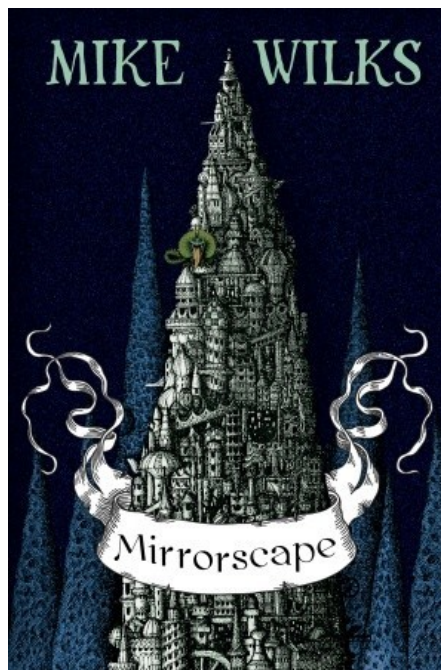




Mirrorscape

Mike Wilks

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Mirrorscape

Mike Wilks

Mirrorscape Mike Wilks

Prepare to enter the Mirrorscape—a world where the bizarre is commonplace and logic makes no sense.

Melkin Womper is thrilled to escape his dull future as a village weaver and develop his artistic talent when he's apprenticed to Ambrosius Blenk, one of Vlam's most famous masters. Mel is especially excited by the colors that he'll be able to use, since color is a very expensive Pleasure, strictly controlled by the sinister Fifth Mystery.

Mel can't wait to enjoy the wonders of the grand city and begin his important work for Blenk. Instead, his dreams are quickly crushed by the reality of days filled with unimportant tasks and bullying by the other apprentices whose wealthy families have purchased their positions. Still, the promise of working under the great Blenk and studying his legendary paintings makes the misery bearable.

But when Mel and his new friends, Ludo and Wren, inadvertently stumble into a battle between the Fifth Mystery and the Rainbow Rebellion, an underground band fighting to make Pleasures affordable for all, the trio must step *through* Blenk's paintings into the Mirrorscape. In this alternative world, the friends encounter monsters, mazes, talking houses, angels, and more.

Hugely original and deeply compelling, *Mirrorscape* is a thrilling adventure filled with the beautiful and the bizarre, the fantastical and the frightening, and entry into an incredibly visual, secret world, where the ultimate weapons are pigment, a paintbrush, and the power of imagination.

Mirrorscape Details

Date : Published October 13th 2009 by EgmontUSA (first published January 1st 2007)

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Author : Mike Wilks

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From Reader Review Mirrorscape for online ebook

Liana says

Nice!! This is a pretty creative story. :)

Puscas Mircea says

I liked the book . I've read it years ago . The book has a nice cover and a creative story .

[?] ???α?ι? [★] says

Das Buch habe ich als Mägelexemplar entdeckt und es - wie so oft - aufgrund des Covers und der Inhaltsangabe gekauft.

Melvin Womper - genannt Mel - hat eine große Leidenschaft: Das Malen. Wann immer er Zeit dafür hat, fertigt er eines seiner Bilder an, auch wenn er sich dabei selbst wirklich nicht als sonderlich begabt hält. Seine Eltern belächeln das eher und gerade sein Vater ist der Meinung, dass Mel doch besser etwas vernünftiges tun sollte, etwas womit er auch ein bisschen Geld verdienen könnte.

Einer der Priester in Nem - das westlichste der sieben Königreiche - unterstützt ihn jedoch bei seinem Hobby, indem er die Bilder, die Mel zeichnet in seinem Gemeindehaus ausstellt.

Als Mel die Chance bekommt, Lehrjunge des großen Meisters Ambrosius Blenk zu werden, reist er in die Hauptstadt und somit in das größte Abenteuer seines Lebens.

