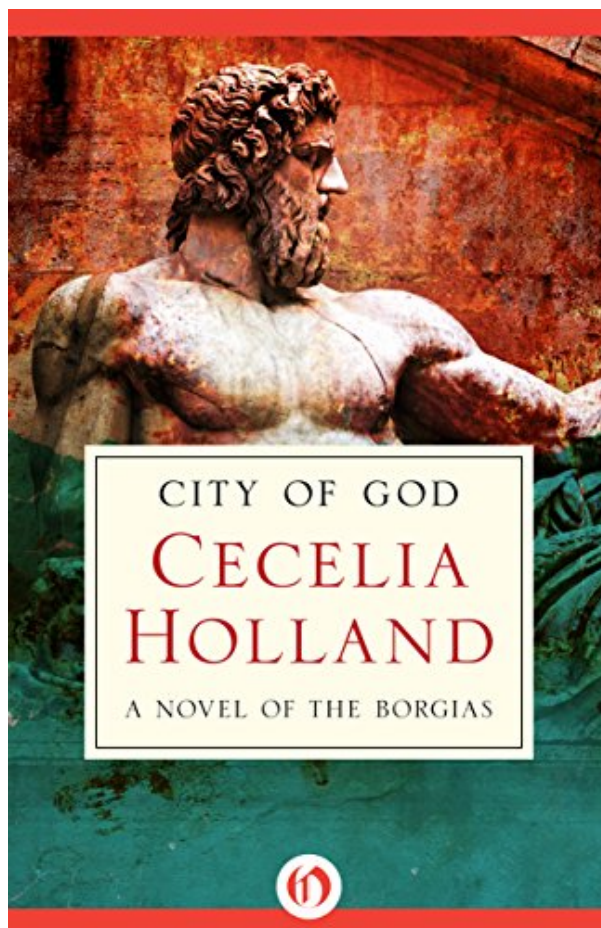
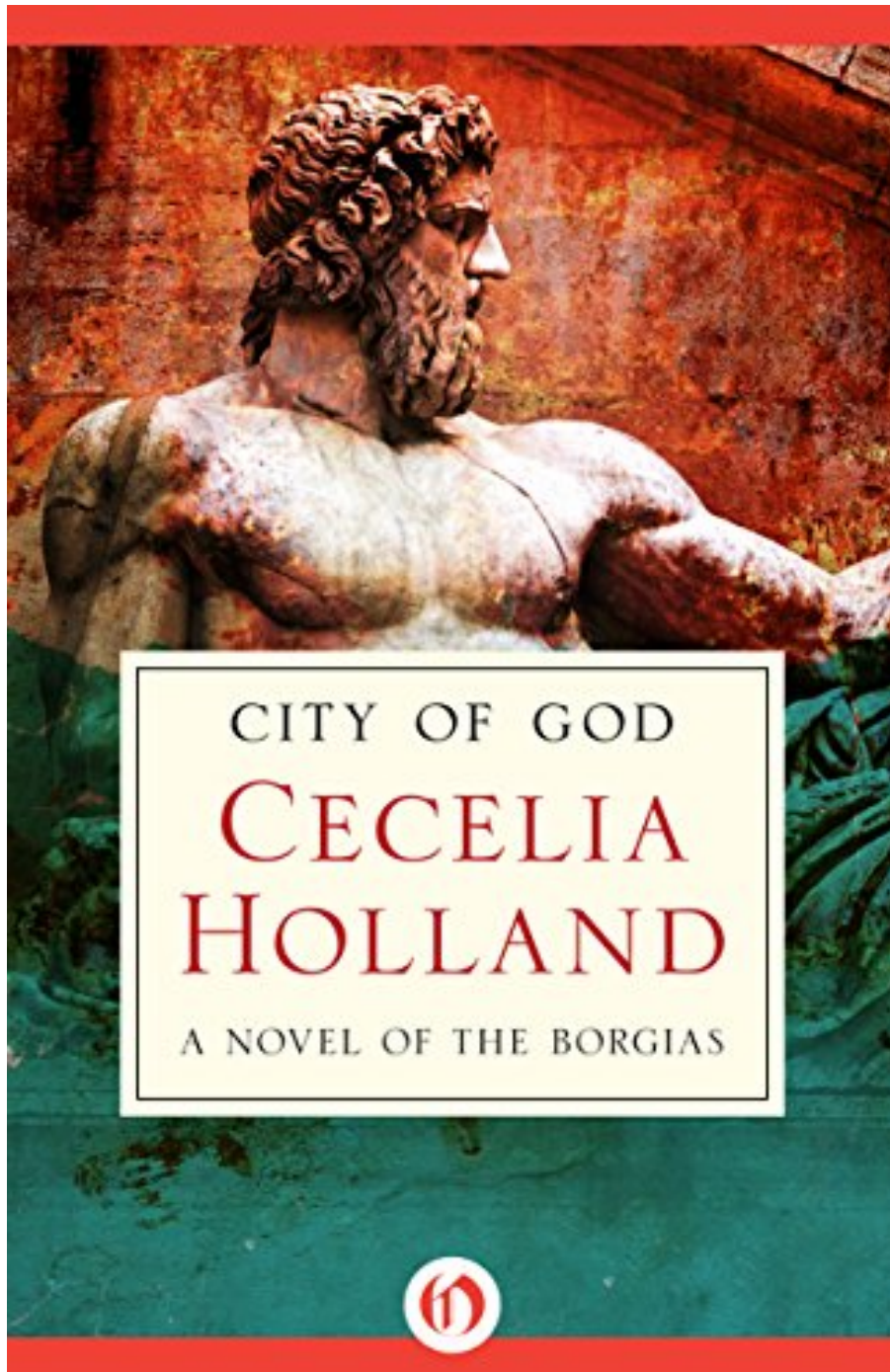


