



## City of God

*Paulo Lins , Alison Entrekin (Translator)*

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Cidade de Deus, the City of God - a place where the streets are awash with drugs, where violence can erupt at any moment, but also where the samba beat rocks till dawn, where the women are the most beautiful on Earth, and where one young man wants to escape his background and become a photographer.

## **City of God Details**

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Author : Paulo Lins , Alison Entrekin (Translator)

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## From Reader Review City of God for online ebook

### Shannon Berry says

After reading "City of God" my perception has definitely changed in the way that MEN, no, BOYS...are so easily swayed by evil and the evils of the world. The young men in the book succumbed to be products of their harsh environment because their mentality was "kill or be killed" or "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em."

The novel was written in a way where there was not a particular "linear" story line. It was scattered and jumpy which added to Brazil's City of God's unpredictable and disheartening activity.

I definitely walked away from this book with a better understanding of God and the importance of GOD in one's life. I also finished this book knowing that some people out there in the world are lost souls and need love and prayer in their lives. I don't know what evil kept the young men in the horrible positions they were in but whatever it was, it wasn't there to help them or bring them to a place of "happiness" in the end.

I originally picked up this book as a result of being UNSUCCESSFUL with finding the movie - that a late friend of mine INSISTED (right before he passed) that I see. I am GLAD that I was only able to get the book because I definitely got an in depth look at the heartache of evil and it's huge influence and brainwash of the youth.

Although it was very gruesome at times, and sometimes I had to put the book down, I recommend this book to anyone who is curious to know how loss of life, mentality, and youth affects a community - a city.

Enjoy :)

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### Adriana Scarpin says

Há momentos que até me fizeram chorar, vide a descrição do bebê sendo esquartejado

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### Realini says

City of God, written by Braulio Mantovani, based on the novel by Paulo Lins, directed by Fernando Meirelles and Katia Lund  
9 out of 10

Notes and thoughts on other books are available at:

- <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list...> and <http://realini.blogspot.ro/>

Critics and audiences agree on Cidade de Deus.

The public has rated this violent, extraordinary film at number 21: [http://www.imdb.com/chart/top?ref\\_=tt...](http://www.imdb.com/chart/top?ref_=tt...)

And TIME magazine has included this motion picture on its All-TIME 100 Movies list:

- <http://entertainment.time.com/2005/02...>

And City of God was nominated for four Academy Awards, in the year when Lord of the Rings took so many prizes.

In my book, Cidade de Deus is better than the winner of the Oscar for best motion picture and the director prize for that year.

Having said that, it must be added that this film is quite difficult to watch in many if not most of its scenes. From the start, I think we are shown how they kill a live chicken on camera and if not all the blood and death dance, at the very least, the images of the seemingly still warm body and the plucking of feathers are gruesome.

Veganism is the way out.

One bird gets away and a whole band of children mostly runs after the animal, which escapes miraculously. "What should have been swift revenge turned into an all-out war. The City of God was divided. You couldn't go from one section to the other, not even to visit a relative. The cops considered anyone living in the slum a hoodlum. People got used to living in Vietnam, and more and more volunteers signed up to die."

It all happens in the poor slums of Rio de Janeiro, where rival gangs fight with no mercy and apparently no mercy.

In one scene, Li'l Ze, perhaps the cruellest, most despicable of the killers involved, catches a few children.

True, there appears to be no lower limit to adhere to a gang or just start with a few buddies to rob stores. Li'l Ze is the leader of most of the City of God, at least for a period, having killed rivals and leaders of various territories.

When he has the two kids in front of him, he is asking them to choose- leg or hand, for he will shoot them where they choose.

And not just that, after the children, who are no more than six years old, are shot in the foot, in spite of choosing the hand this Godfather has other ideas.

He picks one of his upcoming underlings, another child, aged twelve maybe, who wants to be part of the gang and says to him

- Now it's your moment
- You choose and kill one of them

Being raised in this extremely violent environment, little boys become killers at a very tender age and they steal and fight.

"Filé-com-Fritas - Steak and Fries: A kid? I smoke, I snort. I've killed and robbed. I'm a man." And most of the other characters have the same point of view.

Peaceful bystanders cannot stay of this all out, continuous war, for they get trapped and killed without any remorse.

In one instance, Li'l Ze and his band attack a young man and his girlfriend- the narrator explains that this is the only way the gang leader knows to get close to a girl and the general attitude is one of sexist, macho chauvinist males.

After he abuses and rapes the girl, beats the young man, the crazy mobster stops away from the scene of his

crime and thinks- "why didn't I kill that dude?!"

So he goes to his house, shouts that he wants the boy out, his brother comes and tries to reason with the gang of maybe 30 killers.

Unsatisfied, they kill the brother and start a shooting spree, covering the poor house in a rain of bullets, killing an uncle too.

