



# Scatterheart

*Lili Wilkinson*

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The turnkey pushed Hannah into the cell, and clanged the door shut behind her. Hannah's eyes stung and she felt a heavy churning in her belly. The smell of urine, vomit, sweat and rotting flesh was overpowering, and she broke out in a hot, prickly sweat, despite the icy night.

*1814, London Town. Hannah Cheshire - wealthy and spoiled - has fallen from grace. Punishment: transportation to the colony of New South Wales.*

## Scatterheart Details

Date : Published 2009 by Catnip Books (first published August 1st 2007)

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Author : Lili Wilkinson

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## From Reader Review Scatterheart for online ebook

### TheCosyDragon says

I originally reviewed this book on my blog - The Cosy Dragon. For more recent reviews by me, please hop over there.

Hannah is Quality. She is one of the born aristocrats of London, but her father leaves her behind. A series of misunderstandings later and Hannah finds herself on a ship to Australia. Hannah has always been selfish, but the long trip and the factories afterwards open her eyes to enjoying what she actually has.

Hannah develops beautifully as a character, and it is obvious that lots of research has gone into this book. Wilkinson has a gift for bringing history to life. The majority of tortures written into the book actually occurred, and that is what makes this a historical fiction, as far as I am concerned.

I felt driven to finish this book, even though I knew what the outcome would be. It wasn't a badly written book, like some others I have read recently, but it just wasn't my style. For a book that says it is 'fantasy', it doesn't cut it for me. The only fantasy element that I could see were the short fairytale sections put in as hallucinations or flashbacks, as well as the chapter verses.

I really want to blame disliking this book on it being written by an Australian author. But at the same time, some of my other favourite authors are Australian (think Isobelle Carmody). Maybe it is just the Australian content. I will probably try more books by this author, just not from this pseudo-fantasy genre.

This book has been long listed for a number of awards, and has glowing reviews elsewhere, if historical fiction is your thing and you think you want a more unbiased opinion. There is an underlying romance in this book that also might appeal to others - again, it's not really my thing, and I couldn't tell you if it is representative of its kind.

I picked up this book by mistake at the library. It was right next to another set of books by Carole Wilkinson which I really enjoyed, and the spines of the covers looked very similar. Both sets of books are published by Black Dog Books.

The level of gross in this book is pretty high. There's torture, sex, theft; a whole range of fantastic bad things! I'd recommend this book for teenagers, not children by any means.

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### SBC says

Average. Slow moving with not a lot happening and what felt like shallow characters and a lot of doom and misery.

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### Donna says

I have recently been re-reading books on my shelf from when I was younger. Books I liked when I was 13/14, such as the Fault in Our Stars and Fangirl, I could barely continue after a few pages, however this book, which I first read when I was maybe 10/11, I keenly read all the way to the end.

The writing style of Scatterheart is about as remarkable as any another YA book. However, the creation and development of all the characters, Hannah, Long Meg, Thomas, and James are complex, well crafted, and memorable. The little fairytale of Scatterheart running parallel to the main storyline is also a nice touch that adds an interesting layer of magic to the story.

Amongst the sea of YA books on the market, Scatterheart is original, and I would argue, better developed than a lot - it is a shame this book does not have more attention.

disclaimer::: theres a possibility I think this book is better than it is because of childhood nostalgia lmao

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### **Julie Bozza says**

A darned good yarn! I enjoy stories in which the power of stories are acknowledged by the characters.

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### **Vee ?Under Mountain Books? says**

When I first saw this book, I knew I had to read it, just from seeing the cover alone. I wasn't disappointed - this extraordinary historical tale with a fairytale feel to it blew me away. I finished this in a few hours as I couldn't stop reading.

Right from the start the book hooked me, by not letting me know how Hannah ended up in Newgate. Instead, it starts when Hannah is in Newgate, and starts to tell you how she ended up there, which was a great way to grab my attention and made me want to read more. After prison, Hannah is transported to New South Wales and a lot of pages (around 100, probably more) is dedicated to life on the ship, which I usually find boring. However, due to the people on the ship and the bizarre goings-on there, I wasn't bored at all!

