



The Mirror's Tale

P.W. Catanese

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Everyone has heard the story -- the dwarves, the talking mirror, the evil witch. But this tale doesn't belong to Snow White anymore....

Bert and Will, the twin sons of the baron of Ambercrest, are best friends. They do everything together and can't help it if trouble just seems to...find them. But the baron is fed up and has decided that separation will keep them out of mischief. One twin, he proclaims, will stay in Ambercrest for the summer, while the other will be sent to The Crag -- a foreboding, rocky outpost on the edge of the kingdom.

It is there, hidden in a forbidden black chamber, that one of the boys discovers a bejeweled and mysterious mirror. What is the precious object? And why does it make him feel so...powerful? Soon the twins' kinship is replaced by dark magic and deceit, and a kingdom hangs dangerously in the balance. What becomes of one who is ruled by the forces of evil? And can brotherly love conquer a consuming quest for power?

The Mirror's Tale Details

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From Reader Review The Mirror's Tale for online ebook

Renee Brown says

Another great fairy tale adventure in the Further Adventures series. Spun from the story of Snow White - whose young descendants (several generations later) must battle evil forces. More boy-appeal than most fairy tales. Good for fans of Cornelia Funke's Reckless.

Tessa Joy says

As punishment for misbehaving, twins Bert and Will are separated for the summer. Bert is sent off to his Uncle Hugh's mountain fortress while Will stays home to train with Andreas the knight. While exploring his new surroundings, Bert discovers a secret chamber housing the mirror the Witch Queen used to plot against Bert and Will's descendant, Snow White. Bert reawakens the mirror and soon he is poisoned by its power. But before Bert is fully enslaved, he writes a letter to Will telling him about the mirror. Bert's letter sets in motion a war no one was expecting.

Catanese's book may be based on fairytale, but the problems Bert and Will encounter—addiction, deceit, and low self-esteem—are real issues many face. When Bert finds the mirror, its deluding influence makes Bert forget how it ruined the lives of Snow White and the Witch Queen. Like most addictions, the mirror seems harmless and enjoyable at first. Then, slowly, the mirror breaks down Bert's reason and turns him against his family. When the mirror betrays Bert, he still feels sickly dependent for the mirror's attention. Only Will's love and the ugliness behind the mirror helps Bert to destroy its addictive hold on him. A rich read for ages 12 and up.

(Review found on Children's Compass Chronicle: childrenscompasschronicle.blogspot.com)

Jessica says

As with all of the Further Tales Adventure stories, the reality is that the original fairy tale did happen sometime in the past. The history of how the Wicked Queen became wicked was a fun discovery. This was a nice read that gripped me towards the end as everything raced towards the ending. The closing scene felt a little unfinished to me especially after such a strong story. I did love the characters and the situation they find themselves in and the danger of being a troublemaker.

Shelley says

This book was completely fantastic; everything children's fiction should be. Characters were relatable, text was readable but not simplistic and the plot and action were age appropriate. Catanese has a talent for writing books that appeal to boys and girls, with stories complex enough to engage adults too. I look forward to re-reading this one.

Nova says

The Mirror's Tale, written by P.W. Catanese, is one of the books in the Further Tales Adventure series. The Further Tales Adventures are sequels to classic fairy tales, but are intended for an older age group than that of the classic fairy tale. The Mirror's Tale is the sequel to the story Snow White. Among the other titles are sequels for Jack and the Beanstalk, The Brave Little Tailor, Hansel and Gretel, and Rumpelstiltskin.

This story begins hundreds of years after the death of Snow White. The main characters, twin brothers Bert and Will, are descendents of Snow White and the infamous Witch Queen. Bert and Will are best friends, but their parents decide to separate them because they are getting into too much trouble at the castle together. It is decided that one of the twins will go live with their Uncle Hugh for the summer at The Crag. The Crag is a place filled with a lot of danger and mystery because it is said that the dwarves, or Dwergh, live near The Crag, and The Crag is the former castle of the Witch Queen.

Bert, the twin sent to The Crag, discovers an ornate mirror hidden inside a secret annex and becomes obsessed with it. The mirror begins to take over his mind and leads him to believe that he must kill his brother so that he does not inherit the barony from their father. He becomes a different and evil person, and it is up to Will and seven Dwergh he meets along the way to save his brother and to destroy the evil mirror.

At first I thought this was an unappealing idea for a story, but it was actually fun to pick up on aspects of the story that came from the original fairy tale. I think students would have a fun time listening to this story and discussing the similarities between the fairy tale and the sequel. This would be a good group read aloud, and it might be a good lesson to discuss compare and contrast. Mostly though, this story is for entertainment. The Mirror's Tale is intended for students in grades fourth through seventh, and I think that subject matter and reading level are both appropriate. Although the beginning was slow it was very engaging once it got going, and the climax was exciting. This is a great story for students that like fast paced fantasy adventure stories. Students that like fantasy literature will probably enjoy all the Further Tales Adventures. The reviewer of Children's Literature from The Children Literature Comprehensive Database agreed that the story was "compelling", and "would be enjoyed as a read aloud".

Tripleguess says

Lately I've been seeing a lot of "fairy tale re-worked" novels going through my library. Some are decent; others drag out a beloved story and mutilate it via feminism or some other PC attitude (i.e. demonizing the knight as a dead white male).

This one surprised me beyond my expectations. It was not a reworking, though it refers to the story of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Rather, it picks up the tale a few generations later... and, as the saying goes, it seems a few things have changed in the telling!