Gemeinsam mit seinen Freunden Ludo und Wren deckt er ein Geheimnis aus, welches er sich so nie hätte erträumen lassen. Als er eines Tages zufällig sieht, wie Ambrosius in einem seiner Bilder verschwindet, kann er nicht glauben, was er dort sieht und doch gibt es sie wirklich: Die Welt hinter den Bilder - genannt Mirrorscape. Als der Meister jedoch plötzlich entführt wird, scheint es nur an Mel und seinen Freunden zu liegen, ihn zu befreien.

Was mir sofort positiv aufgefallen ist, war das Glossar, was sich am hinteren Teil des Buches befindet. Für Laien ist doch ausführlich jeder einzelne Begriff erklärt, der in Mirrorscape und allgemein in der Welt der Kunst eine Rolle spielt.

Der Schreibstil des Autors ist auf Jugendliche abgestimmt und lässt sich daher leicht und flüssig lesen. Man befindet sich sofort inmitten der Welt des jungen Mel, welcher sich nichts mehr wünscht, als mit seinen Bildern ein wenig mehr Anerkennung zu finden.

Obwohl Mel mit Groot sowas wie seinen persönlichen Malfoy aus den Harry Potter - Filmen gefunden hat, lässt er sich an der Schule nicht unterkriegen. Mit Wren und Ludo erlebt er wenigstens ein paar Glücksmomente und auch vom Meister selbst ein wenig die Anerkennung, die er sich wünscht.

Wren hat mir von allen Charakteren am besten gefallen. Obwohl sie als Mädchen nicht am Unterricht teilnehmen und sich in der Küche aufhalten muss, lässt sie sich nicht unterkriegen und findet schon bald in Mel einen echten Freund, auch wenn ihr erstes Aufeinandertreffen nicht gerade von Erfolg gekrönt ist.

Ein Teil des Buches hat sich meiner Meinung nach zu sehr hingezogen und bei einigen Passagen hatte ich das Gefühl, sie schon mal gelesen zu haben.

Dennoch hat mir das Buch ein paar schöne Lesestunden beschert und ich denke noch darüber nach, mir die folgenden Bände auch zuzulegen, denn gerade Mel und Wren sind mir doch ein wenig ans Herz gewachsen.

4/5 Herbstblätter.

Kaugummiqueen says

Inhalt

Mel kommt aus einem kleinen Dorf in einer kleinen Provinz Feg. Dort lebt er zufrieden als Sohn eines Webers und verbringt seine Freizeit mit Malen und Zeichnen, denn der Pater der Gemeinde hat genau erkannt, dass Mel großes künstlerisches Talent besitzt.

Als er ihm was Gutes tun will und einige Beispielbilder Mels an die große Künstlerakademie in der Hauptstadt schickt, bekundet diese schon gleich Interesse an dem Jungen. Doch als einige Häsher der großen Gilde in den Heimatort von Mel kommt, gerät er in Gefahr - denn die Farben, die er für seine Bilder benutzt hat, hat er nicht von der Gilde gekauft. Im letzten Moment kann er fliehen und kommt so in die große Hauptstadt Vlam und endlich zur Künstlerakademie von Ambrosius Blenk.

Doch auch dort muss sich Mel mit viel Ärger herum schlagen und als er zusammen mit seinen Freunden Wren und Ludo einige höchst interessante und beunruhigende Entdeckungen macht, ist ihm auch schon die Gilde wieder auf den Fersen...

Meine Meinung

Bei diesem Buch handelt es sich um den ersten Teil einer geplanten Trilogie, wobei bisher nur die ersten beiden Bände erschienen sind.

Melkin Womper, kurz Mel genannt, ist ein sympathischer, schüchterner Junge, der in seiner Freizeit liebend gerne malt und ein Einzelgänger ist, da er nicht gerne im Mittelpunkt steht und sich mit den Kindern in seinem Alter nicht so gut versteht. Er soll später ebenfalls das Weberhandwerk lernen, um seinem Vater zur Hand zu gehen. Nur Fra Thenum, der Dorfgeistliche, erkennt das Talent in dem Jungen und fördert ihn, indem er die Bilder Mels in der Kirche aufhängt und an die Künstlerakademie von Ambrosius Blenk schreibt. Mel scheint ein wenig tollpatschig zu sein und das Pech nur so anzuziehen. So steckt er schon zu Beginn der Geschichte in gewaltigem Ärger, als Beauftragte der Gilde von seinen Bildern erfahren. Mel ist mit seinen jungen Jahren und seinem Verhalten auf jeden Fall eher etwas für jüngere Leser - mehrmals habe ich mich dabei ertappt, wie ich über seine Naivität nur den Kopf schütteln konnte. Zudem stürzt er oft von einem Missgeschick ins nächste, was in meinen Augen auch oft an seiner kindlichen Art lag. Daher würde ich das Buch eher als Kinderbuch einordnen, wobei es dennoch sehr spannend und fesselnd war und sicherlich auch älteren Lesern gefallen kann.