The police are not just corrupt and involved in the drug trade and taking sides according to the pay off, but itself involved in killings.

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### **Patryx says**

Una lettura difficile sia per la violenza onnipresente dalla prima all'ultima pagina (e sapere che si tratta più di una cronaca che di un romanzo non aiuta) sia per l'interminabile numero di personaggi (poliziotti e banditi indistintamente) che si avvicendano con nomi che sembrano tutti uguali e che fanno tutti (o quasi) la stessa cosa (ammazzano, rapinano, spacciano, violentano, si ubriacano, si drogano).

*Città di Dio* è una favelas (una delle molte) di Rio de Janeiro e leggere questo libro è come entrare in un altro mondo: in certi momenti mi sembrava di leggere un romanzo distopico, uno di quelli in cui le regole della convivenza come la conosciamo noi non esistono più e tutti possono commettere i più efferati delitti senza che questo crei grossi problemi di coscienza o abbia conseguenze di alcun tipo sugli assassini.

Uno degli aspetti più sconvolgenti è l'assenza di quella fase della vita che noi conosciamo come "infanzia": i bambini già a otto/nove anni spacciano e commettono violenze di tutti i tipi e, ovviamente, vengono uccisi per i loro errori senza alcuna considerazione per la loro età. La polizia è talmente corrotta che, pagando, si può non solo evitare l'arresto ma addirittura uscire dal carcere come se niente fosse. Gli unici che hanno qualche possibilità (scarsa) di modificare la loro sorte sono quei pochi che si convertono alla religione protestante: abbandonano i loro luoghi di origine e anche tutte le loro vecchie abitudini riuscendo a vivere di stenti e acquisendo, in cambio, la possibilità di morire a un'età superiore ai trenta. La scuola è un'istituzione praticamente inesistente.

E' un libro interessante per lo sguardo crudo e privo di eufemismi che getta su una realtà così difficile ma è troppo frammentario per l'assenza di una trama vera e propria o, comunque, di qualche vicenda che faccia da filo conduttore.

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### **Krestan says**

The dumbest ending I have ever read in a book. However, the action was dark and fast paced and I did find myself in shock/awe/disgust at different point in the novels. Everyone died (ehh for the most part) except for the person I really wanted to which was annoying. I stopped reading for a while and tried to pick it back up but I struggled because I really forgot where I left off- try to read it straight though. Still a good book though, very vivid descriptions.

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## **Felipe Vieira says**

Violento, sádico, verdadeiro, nojento, triste e fascinante.

Cidade de Deus é um livro sem plot twists significativos. Paulo Lins narra histórias de pessoas que cresceram e viveram em CDD e se tornaram traficantes, assassinos, bandidos e aqueles que por pouco não enveredaram pelo mesmo caminho. Por não ter grandes reviravoltas o que segura e com maestria é a escrita do autor que dá com bastante energia e veracidade o que se passa na história.

O livro é dividido em três grandes partes e em cada parte será contado a vida de um traficante importante com o passar do tempo. Mas mesmo assim eles não acabam sendo de certa forma principais até porque há inúmeros personagens. Isso às vezes atrapalha a leitura.

É uma mistura de sentimentos ao ler uma obra desse calibre. Você reconhece várias informações que capta da mídia e as reconhece ali. Você torce pelos bandidos e quer ver os policiais que não valem nada mortos. É uma coisa de louco. Lins conseguiu abordar de forma impressionante e conseguiu transmitir toda a crueldade e violência, mas também conseguiu mostrar a tentativa de bons sentimentos. A luta pra mudar e o que o meio acaba fazendo com aqueles que não possui muitas oportunidades. Claro que o livro por ser muito extenso oscila algumas vezes. Alguns personagens e histórias podiam ter ficado de fora já que não acrescenta muito. Mas como o livro fala do cotidiano da favela é possível compreender porque estão ali.

O livro contém muita violência, sadismo, estupro, uso de drogas, corrupção. Apesar de ser forte recomendo a leitura.

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## **George says**

An endless cycle of violence, some of which is quite disturbing. No plot at all.

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## **Ana says**

*If you run, it will get you. If you stay, it will eat you.*

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## **Newton Nitro says**

Li esse livro em dois dias, sem parar, te tanto que fiquei impressionado, chocado, e agarrado pelo pescoço com a narrativa brutal de quase duas décadas de violência e brutalidade das gangues de criminosos de Cidade de Deus. Paulo Lins construiu um mosaico das vidas dos habitantes desse período, principalmente dos que se

envolveram com o crime, gangues de jovens delinquentes que, através dos anos setenta, e granças ao tráfico de drogas, são levados por uma espiral crescente de violência, brutalidade, vingança, retaliações, até culminar em uma guerra urbana em 1982.

E o pior é que a situação, hoje em 2015, é muito mais grave do que naquele período.

