



## **Palace of Lies**

*Margaret Peterson Haddix*

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## **Palace of Lies** Margaret Peterson Haddix

Desmia discovers the reality of royalty is far from a fairy tale in this third adventure set in the Cinderella-esque world of *Just Ella* and *Palace of Mirrors*, from New York Times bestselling author Margaret Peterson Haddix.

Desmia and her twelve sister-princesses are ruling Suala together at last, a united front. The kingdom seems to have finally gotten its happily ever after, but Desmia, trained by a lifetime of palace intrigue, is not so sure. She desperately wants to believe all is well, but she can't help seeing danger around every corner.

And then the unthinkable happens, and Desmia's worst fears are confirmed. Now, without the support of the sister-princesses she's grown to rely on or the trappings of royalty that have always convinced people to listen to her, Desmia must find the courage to seek out the truth on her own terms—and to determine the course of two kingdoms.

## **Palace of Lies Details**

Date : Published April 7th 2015 by Simon Schuster Books for Young Readers

ISBN : 9781442442818

Author : Margaret Peterson Haddix

Format : Hardcover 357 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Fairy Tales

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## From Reader Review Palace of Lies for online ebook

### Lisa Dawn says

Most people are familiar with *Ella Enchanted*, Gail Carson Levine's feminist retelling of Cinderella, mostly due to the butchered movie version released by Disney/Miramax in 2004. But did you know that around the same time *Ella Enchanted* became popular, Margaret Peterson Haddix had released another feminist Cinderella adaptation that was every bit as exciting? *Just Ella* is a thrilling adventure story about Ella trying to escape the castle after the ball to avoid being used as a pawn in a wicked scheme and being forced to marry a prince she didn't love. Years later, Margaret Peterson Haddix turned the series into a trilogy, adding two more books that told equally exciting stories about princesses in the neighboring kingdom of Suala. *Palace of Mirrors* is a fantastic book about a girl named Cecilia who had been raised to believe that she is the true princess of Suala and journeys to the capital to reclaim her throne from the decoy princess, Desmia, who believes that she is the true princess and knows nothing of the secret plot that went on behind the girls' backs. *Palace of Lies*, the final book in the trilogy, is told from Desmia's perspective, which is very different from Ella or Cecilia's because unlike them, she was actually raised in the palace. Together, the three books are referred to as "The Palace Chronicles."

*Palace of Lies* is an adventure story about a sheltered and refined princess who had never been on an adventure being thrust into a daring journey across kingdoms and learning to trust people in the process. Unlike Gail Carson Levine's *The Lost Kingdom of Bamarre*, which can be enjoyed by someone who has never read its predecessor, *The Two Princesses of Bamarre*, Margaret Peterson Haddix's *Palace of Lies* is difficult to understand or appreciate without reading *Just Ella* and *Palace of Mirrors* first. It takes place shortly after the events of *Palace of Mirrors* left off and directly correlates to *Just Ella*. I admit it had been quite a few years since I read *Palace of Mirrors* and over a decade since I read *Just Ella*, but I remembered enough to get through the story. Princess Desmia offers a fresh perspective in this book. She was raised by an evil dictator and used as a pawn, making her cynical yet clever. Her metamorphosis into a warmer and more caring person is a pleasure to read. She does not become a completely different person by the end of the story, but she does learn to let others into her life and finally realizes that she does not always have to be alone.

Desmia is used to the finer things in life, such as glittering ballgowns, tiaras, and great feasts served upon her beck and call. However, this book offers none of those things. At the very beginning of the story, the majestic palace is burnt to the ground by an unknown attacker, and Desmia must flee for her life with nothing but the clothes on her back. She quickly realizes that most people in the kingdom do not have the same advantages that she was brought up with and must learn to stop being a spoiled princess. Desmia also discovers a family member that she never knew she had and must let others into her life for the first time, something that is very difficult for her after fourteen years of putting on airs to everyone at the palace. At first, her only ally is Cecilia, who readers know well as the protagonist from *Palace of Mirrors*, but Desmia quickly loses sight of Cecilia and her other princess sisters during the fire. She decides her only chance at survival is to make the difficult journey to Fidelity and seek help from Ella, the title character from *Just Ella*. Her palace training proves completely useless for such a journey, forcing her to depend on her newfound allies for help.

The road that lies ahead for Desmia is messy, filled with blood, ragged clothing, and scarce food. She suffers from agoraphobia at first, having never left the palace before. It takes her some time to get used to being outside during the daytime without a sheet to cover her face. Her new allies are good to her, despite how embarrassed she is to be seen in such undignified circumstances. Spending time with them makes her realize

how many things she took for granted in the palace and how she had never recognized people as individuals if they were poor. It is an eye-opening experience for a sheltered princess, but it also makes her realize that when push comes to shove, she still wants to be a good person and do the right thing. Though she has trouble accepting that anyone would want to help her without an ulterior motive at first, she later finds herself doing just that.