Neben Mel lernt man auch bald Ludo und Wren kennen, die beide ebenfalls in der Künstlerwerkstatt leben,

die Freundschaft zwischen den Dreien entwickelt sich erst etwas langsam, da Mel von ältesten Lehrling schikaniert wird und deswegen die anderen Jungen Abstand zu Mel halten und Wren ebenfalls sehr dickköpfig ist. Leider bleiben aber besonders diese beiden Freunde ein wenig blass und farblos, wobei man nur hoffen kann, dass ihre Charaktere in den nächsten Bänden ausgebaut werden.

Wie es oft typisch in einem Kinderbuch ist, so sind die Guten gut und die Bösen böse, was man ihnen allein schon an den optischen Beschreibungen "ansehen" kann. Dennoch hat auch hier der Autor für ein wenig Rätselraten gesorgt, denn tatsächlich gibt es auch hier einen Charakter wie Severus Snape aus Harry Potter, den man sehr lange Zeit nicht einschätzen kann. Dennoch haben mir die Darstellung und die Idee der Gilden gut gefallen, denn jede Gilde ist mit einem Sinnesorgan verbunden und für alles gibt es eine Art "Patent", das der Handwerker kaufen muss, um es zu verwenden. Ein Bäcker, welcher der Gilde des Schmeckens unterstellt ist, muss Rezepte kaufen, um sie backen zu dürfen, beispielsweise. Ärgerlicherweise ist genau die Gilde des Gesichtssinns, also des Sehsinns, die mächtigste und macht somit die meisten Probleme und Mel ist ihr wegen seines Talents ein Dorn im Auge. Durch eben diese Gilden wird dem (jungen) Leser das Patentrecht und Korruption erklärt.

Die Beschreibungen in dem Buch, von den Umgebungen, der Welt und den Geschehnissen sind sehr detailliert und bunt geschrieben, sodass man sich alles gut vorstellen kann, ohne von Eindrücken erschlagen zu werden. Besonders ab dem zweiten Drittel des Buches wird auch die Handlung ebenfalls viel aufregender und man kommt langsam hinter die sonderbaren Geheimnisse hinter MirrorScape, was Mel, Ludo und Wren heimlich entdecken, als sie Ambrosius Blenk beobachten. Diese zeugen von besonders starken Einfallsreichtum, Nervenkitzel und farbenfrohen Beschreibungen. Diese Szenen erinnern stärker an ein Jugend- als an ein Kinderbuch und machen die Geschichte zu einem echten "Page-Turner". Die Seiten fliegen nur so dahin und ab da werden auch die Ereignisse in Vlam in der Künstlerakademie immer aufregender und die Geschehnisse überschlagen sich.

Zum Ende gibt es wieder einen sehr spannenden Showdown, der den Leser nochmals besonders an das Buch fesselt. Das Ende ist an sich durchaus als Abgeschlossen zu sehen, dennoch möchte ich gerne wissen, wie es weiter geht. Zumal ich ja den zweiten Band schon besitze.

Da der Autor auch selber Künstler ist, gibt es am Buchanfang eine Karte von Vlam und zu jedem Kapitelanfang ebenfalls eine kleine Zeichnung.

