



The Gallery of Wonders

Marc Remus

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Middle Grade Fiction. Ages: 8 and up.

Eleven-year-old Holly O'Flanigan discovers an unusual paintbrush and a canvas with the image of a fantasy world that her late grandfather has left behind. She falls into the magical land of Magora, where everything and everyone is made of paint.

There she learns to weave art and magic at Cliffony Art Academy, but her carefree life is soon overshadowed by dark events.

Valuable paintings have been stolen from the Gallery of Wonders. During Holly's search for the thief, she discovers the Unfinished—monstrous beings created when a painting is left incomplete. Like vampires, the Unfinished hunger for the one thing that can flesh out their bodies—blood. And they want Holly's most of all.

The book has won the following literary awards:

Readers' Favorite Book Award, Silver, "Children's Fantasy/Sci-Fi" category, 2016

Independent Publisher Book Award (IPPY), Silver, "Juvenile Fiction," 2016.

Moonbeam Children's Book Award, Gold, "Pre-Teen Fiction ebook," 2016.

Beverly Hills Book Award, Gold, "Pre-Teen Fiction" category, 2017

New Apple Book Award, Gold, "Children's General Fiction category, 2017

Purple Dragonfly Award, Silver, "Middle Grade Fiction" category, 2016

The Gallery of Wonders Details

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From Reader Review The Gallery of Wonders for online ebook

Rae Phillips says

Book 1 in a what looks to be a promising series

As a family we have been reading a lot of history of late, so it was time for a little fantasy fiction, not always my favourite genre but it is always a big hit with the kids.

When you are reading children's fiction as an adult it is so important to take a breath and remember the readership and audience it was written for. As adults we have to suspend our imagination and allow ourselves to be absorbed by the narrative, not always easy when you are used to casting a critical eye and taking a sceptic's approach.

That being said I found it easy to slip into Remus's Magora, the influences of Terry Pratchett are obvious and the story sits easily in the magic realism genre.

I have always read to my children and we still share books together even though they are eleven and thirteen so officially just outside the readership age for this book, but as a family we all enjoyed it, so do not let the readership age stop you from considering it. The narrative is well written and the book has been edited well, Remus has a vivid imagination that brings the story to life in a colourful and creative way. Maybe I have been watching too much Anime lately but when reading Gallery of Wonders that was how my imagination saw the story unfold and I do think it would make an amazing Anime series!

A good first book in what looks to be a promising series of children's fantasy fiction by Marc Remus

Jennifer Rinker says

A whole new world

The magical artistic world of Magora is a brand new adventure. It takes the typical group of young magical friends and throws in a creative twist. Instead of wands, they use paintbrushes, and creative adventure is around every corner.

Emmyjo says

Let me start off by saying I love this book and young kids will like it. The book cover is great. It really tells you what kind of book it may be.

I like how the author have a great descriptive style on everything in the book, made you feel like you were in the book. Holly the main character is so wonderful she diffently is a growth arc. Holly doesn't believe in herself and lives with distant cousins who treat her like crap because she is different. Believes in magic like her Grandfather. She is led on a magical journey filled with lots of adventure with three friends. Who meet friends and foes and magical creatures.

Holly and her friends defend the magical place. The resolution is great and leaves it open for another.

phyllis says

Magora Escape

Billy's grandfather died and she was left with a family that treated her like a slave. Then, Holly and 3 of her friends fell into a painting of her grandfather's. It was a whole new world and it was called-Magora. As Holly and her friends look for a way home, she finds out that the Duke of Cuispider is looking for her. It has something to do with painting and a prophecy and Holly.

Dimitris says

This is a great book for anybody who likes magical worlds. In the world of Magora everything is about painting. It's a fascinating story about a girl who falls into a painting and goes on a journey through a world of art and magic.

Even though I first got this book for a friend's child, I quickly discovered that it's also an enjoyable story for adults. When I started reading it myself I got hooked. Now I'm already on the second book in the series.

The story has lots of twists and a fantastic ending. The characters are loveable and there are a lot of fantastic creatures. Of all the magical characters in the book I found the Unfinished to be most fascinating. These creatures are half-finished paintings and they are Holly's enemies.

But there are also some more friendly creatures in the book, like speaking treehouses and a cute troll. The author also introduces new species called Ledesmas and Nukimais, which make the book unique and different to other fantasy books.

I am looking forward to find out what the follow-up books have in store for me.

Toni says

SO good! Can't wait to get started on the next book with my girls.
Review to come...

Literary Classics Book Awards & Reviews says

Following the tragic death of her grandfather, Holly and her friends are transported to a magical world hidden within a painting. This world, called Magora, is a fanciful land full of mystery and wonder. Holly prefers Magora over her home, where she has no family to speak of and her life is dismal at best. But she realizes Magora is just a fantasy, and that eventually they must return home to a land that is real.

