

New Take On Appalachian Folklore Shines In Whimsical Novel “Utopea” By Wynn Mercere

Source: Wynn Mercere

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Utopea, a unique fantasy novel set in early 20th Century West Virginia, goes refreshingly beyond the common trope of something frightening or monstrous threatening visitors to the hills. Wynn Mercere’s March 2015 release (Raven Press, Scottsdale, AZ) is now widely available, providing a fresh look at a bygone time when old ways were challenged by modern progress. History, sorcery, and adventure are deftly intermingled with a dash of romance in a novel that makes the case that everyone must have a little bit of magic inside them.

Firmly rooted in the literary category of Magical Realism, a structure wherein outrageously supernatural happenings are simply accepted as part of everyday life, *Utopea* flexes the power of the genre to showcase characters diverse in age, sex, race, and most amusingly, species. Mercere drew on traditional family tales as inspiration for many of the mystical happenings in the book. “My grandmother would describe a time when she saw a man fly through the air, or watched a coffin drift down the road only to turn and enter through the window of a house. All of these wild statements were delivered with complete sincerity and total belief in their reality,” Mercere notes. “To her, a world filled with these odd things was simply the place where she lived. I modeled the town of Utopea after that concept.”

Mercere also drew inspiration from hill country ghost stories and mythologies. West Virginia cultural touch points such as mines, trains and rugged independence flesh out the frame in which her characters paint their story.

About Utopea

In 1909, newspapers shaped the world, and Hector Browning was a newspaper man. He was a master at wordplay, a king of persuasion with the power of the press. The new century had dawned; it was time to turn a rustic people from their old ways, and more importantly, their homes. His assignment was simple: get those people out of the hills. But Browning and his league of industrialists were fated to encounter a different kind of power, one that didn’t rely on ink and intimidation.

Readers will enjoy discovering the hidden supernatural talents each citizen of Utopea wields to help save their town as they follow Hector’s misadventures among them. *Utopea* has action, romance, comedy, and fanciful, enchanting scenes. With a broad range of character types, each with distinct challenges and dreams, the reader will have many personalities to explore and cheer for as the adventure unfolds. Themes of community, acceptance and respect for individual freedom are threaded throughout the story.

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About Wynn Mercere

Wynn Mercere writes fantasy and historical fiction. She is the co-author of the *City of the Gods* series with M. Scott Verne. Published titles in the gaming industry include Catalyst TM *Citybook*, *Traps*, and *Maps*. For more about Wynn's books, or to request review copies or interviews, please visit <https://www.wynnmercere.com>

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