Fazit

Bis auf die Schwierigkeiten, die ich mit Mels kindlicher Naivität hatte, hat mir der erste Band der MirrorScape Trilogie sehr gut gefallen und lässt auf mehr hoffen. Der Schreibstil des Autors ist gefällig, die Handlung spannend und innovativ und auch die Charaktere sind, mit einigen Abstrichen, sehr authentisch und überzeugend. Daher kann ich das Buch durchaus weiter empfehlen und vergebe 4 Sterne!

Weitere Buchrezensionen gibt es auf meinem Blog Kaugummiqueens Bücherstube (kaugummiqueen.blogspot.de)

Christine says

The good thing about this book is the imagination of the author, he has it in spades.

The bad thing about this book is the imagination of the author, he overwhelms us with it at every turn.

If you have ever had someone describe to you one of their outlandish dreams, then you have a taste of what it was like to read this book. I just never became vested in the story or the characters and I almost couldn't

finish it.

The author really missed the boat with this one. It is packaged as a young adult novel when it should really be targeted to a younger crowd. If it was published as "The Chronicles of Mirrorscape" and were five separate books of less than 200 pages (with illustrations) chronicling the adventures of Mel, Wren, and Ludo in the Mirrorscape, then we would have a winner with the 2-5 grade crowd. A great example of this is "Spiderwick Chronicles" which elementary school readers need more of. Our younger readers love all this fantastic imagery and simple storylines with only a handful of characters to keep up with and if illustrations are involved, winner!

It really is too bad Mike Wilks wanted to write a 350 page novel.

Silvia says

Mel, einem jungen, sehr begabten Maler wird die Chance gegeben eine Ausbildung bei dem berühmten Künstler Ambrosius Blenk zu bekommen, um vielleicht irgendwann nicht mehr nur mit Tusche zu malen sondern auch mit Farbe. Denn Farbe und so vieles andere ist für einfaches Volk, für armes Volk, unerwartet fern. Die verschiedenen Gilden überwachen alles und um Farbe tragen oder damit malen zu können oder gar bessere Speisen verzehren zu können müssen Pläsiere erworben werden, und diese sind unsagbar teuer. Ebenso bestrafen die Gilden Menschen, die unerlaubt malten, verbotenes aßen, sehr hart und schicken sie in die Minen von wo noch nie jemand zurückgekehrt ist. Mel wäre fast bestraft worden, konnte aber noch rechtzeitig zu seinem Lehrmeister gebracht werden. In dessen Haus fand er auch sehr schnell Freunde, aber ebenso Neider. Was ist das besondere an Ambrosius Blenk? Dass er so real und unsagbare schöne Bilder malen kann? Oder steckt noch mehr dahinter? Mel und seine Freunde werden Zeuge wie Blenk vor eines seiner Bilder ein geheimnisvolles Zeichen in die Luft malt und plötzlich verschwindet. Nach dieser Entdeckung finden die drei Freunde bald mehr heraus, über diese andere Welt hinter den Bildern. Mirror Scape wird diese Welt genannt, sie ist voller Schönheit, Fantasie aber auch Grausames gibt es in dieser Welt. Und die Gilde die durch einen Verräter davon erfährt und alles dran setzt Mel, seine Freunde und den Künstler Blenk in die Finger zu bekommen. Ein aufregendes, unerwartetes und spannendes Abenteuer beginnt.

Mike Wilks schafft es in seinem Buch sicher nicht nur Kinder mitzureißen sondern ebenso Jugendliche und Erwachsene. Wieder ein Fantasy Buch wo man nicht weiß zu welcher Altersgruppe es am besten passt. Der Autor schafft es, dass einem die beschriebenen Bilder und die Mirror Scape Welt vorm inneren Auge erscheint. Es reißt einen mit, und wenn man das Buch fertig gelesen hat, erwischt man sich, dass man in Gedanken immer noch in dieser wunderbaren Geschichte, in diesen Bildern verweilt.

Für mich war es mehr als nur ein gut geschriebenes Fantasy Buch, es vermittelt einem viel mehr. Und vielleicht so etwas wie einen kleinen Frieden in unserem stressigen Alltag.

Mittlerweile gibt es insgesamt drei Bände. Von der deutschen Übersetzung gibt es aber lediglich zwei Bände - der dritte wurde wohl nicht übersetzt.

