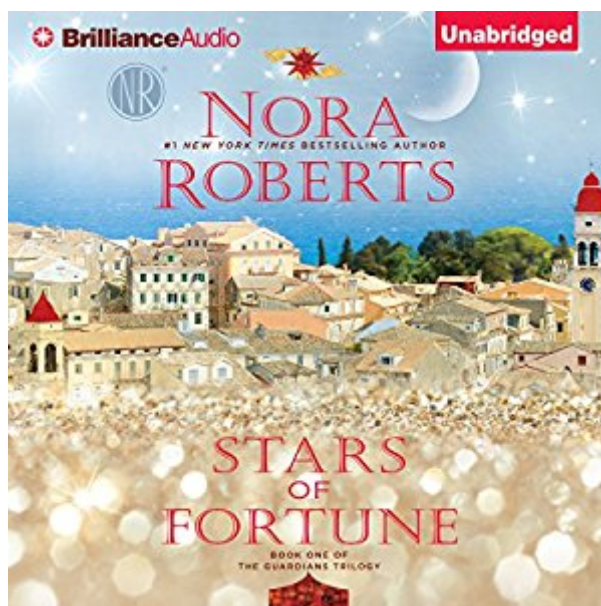


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Stars Of Fortune: Guardians Trilogy, Book 1



Synopsis

To celebrate the rise of their new queen, three goddesses of the moon created three stars, one of fire, one of ice, one of water. But then they fell from the sky, putting the fate of all worlds in danger. And now three women and three men join forces to pick up the pieces.... Sasha Riggs is a reclusive artist, haunted by dreams and nightmares that she turns into extraordinary paintings. Her visions lead her to the Greek island of Corfu, where five others have been lured to seek the fire star. Sasha recognizes them, because she has drawn them: a magician, an archaeologist, a wanderer, a fighter, a loner. All on a quest. All with secrets. Sasha is the one who holds them together - the seer. And in the magician, Bran Killian, she sees a man of immense power and compassion. As Sasha struggles with her rare ability, Bran is there to support her, challenge her, and believe in her. But Sasha and Bran are just two of the six. And they must all work together as a team to find the fire star in a cradle of land beneath the sea. Over their every attempt at trust, unity, and love, a dark threat looms. And it seeks to corrupt everything that stands in its way of possessing the stars....

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I really wanted to love this. I started off adoring Sasha, but that changed quickly. I feel like I am having a hard time with all of her books lately.... The characters are similar, the formula the same. Most of the characters are poorly developed. And even the parts that are very "Nora", which I love, are becoming overdone, like the meals and group planning over a pot of stew. I just read a blog by her showing anger over criticism (specifically on her Facebook page...which I get...that's rude). But

she states the reader is not her employer....my wallet and I would beg to differ. Arrogance is a dangerous thing. When people complain here it is because we love Nora and want her work to be as wonderful as we know it can be.

*****SPOILERS***PLEASE DON'T READ AHEAD IF YOU DON'T WANT SPOILERS, I'M NOT HOLDING BACK*****I couldn't decide if I wanted to give this book 3 or 4 stars. I want to say 4 because I am a longtime fan of Nora Roberts and I was really excited for this book. I think I'm going to end up giving it a 3 though because it just didn't live up. NR's last few books have been incredibly disappointing but, when I read the excerpt of this one, I really thought she'd gotten some of her magic back. She didn't write in those weird, short, choppy sentences she seems to love these days, the characters were a delight, the premise was interesting, and, once again, a great setting. I don't mind, at all, her habit of writing 3 men, 3 women, 3 books. It's just something she prefers and I kind of like it. The predictability of the ending and the events don't bother me one bit. I know that the good guys are always going to win and three couples are going to fall in love. I did speak too soon, however, about the magic coming back because most of the things I was looking forward to were the things that killed it.

