseless against the impending dangers. Riddles and tricks, love and despair, war and victory set a perfect plan for this novel. While the ending was quite abrupt dealing with the issue of Molly ending up with either Alaric or Tobias, I was quite pleased with the plot line. (view spoiler) What truly drew me into the series was the bright and intelligent female heroine that it possessed. She was just as amazing in this book as she was in the other two. It was also nice to see that another one was elaborated upon, Elizabetta. The change of pace inside the land of Cortova was happily welcomed, but with the bringing of Cortova, we barely got to hear from Tobais. This was one of the downsides to the novel. However, do not let this deter you from finishing this series! It was a pleasant read nonetheless and a strong installment to Molly's journey.

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### **Dynamic Pickle says**

What the hell is that ending? What the hell is this book? Where the hell was Molly? Only reason why I trudged through this was because I wanted to see how Molly grew, but she barely got a few chapters here. It

was the princess this, the king did that, Alaric thought this, Tobias saw that.

And the *ending*. Holy *fuck* the ending. I mean, a giant cat? And Molly wasn't even there, she was seeing it through the eyes of a giant chubby cat, the size of a fucking building. And right after Tobias's death, Alaric springs a marriage proposal and Molly just accepts? What the mindbogglingly *fuck*. *This is such a disappointment of an ending and a series in general. I invested so much of my time for this, I mean Jesus I put off my responsibilities just to finish this. This just seemed so insulting.*

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### **Ella Smith says**

WHAT WAS WITH THAT ENDING?!?!? Like, I knew she and Alaric were friends- obviously they were close friends- but she LOVED Tobias!!!! How did Diane Stanley so easily just say, "Oh, let's kill Tobias!"??? WHO DOES THAT????????????????? This book was great, except for the talking cat- I still don't get that- and the fact that she KILLED Tobias!! All of the sudden, there was a major romance between Molly and Alaric, come on! Can't Tobias come back? If this wasn't the last book, I wouldn't be so annoyed. But it is, so I know- TOBIAS IS NEVER COMING BACK!!! That is sooooo not fair! He was my favorite character (besides Molly, obviously)- I mean, he was always there for her, just like it said in the book, "soul of a saint, heart of a lion" , he never did anything to hurt either of them- so in the end, he gave is life protecting the person who would snatch his love from him. Molly and Alaric did not respect the dead. They could've at least waited another book or something- the SAME DAY though? It is apparent that Ms. Stanley did not want to spend much time completing this series, as Tobias died in a sentence or two. I recommended this book halfway through, now I realize, it will only cause the reader grief. I would like to stay home and cry all week after reading this! It's just NOT FAIR!! (Yes, I'm mad!!!)

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### **Benide israel says**

It was a great book.

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### **Nicole says**

Good ending to the trilogy. Needed a bit more build up to the romance and a better wrap up to the one that wasn't meant to be but I loved the characters and the story. Great read for advanced middle readers and young adults.

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### **Shanshad Whelan says**

This is the third and final book in the trilogy that began with the Silver Bowl. All three stories cover the adventures of Molly, who begins her life as a scullery maid until she helps rescue the prince from a deadly plot and destroys the curse on his family. The second book has to do with Molly discovering her true ancestry and the powers she holds within.

This last book wraps up Molly's story in a fairly expected manner if you've been reading along. But this

story--as is evidenced by the title--is not Molly's story. It's an ensemble cast with several familiar characters and host of new ones. Prince Alaric is now going to court the Princess of Cortova in person with The Loving Cup Molly has crafted. Molly and Tobias travel with him. But the King of Cortova is a crafty sort of soul and he has invited Alaric's cousin to come and try for the hand of the Princess as well.

It sounds like the makings of a great plot. And Elizabetta, our Princess, is a wonderfully vivid character. Readers who have followed along already love Alaric, Molly and Tobias, so there's no lack of great characters to follow and root for. The story weaves intrigue, danger and romance into a final outcome where Molly's own strengths will help win the day . . . or lose it.

Despite great characters, and an interesting premise, this book is problematic in its presentation. I consider myself a good reader, even for multi-layered, multi perspective books. So it makes me take a step back when even I am confused about who's perspective is contained in a particular passage. Rather than shifting between, one, two, or even three characters, the perspective shifts between at least six different characters, some of those for only a scene or two at most. Frankly, it's clumsy. The worst is when we constantly flip between negotiations of Prince Alaric and the King and Reynard and the King. The two sets of negotiations did not occur simultaneously--why on earth present them as such?

For all that goes on, this book is incredibly short. And while I normally get irritated when books pad the pages with more descriptions events and conversations than necessary, in this case I wanted much more. I wanted to get to know the Princess better--not just the little set pieces we saw to capture her character. I wanted to see more cleverness from our statesmen, less reacting.

Finally, I have a huge set of issues with the ending:

Warning Major Spoilers Ahead!

Molly gets arrested for allegedly starting the fire that nearly kills the Princess. The fact that she conveniently goes off alone at the point where it would look suspicious is problematic. The fact that she confesses what happened to Tobias and not to the prince--and the fact that she is not immediately rushing to check on her own friends safety after the fire is out is all difficult to believe. But that's hardly the thing that pulled me out of the story.