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Review

“Fascinating . . . Compelling.” —The Washington Post

“Holland packs her pages with action and historical detail. She remains in the front ranks of the genre along with Mary Stewart, Dorothy Dunnett, and the late Mary Renault.” —Chicago Sun-Times

“[Holland is] a literary phenomenon.” —The New York Times

About the Author

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CITY OF GOD BY CECELIA HOLLAND PDF

A self-serving political player in sixteenth-century Rome is caught up in the ruthless and powerful Borgia family's deadly intrigues of murder and betrayal

It is known as the City of God—but Rome at the dawn of the sixteenth century is an unholy place where opulence, poverty, and decadence cohabit sinfully under the ruthless rule of Rodrigo Borgia, the debauched Pope Alexander VI. Englishman Nicholas Dawson is secretary to the ineffectual ambassador of Florence and, as such, finds himself linked to Borgias' murderous machinations, specifically the brutal power plays of the warlord Cesare, the pope's bastard son. A skilled liar, conspirator, spy, and manipulator—a man drawn to power and the pleasures of excess—Dawson coolly plays his part in Rome's draconian political dramas with an eye to personal gain and no true allegiance to any side or player. But his attraction to a beautiful and very dangerous young man soon threatens to bring Dawson's secret enterprises crashing down around him, dooming him to a brutal and ignoble fate.

The great Cecelia Holland is acclaimed as one of America's premier creators of historical fiction. With *City of God* she brings a remarkable epoch and a legendary family of scoundrels and murderers to breathtaking life—the corrupt patriarch pope; the suspiciously widowed and incestuous daughter, Lucrezia; Cesare, the bloodthirsty conqueror; and the tragically imprisoned and damned Caterina Sforza. Holland has written a stunning tale of betrayal, deception, and blood.

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Most helpful customer reviews

17 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

The World of the Borgias comes alive

By A Customer

This is one of my favorite historical novels. Cecilia Holland, as always, brings you into the world of the past. This time it is the world of the Borgias. Nicholas Dawson is a complicated, brilliant man who tries to beat the Borgias at their own game. If you like good historical fiction, you must read this book.

18 of 20 people found the following review helpful.

One of this author's very best

By A Customer

Cecelia Holland's novels are always absolutely remarkable--I've read most of them--but of all of them this may be the best. The main character is Nicholas Dawson, a strange, reclusive, intelligent, homosexual clerk in the Florentian embassy in Borgia Rome. He becomes involved with the ruthless scheming of the Duke of Valentino and the very unholy Pope. Dawson is an absolutely brilliantly drawn character--the little details of his life are perfect. Holland is a truly great writer--other writers may take you back to the past but Holland makes the past the present.

13 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

Such is History

By SaintME

In summarizing the book, one earlier reviewer commented that there was not one character to root for in "City of God." I disagree.

I think it is important to remember that different authors craft historical fiction using different proportions of "historical" and "fiction." When dealing with characters based on real individuals, and including events from history, sometimes the harsh "reality" of the past may be at odds with our modern sensibilities. Rather than detract from Maitland's book, her portrayal appealed to me for being so very unappealing; I believed her. Her writing works because she presents a "real" version of the past, that as a reader I appreciate.

This book is harsh, yes, but great.

See all 18 customer reviews...

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