There's a lot of things in this book that are quite shocking, but I'm glad they're there, as they made the story feel more realistic. I loved that when Hannah was in London I felt as if I was in a fairytale world, which is what she saw it as. Then when the story moved onto the gaol and the ship, I felt as if I could really understand just how disgusting the accommodations were and how much Hannah went through.

There's a lot of really strong characters in this, that really stand out. One in particular was Dr Ullathorne who was just repulsive and I spent a lot of time hoping for him to get his. I also loved Molly, the street child with a melted face. She was really sweet and kept Hannah going throughout the journey. Another favourite was Long Meg, who befriended Hannah back in Newgate and looks after her. Long Meg is a typical London girl, very ballsy and she's not afraid to speak her mind, which added a lot of comedy to the tale.

Hannah herself was less likeable than the others, due to how she was brought up. She's a great character, she looks after Molly and she isn't afraid to stand for what's right but she has moments where she wants impossible things to be true and she can act quite spoilt too. I think the journey was quite good for her though, as she learnt a lot along the way.

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## Kerstin says

### Kurzbeschreibung:

Als Hannah Cheshires Vater Hals über Kopf das Haus verlässt, ahnt die 14-Jährige noch nicht, dass damit eine Welt für sie zusammenbricht. Schon bald muss sie erfahren, dass ihr Vater, den sie immer für einen bedeutenden Londoner Geschäftsmann und Gentleman gehalten hat, ein stadtbekannter Betrüger und Spieler ist.

Mutterseelenallein bleibt Hannah in dem großen Haus zurück. Jetzt gibt es nur noch einen Menschen, der zu ihr steht: ihr ehemaliger Hauslehrer Thomas Behr. Thomas weiß um Hannahs ausweglose Situation und möchte sie vor Schlimmerem bewahren. Sogleich schmiedet er Pläne für eine gemeinsame Zukunft und hält um Hannahs Hand an. Doch Hannah weist ihn zurück. Wie könnte sie, die Tochter eines Edelmanns, einen bürgerlichen Studenten heiraten?

Dann schlägt das Schicksal ein zweites Mal zu und Hannah landet im Newgate-Gefängnis. Das Urteil: sieben Jahre Strafkolonie in Australien, am anderen Ende der Welt. Während der gefahrenvollen Seereise lernt sie nicht nur Hunger und Elend kennen, sondern auch Grausamkeit, Entwürdigung und Gewalt. Aber noch immer gibt sie ihren Traum vom großen Glück nicht auf...

### Zur Autorin:

Lili Wilkinson, geboren 1981, lebt in Melbourne, Australien. Seit ihrem sechsten Lebensjahr denkt sie sich Geschichten aus, von denen bereits einige veröffentlicht wurden. Sie schreibt u.a. für diverse Zeitschriften und arbeitet im Zentrum für Jugendliteratur der Staatsbibliothek von Victoria. Ihr Interesse an Jugendliteratur überrascht nicht, denn Lili Wilkinson ist die Tochter der erfolgreichen Autorin Carole Wilkinson (z.B. "Hüterin des Drachens", Dressler).

"Hannah sah über die graue, öde Landschaft und schauderte. So weit das Auge reichte, nur braunes spitzes Gras und dann und wann ein verwitterter Zaun oder eine Gruppe knorriger Bäume. Sie kam sich sehr klein vor. Die Elster hob ab und flog in den grauen Himmel." (Seite 376)

### Rezension:

Lili Wilkinson entführt den Leser in "Scatterheart" in das England des 19. Jahrhunderts, genaugenommen nach London in das Jahr 1814. Die Geschichte um die 14jährige Hannah Cheshire macht klar, inwieweit Frauen in dieser Zeit in ihrem Handeln und Tun unterdrückt wurden und wie schnell sich ein wohlbehütetes Leben in ein Sträflingsdasein verwandeln kann.

Die Hauptprotagonistin Hannah erschien bis zur Mitte des Romans sehr naiv in ihrem Handeln und Denken, was aber durch ihre Herkunft und ihr bisheriges Leben erklärt werden kann. Dies ändert sich im Laufe der Geschichte und man kann Hannahs Weiterentwicklung sehr anschaulich mitverfolgen.

