



The Black Unicorn

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Landover, a magical kingdom brimming with fairies, trolls, dragons, and witches, is ruled by the passionate and courageous Ben Holiday, a former Chicago attorney who has purchased this wondrous world from Meeks. Meeks, half brother to Questor Thews, has sold Landover to various would-be kings, but each time his command of the black arts has forced the buyer to return the kingdom and forfeit the one-million dollar buying price. That is, until Holiday purchases it. Ben befriends Questor and, through the power bestowed upon him by a medallion--the key to the land's magic and the harness of the Paladin (an unbeatable armored champion and Holiday's alter ego)--manages to defeat Meeks, at least temporarily.

Meeks is not a wizard to be trifled with, however, and he comes upon the secret of the black unicorn, the highest magic of the land. Thus he uses the unwitting Holiday and company to do his bidding. It is only during a final scene in which Meeks is confronted by the sylph Willow, Holiday's ragtag band, and the majestic unicorn that the evil conjurer loses his prize. He is defeated, and the family of unicorns trapped within the books of magic are released. Readers are set up for a potential sequel when Willow muses that she will someday bear Holiday's child.

Brooks borrows heavily from several sources, including Lewis Carroll's ALICE IN WONDERLAND, Stephen Donaldson's Thomas Covenant series, and, most notably, J.R.R. Tolkien's LORD OF THE RINGS trilogy. Brooks's prose flows easily, but, for those seriously interested in the realm of fantasy, THE BLACK UNICORN may serve as little more than an in-flight or rainy-day diversion.

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