Setting: The setting was absolutely gorgeous, but, in the past, Nora has described a setting so beautifully with about a 1/4 of the words she used here. I get it, Villa is beautiful and Greece is beautiful and food is delicious. Say it and move on. I really didn't want sooo much of it. She spent more time developing the setting than she did the characters and I had to skim most of it. Now, in the next 2 books, there are going to be 2 new settings and we're going to have to endure brand new descriptions of them all over again. You're writing a book, Nora, not a travel brochure.

Language: NR characters usually have beautiful and poetic language, especially her Irish characters. Throughout this whole novel, however, the thought that "nobody ever even talks like this", kept circling my mind. It was just too much. Every sentence was something along the lines of "to heart, to mind, to love, we will conquer all", "meals and family and love." I'm not expecting 100% realism when I pick up an NR book, but I'd like it to be A LITTLE realistic. I don't need, "Hey, dude, look at the villa. Awesome!" But, I don't want them to speak like poets ALL the time.

Characters: I pick up an NR book for the relationships. Let's be real, the setting and the whatever-storyline are great, but the relationships are my favorite part of these books. I looked and looked and just couldn't find it. Nobody connected at all for me or for each other. In her Circle trilogy, I was instantly and madly in love with the characters and, at their losses, I was heartbroken and, at their triumphs, I was joyful. I can honestly say that I don't care what happens to any of these characters. They also didn't click very well with each other. There were no little things to

make me think that these people truly care about each other. When Doyle takes that death blow for Riley in the end, I couldn't imagine it was because he cared about her at all, only that he knows he can't die and she can.

Riley: She was just one of Nora's previous characters supercharged. It felt like she was trying to mash many of her characters into one, the archaeologist, the fighter, the supernatural, the know-it-all. She was all these and more, it felt like she was trying way too hard. No one person could possibly have all those personalities smashed into one.

Sawyer: Such an interesting character and the one thing we know about him above all else is that he's got the hots for Annika. So many more things I would have liked to learn about him.

Annika: Different. Different personality and different supernatural creature than usual. Very sweet and innocent and I wish she just wasn't so innocent though. The sweetness was lovely but she was too trusting for my liking. Like even in her world, way under the sea, there must be some untrustworthy mer-people. Going to a new world and making friends with others of a completely different species, she has to have some sort of caution otherwise she's just an idiot. I like that it was something new but dial it back. That random comment about her only having 3 months until she loses her legs after she tells someone what she is? I don't know if I understood that right but it just seems to be a problem for the sake of having a problem and really doesn't make any sense at all.

Doyle: No time at all was spent on him. By the time we found out his secret and his story, I didn't have any sort of emotional connection to him and couldn't find it in me to care.

Sasha: I tried so hard to like her but I just couldn't. Such a bore and no personality whatsoever. Hypocritical and did nothing throughout the entire book that was her own will. She was led by her "power" to all the answers and didn't really put forth any effort to actually get to the answers herself. She kept saying how much she wants to get stronger and stop being the weak link in the circle and, every time something happens, she proves that she still is the weak link. I also really wish she had done something more in the final fight than hug Bran to give him her love while he defeated Nerezza pretty much on his own. She was also a hypocrite in the biggest way. She spent her entire life in isolation, she was even described as a recluse in the book flaps, but, when someone wants to do something by themselves, she gets all pissy about them not being a family. There was a line about something that Doyle was doing, setting that target up alone, Sasha thought, resentfully". You've known these people for a week and Doyle for all of 2 days | relax. She also stepped over her own words a lot. I remember her speaking to Riley about everybody having secrets and them revealing them in their own time, yet every time she found out someone's secret, she got angry at them. Bran didn't reveal his secret within the first minute of knowing her. Big deal.