(Wieder ein Buch auf meiner Liste dass ich herausgeben möchte wenn ich meinen eigenen Verlag haben werde)

www.facebook.com/winkeysbuecherwelt

Dandelionsteph says

It had an interesting world, both with the "real world" and the Mirrorscape. However, I think it had a few too many characters to remember.

Julie says

Mel is living his dream. He's been plucked from his meager existence in his sleepy town and has been brought to the big city to study as an apprentice under a great Master painter. Once there however, Mel finds that life in the big city is not exactly what he pictured.

The head apprentice Groot has it out for him because he knows how much more talented Mel is, and Groot's uncle who is a big-shot within the main mystery also has Mel on his short list and will go to any lengths to fatten his own pockets and squash Mel like a bug.

But not everything is dim for Mel. He's made friends for the first time in his life: Wren, a kitchen girl, and Ludo, a fellow apprentice. When running from Groot one day, the friends see the Master doing something in his office they were not supposed to see, and are suddenly thrown into a mystery and a great adventure that could be the difference between life, death, and saving the beauty of art itself.

I've got to say right from the start that Mirrorscape was, for the most part, a disappointment. I was interested in the very beginning when poor Mel was torn away from his parents and dragged to the city to hone his skills as an artist. I was intrigued when Mel and Ludo discovered the secret of the paintings they could jump into and experience the sheer world of imagination, and I did think it was awful clever of Mike Wilks to include backward writing (or mirror writing) in his book which required the reader to hold a small mirror up to the book in order to read what was written. I found that to be a stroke of genius, and know that kids will go crazy for it (some people probably thought I was crazy as I came across this part of the book while sitting in the doctor's waiting room and was holding my compact up to the book)!

On the flipside, after the first half of Mirrorscape however, the story just got silly. I mean, it's one thing to have an imaginary world that one can experience, for me it was quite another to have the main characters running through several paintings and once and meeting creatures such as walking houses, mountains that attack you, and pyramids that slow down/speed up time. After several chapters of this instead of being endearing and interesting it just got tiresome.

Ok, I know what you're going to say: "But Julie! It's FANTASY! What do you expect?" Well, dear Reader, I understand that Mirrorscape was meant to be a high fantasy for kids and was meant to release imagination as well as show that art is something to be admired and appreciated...but I honestly feel that great fantasy has at least some basis in reality. This thought process is hard to explain in a review, but I suppose the problem with Mirrorscape for me, was that I didn't find the characters to be very deep or believable. I wasn't scared of the antagonist, I wasn't excited to enter the mirror world with the main characters, and after several silly scenes which I felt did not further the main plot in any way, I just lost interest.

Basically, I felt that Mike Wilks spend too much of his time basing the story in the mirror world and not enough time in the "real" world of the main characters, and therefore the characters themselves just fell flat. For me, that's a classic sin in any kind of writing. Flat characters = Flat story, be it YA literature or anything

else.

Carolynn Markey says

[the idea that you can enter paintings (hide spoiler)]

Rachael says

Melkin Womper has always loved to draw, so it's a dream come true when he learns he's eligible to be apprenticed to one of the greatest painters of the day, Ambrosius Blenk. And as soon as Mel leaves his home behind, he knows he's in for the adventure of his life. The danger starts almost immediately, and Mel has to be extra careful in the unfamiliar city of Vlam not to run into the red robed men from the Fifth Mystery who are convinced Mil is responsible for theft and must be punished. Luckily, Mel has some new friends to look out for him, and the Master also has seemed to take a shine to him. As much as Mel would just like to improve his craft, he can't avoid the power struggle between the Mystery and the Master he's been caught in, because Mel has stumbled upon Mirrorscape, the world within paintings in which imagination is the only thing that truly matters. Stumbling in between Mirrorscape and the real world, Mel and his friends will have to use their wits and creativity if they are to survive and ultimately defeat the Mystery.