Palace of Lies is an incredibly fast-paced fairy tale adventure story. It almost feels exhausting to travel so far with Desmia while so many things are happening at once. It's difficult to put the book down at any point for fear of not knowing what will happen next and if the many characters we met throughout the trilogy are still safe. I particularly enjoyed reading a story about a princess who was actually raised to be a princess since most stories are about princesses who marry into privilege or are treated like paupers by cruel guardians. Desmia teaches us that's possible for people to change if they truly want to and that someone who appears to be perfect on the outside might be suffering inwardly, so it's a good idea to be kind to everyone because you never know what they might be hiding from the rest of the world.

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### **Julianna says**

I LOVED THIS BOOK!!!! I met Mrs Haddix at a book signing yesterday for this book, got home to start reading, and didn't put it down until I had finished the book! I was very surprised by the end, but loved it! A must-read!

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### **Rmssoon says**

4.5

i really loved the story so much ,, but the romance part i thought there is something more :)

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### **Alyssa says**

\*\*\*Review posted on The Eater of Books! blog\*\*\*

Palace of Lies by Margaret Peterson Haddix  
Book Three of The Palace Chronicles  
Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers  
Publication Date: April 7, 2015  
Rating: 1 star  
Source: eARC from Edelweiss

Summary (from Goodreads):

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Desmia and her twelve sister-princesses are ruling Suala together at last, a united front. The kingdom seems

to have finally gotten its happily ever after, but Desmia, trained by a lifetime of palace intrigue, is not so sure. She desperately wants to believe all is well, but she can't help seeing danger around every corner.

And then the unthinkable happens, and Desmia's worst fears are confirmed. Now, without the support of the sister-princesses she's grown to rely on or the trappings of royalty that have always convinced people to listen to her, Desmia must find the courage to seek out the truth on her own terms—and to determine the course of two kingdoms.

What I Liked:

SKIP. Sorry not sorry. This book was all kinds of awful. I'm not even going to sit here and write a full review on this one. Not wasting my time.

What I Did Not Like:

First and foremost: Simon & Schuster did an AWFUL job of marketing this book. Let me explain. When I downloaded this book from Edelweiss in June (JUNE. 2014), there wasn't much about this book. No information about a synopsis, no cover, no series information. LOOK at my Stacking the Shelves post - you'll see that I had a placeholder cover up, and I stated, "Not much has been said about this one, but I'm willing to give it a try!" I had NO idea that this book was a third book in the series. There was NO indication of this on Edelweiss at the time. And on Goodreads, there was barely even a publication year (at the time). You want to know when I realized that this book was a third book? JUST NOW, when I went to input my 1-star rating on Goodreads. I was like, ohh...

I mean, I was giving it 1 star anyway. Regardless of the number in the series, this one wasn't getting more than 1 star. I think this series reads as a companion series - you can read the books in any order, or none at all. The thing is, had I known that this book was part of a series (even if it was a companion series), I wouldn't have picked it up.

Second thing: this is MIDDLE GRADE. Not Young Adult. I've not been able to read Middle Grade in quite some time, and this book is the epitome of why. I couldn't stand the immaturity of the characters in this book. I couldn't wrap my head around the absurdity of the situations of this book. I just could not believe the story, let alone like the story. And I get it - it's fantasy. But something about fourteen- and ten-year-old children taking down grown men doesn't sit well with me. When I say "take down", I mean "outwit". But also, the ten-year-old children are pretty well-versed in killing people. Okay.

I didn't like the protagonist, Desmia. She's fourteen, and gosh does she act her age (or less, really). She's so conceited and selfish, and honestly, her character and personality don't really develop throughout the story. The author likes to TELL us readers that she does, by physically forcing Desmia's thoughts in a certain way, but it's not natural and doesn't flow right at all. I want to be SHOWN that Desmia is maturing. Don't TELL me she is. Don't have HER tell me.

I didn't like the supporting characters, either. They're all so YOUNG, and so immature, and their roles don't seem right at all, for their age. It's like the author was trying to tell a Young Adult story in a Middle Grade type of book... I could not wrap my head around the characters and their age and the things they were doing. Like, they seemed too stupid to be doing some things, and entirely too smart to be able to do other things. If that makes sense.

The whole plot is absurd. Go find the twelve princesses that were probably killed in the fire - oh, but you're

seriously injured, so you have to depend on others to take you. Not to mention that these other people will drop their entire lives and money and home and EVERYTHING for you and your problems. Somehow, I just did not believe this plot arc. I wasn't buying it. I was rolling my eyes the entire time, or had an eyebrow cocked, or was staring incredulously at the pages.

Seriously, if you're going to write a Middle Grade book, age your characters as such, and mature (or immature) them as such. Don't make them super-smart, super-strong, super-witty children sent from heaven or something. Literally the entire time I was thinking to myself, these are CHILDREN?!

But again, the story seemed ridiculous. I'm not even doing it justice by saying it was "ridiculous". It was so trivial and superfluous - this book was one of those books where I was like, what's the point? This story seemed recycled and retold and booooooring, to be honest. Thank goodness the book was semi-short.