"Scatterheart" ist sehr flüssig geschrieben und die Kapitel schön überschaubar eingeteilt. Mehr als überzeugend wurde vor allem das Elend von Gefangenen und auch die Schiffsüberfahrt nach Australien (die damals ein gutes halbes Jahr dauerte) dargestellt, was das Buch auch für Erwachsene interessant gestaltet.

Der Roman wird ab 12 Jahren als Jugendbuch empfohlen, wobei ich hier ein Lesealter von 14 Jahren für angemessen halte, da manche Szenen nicht unbedingt für Kinder dieses Alters geeignet sind.

Zur Gestaltung des Buches: Ein Blickfang ist das schön gestaltete lila Cover mit einer passenden Grafik von Hannah (oder Scatterheart) und einem Schiff. Diese und auch der Titel sind in Glitzeroptik überzogen, was wirklich edel aussieht und sich schön im Bücherregal macht. Zum Anfang jeden Kapitels wird auch das Märchen von "Scatterheart", dem flatterhaften Mädchen, stückweise weitererzählt, und man erfährt somit die Parallelen zwischen Hannah und diesem schönen und auch traurigen Märchen.

Fazit: Ein nicht nur für Jugendliche interessanter historischer Roman, der mitfiebern lässt und zeitgleich auch gut unterhält.

Wertung: 4 von 5 Punkten

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### Hallie says

I thought the premise of this book was wonderful - linking the fairy tale "East of the Sun, West of the Moon" with the historical story of a girl convicted of theft in 19th century London and transported to New South Wales. The problem I had with it as an enjoyable read was that the protagonist is so naive for so much of the book, and - although it's understandable given her upbringing - a snob and a half, too. That just makes for tough reading, or rather, it makes for a different kind of tough reading. What happens to Hannah after she's abandoned by her worthless father is horrific, and the villains she encounters during her long voyage to Australia are some of the nastiest imaginable. But it still wasn't a book I could say I loved, despite admiring it quite a bit. Will definitely look for other books by the author.

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### oliviasbooks says

Dear publisher(s), are you sure you had checked the spelling of the final version thoroughly before handing it over to the printers? I am pretty convinced the historical young adult novel about a nineteenth century high society girl being shipped from London to New South Wales as a convicted thief of her own jewellery had been meant to bear the title *Scatterbrain* instead of *Scatterheart*. Certainly, Hannah Cheshire is a bit fickle, too, as far as her ability to fall in love, recognise love and give love is concerned, but who would expect otherwise: Hannah grew up having no mother, no friends and no companions beside her teacher and her cold, calculating fraudster father, and is barely fifteen when the latter flees out of the country under the pretense of a sudden business trip and leaves his helpless offspring to face her fate completely unprepared and alone. But Hannah's stupidity, her naiveté and her inability to process and use what is happening and being said to her deserves a big, fat single-worded title. *Scatterbrain* undoubtedly sounds nice. I would prefer *Peabrain*, though ... or - even better - *Fleabrain* to underline the convict ship theme and evoke all kinds of authentic images - just like writing does. I will come back to the rather applaudably graphic scenery in a minute. I just have to elaborate some more to defend my dislike of Hannah and her 'friends' and foes - everyone, more or less.

Hannah is well bred. A real *lady*. She even tries to shake her fellow inmates' hands in her London prison cell. And she seems to be well equipped enough to learn, for her private tutor, Thomas Behr, enjoyed immensely to stuff her with scientific theories that had not been on his employer's lesson plan. But at the same time Hannah managed to live almost fifteen years in the midst of London society, in a large house full of lively, gossiping servants, in a house with a daily newspaper on the breakfast table, without mustering the slightest amount of curiosity about her father's business, about his plans for her future, about how a household is run and things get done. If someone dares to prod and ask for details, she is completely content with giving placeholder answers like "My father is a gentleman". A normally curious girl would have been embarrassed to have been caught clueless and would have put a lot of effort in finding out afterwards. Not Hannah. Hannah trusts that her father means well and will tell her everything she needs to know in his time. Therefore Hannah does not protest or wonder, when Thomas and other servants get fired, Hannah does not draw conclusions when her father, who promised to marry her to a wealthy man of high standing, asks her to dress up for a dinner with a business partner of him who is fiftyish, proportionless and so boring Hannah even considers that one evening as a waste of time. When all her former servants have left the house for