To tell more might spoil the story, so I won't. I enjoyed it thoroughly, and found it creepier than the overrated Mistress of the Art of Death. Highly recommended, but preread it to make sure it won't give your child bad dreams.

Aelvana says

Bert and Will have always been trouble. Because they're identical, they can play on their looks for even better pranks. But when they push their parents too far, the twins are separated for the first time in their lives. One of them will be sent to their uncle's fortress. The fortress once housed the evil Witch-Queen, and an evil force lingers there still . . .

This is an interesting twist on Snow White. Set around a hundred and fifty years after Snow White lived and died, the characters from the original story have become faded bits of history to most folk. But one bit of history hasn't died well enough. The mirror that seduced the Witch-Queen to evil is still around, and time has done nothing to diminish its power.

In terms of what it does with the original story, this is spectacular. The Dwergh (dwarves) are a nation at war with men, and these short-but-powerful diggers and warriors little resemble the cheerful Disney fare. The story can't go too far into their culture but even the glimpses it can offer are intriguing. Similarly, the origin of the mirror, the story behind the cottage, and the relationship between Snow White and the dwarves are equally well-spun.

The only downside to the story for me was that it is based on Snow White, so it's pretty obvious the mirror will be bad news, the Dwergh will be heroes, etc. The original story was grounded and enhanced, not changed. So most of the characters follow the path you would more or less expect, but there were still surprises along the way.

I confess I read this story first of all the Further Tales because Bertram makes a later cameo in Dragon Games, and since I'd already met him there, I wanted to see his backstory. And it is nice having that bonus future glimpse, though the ending does point you in the same direction.

Overall, I think this is going to appeal most to those who like original takes on familiar stories. The gender-reversal of having a man fall under the mirror's spell helps broaden the story beyond the traditional "jealous of her beauty" motive, the world is well-defined, and the plot keeps a fast pace. I rate this book Recommended.

Melaniemouse says

Like I said in my review of #3, the author has definitely starting hitting his stride in these last two installments of the series. This was another great JV fantasy adventure, with a fun twist on the fairy tale. I've got #5 waiting for me on the couch :)

Jahh Love says

a whole new version of snow white , boys version .. i like this version that of snow white's .. it show pure strong motives of characters, manipulation and prophecies all in one classic story ..

Lisa Rathbun says

This was my favorite of the series! Great story! I could see it being a little too scary for sensitive kids on the younger age of the suggested range of 9-13.

I love that this series is for boys not just girls (although girls would enjoy them too). The luring seductiveness of power and the destructiveness of evil would be great topics to discuss with your kids after reading it.

Gevork Salmastyan says

I thought that this was a great book. The book will keep you hooked. There are many suspenseful moments and a big twist too, that will shock a lot of readers. Also, the ending of the book was really surprising. The best part of the book is the way the other told the story and his writing style. It was told from 3 perspectives. The two twins, Bert and Will, who get separated due to their childish acts at the Castle of Ambercrest and their messenger, Parley. Bert gets sent to his Uncle's castle at The Crag while Will stays at Ambercrest. This was not the way it was planned though. Originally, Bert was supposed to stay at Ambercrest but they decided to switch places. Now, Parley's perspective is when he gets caught by the Dwergh (A magical race in the story) and they keep him as a prisoner. I would really recommend this book to people who love fantasy books.

Erica Flory says

the most disturbing book in this series

Stephanie says

Ben and Will are twins who get into a lot of trouble together. This is disappointing to their father, the baron, and their mother, the baroness. When they nearly burn down the map room it sends their parents over the edge, and they come up with a plan to split the boys up. Will is going to live with his uncle in the Crag, while Ben is to stay at home at the castle. The two tricksters decide that plan doesn't work and they switch places. No one is the wiser until it's too late. Unfortunately, this allows Ben to hear his father say some not so nice things about him because he thinks he's talking to Will. Ben stewes about it until he gets to the Crag. Once there, his uncle is not very friendly and the place is just as dark and gloomy as he remembered. Luckily, his aunt is kind to him. But nothing is as exciting as the secret stairwell he finds with a mysterious mirror. It's clear the mirror holds special magic, and it tells Ben things about his twin brother. Should Ben listen to what the mirror says? Will it help him get the power he deserves? What will happen when Will visits? You don't have a magic mirror, so you'll be turning the pages like I was!

I was very excited to read *The Mirror's Tale* by P.W. Catanese. I enjoy fairy tales and twists on them are usually a lot of fun. I knew the story of Snow White, so I was curious to read about her great-great grandchildren. Ben and Will's characters were developed in a way that I liked them both and felt sorry for them for different reasons. The mirror really worried me! This book was definitely a page turner, and I would recommend it to kids in fourth grade and up who enjoy fantasy stories. The twist on Snow White will appeal to boys and girls. I look forward to reading more books by this author.

Phoebe says

The tale of Snow White is now history, and her descendants live at Ambercrest. Bert and Will are twins who are always getting into trouble--until one night they go too far and their fed up parents decide to separate them. The more courageous, devilish twin, Bert, will stay home and learn to be the baron he will one day become, and Will, the quieter one, will be sent to stay with dreaded Uncle Hugh on the barren edge of nowhere. As usual the twins have tricks up their sleeves, and switch places. Catanese, always a treat to read, offers his readers plenty of fantasy elements to revive the fairy tale base. 4th-6th grade.

Ava Kistner says

This book was pretty good, and don't let the cover deceive you. Bertram (twin to will) is sent away because of how much mischief the twins make. And while at his Uncle crags he discovers something that could change him and will forever.