I really wanted almost everyone to end up dead... of course that was not the case. Take that as you may. This book ends so cartoon-like and cookie-cutter perfect. And the villains - literally so cartoon-like! It's like these GROWN men and women are idiots, at the hands of fourteen-year-old children! Really! These children can run a castle better than men and women who have been around a palace for years?! Yes, I believe that, totally...

Overall, I'm not pleased, not amused, and 100% would not recommend. It's Middle Grade, but it's superfluous Middle Grade. It's MIDDLE GRADE - not Young Adult (like it seemed to have been marketed to be). I would never have picked up this one, had I known that it was a book three, as well as Middle Grade. Please, publishers, market your books correctly. I know you like to upload your books super early to Edelweiss, but really, it would help immensely if you had the book's information (like, at the very least, the number in the series).

Would I Recommend It:

NOOOOOO. Maybe if you've read the other two books in the series. But nooooo. Don't do it. It's not worth it.

Rating:

1 star (really, it would be lower than that if possible. Again, sorry not sorry). This was definitely NOT for me. And now I know better than to be interested in an unknown, supposedly YA, non-series fantasy novel. Sad life.

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## Amy says

Just Ella holds a special place in my heart. I've re-read it many times. Palace of Mirrors bored me to death. I have tried reading it twice and still have no memory of Ella even being in it.

Thankfully, *Palace of Lies* caught more of the spirit of *Just Ella* than its more recent predecessor.

The story follows Princess Desmia, the princess raised in the palace. She is re-ascending the throne alongside the 12 other princesses of Suala. And then everything goes wrong. Unsure who to trust, separated from her fellow princesses, the girl who has never left the protective walls of the palace must now gather her courage

to save her kingdom one more time.

A lot of this book was dramatic and confusing and convenient, but I loved Desmia and I enjoyed her journey. I liked the simple romance. I liked having "closure" to Ella's story. An intriguing new fairy tale has emerged and I am excited to see what Haddix will do with her 13 princess rulers!

For fun, this book described in random memes I found on Pinterest:

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### **Sharon Hooper says**

An overly obnoxious protagonist does not a good book make.

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### **Yusra ? says**

so down for this to become a movie

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### **Bethany says**

A fire at the coronation leaves Princess Desmia alone and cast as a criminal by unknown enemies who have accused her of attempting to murder her "sisters," forcing her to go on the run while seeking her missing sisters - and justice. Having lived in the palace her entire life, Desmia is ill-suited for the sort of rough adventuring required of her, but with the help of an older sister she did not know she had and a pair of charming street urchins she is able to travel from Suala to Fridesia to seek help from her friend Lady Ella, who readers will recognize from the previous books in the series.

The story itself is nothing remarkable, and the characterization leaves much to be desired, but that could simply be a matter of forgetting what has gone before in the series. Having been published so many years after the last book in the series, Palace of Lies will probably not find favor with the same readers who enjoyed Just Ella and Palace of Mirrors, and likely will have outgrown it, but readers who are new to the series will be glad to see their favorite characters once more and find out how everything turns out for everyone.

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## **Haley Judi says**

The books just got better and better!

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## **Giselle Bradley says**

I was meaning to read this for the Buzzword Readathon but instead I DNF'd it 5 pages in. I can just tell that I'm going to hate every moment of it. Desmia is obnoxious and annoying and has had no growth since the book before which I also didn't like. Her thoughts about the other characters are so rude and stuck up. I can't do it. This'll just give me the time to read books that I'm actually going to like.

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## **Karla Mae (Reads and Thoughts) says**

So much better than the second book.

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## **Coralie says**

Firstly, I LOVE HADDIX! Secondly, this book was amazing. I thoroughly enjoyed returning to this world. I was very pleased to see characters return from BOTH previous novels and the new characters were simply enchanting. The tale was absolutely intriguing and positively riveting. I couldn't put it down. Haddix has mastered the art of storytelling, but I think we already knew that. This is simply the latest testament to her wonderworking powers! I wish she would do another!

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## **Sasha says**

I have no words for how amazing this book was. All I can say is you have to read it I loved the first two books and this one was even better I loved this series and this book. It was so amazing!

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## **Morgan says**

I liked Palace of Mirrors better—and how in the world does a palace made of stone burn to the ground?!?—but still, lots of political intrigue+Margaret Peterson Haddix=awesome.

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## **Laura says**

A number of years ago I did a year of Cinderella stories with my 4/5 grade class; one of the books we read was *Just Ella* and the class was divided about it (they liked Ella's resourcefulness, but the method of



escaping the palace grossed them out). Where was I when the sequel came out? Who knows. Now I have to track that down. This book, the third in the series, is good both as a stand-alone and as a continuation. We're in a different kingdom, with different problems and different characters, but Ella and Jed make an appearance.

As far as the plot goes, it hits all the right notes: daring escapes, wicked plotters, possibly mistaken identity. There were a few moments when I hoped for something different, but that's because I've been reading these types of books for so long. The target reading group? They'll love this.

ARC provided by publisher.

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