

The Black Unicorn Study Guide

The Black Unicorn by Terry Brooks

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Plot Summary

The Black Unicorn is A Magic Kingdom of Landover novel by author Terry Brooks. In this novel, Ben Holiday pays one million dollars to buy the throne of the fairyland of Landover, after Ben's wife and unborn child die in a car accident. Ben escapes from his reality by assuming the role of the King of Landover, which is a magical fairyland that is completely different from his role as a big shot attorney in Chicago. Ben, his new girlfriend, the sylph Willow, and the wizard Questor Thews all have vision-like dreams.

They feel that the dreams are premonitions that they must carry out. Ben's dream sends him back to the real world in Chicago. Questor sends him to retrieve the lost books of magic and Willow's dream sends her in search of the golden bridle to capture the elusive black unicorn that's been spotted throughout the land. Each characters heads out on their individual journey to see if their dreams were just dreams, or lead them to find the answers they seek.

Each encounters their own dangers, obstacles and fortunes while carrying out their journeys. When Ben inadvertently brings his archenemy, Meeks the wizard, back into Landover, chaos ensues. Meeks steals Ben's identity as the King of Landover. Ben has to work with his friends, followers, and his inner struggles to determine how to unmask himself and return his kingdom to order.

Ultimately, Ben discovers that he has to believe in himself. Without his own self-confidence, he cannot expect those in his kingdom to look up to him as their leader. Additionally, the novel helps to instill the belief that magic does exist, even in the real world of Chicago. The belief in magic, or the possibility that magic exists, gives people hope.



Prologue and Dreams

Prologue and Dreams Summary

The black unicorn emerges from the forest and stands at the edge of the stream. All of the other animals gather around to stare at the rare sight. There is mention that the black unicorn cannot be killed, yet its life can still be taken away.

Ben Holidays announces at breakfast that he had a dream the previous night about the Old World. Ben says it was about his old law partner, Miles Bennett. Miles was frantically busy and kept calling out for Ben. Ben tried to respond but Miles couldn't hear Ben. Then there was a distortion and Ben woke up. Ben says that there was something very real about the dream—some impending disaster—that he just cannot put his finger on.

Abernathy, the scribe, talks to Ben and suggests that Ben's premonition is compelling Ben to get in touch with his previous life. Ben thinks about how he entered the fairy world of Landover about a year ago from his life as a trial lawyer in Chicago, Illinois. Landover is a place where magic governs and Ben is the King.

When Ben admits that he is worried about miles, the wizard Questor Thews acts cautiously before he speaks to the six friends in the room at the castle. Questor Thews confesses that he too had a dream the previous night and it was about the missing books of magic. He says that his dream revealed to him where the missing books are hidden in the catacombs in the Melchor.

Willow then admits that she too had a very vivid dream the previous night—possibly even more vivid than either of the other two dreams. She says she was on a journey with her people, but then suddenly found herself alone. A black unicorn appears before her in the mist, but it seems more evil than fairy, and it won't allow Willow to pass.

Willow says a bridle of gold thread appears in her hand. She knows that the bridle is the only thing that will harness the black unicorn and that she must take it to Ben. Willow says when she woke, she had the feeling that the dream had not truly ended. Questor Thews suggests that they are having the dreams because Landover is where the dream world and reality meet and come together.

As they discuss their dreams, Willow realizes that each of the three are destined to embark on their own separate journey to uncover the truth of what their dreams presented to them. Ben says that Bunion will go with Questor or Willow and that Parsnip will go with the other one.

Ben fingers the medallion around his neck. It is the medallion that his enemy Meeks sold to him when Meeks sold him the throne of Landover. As long as Ben is wearing the medallion, he holds the magic that allows him to pass between the fairy world and the real world.



Abernathy is not happy about any of them leaving on their journey. He is concerned about the business at hand in Landover that is upcoming in the next few days. Willow and Ben embrace, as if to say goodbye to one another. Willow tells Ben to come back safe to her.

Ben goes to his room, where he changes into his old world clothes and packs a bag. He goes down to say goodbye to everyone. Questor warns Ben to be safe, in case he runs into Meeks, who is trapped in the old world now. Willow gives Ben a stone that will warm and turn crimson as a way of warning Ben of danger.

When Willow tells him she loves him, Ben gets scared. He thinks of his wife Annie from the old world that died in a car accident. He is afraid of losing that love again if something happens to Willow, or of how crushed Willow will be if something happens to Ben.

As Ben and his soldiers near the edge of the forest, Ben feels an anxiety as if when he leaves Landover that he will never be able to return again. Ben leaves his soldiers behind as he enters the tunnel that will take him back to the old world. When he reaches the end of the tunnel, he finds himself face-to-face with Meeks.

Prologue and Dreams Analysis

The suggestion is that the black unicorn is a rare species. While ordinary things might not be able to kill the black unicorn, the suggestion is that something, such as magic, can take away the life of the black unicorn.

Ben's dream is more like a premonition than it is a dream. It foreshadows that Ben will somehow get entangled with his old home and old law partner. The entanglement might put Ben in danger, or it might put Ben in a position to save his old law partner and possibly even his old home.

Ben's choice to give up his old life and live out his life in a fairy world suggests that Ben is trying to escape reality. Questor Thew's dream of where the missing books of magic are hidden suggests that the six friends will be embarking on a journey to find the books and bring them back to Landover.

There is some foreshadowing that Ben will run into his enemy Meeks in the old world. Even though Meeks doesn't have as much power as he once did, it could put Ben in the way of danger. It seems as if one of the reasons Ben might have escaped reality is because his wife Annie died in a car accident.



...and Memories and Shadows...

...and Memories and Shadows... Summary

Ben freezes and he notices that all of Meeks's manlike features and clothing are more like that of an enraged animal now. Meeks comes at Ben, but then when Ben looks again, Meeks is gone. Ben follows the trail out of the forest that he took in to cross over to Landover the previous year.

Ben takes out the stone that Willow gave him, but it isn't glowing red, so he realizes that it definitely wasn't Meeks he saw. Thirty minutes later, Ben is at the courtesy phone off the trail. It's raining when he reaches for the phone in hopes that it's working. It is, so he calls for a car service to pick him up with the credit card and coins he has in his duffel bag.

While riding in the limo into downtown Waynesboro, Ben realizes that the image he saw of Meeks was to warn Ben, but was also to alert Meeks that Ben had crossed back over from Landover. Ben checks in to the Holiday Inn in Waynesboro. He showers, sends his clothes out for cleaning and orders in dinner.

Ben uses his credit card to book a flight to Chicago for the following morning. Then he starts to worry because Meeks can trace his flight with the credit card Ben used to buy the ticket. The next morning, Ben boards his flight, but when he lands in Washington, he cancels the second part of his ticket. He books a new flight and this time pays in cash.

Ben thinks about how much his life changed when his wife, who was three months pregnant, died in a car accident. His reclusive state is what led him to browse through a department store catalog and decide to purchase the throne to the kingdom of Landover. When he made the one million dollar purchase, Meeks is the one that conducted the interview out of the New York office.