good, Hannah has no idea where the contents of her chamber pot usually go. So she just amasses them day after day in her room. Her idea of London topography is so hazy that she loses her sense of direction on her quest for a pawnbroker. She does not know anything about reproduction. She has learned everything about star constellations, but has not heard that they are used to navigate ships. I had the impression of a time travelling heroine when it became clear that she did not know that boys commonly began their career in seafaring as young as nine or ten in her time. And I could not believe that Hannah is still particular about her food after two weeks in a mouldy prison cell and four unconscious days on the convict ship. It drove me mad that she does not explain at her court hearing that the supposed stolen earrings were hers and that she *never* asks for details, when Long Meg, Tabby, Molly and other fellow prisoners throw hints and warnings about her new friend, Lieutenant James, or the ship's cruel and syphilis-marked doctor into her direction. She must notice that all of the women around had precious life experiences as a hierarchy's lowest members. But she never gets the faintest idea that they could show her the ropes, which would keep her out of danger. Her birth makes her superior in her eyes.

Apropos hints. I kind of liked the prostitute Long Meg and her balance between life-saving selfishness and sympathy for the underdog. But I could not stand her meaningful, but worthless hints and her strange, sudden self-destructive behaviour on the ship. The first just served to make the reader uneasy about the unknown dangers Hannah would be surely soon facing, the latter did not fit her personality. She could have taken Hannah aside and told her bluntly what happened on the crew's deck at night, scattered Hannah's romantic illusions about her supposedly white-armoured gentleman. But she doesn't. She does not even tell Hannah her suspicions, when the two of them go to rescue little Molly. All of it is a second rate stylistic device to show Hannah sinking deeper and deeper into her self-dug whole of rich-girl-naivety – from which she will emerge chastened, wizened and refined, I suppose.

The other person who haunts Hannah oracle-like with warning metaphors should not even be on that ship. Tabby is old and brittle. The Australia-bound convict ships transported young and middle-aged strong women to serve their time, work hard and become brides or mistresses. Someone on the brink of dying of old age would not have been invested in.

Hannah's love interest on that ship is so obviously two-faced from the beginning (He sits on his jacket, she sits on the floor in a puddle), that reading their romantic scenes was not fun at all.

The main part of *Scatterheart* is meant to be a dark, realistically hopeless tale, I suppose. I think Lili Wilkinson researched life on London's streets, life in London's prisons and life on convict transports quite thoroughly. For *Scatterheart* is brimfull of disgusting odours - vomit, pus, urine, dried menstrual blood, festering wounds, bad teeth -, visuals – the ship, the cell, the dirt, coarse clothing, hooked-up skirts, worms, blood, corpses -, and sounds – moans, cries and crackling laughter. There is a heap of creative swearing in the story, a lot of raw sex and violence. And although I admire the painted picture, I liked the young adult novel *Abby Lynn*, written in the 80s by Rainer M. Schröder a whole lot more. It also deals with an innocent girl who is convicted for theft and befriends an older woman who looks out for her on a convict ship. It also does not gloss over the exchange of sexual favours for food, the sadistic bride buyers on the lookout for young bed warmers, the undernourishment and so on. But it tells the story of friendship in unexpected places, the story of hope, a beautiful romance. It shows you normal people speaking plain text instead of sprouting riddles. But if you thought *Abby Lynn* was too cheerful and aimed at a too young readership, you might enjoy *Scatterheart*. Well, I didn't. I stopped at page 216. A certain event killed the last curiosity in me to learn the two women's fate.

Another similar themed novel I have wanted to read is *Scout* by Nicole Pluss. But after this personal flop I am not so sure anymore. I will also stay away from the rest of Lili Wilkinson's work. I also only barely liked the characters in her young adult crime story *A Pocketful of Eyes*. Now I am convinced we are simply not compatible.

A last word according the German edition: *What* is the use of spreading the text on so many thick-papered pages with an *enormous* white margin around the text? It is unnecessary bulky to hold and carry around, unnecessary expensive and a waste of wood and shelf space. I would *never* have bought this edition. I only borrowed it, but I hope it does not exceed the maximum weight for book parcels.