Eleven year old Holly is a reluctant hero. Certain she doesn't possess the talents so many people believe she

does, her greatest fear is that others will learn how very untalented she really is. Armed with an arsenal of objects which she has no idea how to use, she and her cohorts have a long road ahead of them before they will discover their true talent and purpose.

Author Marc Remus has written a delightful tale in which the paint-brush is mightier than the sword. With a myriad of wonderfully unique characters, this book is sure to spark imaginations and enthrall young readers as they join in the adventures of Holly and her entourage.

Katie says

This is a fantastic fantasy novel for children. I like the idea of the gindars that can paint anything and make it come alive. Magical. As are the horrifying unfinished.

This is similar to Harry Potter. Too similar for me to get really into this. Similarities include: the street that is forbidden, the corridor that is closed to all students, the MSP, the nasty teacher that they suspect of wrongdoing, the bully, hearing voices, the prophecy and so on.

I like the underlying message that this has of believing in yourself. Art cannot be created through what other people expect from you.

Montzalee Wittmann says

The Gallery of Wonders (Magora #1) by Marc Remus is a wonderful children's fantasy tale. It has lots of magic, adventure, mystery, suspense, humor, creatures of magic, and a world of wonder that even adults will like! The characters are well developed and unique. The dialogue is believable. The plot has LOTS of twists and turns and surprises along the way. Truly a great story for fantasy lovers everywhere. Great job!

Jo-Marie Jo-Marie says

This is a great story. Marc Remus has mixed fantasy and reality into a beautiful piece of literature. His characters are totally believable and endearing. He makes his fantasy land of Magora come alive! This first book is a blend of action, adventure, and excitement with colorful characters and an amazing setting. If you love to read a great story, put this book at the top of your want to read list.

Lost.in.a.Book says

The Gallery of Wonders, by Marc Remus, is a childrens fantasy book that follows a group of friends through their journey into an undiscovered world. After witnessing the horrific death of her grandfather, and being treated horribly by her aunt and uncle who are her caretakers, Holly and her 3 friends find themselves sucked into a painting of the magical world of Magora. While in Magora, Holly and her friends must learn the ways of magical painting, learn their true abilities, and overcome Cuspador who is the evil Unfinished who wishes to destroy Magora. There are trolls, griffins, leprechauns, talking trees that can complete house keeping tasks, and magic galore in this childrens story that is very reminiscent of Harry Potter.

The writing style of the story flowed nicely and the storyline also flowed very well. The book is written for ages 8-14, and is very appropriate for that age level. It has tons of life lessons within the story that I feel were placed very well throughout storyline. I feel that this imaginary world is told with such description that it builds such a platform for the audience, allowing you to fully grasp the concept of this new world as you read along. I did not find any grammatical errors and simply found the book to read well and easily. Its a very quick and easy read and I would highly recommend it to those who loved the Harry Potter series.

Nada Sobhi says

LOVE IT!

Magora: The Gallery of Wonders is the first instalment in the Magora series by Marc Remus.

Note: I read the second book first but just had to pick up the first one. Each can be read as a standalone, but you'll be making connections if you read both.

Centred around Holly O'Flanigan, who is living with her distant and annoying relatives The Smoralls, Magora: The Gallery of Wonders opens with Holly seeing a fire breakout at her grandfather, Nikolas' house. We don't meet Nikolas because he dies at the beginning, but immediately after we are introduced the world of Magora, which Holly stumbles upon when she discovers a chest with a painting and the strange creature, Tenshi.

“S-s-seahorses?”

Had she actually seen flying seahorses in the tree? Holly jumped back up on her feet and grabbed the binoculars. Jittery, she focused them. There they were, three seahorses as big as cats, but they weren't ordinary seahorses. Their leathery tails were spiked with gigantic steel needles, and their bodies were protected by rusted armor. Metal helmets covered their heads and smoke steamed from their snouts. Their bulgy eyes gazed at Holly as if they could see her from the distance.

Magora: The Gallery of Wonders is full of interesting characters, twists, events and adventures. Some parts are reminiscent of events from other fantasy books, but overall Remus has lots of creative ideas in there.

From the beginning, the reader is introduced to Holly's friends, who will appear in the following books: Rufus, Brian and Amanda.

For me, Brian was sarcastically adorable and just cracked me up as I read. I loved his character. I liked them all – may be not Amanda, but she's a love-hate-type of character.

“Everything about Amanda repulsed [Holly]. She was arrogant, gossipy, and only cared about her looks. Most of all, she was an extremely good painter. That just made matters worse.”

This is the reader's introduction to Amanda; however, having read the second book, I must note I liked the development of both Amanda's and Holly's characters in terms of friendship and trust.

Character development is evident for the four main characters and continues as the books progress.

The coolest thing about Magora: The Gallery of Wonders is the pace by which the author introduces the

reader to Magora and the concepts in that realm. Having read book two, I was already aware of certain bits, but reading book one gave me a perspective and depth.