In Chicago, Ben checks into a hotel and shops for clothing, paying for everything in cash. After returning to his room, reading, watching the news and ordering in dinner, Ben calls his accountant, Ed Samuelson, to talk about getting his affairs in order permanently. Ben calls Ed at home, tells him what he wants and arranges to meet Ed at his office the following day to sign the papers.

That night, Ben dreams about a black unicorn that changes back and forth from a unicorn to a devil. Ben realizes in his dream that the unicorn/devil is Meeks. As Ben charges after Meeks in the dream, Ben is the Paladin, an armored knight. Ben hears a scream ring out in the night and Ben realizes that it is his own. Ben thinks about how his thoughts are completely different when he slips into his Paladin mode, which he has only had to do once.



Saturday morning, Ben catches a cab to Mile's office. As Ben is riding up in the elevator, he has a bad feeling. When the elevator door opens, Ben is once again face-to-face with Meeks.

Questor Thews and Bunion are in Mirwouk, which is the fortress where Questor dreamed the books of magic are. He recognizes the corridor from his dream and works his way through the spider webs and dust to see if he can find the books. He wants to work fast because he senses something evil lurks.

When the corridor ends with a stone wall, Questor rubs the stone door marked with scroll and runes. This causes the door to open to a room with a unicorn carved into the granite floor. Questor rubs the horn of the unicorn and the tile slides open. When he reaches his hand down into the hole, there is something in it.

Willow is bathing in the Irrylyn, which is the same place that she and Ben first met and she first knew that he was the one for her. Willow thinks about how the meaning of the dreams is dangerous, but because they are a riddle, she isn't sure what the danger is yet. She thinks about how she held a piece of information about her dream back, but how she will seek advice from her mother the next day.

As Meeks approaches Ben in the hall of the office building, Ben grabs his medallion. He also reaches for the stone Willow gave him to see if he's in danger but he can't find it. When Meeks is directly in front of Ben, he disappears. Ben finds the stone and it is blood red and hot. Ben looks around and confirms that he is definitely alone. He walks into the office and finds Miles at his desk. Miles is surprised and happy to see Ben. Miles pulls out Ben's favorite bottle of scotch and pours two glasses.

Miles wants to know how purchasing and taking over the kingdom has worked out for Ben. Ben asks if it's enough to just say that it has worked out. Miles is the only one that knows he bought a kingdom. Miles says yes, but that he still wants to know about it later. Ben admits that he has overcome his past though and that he is there because he is worried about Miles. Ben tells Miles about the dream, but Miles assures Ben that things are great. Ben smells a rat.

Ben catches the bus to Ed's office and signs the paperwork extending Ed's ability to make decisions for Ben and his accounts in his absence. Ben feels paranoid like someone or something is watching him. He wonders if the dream is just his guilty conscience for leaving his life and Miles behind in Chicago. He goes to the airport to catch a flight to D.C. and then on to Waynesboro. The two times he checks the stone during his journey, it is glowing red and burning hot.

Ben spends the night in Waynesboro and travels through the tunnel back to the fairyland the following morning at daybreak. When Ben meets his escorts at the same camp he left them behind, he wonders if Willow and Questor's dreams were lies like his dream was. he gets back to Sterling Silver by nightfall.

Abernathy greets Ben with all of the problems of the kingdom and confirms that Willow and Questor haven't returned yet. Ben goes to the tower of Landsview, which is magic



that allows him to fly over the land, which he does looking for Questor and Willow. He doesn't find either one.

Later in the evening, Questor bursts through Ben's study door shouting that he found the books and it was exactly like his dream. Questor says the only difference was the imp beast that Bunion had to fight. Questor presents the books to Ben, pointing out that the lock on the first book is missing. When Questor opens the book for Ben, the pages are blank, as he flips through the book, some of the pages are seared. The further he gets into the book, the more the blank pages are seared.

When Questor opens the second book, he finds the drawing of a unicorn. As he flips through the book, each pages contains a drawing of the unicorn. Abernathy says these are the not the books of magic Questor thought them to be. Abernathy finds a book in Ben's study and reads a story about fairies sending white unicorns out into the world to prove that magic exists. Except that the unicorns disappeared and were never seen again.

Ben orders the books to be locked up and sends everyone to go to bed. In the morning, he intends on searching for Willow.

...and Memories and Shadows... Analysis

It seems as if the man that Ben sees as Meeks is just a figment of Ben's imagination. It could be that Ben is so afraid of Meeks that Ben conjured up an image of Meeks, as if Meeks has been waiting for Ben to return so Meeks can seek revenge on Ben. Ben portrays Meeks as a very conniving and two-faced individual.

Ben believes that Meeks tricked Ben into buying the throne of Landover. Ben thinks that Meeks wants Ben to fail rather than succeed as King. The dream Ben has about Meeks, again, is more of a premonition than it is a dream. As Ben makes his way through the streets of Chicago, Ben thinks about how much the dream relates to reality.

Ben as the King and Ben as the Paladin represent two different personas. When Ben has to be the Paladin, he is a warrior. He thinks of blood and death. The Paladin represents Ben's dark side. As King, Ben thinks of the welfare of his kingdom and followers. This represents Ben's light or good side.

Miles wants to know if achieving dreams is possible. This is why he yearns to know if buying the kingdom and rescuing damsels in distress is real. Ben smells a rat when Miles tells him everything is great because Miles is lying to Ben, or just because Miles doesn't know about the danger lurking around him. Something is wrong, but Ben just doesn't know what it is yet.



...and Nightmares and Stranger

...and Nightmares and Stranger Summary

Ben remembers later how he grows to regret his thought that everything would be better in the morning. Ben has fitful dreams all night. When he wakes from chasing a giant rat in his dreams, he sees the stone is glowing crimson, again indicating danger. The problem is that Ben doesn't know what the danger is or where it lurks. Ben covers the stone with a towel and falls back to sleep.

He dreams this time of Meeks. When Ben wakes, the towel is gone from the stone and he sees Meeks. This time it is not an image and Ben is paralyzed in his bed. Meeks tells Ben that he is the one that sent the dreams to each of them. Meeks says he turned himself into small speck on Ben's clothing and that Ben brought Meeks back into the kingdom.

Meeks also shows Ben he has the medallion, which he convinced Ben to hand over to him in a dream. He gives Ben a medallion that has an outline of Meeks on it. Meeks tells Ben if he tries to remove the medallion that he'll die. Meeks changes Ben into a commoner. Meeks also reveals that Questor's dream has put the books of magic into Meeks's possession. He almost reveals what Willow's dream will give him but doesn't.

As Meeks sends Ben from the bedchamber, Ben falls into the darkness of sleep. When Ben wakes, he is on a pallet in a waiting room in the castle. Bunion comes and Ben sends him to get Questor. Questor looks at Ben as if he's never seen him before. When Ben declares he is Ben Holiday, Questor says he just came from the king's bedchamber. Questor sends Ben away.

Ben catches a glimpse of himself in a mirror on the way and verifies that his face is the same as it has always been. Questor says that Ben is a spy. The guards drag Ben out of the castle and escort him over the bridge.