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### **Toniarw says**

\* 3.5

Das Buch hat mich komplett an "das Hurenschiff" von Martina Sahler erinnert. Die Handlung war teilweise komplett identisch...

Da mir das Hurenschiff schon wirklich gut gefallen hat, hat mir Scatterheart natürlich auch gefallen. Nur leider war für mich die Handlung nichts neues. Nur hat mich hier das Ende auf jeden Fall besser gefallen.

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### **Eve says**

more like 4.5

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### **Jule says**

„Scatterheart“ von Lili Wilkinson erzählt am Beispiel der 15-jährigen Hannah Cashire, die als Sträfling nach Australien kommt, die Geschichte eines ganzen Kontinents.

Hannah ist eine junge Dame von Stand. Doch als sie erfährt, dass ihr Vater ein gesuchter Krimineller ist, will sie es nicht glauben. Von diesem Moment an ändert sich ihr gesamtes Leben. Zuerst landet sie im Londoner Gefängnis und wird schließlich nach Australien deportiert. Der Gedanke an ihren Hauslehrer Mr. Behr, den sie überheblich von sich gewiesen hat, hält sie aufrecht. Doch wird sie ihn überhaupt jemals wiedersehen? Hannah Geschichte ist ein Beispiel für die von Tausenden von Sträflingen, die für verschiedene, oft lächerliche Vergehen nach Australien deportiert wurden. Die Geschichte spielt um 1814, als die Besiedlung Australiens gerade begann.

Wilkinson versteht es, den Leser in ihren Bann zu ziehen und sehr starke Emotionen in ihm zu wecken. Gleich am Anfang, als Hannah ins Gefängnis gesteckt wird, ist man schockiert und angewidert von den Zuständen. Man fühlt sich bedrängt in dem kleinen Raum mit über 20 Menschen, riecht förmlich den Gestank und spürte die Kälte des Londoner Winters. Zusammengepfercht entsteht eine Atmosphäre der Gefahr, Ausweglosigkeit und Verzweiflung. Je weiter man liest, desto schlimmer wird es. Und obwohl man die arrogante Hannah anfangs gar nicht leiden kann, fühlt man doch mit ihr mit. Erst recht als man den Grund für ihre Festnahme erfährt.

Dieser ist so ungerecht und wird so intensiv dargestellt, dass der Leser am liebsten ins Geschehen eingreifen würde, jedoch zur Untätigkeit verbannt ist.

Es bleibt nur weiter zu lesen, was aufgrund des herrlich fließenden Schreibstils der Autorin ein Vergnügen ist.

Obwohl die Sträflinge lange Zeit auf See sind und somit auch über 200 Seiten auf dem Schiff spielen, kommt keine Langeweile auf. Es werden viele schreckliche Dinge beschrieben, die für den Leser noch schlimmer werden, weil er weiß, dass sie nicht der Fantasie der Autorin entspringen, sondern wirklich so oder so

ähnlich geschehen sind.

Ein weiterer positiver Aspekt der Geschichte ist die Entwicklung der Figuren, die insbesondere Hannah durchläuft. Unter solch schrecklichen Umständen lernt sie viel über das wirkliche Leben, dem sie vorher nie begegnet ist und über die vornehme Gesellschaft, die in Wahrheit wenig vornehm ist. Erstaunlich ist auch, wie die sozialen Schichten durch die unterschiedlichen Sprachstile gekennzeichnet sind. Long Meg entstammt der Unterschicht und redet stets vulgär daher, trotzdem ist sie viel klüger als Hannah. Diese spricht sehr vornehm und höflich, doch weiß nichts vom Leben außerhalb ihres Hauses.

Die Charaktere sind vielseitig und stecken voller positiver und negativer Überraschungen.

Das Cover von „Scatterheart“ macht mit seiner violetten Farbe und viel Glitzer den Eindruck eines Romans für Mädchen. Doch die Geschichte um Hannah ist viel mehr als man auf den ersten Blick meint. Sie erzählt einen Teil der Geschichte Australiens, und auch wenn einen der geschichtliche Aspekt weniger interessiert, wird man von den unterschiedlichen Personen, den Orten und den schrecklichen Geschehnissen einerseits schockiert und andererseits fasziniert sein.