Bran: A typical Irish, magick, Nora character. Nothing

new about him in abilities or personality. At all. Romance: Boring. It all happened very quickly and there was none of the usual feeling I get when I read an NR romance. The s*x scenes were too long and words were basically copied and pasted from some other NR books. Nothing new there. When I read some of Nora's books from 20 years ago and I come across a female character who is a virgin, it's not weird but, in this day and age, when she revealed she was a virgin at 28, all I could do was roll my eyes and think "why does nobody else think this is weird?" Maybe I'm being judgmental but it just added an extra layer of my un-believability of Sasha. Bran basically carried Sasha. She hid behind him at every opportunity and the entire romance just wasn't a very fun read at all. Villain: Nerezza is nowhere near the villain that I've read in some of Nora's other books. The Circle trilogy has one of my favorite villains of all time in Lilith and comparing this one to that, I can definitely see that they were supposed to be similar but Lilith was just better in every way. Nora has gotten into this habit of telling and not showing so, every time Nerezza was described as "evil", it was like NR was begging us to believe it. Nerezza had madness and evil in her eyes. Lilith murdered an entire family so she could turn a little boy into a vampire to have as a son and lover. Nerezza says that love is for mortals. Lilith takes one of the group's good friends and turns him into a vampire to use as bait. There's just no comparison. Writing: Everything was so repetitive. The line "Sasha contemplated what to make for dinner" was probably in there at least once every other chapter. Food was mentioned in every single chapter. Sandwiches, eggs, pasta. "I'll get a bottle of wine" or "opened a bottle of wine" was also in there every minute or so. Sasha painted, Sasha packed her sketch book and pencils, Sasha grabbed her tote with her sketch book and pencils, Sasha grabbed her bag with her sketch book and pencils, Sasha itched to sketch this scene, Sasha wanted to remember this scene so she could paint it later, Sasha sat down to sketch. I can beg and hope and pray that the next two are going to be written by 20 years ago Nora, but they probably won't be. I love her and she will always be my favorite author (20 years ago Nora, that is), but I'm starting to get real sick and tired of shelling out so much money for recycled storylines and characters. Why should I put the effort in if she's not going to?

I really want to like this book but I just don't. Dare I say it's deathly boring in parts and strangely repetitive in others -- for example, we get it, Sasha was weak but now she's not. The plot and characters feel like a hodgepodge of all the other plots/ characters in previous novels. I was unamused by the character development of Riley. Really?! All I'll say is that a basic tenet of these books is that the cards are on the table from the beginning. It's difficult to suspend belief when

information just comes out of nowhere in the middle of the book. I did like Annika but am just not sure I'm going to be able to get there when all is revealed. Sigh, I still haven't finished the book but I will just as I'll buy book two of the trilogy because I am at heart a Nora fan looking for some of the magic from the Irish trilogy.

Even with some similarities to other Nora Roberts characters (regarding some of the personalities), I found the plot of the first book in The Guardians trilogy: interesting, mysterious, and unique. 'Stars of Fortune' introduces us to Sasha. A loner artist who's always had dreams and premonitions: a seer. One day she decides to leave her life in North Carolina and travel to Corfi, where she meets the five people she's been watching in dreams and painting for a while. Sasha along with Bran, Riley, Sawyer, Annika (my fav!), and Doyle make six; the chosen ones who will be in charge of finding three stars before the evil force does and destroys the world. Good thing, each of these characters has a unique power and hidden identity that will make them even stronger along with the trust they have to build among them, and of course, love. The beginning was incredibly confusing. I had no idea what was going on or why these people were agreeing so matter of factly to living together. Fortunately, it didn't take long to understand their motives and mission. I loved how it all evolved. I especially enjoyed trying to guess each of their powers and identities, which I'm not revealing because part of the enjoyment of reading this book is to find out at the same time they do. What I didn't like much was the main romance between Sasha and Bran. They had cute moments but also others where they absolutely bored me. Never felt sparks flying or had that AHA! moment when I fall in love with the couple. Maybe I got tired of Bran needing to constantly assure Sasha she wasn't weak while Sasha would constantly tell herself she was. Maybe I got annoyed with a couple of her overreactions. Maybe I didn't feel they got to know each other past their powers and identities. Maybe it was all of the above and more. The conclusion is simple: I couldn't love them. ****OVERALL:** 'Stars of Fortune' failed in the romance aspect (for me) but triumphed with the plot and this group of people with different abilities and personalities coming together to vanquish the evil force. They really are the Avengers of the mystic world. I cannot wait to read more. 2016 needs to hurry up.

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