Willow meets her mother, the wild nymph, in the forest. Her mother sends her a message saying that there is someone in that can provide Willow the answer of the black unicorn and the gold bridle, but it has to wait until morning. Willow turns into the tree that is her namesake for the night.

Back at the castle, Questor and Abernathy run into each other. Questor says he can't sleep but doesn't understand why. He says he's very disturbed by how much information the intruder knew about the magic books and the unicorn.

...and Nightmares and Stranger Analysis

Ben's hindsight thought foreshadows that something bad happens overnight after Ben sends everyone to bed after reviewing the books of the magic. Meeks is using magic to



make everyone in the kingdom believe that Meeks is the real Ben Holiday and that the real Ben Holiday is just an impostor. Since Ben's face is the same, Meeks is somehow masking it to make Ben's face look different to the others in the kingdom, but it still looks the same to Ben.

Willow is a symbol of wild and tame. Her mother is a wild nymph, while her father is stable. Willow is a combination of the two, which is what allows Willow to change between a human form and forms of nature, such as a tree.



Edgewood Dirk and Healer Sprite

Edgewood Dirk and Healer Sprite Summary

Ben is making his journey to lake country. He is searching for Willow and lake country is where she began her journey a week ago. Ben thinks Meeks's reason for sending Willow her dream is to gain control of the gold bridle Willow thinks she must give to Ben. Since Meeks is disguised as Ben, it is Meeks Willow will end up handing the bridle over to unless Ben can stop her.

Ben makes camp for the night, pondering how Meeks could have compelled him to hand the medallion over to him. Ben notices a cat sitting on the edge of the woods staring at him. When Ben tells the cat help, the cat says hello back. When Ben speaks again though the cat does not, so Ben thinks he imagined it. The cat continues to sit in the same place and stare at Ben. As Ben ponders out loud how he'll get Willow's father to recognize him, the cat starts talking to Ben again. The cat talks in riddles and the cat recognizes Ben Holiday for who he truly is.

The cat says he is a very rare cat, called a prism cat. His value to Ben depends on Ben's self-intrinsic value. The cat tells him that deception must be recognized to be banished, which is something that Ben has in common with the black unicorn. The cat explains that as a prism cat, he retracts light from one of the lands eight moons and turns this into energy. So, the cat uses this energy to build a fire for them to stay warm.

The cat says he is Edgewood Dirk, but that Ben can call him Dirk. Ben asks if the cat came looking for him, but Dirk doesn't reply.

The next morning, when Ben wakes, Dirk tells him he's decided to go on Ben's journey with him. Later, they arrive at the Irrylyn. Ben recalls when he first met Willow there, but has a feeling as if he will never see her again. As they continue toward the city of Elderew, which is where Willow is from, Willow's father, the River Master appears.

The River Master doesn't recognize Ben. Ben tries to fill him in on the magic that is masking his true identity. The River Master demands to know why he is traveling with a prism cat. He also explains to Ben that prism cats are true fairies and that their magical powers are unknown. The River Master agrees to listen to Ben when he tells him his daughter might be in trouble.

Ben tells the River Master the whole story. The River Master asks Ben something about the first time he visited. Ben's answer makes the River Master believe he is Ben Holiday. When the River Master tries to use his magic to change Ben's appearance, he tells Ben it is Ben's own magic that altered his appearance and the appearance of the medallion that Ben is wearing. He says that Ben is the only one that can change himself back.



The River Master says he cannot help Ben. He also says Willow would never come to him for help.

Edgewood Dirk and Healer Sprite Analysis

The riddles in which the cat speaks hold the answers Ben seeks. Ben simply has to listen and decipher what the cat is saying to uncover the answers. The cat has been sent by someone to be Ben's companion on his journey. Dirk seems to know about the books of magic, the white unicorns and the black unicorn. It is unclear right now whether Dirk is good or evil.

The River Master suggests that it is Ben that put himself in the predicament he is in. The River Master also implies that it is her mother that Willow would turn to for help with her dream, not the River Master, Willow's father. This foreshadows Ben setting out to find Willow's mother so that he can then find Willow. The problem is that Willow's mother is so wild that she will be next to impossible to find, if she doesn't want to be found.



Dance and Earth Mother

Dance and Earth Mother Summary

Ben thinks that Dirk is more peculiar than most cats. When they reach a clearing in the down pouring rain, Dirk says that he smells that Willow was there two nights ago, but he doesn't know where she is now. Dirk says it is as if her leaving has been deliberately hidden so that he cannot smell it.

The water sprite, the River Master, appears. They tell him Willow's mother danced for her in the clearing two nights ago, but they don't know where she's gone now. He also says her trail seems to be deliberately hidden from them. The River Master says he cannot summon Willow's mother to him but that he can summon her kindred.

Ben and the cat see nymphs start to form and dance over the water. Above them, a shape forms and it is Willow. Ben suddenly hears a voice warning him to beware. The black unicorn appears at the edge of the forest. It is Dirk that is telling Ben to beware. This is when Ben realizes the River Master has summoned the black unicorn so that he can have the power for himself. Ben is so awestruck by the beauty of the black unicorn that he cannot force himself to do anything to stop the River Master.

When lightning flashes in the sky, the black unicorn sees Ben and the medallion, and the creature seems to recognize Ben and the medallion. The unicorn hisses and vanishes. The River Master accuses Ben and the cat of taking everything he wants away from him and he banishes them both from his land.

Ben thinks Meeks must be responsible for sending the demon that burned and killed the wood nymphs as they danced. As Ben leaves Elderew, he wonders where he is going to go now. Dirk steps out from the woods and Ben asks him where he has been. Ben starts asking the cat a bunch of questions. The cat says he doesn't have the answers, that he only has instincts that help him discern things at times.

Ben decides his medallion is responsible for killing the wood nymphs. Dirk says before he gets rid of the medallion, he should see what the mud puppy wants. Ben then sees a creature that looks sort of like a beaver. The mud puppy acts if he wants them to follow him. He leads them to a huge mud hole, from which a woman figure appears covered from head to foot in mud. She greets Ben as the High Lord and introduces herself as the Earth Mother.

Earth Mother says she is similar to the prism cat in that she doesn't rely on appearances. She also says she has news of Willow for him because Willow and Ben have a bond that the Earth Mother doesn't want broken. Earth Mother says that Willow has gone to find the gold bridle. Earth Mother makes Ben promise that no matter what happens that he will always protect Willow. When he greets, she tells him that she's gone to the witch Nightshade's house.

Earth Mother says the witch and the dragon have been stealing the gold bridle from each other.

Dance and Earth Mother Analysis

The River Master pretends to be on Ben's side in helping him find Willow and the black unicorn. In essence, the River Master is very selfish. He beckons the black unicorn because he wants to possess the magical power that the black unicorn has. The cat implies that there is some kind of connection between Ben, the black unicorn and the medallion. This is one of the secrets yet to be revealed as the novel unfolds.

