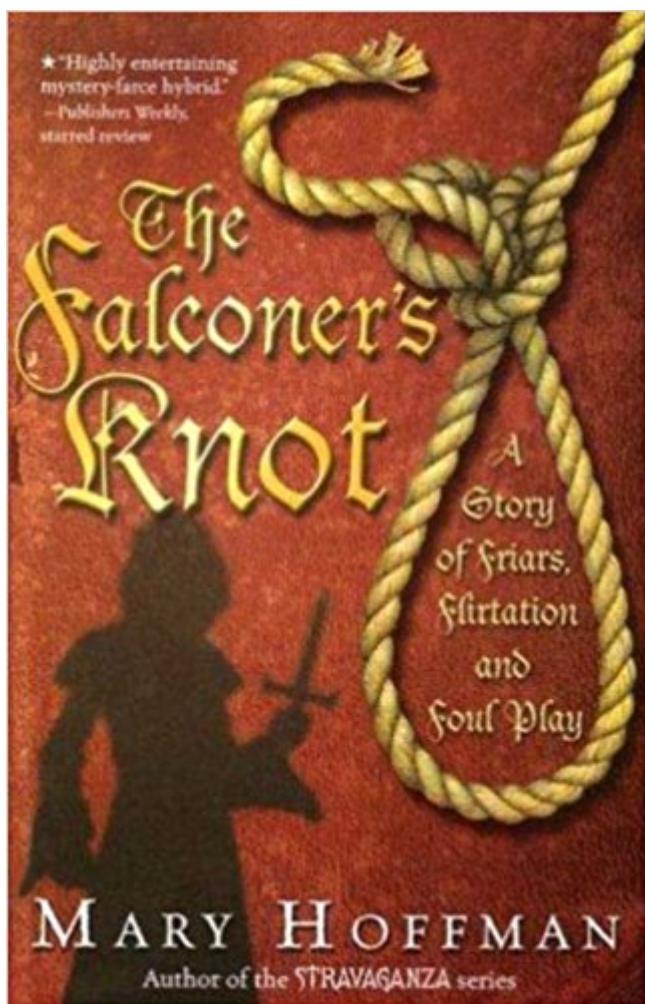


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The Falconer's Knot: A Story Of Friars, Flirtation And Foul Play



Synopsis

The award-winning author of the *Stravaganza* series has done it again with this atmospheric adventure set in Renaissance Italy. Sixteen-year-old Silvano da Montacuto has wealth, good looks, and a new hawk—but none of these can save him when his bloody dagger is found near a dead body. For his own protection, he is sent to a Franciscan House, where he poses as a novice, or a young monk. There, he lays eyes on Chiara, a lovely novice at a nearby abbey who is also living in secret. When they fall in love, their secret identities make it impossible to reveal their feelings to one another. Murder seems to have followed Silvano, and soon several other dead bodies turn up. Who is committing the crimes? Will a young man accused of multiple murders be able to clear himself? And what about the girl he adores? Fans of Mary Hoffman's critically acclaimed *Stravaganza* series won't be disappointed in the romance, colorful web of intrigue, and rich, marvelous setting.

Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Bloomsbury USA Childrens (May 1, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 159990229X

ISBN-13: 978-1599902296

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.5 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,880,754 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #71 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Renaissance #110 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Renaissance #685 in Books > Teens > Mysteries & Thrillers > Historical

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 7—Fans of the author's "Stravaganza" series (Bloomsbury) will welcome this novel set in Renaissance Italy. Wealthy young nobleman Silvano, 16, is infatuated with beautiful Angelica, who is married to a coarse sheep farmer named Piero. When Piero is murdered with Silvano's dagger, the teen is forced to flee, seeking sanctuary with a group of Franciscans. At the friary, two more murders cast further suspicion on him. A parallel story involves Aureliana, who has been forced by her family to marry a rich man she does not love. Her true love, Eduardo, has

become a friar named Anselmo in the very friary where Silvano seeks refuge. As the stories coalesce, multiple murders, romance, betrayals, and star-crossed lovers all make for a page-turning mystery, and, in truly satisfying Shakespearean fashion, everyone ends up with the proper lover at the end. The book provides a well-realized setting rich with details of the time period, which are deftly woven into the plot. Especially interesting are the descriptions of the art of color-making for the pigments used for religious paintings. Engrossing historical fiction. Quinby Frank, Green Acres School, Rockville, MD 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.