Hannah Geschichte hat mich sehr bewegt. Ich muss auch nach dem Lesen noch oft an Szenen aus dem Buch zurückdenken, die aufgrund ihrer Intensität tief in mir hängen geblieben sind. „Scatterheart“ kann ich daher sehr empfehlen, man lernt viel dazu und wird zum Nachdenken angeregt, auch über sich selbst.

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### **Kirsti says**

Wow, this book was nothing like I expected, yet I loved it. Judging from the cover and the name, I assumed it was a YA fantasy novel. Even the back gives you the idea that it's going to be fantasy, but in fact it is more historical/ naive romance. But don't let that put you off! What I found in these pages was a beautiful story, filled with ugly characters and situations that make you grow to love the main character, Hannah, even more. She struggles through such a fall, but never loses the essence of her character, and builds herself up more than she, and the reader, can ever expect.

I loved this book, no two ways about it. It was raw and painful and sad, but at the same time I couldn't stop reading. I'm not sure where to class this; some of the subject matter definitely isn't YA (That's the section in the library I found it in) but nothing so horrible happens that it could be classed higher. I think people of all ages will read this story however, and like it. It is just a good story, and really well written. Another excellent book read today!

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### **Hannah says**

It was such a fantastic story but the reason I didn't give it 5 stars was because of how disturbing it is. Only read it if you can cope with reading about abuse, sexual assault, mistreatment and other disturbing elements in explicit detail. Otherwise, a truly excellent book!

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### **Larissa says**

Hannah Cheshire is a young lady of Quality living in London, and the daughter of a Gentleman. Arthur Cheshire is an important businessman, and wants only the best for his daughter. Hannah is used to having the best, fine dresses and jewellery, food and servants. Hannah has grown up with no mother and, apart from her father, has no one else in her life besides her tutor.

Thomas Behr has filled Hannah's head with history, poetry, and mathematics as well as languages, animals and stories; much to Arthur Cheshire's dismay. It was not necessary nor desirable for a young lady of Quality to know such things, Hannah's father would say. But still Thomas Behr loved to tell his story and Hannah loved to hear them. Her favourite story was that of Scatterheart.

One day Hannah finds her life turned upside down, and all her troubles seem to start with the dismissal of Thomas Behr as her tutor. Quickly afterwards things seem to turn from bad to worse, and Hannah finds herself imprisoned. "A series of misfortunes and calamities...", as Hannah puts it, has brought her to trial and despite her insistence of innocence; she is sentenced to "Parts Beyond the Seas", other wise known as New South Wales.

It is upon the seas and beyond that Hannah holds dear to her the stories told by Thomas Behr; she is haunted by the story of Scatterheart and the white bear. Along with the stories is the memory of the man she has become so fond of. Once she had considered him well beneath her, a servant, a commoner. Now she thinks of him more and more. But will she ever see him again?

Scatterheart is a fickle and selfish girl who accepts the offer of marriage from a white bear, not because she loves him but because he can offer her a castle to live in and beautiful dresses to wear. Hannah begins to wonder if she is not so different, willing to consider marriage to a man she detests for the chance to have a grand house with carriages, and fifty servants, and jewels and beautiful dresses.

Like Scatterheart, Hannah must endure a long and dangerous journey, to discover what is truly worth having, finding growth and learning and love; all the while searching for her own Mr Bear, 'East O' The Sun, West O' The Moon'.

Scatterheart is a wonderful story that mixes reality with fantasy, and truth with illusion. It's a story that portrays the ignorance and selfishness of the wealthy and the harsh reality of life for the poor living in London and Australia in 1814. Scatterheart is a fairytale that's actual and realistic.

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## **Mary says**

A very unusual offering, with all the feel of a first novel, Scatterheart is a very different journey.

Dealing primarily with the history and experience of those on the prison ships travelling to Australia, Wilkinson does tie in a personal story which is, if not always compelling, definitely enough to get you to the finish.

A worthwhile read for anyone who didn't quite realise how interesting Australian history was until they read about it. So there's a moebius style recommendation for you...

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