Earth Mother making Ben promise to protect Willow suggests that Ben will face a great challenge. It predicts that Ben will have to decide between saving Willow and some other fate. Because he has promised to save Willow, this is what Ben will be forced to do. This could be at a cost to Ben, however. For example, it might cost Ben his kingdom or even Ben's own life.



Hunt and Thieves

Hunt and Thieves Summary

Four days later, Ben and Dirk meet a hunter that tells them about his encounter with the black unicorn. He tells them that the King has assembled a hunting party to net the black unicorn. The King is paying them money and providing them food for a month in order to capture the creature.

The hunter tells them that it is on the third day of the hunt that he finally spotted the black unicorn. The hunter says it stared at him and then flew away in a graceful motion. It flew right into the heart of the hunting group but eluded all of the nets that were trying to capture it. After that, the hunting party broke up. He says Abernathy and Questor got thrown out of the palace by the King after that.

The same night, Willow has her third dream about the black unicorn. She is now only hours ahead of Ben Holiday on her own journey. This time, however, Willow realizes that this dream is the truth. The first dream reveals a demon black unicorn. This one, however, reveals a black unicorn that is a victim.

Willow leaves Parsnip sleeping and heads into the woods. When she returns, she knows the bridle has been stolen again. She wakes Parsnip and they start walking east.

When Dirk and Ben wake the next morning, the hunter is already gone. Ben confides in Dirk that he used some magic dust to fight off the witch Nightshade and the dragon Sabo. He wonders if he might be able to get some more dust from the fairies for this fight. Ben decides to visit the G'home Gnomes, who are thieves, to help him with his dilemma. By the time Ben arrives in their town, the word has been spread that strangers are on their way into town and the molelike gnomes are hiding. Ben knows how to play the game, so he takes a seat on a stump in the middle of town.

Shortly after, one gnome comes out to assess the situation. Ben tells the gnome he has traded with Sot and Phillip before and would like to trade with them again. Hours later, the two gnomes appear and Ben Holiday tells them his true identity, but they don't believe him. When he brandishes the medallion but covers what's on it, the two gnomes say they'll do whatever he wants.

Ben tells Sot and Filip that he wants them to go to the Deep Fell to see if Willow is there because they can go without being seen. They say Nightshade has returned to the Deep Fell, that she hates everything and especially the High Lord. They ask if they can have the cat for the deal because the gnomes consider cats and dogs a delicacy but Ben tells them no.

On the same night, Abernathy and Questor have their own camp set up after being thrown out of the palace. Abernathy is questioning Questor as to why he didn't catch the unicorn when he could. Questor says that Abernathy should understand. Abernathy



realizes that Questor allowed the unicorn to escape on purpose. Questor says that when he saw the creature, something inside of him said it wasn't right to capture the creature, which is why he allowed it to escape.

Questor points out that the High Lord is not acting like himself these days, since he found the impostor in his bedchamber. This is when they question if the High Lord is really the impostor and vice versa. Questor decides that they have to go to the dragon Strabo for help, even though the dragon hates them.

Hunt and Thieves Analysis

The black unicorn definitely possesses some kind of magical powers or something that Meeks wants. This is why he has assembled a hunting party to bring the black unicorn to him under the guise of being the King.

The reality of the black unicorn is still in question. Dirk implies that the black unicorn is nothing more than a vision. This is why nobody is ever really able to touch or catch the creature.

While Ben and Dirk are forming an alliance with the gnomes, Abernathy and Questor decide to form one with the dragon Strabo. Abernathy and Questor suspect that Ben Holiday was telling them the truth when he said he was the real king, which would explain why the High Lord has been acting so strange lately. The plans the two groups have foreshadow them running into each other along the way and forming an alliance to throw Meeks out of power and return the true Ben Holiday to power.



Mask and Witch and Dragon, Dragon and Witch

Mask and Witch and Dragon, Dragon and Witch Summary

At sunrise, Phillip and Sot arrive at Ben and Dirk's camp to leave for their journey to Fell Deep. The two gnomes have injuries that Dirk bestowed on them when they tried to attack Dirk in the middle of the night. The two gnomes are staying clear of Dirks and are not sharing any information about the injuries they sustained.

As they travel through the land, Ben notices the wilting of the land. Since Meeks is not the real High Lord, it is taking its toll on the kingdom. It is also depleting the magic. Ben also ponders the connection between the black unicorn, the drawing he saw in the book of magic and the missing unicorns released ages ago.

When Ben asks Dirk about the stolen unicorns, Dirk says the wizards stole them. When the High King got rid of the wizards for stealing them, they don't know what happened to the unicorns. Ben wants Dirk to tell him the answer but Dirk says Ben has to start seeing things for himself. Dirk suggests that the unicorns wear masks like the one Ben is wearing now.

Dirk takes Ben to the water and tells him to look at his reflection. At first, Ben sees himself. When he looks again, he sees someone else. Dirk says this is because Ben is losing himself.

They reach Deep Fell by midafternoon. Ben sends Sot and Phillip down to see if Willow is there and to retrieve the gold bridle if they find it. While the gnomes are gone, Ben thinks that the missing unicorns are the ones trapped in the book of magic. He's still trying to figure out the significance of the black unicorn, however. When the gnomes return, they don't look like themselves and they seem petrified. This is when Ben sees Nightshade come up behind the gnomes.

Nightshade says Ben is the same but different. He explains that Meeks used his magic to change him. When Ben shows her the medallion she demands to see, he knows that she knows what magic is causing him to look different. He makes Ben mad. Ben admits he is there looking for Willow, who should be in the Deep Fell looking for the golden bridle for the black unicorn. Ben says it is all connected to Meeks. Nightshade says she stole the bridle from Meeks to start. This is when Ben notices that Dirk is missing.

Nightshade admits that Strabo stole the golden bridle from her. She says that Strabo might trade it to her for handing over Ben so that Strabo can seek revenge on Ben. In the meantime, Bunion, Abernathy and Questor arrive at Fire Springs, which is the dragon's lair. When they see the dragon, Questor says they wish to speak with him, but



the dragon tells them to go away before he eats them. He doesn't recognize Questor at first, but when he does, he still tells them to go away. Questor and Strabo start to get into a confrontation when Questor says he needs to know what Strabo does about unicorns. When Questor mentions capturing the unicorn with a bridle of spun gold, the dragon looks at him perplexed. This is when Ben and the gnomes show up.

Mask and Witch and Dragon, Dragon and Witch Analysis

The cat seems to know the answer to the unicorn riddle. He is also trying to teach Ben a lesson. If Ben is going to be the King, then he has to learn about harnessing the power of magic on his own. He cannot turn to everyone else for answers all of the time. Additionally, the mask the cat tells Ben he is wearing is about Ben's self-confidence. Ben doubts his ability to be the king and do the right thing. Ben is scared that something bad is going to happen, such as his wife and unborn child dying in a car accident. This fear is holding Ben back.

It seems as if the spun gold bridle might not capture the unicorn. Now, Ben is going to reunite with his advisors. Since they will be able to talk and they think Ben might be the High Lord, this time they might be able to put their heads together to figure out the riddle. Once they do this they can concoct a plan to stop Meeks.