Mirrorscape is one of the most unique and enthralling fantasy stories I've ever read. Like in most fantasies, the unusual setting and specified language take a little getting used to, but thankfully, the new places and words weren't so different that I couldn't imagine them at all. I love the idea of hidden worlds within our own, so of course, I was drawn to Wilks' Mirrorscape, the world within paintings. The very nature of this place lends itself to endless possibilities as far as one's imagination can go, and that leads to some highly unusual, sometimes strange, but always interesting situations in this story. I heartily commend Wilks for his creative and exciting plot; there wasn't a moment in this story that failed to capture my interest. In addition, I loved the political undercurrent to this enjoyable story; the corrupt bureaucracy that calls itself the Mystery reflects governmental corruption around the world and its repression of the arts and artistic expression, that of many civil liberties. Although I may be reading too much into the story, this adds a little something extra that makes an already fantastic story even better.

Mirrorscape is the type of story that will appeal to readers of all ages, especially those who enjoyed Inkheart by Cornelia Funke and Poison by Chris Wooding. I particularly cannot wait for the continuance of this story in Mirrorstorm, the second installment in this trilogy.

reposted from <http://thebookmuncher.blogspot.com>

Roof Beam Reader (Adam) says

Mirrorscape by Mike Wilks
Final Verdict: 2.0 out of 4.0

Plot/Story:

2 - Plot/Story could work with better development.

Mike Wilks' *Mirrorscape* is a young-adult fantasy novel with a promising premise: what would the world be like if artists could actually travel into their paintings? The imagination roars with the idea and, I for one, was drawn in just by the possibilities; sadly, the execution leaves much to be desired. While much leeway can and should be given, as fantasy worlds are imaginary and, to a degree, largely impossible, the world of *Mirrorscape* is so passively developed that one has to really try to believe in it. There is no ease or enrapture. The problem also exists on two levels: 1) the "real" world which Wilks develops is meant to resemble Earth; however, the villages, towns, political systems, etc. are so weakly and off-handedly described, that the reader is left having to guess about what these places might really be like, how people might really interact – because the author does not show us. 2) the "fantasy" world inside the paintings is so fantastical – the energy is ramped up and progresses at a nearly whiplash pace. This is a world in which absolutely anything can happen - and it does. It is almost as if Wilks sat down for days on end, imagining everything he possibly could, and then cramming it into sentence after sentence of this book. But, where is the plot development? Where is the natural story progression? The wild, "anything goes" attitude of the mirrorscape is so at odds with the underdeveloped, under-described natural world, it was impossible to reconcile the two into one co-existing world. With a softer hand, I think, the story could have worked. If Wilks had slowed down a bit, eased up on the creative throttle and allowed the places and the characters to grow and enchant us, rather than bombard us, a truly magical story could have ensued – but it did not. Perhaps the raging energy and non-stop action would be better suited to the movie format.

Characterization:

2 – Characters slightly developed.

While the plot was a slight disappointment, the characters were heartbreakingly underdeveloped. Wilks provides very little history or motivation for his characters; they interact in the most superficial ways with one another, yet the reader is meant to believe that, somehow (in a matter of days, really) these deep friendships and deeper animosities manage to develop – so that good and evil comes to fight a battle to end all battles at the climax of the novel, and yet, the reader couldn't really care less who prevails or who falls along the way. It is also disappointing that every character remains flat and static. The characters we meet in the beginning who are "bad" remain bad through to the end. The characters who are "good" are, of course, the "heroes" of the novel. Wilks attempts to throw a curveball in the character of Dirk Tot, the eminent artist's right-hand man, but it fails disastrously (where there could have been potential) because the sub-story goes absolutely nowhere. When Mel, our main character, reveals his misgivings about Tot to the master artists, they can only laugh and the reader is unable to do anything but laugh at the absurdity of the whole scene.

Read the entire review at: <http://RoofBeamReader.blogspot.com>

Dream Team Reads says

(note. My actual rating is a 2.5)

A highly original adventure-fantasy novel; Wilks brings readers through a magical journey full of art, creativity and imagination, pleasing to art aficionados and less experienced art appreciators alike.