Starred Review Hoffman set her acclaimed *Stravaganza* novels in an alternate world that resembled sixteenth-century Italy. In this suspenseful mystery, Hoffman leaves the alternate worlds behind and locates her story in the real-world history of fourteenth-century Umbria. Sixteen-year-old Silvano, a handsome nobleman, admires Angelica, a local merchant's wife, from afar. Then Angelica's husband is murdered, and Silvano becomes the prime suspect. Until his innocence is proven, Silvano takes refuge in a Franciscan friary, where he enjoys making pigments for local artists and finds himself attracted to a lovely novice at the adjoining abbey. Then a series of mysterious deaths puts Silvano under greater suspicion, and he determines to find the murderer. The publisher has compared this novel to Umberto Eco's *Name of the Rose* (1983), and there are certainly similarities between the books' friary settings and central mysteries. Hoffman makes the story her own with an exciting tangle of murder suspects and romantic intrigues. The plot is crowded with characters, and the intricate details about pigment preparation and fourteenth-century art and life will slow some readers and fascinate others. Hoffman creates utterly engaging characters and vivid settings, and she skillfully turns up the suspense, wrapping her varied plot threads into a satisfying whole. Readers will race through to the satisfying, fairy-tale conclusion, which includes some empowering twists for the female characters. Gillian EngbergCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Three cheers for a book I delighted in reading. Interesting characters, interesting time, and how gently it helped me learn about how colors were prepared for artists--all while wrapped around medieval mystery, mayhem, and murder. The author carefully unwraps the story details and moves the reader through a variety of points of view, but still holds the reader captive. This is a terrific book for mature young readers and young mature readers as our sympathy moves from teen angst to

adult sorrow. I'm so glad this book fell off the library shelf and with the title alone invited me to read it.

I liked it so much that I have read it 5 times. I am a retired high school teacher who have dealt with students for 50 years. This book and the City of Books I have recommended to my students which they relate to.

A- fast paced but easy to read. Lots of colorful characters even though the setting was gray. Liked the Romance.

This is a mystery novel set in 14th century Italy. Silvano, a young nobleman who rides through his home of Perrugia with his hunting falcon, is cast under suspicion of murder and his father sends him to a friary so he will be safe until his name is cleared. But then a rash of murders begin at the friary. Silvano and Chiara, a young unwilling novice who he has met, must try to solve the murders. There are a lot of complicated side-plots in this intriguing book as well, including two women, both widowed by the murders. This was a pretty suspenseful book, and I liked how it was set in 14th century Italy. There is a lot of talk about frescoes and other paintings in the walls of cathedrals that is really interesting, and I love the world that is described in this book. However, the actual mystery itself wasn't that complicated. There was no real connection between the seemingly separate murders, even though the murderer was the same. You'll see if you read it.*You can read all of my reviews at my blog,[...]

Silvano and Chiara are interesting characters - except you just don't read enough about them! Silvano seeks refuge with friars after being accused of murder while Chiara's brother hands her over to the nuns. Both of these characters are unhappy with their situation - until they glance at each other. There is much in this story that I didn't like - the fact that I had worked out who had killed Tomo before half-way through the book was a major issue as it was too obvious. This is compounded with the eventual revelation of who killed all the others - it didn't make sense and was pathetic as it was just THERE. But, even if the above issues were better written and, in my opinion the painter's role could have been completely cut out as it failed to advance the story as he droned on and on and on (not to mention the friar's conversations which did much the same), the biggest issue was the conclusion. It had a "everyone is happy and all worked out with a big smile" ending which let me down after forcing myself to read to the end. Would never read another book by this author, in spite of the positive reviews. I have learnt my lesson!

I have read hundreds of historical mysteries and this one is top notch. Once I started it, I did not want to put it down. The main protagonists are Silvano, who has sought sanctuary in a Franciscan Friary after being accused of a murder he did not commit, and Chiara, who is forced to enter a neighboring convent because her family does not have the money for a dowry. The supporting characters are very interesting too. The lively plot could be described as Shakespeare meets Brother Cadfael. The fascinating details about color-making and fourteenth century art brought back happy memories of my visit to the Basilica of St. Francis several years ago.

This poorly written novel is confusing and has absurd characters. Someone kills because he smells paint, and the characters are very one-dimensional. No anti-hero spin. Our school taught this book, and the students hated it. The setting is nice, and there are some nice themes about friendship. It is a mystery that I could have done without.

I really wanted to like this book. The two main characters are potentially very compelling, and the mystery of who committed the murders in the plot is interesting. But the author does more "telling" or exposition of the thoughts and actions of the characters rather than letting readers watch the story develop by having the characters act it out. To me, that puts some emotional distance between the readers and the characters, and it keeps the book from having the impact it potentially could have. I was disappointed.

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