Fire and Spun Gold and Search

Fire and Spun Gold and Search Summary

Everyone is surprised to see everyone else. Strabo tells Nightshade to leave because she is never welcome here. When Strabo finds out Nightshade has brought Ben Holiday to him, however, he changes his tune. Nightshade says only she and Strabo can see Ben for who he really is because they are older than the magic that masks his identity.

Nightshade tells Strabo she wants the bridle of gold in exchange for Ben. Strabo begins to bargain with her, trying to get her to take something else instead. Strabo finally admits that he doesn't have the bridle because he traded it to a sylph for the song she sang to him. Nightshade launches a verbal assault on the dragon and the dragon breathes fire her way in an attempt to destroy her and to get to keep Ben Holiday for himself.

The others take the opportunity to try to escape. When they finally stop running, it is close midnight. Ben tries to convince everyone that he really is the High Lord. Questor asks Ben if the story he told them back at the palace is true. Ben confirms it is. Questor asks how it happened and Ben says he doesn't know. Ben recounts the story.

The others agree that Ben is the High Lord. They also decide that they have to find Willow to stop her from bringing the gold bridle to Meeks, thinking he is Ben. First, they decide to rest and try to wait for the rain to die down so that Abernathy, the dog, can sniff Willow's path out.

While he sleeps, Ben dreams of Willow. He's frantically searching for Willow in his dream until he hears the voice of Edgewood Dirk. Dirk tells Ben that he works so hard to put his life together like a puzzle but that he doesn't step back to figure out why the pieces should go the way they do. Dirk tells Ben he lacks feeling.

In his dream, Ben tries to search for Willow. She appears before him but he doesn't get to her in time. Ben keeps insisting that he must find Willow and when Dirk asks him why, Ben finally admits it is because he loves her.

When Ben wakes up, Dirk is back. Ben asks Dirk where he has been and sarcastically thanks him for helping them escape the dragon and the witch. After they stop arguing, Dirk mentions that dreams are sometimes a part of the subconscious that must be recognized while awake.

When everyone else in the group wakes up, none of them seem surprised that the cat is now present, when he has been missing since Nightshade. The two gnomes don't seem to recall that Dirk roughed them up when they tried to make a meal out of the cat either. Parsnip, who is supposed to be guarding Willow, shows up with Bunion.



Bunion tells Ben that Willow used her magic to send Parsnip away. He confirms that Willow has the bridle and is searching for the black unicorn. Bunion says that according to Parsnip, Willow has decided to go against her dream and not take the bridle to the High Lord. He says Willow seems to be heading toward Mirwouk, which is where the magic books were hidden. He also says the witch, the dragon and a flying pet of Meeks is hunting, presumably them.

Fire and Spun Gold and Search Analysis

It is Willow that sang like a siren to Strabo and got him to give the golden bridle to her. With the six of them total, the group might be able to split up and find Willow a lot faster than they would be able to on their own. Even if they do not split up to search for Willow, six heads are better than one when it comes to creating and implementing plans.

Part of the lesson that Ben is supposed to learn is that he needs to start feeling again. Part of this is that Ben has been burying his feelings after enduring the pain of losing his wife and unborn child. He is afraid to love again because of the fear of loss.



Mirwouk and Flynt and Discovery

Mirwouk and Flynt and Discovery Summary

Willow sees Sterling Silver in the distance. She thinks of how her dreams, instincts and visions are leading her. She also thinks about the dream she had about Ben the previous night. In the dream, the black unicorn was being hunted and it was afraid and beckoning Willow to help it.

Willow is just a few miles from Mirwouk now. This is when Willow sees the black unicorn. While Willow thinks and knows she needs to use the bridle to capture the unicorn, some power holds Willow back from making a move to capture the unicorn. It is reminiscent of the dream she had. As quickly as the unicorn appeared, it disappears. Willow questions if she really saw it or if it was just a vision.

She searches for the unicorn for the rest of the day. About a mile from Mirwouk, when it gets dark, Willow decides to rest. She plans to resume her search in the morning.

The following day, about midday, Ben's group is also a mile outside of Mirwouk. The dogs' search reveals that Willow's tracks are crossing each other. Since sylphs don't get lost, they assume Willow is searching for something. Ever since the dogs showed up at their camp two nights prior, Dirk has been missing again.

They decide to have a look around the fortress of Mirwouk. When they do, they see that a statue has come to life and is moving. Then, they see a giant entering from the other side of the tunnel. They scream that it is a Flynt and then realize there are two Flynts. Flynts are aberrations of old magic. Ben orders Questor to use magic on the Flynts, but Questor is injured in the process.

Ben gets the dogs to howl in High C in order to scare off the Flynts. They attend to Questor's injury and then vow to keep tracking Willow until they find her, if they find her.

Willow has been searching for the unicorn since sunrise. She has the gold bridle draped around her neck. She finally comes face-to-face with the unicorn. Willow can tell by the look in his eyes that the chase is over and that she won't have to chase him any longer. Willow takes the bridle and starts to approach the unicorn.

When she gets close, the unicorn doesn't move, but waves of doubt and apprehension come over Willow, which prohibits her from capturing the beast. Even though she thinks she will die if she touches the unicorn, she ends up putting the bridle around the unicorn's neck.

Ben and his group burst through the meadow to see Willow standing there with the black unicorn. Meeks lands his own flying demon and demounts from it in the meadow. The unicorn trumpets and the Ben starts to yell to Willow what Meeks is up to with his



magic. In the process, Meeks, who looks like Ben, tries to get Willow to turn over the unicorn to him.

Willow looks from one to the other in confusion. She asks for Ben to show her the stone she gave to him, but Meeks smashed the stone in the bedchamber when he stole Ben's identity. Ben says he lost it, but Meeks produces the stone, glowing bright red, to show Willow. Questor uses his magic to create a stone that he hands to the real Ben. This confuses Willow even more.

Dirks comes out of the woods. This is when the illusion disguising Meeks disintegrates and Willow can see Meeks for who he really is. Meeks goes after Dirks. In the melee, the unicorn starts to bolt but Willow jumps on its back and the two disappear into the trees.

Meeks's demon attacks. Ben thinks he sees the Paladin, but knows it is impossible without the medallion. Then, everything goes black for Ben.

Mirwouk and Flynt and Discovery Analysis

Ben surmises that Meeks sent the Flynts to protect Mirwouk after the books were stolen. It seems as if there are two types of magic at work—good magic and evil magic. It also seems as if Ben is using magical powers that he isn't even aware that he is using, which is why everyone keeps telling him that he is the one responsible for the mask he is wearing.

The novel has reached its turning point. This is the point in the novel where the outcome can go one of two ways. The first way is that Ben prevails and everything in the kingdom returns to the way that it was. The second is that Meeks remains in power. Now that Meeks has lost the illusion that he is Ben, however, it seems as if the gig might be up. It appears as if Ben is subconsciously using the power he has to reveal Meeks's true identity. This indicates that Ben's self-confidence in his ability to rule as King is returning and that by admitting his love for Willow, he will bring back balance to Landover.