Readers who've been with us since the first book know that Molly is fond of Tobias and Alaric both. We're pretty sure she loves the Prince but is resigned to him being out of her league. In the last book, she commits a tremendous crime against Tobias . . . and it's never resolved, but the indication is it kills something of their innocent relationship. The fact that Tobias is conveniently killed turns the romance with Alaric sour for me. It's the convenient method of cleaning up a love triangle and it annoys me to no end. Add into that the fact that the author crafts a loving beau for Princess Elizabetta so that when she takes the throne as Queen she chooses her faithful knight, and all our complications melt away.

It's too pat, too arranged for my tastes. Perhaps this will be fine for others, it is after all, my opinion, but I was disappointed with the wrap up.

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### **Leah says**

What a great conclusion to a wonderful fantasy trilogy. As I've waxed rather gushingly about the myriad

merits of juvenile fiction, I will forebear to do so again, except to say that I really appreciate the innocence and simplicity of the content without a sacrifice of depth or quality. This trilogy was certainly no exception.

I enjoyed Molly, Alaric, Winifred, and Tobias. They were great characters, well written, who had great adventures. It was a joy to get to know them and follow them as they grew and matured.

There was a twist at the end that caught me off guard, but was so right for the story. Actually, there were several, but all made sense and were right.

I would have liked a bit more on Harrowsgode, either more story set there, or more than a passing reference to Molly's relationship with it, but that was a small (and the only) complaint.

All in all highly satisfactory and highly recommended.

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### **Jen says**

OK book with a truly crap ending. So much I could say, but it's really the last chapter. The title of the last chapter was particularly offensive. "It was really quite convenient." Yes, it was. Convenient that Tobias didn't enter the book except to remind you of his quiet unconditional love for Molly. Didn't enter, that is, until the end where he dies suddenly. That was convenient. Now Molly doesn't have to deal with her feelings toward him. Convenient that now Alaric can come in professing his love in a careless speech.

Alaric: "Hey, I'm free and I love you. Wanna drink from this magical love cup with me now? Wait you look a little sad. Oh right, your best friend, possible love, definite admirer just died a horrible death for my sake. Crap, forgot all about him. Let's forget this happened."

Molly: "Nah, its ok."

Alaric: "wanna marry me even though we told everyone that you're betrothed to the newly dead (and newly remembered) Tobias?"

Molly: "Of course."

The end.

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### **cookiemonster says**

I am going to have to add to the number of reviews that say, "Oh come on, Ending!"

This was such a weird series. The first book was solid, tightly written, and very recommendable. Then the second came with a change from Molly's enjoyable first person (and those can be rare on the ground) to third person.

Simply put, it was not even the same kind of book as the first. The writing was still good, but that kind of style change is incredibly jarring--especially if you're reading the trilogy straight through in one go. I can only imagine that the change occurred so that Stanley could include information/scenes that wouldn't be available to Molly, but... from what I could tell, the story didn't need any of them.

Now that I think about it, the second book had a bit of an ass-pull ending wherein Sigrid, who had previously been red-flagged as an antagonist/villain type of character, was suddenly benign. Um, okay.

The third book went with yet another format change, albeit a much less dramatic one. Rather than just chapters, the book is divided(-ish) into Parts, each prefaced by the definition of a chess term. There are also about six different points of view throughout.

The chess in the book was so... token. And completely unnecessary. It's just kind of THERE, holding up a big sign saying, "Please give a crap about me." While it whinges on about its own importance.

Of the three books, this one definitely has the loosest... everything. The plot can barely carry it through all 320 pages, the characters from previous books are just sort of coasting, and there is so much recapping. It's like it was added in to make sure the book hit a certain page count.

I saw the love triangle in the first book, but the ending admirably snuffed it. OR SO I THOUGHT AT THE TIME. It implied pretty strongly that Molly would "end up with" Tobias. The effing end. That was even the tone of the writing.

Then the love triangle tone and language started up again on the first page of the second book. So I knew when I started the third book, it would have some more erratic and badly handled love triangle. I realised in the second book that Molly's status had changed to royalty so that barrier was gone, so honestly, the ending didn't surprise me in this book.

**EXCEPT FOR THE DISPOSAL OF THE VILLAIN.** And disposal is probably the most apt word for it. If I ever need to show someone an example of rushed endings, this will be the first on the list. The phrase, "deus ex machina" comes to mind.

So. I loved the Princess Elisabetta and the setting was not bad. I am a little worried that the characters all seem to think that being fostered in Austlind will be enough to cure Prince Castor of his psychopathy. (view spoiler)

Molly spends the majority of the book navel-gazing, recapping the previous books, or being a supporting character. She is not the main character in any way, shape, or form. Her ship sailed at the end of the second book. The political intrigue was a mess, but the writing was good enough that I was totally on board with it at the time. The ending ruins any suspension of disbelief and good faith, so I can recognise that the intrigue was a hot mess.

Still, this trilogy is not a waste of time, and I would say potential readers should risk this book if only to complete it, and for the good-ish bits.

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