



*Strange the Dreamer* by Laini Taylor

Reviewed by Zoe



It has a sequel called *Muse of Nightmares*

The genre is Fantasy

### **Give a summary without spoilers!**

Lazlo Strange, orphaned as a baby and a perpetual misfit, has always been obsessed with two mysteries. The first mystery concerns an ancient city that has suddenly disappeared, leaving a scattered collection of fairy tales in its wake. Lazlo has loved this city for as long as he can remember. One thing he can't remember- that no one can remember? It's name. Lazlo remembers the days before it was stolen, right off the tip of his tongue, and replaced with the simple word Weep. This is the second mystery. Guided by the curiosity that only a dreamer can know, Lazlo finds himself facing an opportunity he thought he would never have, and leaves behind his simple life as a librarian to search for answers to his questions. However, the mysteries only multiply as things grow stranger and stranger, revealing things about the city of Weep, Lazlo's dreams and his own past that he never thought he would know.

### **What drew you to this book?**

I was drawn in by the enthralling prose, the mysteries of the lost city, and the intense relatability of Lazlo's life. The magical details in this book are poignant, imaginative and often surprising. The characters are diverse, relatable and deeply human, despite the otherworldly challenges they face. I was spellbound by the setting, intrigued by the plot and validated to see parts of myself in many of the characters.

### **Did it remind you of something that you've previously read?**

Aside from its sequel, *Muse of Nightmares*, I cannot think of a single other book as inspired as this one- that makes it my favorite. I think one other story that reminds me of it in style and whimsy is "Immortal Snake," by Rachel Pollack, a short story I encountered in the anthology *Mythic Journeys*, edited by Paula Guran. They have a very similar way of portraying ancient gods, and the poetry of the words and concepts are similar to me. Generally, *Strange the Dreamer* is a book built off fairy tales and inspired by ancient legend and myth, so I think those old stories best encapsulate the aesthetic this book presents.

**To whom would you recommend this book?**

I would recommend this book to anyone who loves fantasy stories, fateful journeys, or who has ever felt lonely in their life and sated it with dreams and their imagination. It is a book for the reader who wishes to escape to the places of their fantasies, to find something precious or to study the ancient wonders of the world. Given its slow pacing to start, I would recommend it to someone who doesn't need a lot of action to stay interested in a story, who is intrigued by sheer mystery and beautiful descriptions.

**Overall, did you like it and would you recommend it to others?**

I loved this book, and I will probably re-read it several more times in my life. Its characters, plot and setting all completely enrapture me and I think the themes embedded in this book as well as its sequel are full of wisdom and inspiration. In my opinion, anyone who considers themselves a dreamer should read this book.

**Anything else that you would like to add to this review? What made you choose it? Did you like the cover? Was it recommended to you? Did you find it at the library?**

As a writer of fantasy, I admire this novel in so many ways and I aspire to write like Laini Taylor does. When I received the novel as a gift one year, I wasn't sure if I would like it as I had not heard of it before, but once I started it I couldn't put it down. I read it within three days and it has been a favorite re-read since then. It has been my favorite for years now.