Cat's Paw and Revelation

Cat's Paw and Revelation Summary

Ben wakes up in a peaceful meadow that is different from the one he lost consciousness in to find Dirk there. Dirk says he brought Ben to the meadow. Ben has some bumps and bruises and is covered in soot, but has no permanent injuries. Ben asks where the others are.

Dirk says Willow flew off with the black unicorn. The others were scattered in the last explosion. Meeks flew off on his pet demon, Dirk presumes to find the books of magic and then hunt down Ben. Ben decides to seek aid from the fairies, but Dirk says the fairies have already found Ben. Ben realizes that the fairies send Dirk to Ben.

Dirk also tells Ben that nobody gets the answers to their problems handed to them on a silver platter, even if they are King. He tells Ben that only Ben holds the answers to his own problems. Dirk tells Ben that Meeks is afraid of him because Ben is smart and close to breaking free. Dirk tells Ben to remember everything he has told him and then Dirk leaves.

After Dirk leaves, Ben tries to figure out what answers he holds to his problems and current situation. Ben recalls something the fairies once said to him about fear and how it has many disguises. Ben pulls the medallion out of his tunic that Meeks gave him. He continues to wonder how he lost his original medallion, when he realizes that the medallion could be wearing a disguise, a mask, just like Ben is.

Ben concentrates on the medallion. When he opens his eyes the first time, he sees the same tarnished medallion Meeks gave him. When Ben does it again, the medallion starts to warm in his hand. This time, when he opens his eyes, he sees the Paladin medallion, shiny and untarnished in his hand. The chain that has been holding Ben is broken.

Willow wakes up in a grove in the shadow of Mirwouk. The black unicorn with the bridle is standing across from her. She has an overwhelming feeling that she needs to protect the unicorn.

Questor wakes on the cusp of the battlefield, but doesn't see anyone else. Questor realizes that Meeks was impersonating Ben and that his half-brother had been responsible for sending the dreams that sent the three of them on their quests to start. When Questor turns around, he comes face-to-face with Meeks. Demon imps appear out of the forest behind Meeks to help him defeat Questor, who is the last threat against Meeks.

As the demons attack him, Questor loses consciousness. The only thing he sees is Meeks smiling above him.



Abernathy finds Willow. He urges her to come away from the unicorn, which is a dangerous creature. Willow is drawn to the unicorn, however, and when she touches it, she feels something surging through her body. She exclaims that she sees.

Cat's Paw and Revelation Analysis

It is fear that is causing others to see Ben as someone other than who he truly is. Once Ben overcomes his fear, he will break the one link of the chain that will cause the rest of the problems that make up the chain to fall apart too. Slowly, Ben is overcoming his fear and building up his self-confidence. This is causing Ben to see things for how they really are.

The implication is that some kind of magic has trapped someone that they all know inside of the body of the black unicorn. The powers of good and evil at war with another, which is why sometimes Willow sees the unicorn as a demon and sometimes as prey.

Willow implies that the unicorn holds magic. She acts as a conduit for the magic the unicorn holds and the vision she sees. This is why she screams out that saw something after touching the unicorn when Abernathy finds Willow.



Combat and Legend and Epilogue

Combat and Legend and Epilogue Summary

Ben hears Willow's cry from where he is. In an instant, Ben realizes that his love for Willow is what is propelling him to save her. He grasps the medallion in his hand and calls forth the Paladin. Ben feels the power surge through him as his body merges with the knight-errant.

Meeks also hears Willow's scream. He demounts the flying demon with the books of magic in his good hand. Abernathy warns Meeks to stay away from them, even offering him the unicorn to take away. Abernathy tells Willow to run as he launches himself at Meeks. Meeks wards him off with a flame of fire and then goes into the woods after the feeling Willow.

The Paladin rides up in confrontation to Meeks and his demon imps. Meeks and the Paladin start a battle. Even out of the fire, six skeletons emerge, black as night, and try to attack the Paladin. Willow and the black unicorn watch the battle unfold from the sidelines.

Finally, a voice comes from what Willow realizes is the black unicorn. The unicorn is calling for its freedom. Willow sees a vision that it is not one life inside of the black unicorn but many lives. The unicorn cries for the destruction of the books of magic. Ben does not hear the cries of the unicorn, but Abernathy does. Abernathy bites Meeks on the ankle and sends the books of magic flying out of Meeks's arm. The black unicorn runs and spears the books with its horn before they hit the ground.

Light streaks from the fluttering pages of the books, encasing the black unicorn and Meeks. Both figures crumble and disappear. The Paladin riding toward the two also disappears. This is when the pages from the book become like a windstorm. From the pages, the unicorns emerge.

Willow says the black unicorn never existed, but was just a deception. Questor, Ben, Parsnip and Bunion have joined Abernathy and Willow once again. Ben explains that the unicorns the fairies once released to go into the mortal world to reveal magic exists were imprisoned by the wizards that wanted to possess their power. The body of the unicorns were imprisoned in one of the books and their souls in another.

Only when the books were rejoined could the unicorn bodies be rejoined with their souls. The black unicorn represented the collective spirit of all of the white unicorns. Every once in a while, a unicorn would escape and it would appear as black, as something evil, because it was just a shadow of the real thing since the spirit couldn't join with the body.

As they start to return to Sterling Silver, Willow tells Ben she loves him. He admits that he loves her too. He says fear has been prohibiting him from saying it before. When he



tells Willow he promised Mother Earth he would protect her, Willows says it's because she knows that Willow will carry Ben's child some day.

Back in Chicago, it's a few days before Christmas. Several people are going home for the day when they think they see a white unicorn fly by. They all look at each other as if asking if they saw what they think they saw. Then, they continue on with their lives.

Combat and Legend and Epilogue Analysis

In true fantasy, Ben turns into a knight and shining armor that will ride in on his white horse to save the damsel in distress—Willow. The whiteness of the Paladin and his horse represent good. The blackness of Meeks and his fighters represent evil. The unicorn is calling for its freedom because it is someone that is trapped in the body of the black unicorn by a magic spell. Again, it is a mask, such as the mask that Ben was wearing. The magic of the pages that were binding the white unicorns together is broken and the unicorns are once again free to run. The unicorns run free, disappearing into the mountains.



Characters

The Black Unicorn

The black unicorn is an elusive creature that is spotted throughout the land of Landover. Nobody seems to know where the black unicorn came from or why it is suddenly roaming the fields and meadows of the land. Whenever someone tries to capture it or touch it, however, the black unicorn darts away and remains un-captured. The black unicorn comes to Willow in her dream.

Each time Willow dreams about the black unicorn, however, it becomes more docile. In her first dream, the black unicorn seems like it is a demon. By the last dream, it seems as if it is docile and scared. Willow ultimately is able to capture the black unicorn.

By the end of the novel, they realize that the black unicorn is the shadow of the white unicorns that are trapped by magic inside of the books of magic. Since the spirits of the unicorns are in one book and the bodies are in another, the spirits that escape cannot match with their bodies, which is what makes the unicorn appear as if it is black, like a shadow.