O livro é chocante, baseado em fatos reais e na experiência pessoal do autor. Paulo Lins não julga os acontecimentos narrados, ele apenas pinta os retratos da vida de centenas de personagens, quase como uma coletânea imensa de contos e crônicas intercaladas entre si. O personagem principal, como diz o título, é a própria Cidade de Deus.

O livro também mostra o desenrolar da anarquia suicida de violência que existe hoje em muitas áreas do Rio, e do Brasil (não vou tirar Belo Horizonte dessa porque aqui também temos as nossas "Cidades de Deus").

Um livro de leitura obrigatória, tanto para quem curte literatura visceral, de chocar ao mesmo tempo que alerta, literatura que, como diz Érico Veríssimo "pega o boi (a vida) pelos chifres", e que serve, tanto como testemunho de uma realidade brutal que ainda persiste, quanto como uma denúncia do sofrimento de inúmeras vidas abandonadas à marginalidade da nossa sociedade.

Recomendadíssimo!

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### **Artemisa says**

Este é um dos poucos casos em que o filme realmente é melhor que o livro.

Como o autor faz questão de indicar no inicio e no fim do livro, a história é ficção, mas é inspirada em factos reais, inspirado pelas enrevistas feitas para um documentário.

Apesar de começar por ser um romance, a medida que se aproxima do fim o livro começa a parecer-se mais com um documentário e a história começa a perder consistencia, passa a ser só um conjunto de episódios.

Apesar de estar dividido em 3 partes, cada uma dedicada a uma personagem diferente, o livro segue a personagem Zé Miúdo ao longo da sua vida, preenchendo as lacunas com pequenos episódios da favela (normalmente violentos).

Quanto a mim o livro deveria ter 5 partes em vez de 3:

Um prologo no inicio do livro que explicasse o porquê da criação da favela, e a parte inicial da descrição da geografia da favela, uma vez que o livro é claramente dirigido a quem não conhece a favela...

O final do livro está escrito claramente como um epílogo, sem que a história tenha um fim. A morte de Zé Miúdo, a personagem mais referida ao longo do livro, líder ao longo de todo o livro, mal tem um paragrafo, é apenas um apontamento entre os outros que descrevem o que acontece às personagens mais marcadas do livro.

Tal como várias pessoas referiram, as gírias e os propositados erros ortográficos que reflectem a oralidade da favela fazem com que a história também se perca na dificuldade da linguagem. Uma ou duas notas de rodapé com indicação dos significados fariam maravilhas pelo livro, ou mesmo um pequeno glossário.

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### **Yuri says**

Uma pedra que a equipe do Meirelles e da Kátia Lund soube ordenhar até a última gota de leite. Muita enrolação, personagens e conflitos mal elaborados, banalização da violência estilo filme de ação dos anos 80 que só morre figurante e tá lá os bicho-solto da bandidagem dando tiro a torto e a direito, erotismo de pornochanchada... Trocando em miúdos: só ideia errada. Só a primeira parte é aproveitável e mesmo assim enche linguiça. Quem quiser ler alguma coisa nessa linha, vai atrás do Meridiano de Sangue do McCarthy que é 100 estrelas.

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### **Laura Walton says**

An amazing book about the crime that brews in Rio's favelas. The movie adaptation is engaging and an ode to seventies youth culture.

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### **S10\_Matthew says**

I watched the film version of City of God, directed by Fernando Meirelles. The film follows kids in the City of God, a slum of Rio de Janeiro. It is an unforgiving world, where people are raped and murdered on a whim. For example, Little Z, a leading gang lord, got his start after his older brother robs a brothel. As they leave, he walks in and murders everyone, laughing all the way. He is 9 years old at the time. The violence is relentless and even more jarring when juxtaposed with the scenes in the actual economic center of Rio. The story is narrated by Rocket, a budding photographer who watches this all happen.

Rocket is the slight chance of hope in a film of despondent futures. He does not have the stomach for murder and ends up becoming a known photographer and getting out of the slums. But he is in the resounding minority. Most of the gang members are killed by the end of film, and yet does this not result in the end of the violence. Our gang kingpin Little Z is murdered by a group of young laughing kids and that are not older than ten. And so the film ends as our older age of killers has been replaced by a younger crowd. A chilling statement to make about life in the slums.

This is a tremendous film with a realism that speaks to the talents of the young actors and the honesty of the screenplay. It can be difficult to watch, but at the same time, it becomes impossible to look away. It would be terrific for a high school history class. The violence may be an issue, but is a facet of society that is often overlooked and needs to be seen. I would also recommend seeing another Meirelles film, The Constant Gardner, or City of God's recent sequel City of Men.

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### **Just? says**

Contemporary Brazilian literature at its finest. Although the second part dragged a bit, I can see it becoming a modern classic. Read and then go watch the film adaptation. Or both. Or either.