Book Breakdown

Mirrorscape is a Middle Grade-level story; while the book is lengthy, the print is very large, and the sentences are simple and short. The exposition is consistently clear and well explained, Wilks creates a bond between Mel and the reader, as both parties progress through the tale together.

This book is definitely an adventure novel in which the fast-paced plot moves quickly from one exploit to the next, always contributing to a larger quest which begins with Mel all alone finding a box containing a mysterious substance and eventually grows to a full-scale good versus evil clash. The escalation and development of this plot proceeds at a good tempo, keeping the reader hooked on the story.

Moreover, Wilks uses his extensive art knowledge to add authenticity to the artistic side of the story through both content and format! He even includes a glossary of art terms and his own fantastical neologisms at the end of the book, in addition to interspersing neat (but not overly technical, thankfully) art-related descriptions throughout the text, providing a slight elevation to the simplistic writing style.

In my Opinion

Mirrorscape is good for what it is, a creative middle-grade adventure story, however young adult readers are sure to find the book two-dimensional. This action-heavy story provides minimal character development; individuals in the novel are mostly present to perform specific roles, they have little real depth. SPOILER: Wren is just there to provide a link to the stash of iconium, Ludo is the traitor without whom the villains would never have caught up with Mel and his group, etc. I wonder how much more powerful the story could have been with more complex characters.

That being said, the plot is captivating enough that it manages to carry the whole story quite successfully. Wilks' displays of his artistic knowledge in the book – his delicate balance of artistic realness and imaginative plot is commendable.

What I Learned

The learning experience I take away from this book is in terms of the importance of reading books that match your level. While I enjoyed Mirrorscape for its creative concept, the writing was rather simplistic, I know I would have enjoyed it so much more had I read it as a pre-teen or early teen reader! I also learnt a lot of really cool art terms, such as: chiaroscuro, gesso and, cinnabar.

- Sarah
dreamteamreads.com

Julie says

I love the premise (traveling into the worlds of paintings), I love the cover, I just don't love the book. It's missing something that I can't put my finger on. Sigh.

Janeen-san says

This book was AMAZING! I loved it! This is one of the books that I judged by its cover only; I've never even read the back cover and I'm glad I didn't: I just let the story draw me in.

The prologue instantly hooked me, drawing me into the story with its first wonderful paragraph:

It should have been darker than the darkest night, as black as Indian ink. But it was not. He held his hand in front of his face and could clearly distinguish its outline in the feeble light. It was both a blessing and a curse. If he could see, then he could also be seen.

This opening paragraph brought forth a feeling excitement and raised questions within me. I felt immensely compelled to read on!

The story progresses in short, imagine-filled chapters, filled with many characters, most of them with extremely cool names, such as Adolphus Spute, Ambrosius Blenk, Dirk Tot, the Rainbow Rebellion, and my favorite, *Mumchance*. Mike Wilks, the author, must have had a great time inventing these names.

I *really*, really liked the concept of this book; it was great and took my imagination on a roller-coaster ride of whopping proportions. Shifty traders in the marketplace would fool their customers, giving them flour that was almost all sawdust and watered wine. People everywhere were getting tricked for paying lots of money for worthless items, and who was behind it all? A group of wickedly twisted shopkeepers. In the words of the character Dirk Tot, "*There will always be men who only think in terms of profit, never in terms of value.*" To put a stop to all these wrong-doings in the marketplace, the honest merchants of the city of Nem got together and formed something called the Mysteries. I *really* liked this part. Anyway, they formed the Mysteries. The items a merchant would be trading would be carefully inspected by whichever Mystery the merchant was a member of. The shady shopkeepers and merchants soon all disappeared and everything went well for a while. But--and there is *always* a but--the system that was made to stop corruption...soon became corrupted itself.