Ben Holiday

Ben Holiday is the King of Landover. Ben paid one million dollars for the throne and the salesman was Meeks. Ben was a lawyer in Chicago and had a pregnant wife prior to buying his way into the fairyland. Ben was looking for a change after his wife and unborn child die in a car accident, so he decides to spend some of his wealth on buying his way onto the throne.

When the novel opens, Ben has been in power for just a little over a year. Ben is in love with a sylph, Willow, but he is afraid to admit it after all of the hurt and loss he experienced when he was in Chicago. Ben Holiday also has access to magical powers as the king. It is Ben overcoming his fear that is the pivotal point of the novel where everything changes from bad to good again.

Questor Thews

Questor Thews is a wizard in the kingdom of Landover, and in Ben's court. While he is a wizard, Questor Thews is also known for his magic going haywire. He wears a ragtag of patchworks robes that make him look like he is scarecrow. It is one of Questor's magic spells gone wrong that turns Abernathy into a Wheaton Terrier.

Questor Thews is also the half-brother of Meeks. It is Questor who dreams about the location of the missing books of magic. Questor, ultimately, finds and brings the books of magic back to Landover.



Miles Bennett

Miles Bennett is Ben Holiday's old law partner from when Ben was living and working in Chicago. When Ben Holiday has his dream, it is about Miles Bennett being in danger. Ben returns to Chicago to check on Miles. He and Miles have a few drinks together and then when Ben sees everything is fine, he returns to Landover.

Willow

Willow is a sylph. She is half woman and half tree. She is the daughter of a nymph and the River Master. Willow is also Ben Holiday's girlfriend. They met at the river when Ben first came to Landover. Willow is the one who dreams about the black unicorn, which sends her on her journey to capture the black unicorn. In the end, Willow does capture the black unicorn. She also predicts that she will bear Ben Holiday's child in the future.

Parsnip

Parsnip is one of the two kobolds. Parsnip looks like a monkey with big ears that wears pants. Parsnip is also a cook for the palace. It is Parsnip that goes with Willow on her journey to carry out her dream. Parsnip acts as Willow's protection until she sends him away and he rejoins Ben Holiday and his group.

Bunion

Bunion is the other of the two kobolds. Bunion looks like a monkey with big ears that wears pants. Bunion is also the messenger for the palace. Bunion accompanies Questor Thews on his journey to retrieve the lost books of magic in Mirowouk.

Abernathy

Abernathy is a man turned into a Wheaton Terrier after one of Questor's magic spells went awry. Abernathy is also the court scribe. When Ben Holiday wants to go back to the old world, it is Abernathy that tries to talk Ben out of going. Abernathy tells Ben that there is a lot of business at court that needs to be handled in the upcoming days and weeks.

Meeks

Meeks is a wizard. He has a craggly face and clothes. He has a claw for one hand. It is Meeks that sells Ben Holiday the throne in Chicago. It is also Meeks that is responsible for sending the dreams to Ben, Willow and Questor so that Meeks can obtain the magic that the unicorns possess.



Meeks sneaks back into Landover by hiding on Ben Holiday's clothes. Meeks steals Ben's identity and acts as the High King in order to capture the black unicorn. As the Palidan, Ben ends up defeating Meeks in a battle and stops Meeks from stealing the power of the unicorns.

Nightshade

Nightshade is a witch. She hates Ben because he once used fairy magic to defeat her. when Nightshade catches the gnomes in her home, Deep Fell, she also takes Ben hostage. Nightshade tries to trade Ben Holiday to the dragon in exchange for the golden bridle.

Strabo

Strabo is a dragon. Nightshade tries to trade Ben Holiday for the golden bridle she thinks Strabo has stolen from her. Strabo hates Ben too, but admits that he doesn't have the bridle. Willow uses a song to serenade the golden bridle away from the dragon before Nightshade arrives with Ben to make the trade.



Objects/Places

Landover

Landover is a fairy world. Landover begins somewhere deep in the forest of the Blue Ridge Mountains, near Waynesboro, Virginia. It is the throne to Landover that Ben Holiday buys to escape the real world after his wife and unborn child die in a car accident.

The Missing Books of Magic

The missing books of magic are secret books that few in Landover know about. The books belonged to Questor's half-brother, who was the former wizard of Landover. At the beginning of the novel, Questor says that his dream revealed to him where the books are hidden. Questor is able to retrieve the books. It is in the books of magic where the spirits and bodies of the white unicorns are hidden and ultimately released.

Chicago

Chicago is the city where Ben Holiday lived prior to becoming the King of Landover. Ben returns to Chicago to check on his old friend Miles after Ben dreams that Miles might be in danger. While Ben is in Chicago, he thinks he sees Meeks, but Meeks doesn't confront Ben or try to him in any way.

Golden Bridle

The golden bridle is the only thing thought to harness and lead the black unicorn. Willow goes in search of the golden bridle so that she can catch the black unicorn. Willow ends up serenading the dragon, Strabo, to get him to hand over the bridle to her. she ultimately uses the golden bridle to capture and ride the black unicorn.

Mirowouk

Mirowouk is a fortress outside of the kingdom. It is where Questor dreams the books of magic are hidden. Questor retrieves the books when he journeys to Mirowouk. Later, it is at Mirowouk that Ben and his group encounters the Flynts.



Deep Fell

Deep Fell is where the witch, Nightshade, lives. Ben sends the two gnomes into Deep Fell to see if they see Willow or find the golden bridle. Nightshade sees the two gnomes in Deep Fell and returns with them to capture Ben.

Medallion

The medallion Ben Holiday wears has the Paladin on it. as long as Ben wears the medallion, he has magical powers and he is protected from evil. Nobody can steal or force Ben to take the medallion off. Meeks convinces Ben that Ben gave Meeks the medallion, which is what causes Ben to lose his identity as King.

Dragon's Lair

The Dragon's Lair is the fire pit where Strabo lives. Nightshade takes Ben there to try to trade him to Strabo for the golden bridle. Nightshade and Strabo get into a fight in the dragon's lair, which is when Ben and the others escape.

Sterling Silver

Sterling Silver is the name of the palace in Landover. It is where Ben Holiday lives as King. It is while in his bedchamber at Sterling Silver where Meeks steals Ben's identity. Ben is thrown out of Sterling Silver for acting as an impostor and trying to attack the King.

Blue Ridge Mountains

The Blue Ridge Mountains is a mountain chain that runs through the Carolinas Virginia and Tennessee. In the novel, the Blue Ridge Mountains in Waynesboro Virginia is where there is a tunnel that connects Landover to the real world. After passing through the Blue Ridge Mountains, Ben passes to and from the real world and fairyland.



Themes

Relationships

One of the primary themes running through the novel is relationships. In this particular novel, the relationships coincide with the various fairies, wizards, and animals get along in the fairyland of Landover. Additionally, however, the novel also tackles how the natural divisions of these relationships change and morph when they are working toward a common goal.