Holly gaped with astonishment at two tiny paws covered with fluffy orange fur. Behind the paws, two frightened green eyes appeared. What followed looked like an orange koala with a humanoid face, like that of a child. It had pointy ears and short arms and legs.

"It's a Nukimai." Grandpa Nikolas had painted creatures he told her were called Nukimais many times, but Holly had always thought he had made them up.

One of the things I liked about Holly is that she's smart and actually tries to think outside the box. This is evident in the Quadrennial Art Competition she enters towards the end of the book. She is also brave and sometimes funny.

In Magora, the children attend Cliffony Art Academy, where Holly can finally pursue her love of art, which in the real world everyone has discouraged her from pursuing. Although she's told she's a Gindar, a rare kind of artist that can create living beings, Holly struggles with her brush strokes and her creations.

Each chapter begins with a kind of author's note on art, painting and fantasy versus reality. Among the ones I liked is:

"The line between reality and fantasy has many shapes. It can be thick or thin, colourful or dull, wavy or straight, blurry or sharp. It is always changing."

The chapter on Ravenscraig Lane reminded me of Diagon Alley from the Harry Potter books, especially the pastry shop where the Holly asks for marzipan griffins and the shop owner jumps around trying to catch them from his shop. Note: It's a mouthwatering chapter!

Throughout the book, we see Holly struggle with her painting. She has always loved drawing and colouring BUT people have discouraged her saying she didn't have the talent. At Cliffony, there are things she could do, but others that she just seems to fail it. Holly constantly self-doubts her abilities, giving her character depth and making the reader sympathetic. It also makes room for a lot of character development.

Overall, Magora: The Gallery of Wonders is a highly interesting, exciting and artistic first instalment in a new magical series. It is a middle grade-to-young adult fantasy, combining art, magic, adventure and excitement. It's highly recommended for all ages. You'll love it, trust me.

"The struggle to balance fantasy and reality is part of learning that the two can't exist without each other. Reality is fantasy and fantasy is reality. It all depends on the viewpoint. And the line becomes unimportant."

Overall rating: 10 stars

This review is also post on my Nadaness In Motion blog with pictures provided by the author (including the chapter banner and a black-and-white portrait of Holly) at: <https://goo.gl/tKULQM>

Tayyab Ali says

This book was great. I can't say enough good things about it. There was something for everyone, I found this book a real page turner and hard to put down, really well written and drawn into the characters, so much so I want to know more about "The Gallery of Wonders (Magora)" completely gripping and very sad to have finished it. I will probably re-read this book in the near future because its so good and just enough to keep you turning the pages. Couldn't put it down once I started reading. I highly recommend this excellent story to my school friends.

[Shai] Bibliophage says

Holly O' Flanigan lives with her distant relatives, the Smorall's, in Donkleywood; her parents died in an accident when she was still a baby so she never got the chance to know them. She used to live with her grandfather, Nikolas, but she was taken from him by the government because they perceived that he was unfit to take care of Holly. Instead of a relative, the Smoralls treat her like a maid and they made her sleep and always hide in the attic after she's done with her chores.

Her grandfather is a painter and lives alone in his studio and Holly inherits her grandfather's passion for painting. However, she thought that she is not good because she lacks the skill and talent. Unfortunately, there was a fire in her grandpa's studio and he jumped out of the building. Prior to that, Holly and her friend, Brian, saw a peculiar man and creatures outside. The next day, Holly received a package with a letter and it contains several things: a jar of white powder, a gadget with a funnel-like attached in the side, and a book that is an Encyclopedia of Magora written on it.

Holly's life changed once she received the said package. Unexpectedly, Holly and her friends Brian and Rufus; together with her obnoxious classmate Amanda; and nosy neighbor, Ms. Hubbleworth, they were all transported to Lake Santima in Cuspidor when a painting became a portal in Holly's attic.

The Gallery of Wonders is the first book in *The Magora Book Series*, and while reading, it greatly reminds of the well-known classic book series of *Chronicles of Narnia*. Moreover, I can't help but compare it to the *Harry Potter* series because there's a Cliffony Academy of the Arts, prophecy, talking tree house, and animated creatures such as trolls and griffins in the story. I reckon that *Marc Remus'* huge inspirations for writing are *C.S. Lewis* and *J.K. Rowling* because of the flow of the story and several similarities in some instances. Despite that, middle graders, young adult readers, and those who are fond of fantasy and adventure stories will enjoy this novel.

Jan farnworth says

In the veins of awesome middle grade fantasy this one will sit in wonder on my shelf right next to Harry Potter and Chronicles of Narnia. It an amazing story with loveable characters with a story that easily pulls you and you feel like your a part of this magical world in cased in stunning artwork. The author is a painter so he does a impeccable job of describing the brush strokes used in magic working, the details in paintings, and of course the wonderful way they traveled to Magora.