And this is where the character with great artistic talent, Melkin Womper, comes in: he is born into a world with corrupt Mysteries, although he knows close to nothing of it because he lives in the country. But that quickly changes when he encounters a vile man, Adolphus Spute, and his whistle-tooting companion, Mumchance. They are part of the Fifth Mystery, the most-corrupt one out of the five, and they're convinced that Mel has stolen a Pleasure. The character, Mel, and the reader are left to figure out what 'Pleasures' are, and it is soon revealed. The five Mysteries are based on the five senses, but since they became corrupt, the idea of Pleasures were introduced. If a baker, being a member of the Mystery in charge of taste, wanted to bake a new kind of cake with chocolate icing, he would first need to save up enough money to buy that particular Pleasure. The concept of Pleasures within the five Mysteries became tyrannical and everyone was kept horribly poor. Almost no one could afford new Pleasures.

The man called Spute is convinced that Mel has stolen a Pleasure belonging to the Fifth Mystery, which has to do with sight, and therefor, art. And Mel a young artist, and by pinning some drawings up on his wall, he unwittingly stole a Pleasure: and Spute wants it back.

Dirk Tot, a friend of Mel's friend, whisks Mel away from the danger in the nick of time, and they travel to the great city of Vlam, where Mel gets an apprenticeship to a great artist, Ambrosius Blenk. There, he meets the rude, nasty Head Apprentice named Groot (another great name) and another apprentice named Ludo. Ludo and Mel become friends, and then a kitchen-girl named Wren joins them.

And together they unravel the mystery of the Mirroscope.

Let me repeat my earlier claim: this book is amazing. Here's why.

Mike Wilks had invented a wonderful concept of an art academy...with paintings...*that let you enter a whole new world. The artist's world.* That's right! Certain paintings have something called the Mirrormark, a symbol that will open the portal into the *world of the painting!* I instantly loved the idea. Beasts that artists' have created can come out of the Mirrorscape, as Mel, Wren and Ludo discover...but people can also go *in*. And get trapped.

The three friends discover a vile plot, led by Spute and Mumchance, to arrest Dirk Tot and trap the Master, Ambrosius Blenk, inside the Mirrorscape. Forever. So THEY--Spute and Mumchance--can eventually climb their way higher and higher...and eventually overthrow the Lord-High-Master, Lord Brool, and rule *the entire Fifth Mystery!*

The three friends journey inside the dangerous world of the Mirrorscape to rescue Blenk, facing many dangers, such as getting buried alive by only one solider and stabbed to death by giant paintings that came to life at the hand of a drunken traitor. And more dangers than just those two! What will happen? Read this fantastic book to find out!

I LOVED this book, the concept was fantastic, the characters were great, and the descriptions of people and landscapes were utterly amazing! While I was reading this book, I was also writing a story of my own, and kept using the word 'clambered'. I *knew* I had to find another word to use, but my mind was blank. I

REALLY like writing, and what was fun that, after a long day of schoolwork and writing my own story, I could sit down and read someone else's story for an hour or two. It was definitely great and...*refreshing* to read all the wonderful descriptions in Milk Wilk's Mirrorscape book; I think he is a genius. A very hard thing for writers to do is paint a picture in their readers minds and I think that Mike Wilks has most certainly done that, using the best words at the right moments to paint a wonderful picture in his readers' mind as his characters, Mel, Wren and Ludo, journey forth to fulfill their destiny inside a painter's painting, which hangs upon a wall in a room in an academy in a city in the wonderfully and incredibly well-thought out world that Mike Wilks has created. I can't *wait* to get my hands on the second book!

Mike Wilks, I applaud you.

Elizabeth says

I am more than a little happy to be done with this one. It had a promising premise that just utterly failed to deliver. I kept thinking that it would have been better as a graphic novel. As the author is an artist, I really fail to understand why it isn't. It's probably not fair to compare, but I've spent the last few months feasting upon the likes of Lloyd Alexander and Shannon Hale. Going from that to this was kind of like going from a crystal flute of champagne to a styrofoam cup of flat ginger ale.

One thing above all others I couldn't/can't/won't get over. There are characters in this book by the names of Ludo and Ambrosius. I mean... LUDO and AMBROSIUS. Even if Mike Wilks is the biggest fan of "Labyrinth" ever, filching names seems like a really lame way of paying homage. And there's no way that's a coincidence. Right?

Sigh. Moving on...