Friendship is one type of relationship the novel tackles. Ben Holiday and his old law partner Miles are true friends. While Miles remains in the real world while Ben lives in fairyland, Ben and Miles have such a strong bond that it sends Ben back to Chicago to check on Miles's well being. Even though Abernathy, Bunion, Parsnip and Questor work for Ben Holiday in the kingdom, they are also Ben's friends. They care about each other's well being, safety and overall happiness.

Romantic relationships are also tackled in the novel. When Ben Holiday lived in the real world, he had a pregnant wife. When she is killed in a car accident, Ben is trying to escape the pain of his loss. He falls in love with a sylph, Willow, when he becomes King of Landover. The problem is that Ben fears his love for Willow. Once he overcomes his fear, however, it seems as if Ben and Willow start to plan a romantic future together.

Good versus Evil

Another primary plot throughout the entire novel is that of good versus evil. The two opposing forces in this novel are that of Meeks and that of King Ben Holiday. The followers for each side also represent the side of good and evil, depending on which side they take in the battle.

Ben Holiday represents good, while Meeks represents evil. Throughout the novel, Ben is seen as someone who uses his powers as King for good acts and acts of kindness, while Meeks is someone who uses his powers for evil and his own selfish wants and needs.

Even the unicorns seems to represent good and evil. The white unicorns symbolize good. the black unicorn symbolizes evil. In the end, it is revealed that the black unicorn is not evil, but is portrayed this was throughout the novel.

Family

Family is the central theme throughout the entire novel. This is because the storyline is about the lives of this particular family—those who live in Landover in the Sterling Silver palace. In this case, it is a surrogate family rather than a biological family. While every

family has their trials and tribulations, Ben's family has its own family dynamics that are the same and that are different from those of other families. In the end though, they are a family and they will get through it together, one way or the other.

By the end of the novel, it also becomes about the family of those that have come together to save the kingdom. While the different characters in the novel have been segregated in the past, they unite by the end of the novel. The coming together of the different groups is symbolic of the world in which the characters live.



Style

Point of View

The novel is recounted in the third-person point of view. The narrator of the novel is also the author of the novel. The narrator is telling the story as it unfolds, but also switches back to some past events to provide the reader with some perspective.

The point of view of this novel is an intimate point of view that allows a reader to connect closely with each of the characters in the novel. The point of view also allows the author to inject the author's own opinions into the narration and to expand on the events taking place to her and the characters of the novel without interrupting the flow of the narration. For these reasons, the point of view works well with this novel and the author's writing style.

Setting

When the novel first begins, the primary setting is Landover, which is the fairyland kingdom that Ben Holiday rules as the High Lord. When Ben crosses over into the real world, the primary setting moves from Waynesboro, Virginia to Washington D.C. to Chicago, and then back in the reverse order. The author never states the specific year of the novel. The setting of this novel is important because it is a make believe world where animals talk and magic rules. The main characters of the novel work to mend the destruction left in the wake of Meeks taking over the kingdom.

The setting of this novel works well with the plot. At first, the reader is not aware of how each of the characters relate to one another. However, as events unfold, each group of characters comes together on one side or the other.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is not formal, but also includes words the author invents as part of the make believe world in which the characters live. The language is educated, strong and descriptive enough that it creates a flow that leaves the reader impressed with the words as much as the plot when the novel ends.

The language of the novel is appropriate to the plot because it is accurate to the characters in the novel and the education level of the writer. The novel is not in love with its own words, but it is descriptive enough that the reader finds enjoyment in the words as well as the plot. The language is not difficult to understand, however, and everything is clear in its context. For this reason the language of the novel fits well with the plot of the novel.

Structure

The novel consists of 23 chapters. Each chapter is anywhere from ten to 20 pages long. The chapters tell the story both in exposition and dialogue. The author is the narrator of the book, so it seems as if the author's voice is used throughout the novel. This allows the author to provide opinions of the events surrounding the setting of the novel, as well as the actions taking place within the plot.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot follows the various relationships between the characters in the novel. The subplots involve good versus evil and the trials and tribulations of the family.



Quotes

"The black unicorn slipped like quicksilver through shadows and light in search of its freedom" (Prologue, p. 1).

"I had a dream last night" (Dreams, p. 3).

"Now be sure that you don't underestimate him" (Memories, p. 31).

"Would it be enough to tell you that I found what I was looking for" (Shadows, p. 47).

"You were responsible for bringing me back again. What do you think about that" (Nightmares, p. 67).

"And you are Ben Holiday" (Stranger, p. 77).

"I do know that however you might appear, you are in any case Ben Holiday, High Lord of Landover" (Edgewood Dirk, p. 94).

"It happens like that sometimes after revealing something so carefully guarded for so long" (Healer Sprite, p. 116).

"It knew the medallion! There is a tie between you that you cannot explain away" (Dance, p. 130).

"What seems to be and what actually is are quite different, High Lord—a lesson you have yet to learn" (Earth Mother, p.135).

"I just want to touch it once more. Just for a moment" (Hunt, p. 153).

"I hope he finds what he's looking for" (Thieves, p. 156).

"Why were the unicorns stolen in the first place" (Mask, p. 181).

"Not bridles of spun gold" (Witch and Dragon, Dragon and Witch, p. 204).

"You gave the bridle away for a song" (Fire and Spun Gold, p. 211).

"Six of us will have a better chance than one" (Search, p. 219).



"If we find her" (Mirowouk and Flynt, p. 244).

"Let me see the stone I gave you" (Discovery, p. 252).

"The fairies sent me to help you, High Lord, but they left it to me to choose the means" (Cat's Paw, p. 260).

"I saw" (Revelation, p. 280).

"Fairies! Her dreams were sent by the fairies" (Combat, p. 291).

"There never was any black unicorn" (Legend, p. 297).

"There was a feeling of having been part of something magical" (Epilogue, p. 307).



Topics for Discussion

Who is Ben Holiday? Why does he feel the need to buy the throne of Landover out of a catalog? What does Ben recall about his life before leaving Chicago? Why is this important? How does it change his life?

Discuss the relationship between Ben and Willow. Are they friends or are they really in love? Is there love, guilt or a sense of obligation in their relationship? How does Willow feel about Ben? How does Ben feel about Willow? What do you think happens to their relationship in the future after the novel ends?

How does Meeks lose power to Ben? How does this affect the future? How does Meeks regain power? What do you think happens to Meeks after the novel is over?

Who is the true Willow? Why does she set out to capture the black unicorn? Why do you think she chooses not to take the unicorn and the golden bridle to Meeks, who is portraying Ben Holiday, the High Lord? What do you think will happen to the relationship between Willow and her father? Do you think they will see each other on a more regular basis?

Who is the black unicorn? Why does he continuously change throughout the novel? What happens after Willow captures him? What do you think happens to the black unicorn once the white unicorns are set free?

Who is the River Master? Do you ever find out why he wants to help Ben Holiday regain the throne? Why isn't he able to help Ben? Do you think he seeks out his daughter for a deeper relationship in the future?

Discuss the magic in the novel. What impact does it have on the characters of the novel? How does it motivate them or hold them back? Does the magic have anything to do with way the relationships between the characters develop and evolve?