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### **Aaron Weinman says**

Thoroughly enjoyed this. While the plot may be confusing, the main theme of violence through adversity and evil as a mainstay (in the slums) is well expressed and carried through the generations - this is evident when depicting characters who have known nothing but corruption, violence and squalor for their respective lives. Despite the convoluted plot, it's entertaining enough to follow and you can't help but feel for so many characters and their plight. Maybe the translation from Portuguese to English hindered the structure of the book and prose? Nonetheless, I loved it.

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### **Bianca says**

Not comparable to the film, by any means. In this ONE case, the film is probably better than the book. With that said, the film wouldn't be so great if the book wasn't written first, to provide a story for the film to be based off of. And yes, I just ended that sentence with a preposition. :)

At any rate, the book has soooo many characters (almost like a Tolstoy novel!) and people are dying at an unhealthy rate, it's a little difficult to keep track of who wronged who and who's serving up revenge for what. Perhaps if I had read the book before watching the film (courtesy of a Portuguese language class in college), I might have had a different feeling about the book, but alas...

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### **Marija I says**

City of God - a moving depiction of gangster life in the Brazilian Favelas.

We follow the story of 3 main gangster characters during the 60's, 70's and 80s. Their rise to power, money and influence as well as their tragic ending.

Throughout this novel, we really become immersed and learn how the other side lives... *their suffering, their struggle, their violence and their poverty* becomes our own.

The reason I gave it three rather than 5 stars, is due to the lack of a protagonist... I would have liked the character and story of Rocket more pronounced. How a 'good' and 'honest' man survived in a place like that! Furthermore, a development of 'why' the children become who they become.... 'how' the alternative would affect ... What sort of families they come from... etc.

Overall - a good read though...It gave me an insight into life in the Brazilian favelas as well as general mentality of those people.

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### **Jukka Kuva says**

City of God was, and is, a place of endless violence. Mob bosses have way more power in the favela of Rio

de Janeiro than Brazilian government and they change on a weekly basis as a younger gangster decides to kill the old boss. Very few can escape the cycle. Paulo Lins was one of those few. When he had got out, he wrote a book about his childhood neighbourhood and things he saw. That book is City of God. Lins' writing is just like the story it tells. Very harsh. Plain dialogue, jumps from scene to scene. Brutal descriptions of deaths of gangsters. The story doesn't need fancy text structure or sophisticated words. There's no need to smoothen the edges from a rough story. The fact, that things Lins writes about really do happen, makes the book a lot more touching. All those lives wasted and people killed for nothing. Collateral damage in a war is a meaningful death compared to this.

You should do things the other way around than I and read the book first, then see the movie. You'll value the book more and get some things from the movie better.

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### **Jacob says**

I hate how much I love the movie for this novel, it's filmed incredibly well, tells a fascinating story and holds no punches. Now I realise just how faithful it is to the nearly 500 page novel, which is incredibly impressive once you realise the film is just a little over 2 hours long.

But this isn't a review on the film, it's about the novel. Pablo Lins actually lived in the City of God in his youth, but managed to escape with his life and achieve better things. This non linear novel tells of the gangster life during the sixties, seventies and early eighties, most of it actually happening in real life. The writing is straight to the point and flat and simple, just like the gangsters. It follows a pretty large amount of characters and in no particular order; multiple things can happen at one point in time. All the gangsters want is just money to buy nice things (help their families and drugs for themselves) and to be respected and in some cases feared. Only a few characters actually care that they kill people, while everyone else does it without a care in the world. There is no real character development. It's all just an odyssey into one of the greatest slums in the world. The book has a point of pointing out that those who leave the favela are more likely to survive, while basically everyone who stays has an unhappy ending to their story.

It's brutal and disturbing, yet you can't help but read on, just to see what else happens in this hellhole. The film now holds so much more to me, and I won't forget this book for a long time, for good or for worse.

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### **Martin Lewis says**

For the most part this was a very effectively shocking and disturbing account of life within the Brazilian CDD. Casual and frequent mentions of murders, drug abuse, drug dealing and rape initially shock and then desensitize readers, building up a vivid picture of lives so riddled with these activities that they become almost commonplace. The deeper shock comes from this desensitization as you realise as a reader, that you too have become accustomed to it.

Having seen the film version first, I was surprised when the book had a less strong single narrative around the character Rocket, and instead followed several narratives, probably the strongest being that which follows the villainous Tiny, one of the most recurring characters in the seemingly endless barrage of new

nicknames.

The reason behind my rating of "liked it" is partly because of this confusion, the narrative being hard to follow. As well as this, upon finishing the novel, 'liking' it didn't seem quite the right response. For the most part, I found myself compelled and curious to read further, interested at what shocks the novel would bring

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