

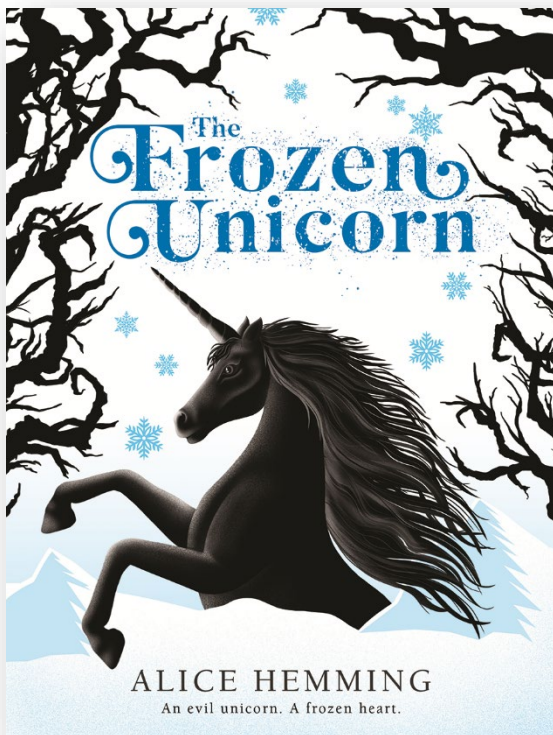
DARK UNICORNS

THE FROZEN UNICORN

Alice Hemming

Series Fiction | ISBN: 978-1-68464-665-4 | Ages 12+ | Paperback | 5 3/4 x 7 1/2 | 384 pp | \$8.99 | LOC: 2022941563

Violet, the pampered girl from the manor, sets off on a perilous journey to the Far North to find her True Love: the village boy who has disappeared. So many dangers and surprises lie ahead ...



- Filled with danger, mystery, and enchantment.
- Brave female heroines; dark villains.
- Plot twists and surprises.
- May be read as a standalone.

CHAPTER SIX

TO THE NORTH

Violet was sure she was right. She held out her still-shaking hand to the animal so it could detect her scent. It sniffed at it as it had done with the branch, then licked the back of her hand in a clearly friendly gesture. Relief flooded through her that she wasn't going to be the wolf's next meal.

So the wolf was her guide. But how could it help her? She tried to remember exactly what Madam Verger had told her. *Blow the horn at Wending and your guide to the Far North will arrive.* Something like that.

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She inspected the creature, looking for a collar or a message-carrying device.

"Can you talk?" she asked in a whisper, and then felt silly when the wolf blinked silently back at her. Of course it couldn't talk. Still, she felt certain it understood.

"Have you brought me something? A map?" Violet's own voice sounded strange to her out here in the mountains. The creature continued to gaze steadily at her, then turned and walked back to the clearing where it had landed. It looked back at her, twice.

"You want me to follow, don't you?" asked Violet, not expecting a response.

She squeezed through the tree trunks and followed the wolf, admiring the magnificent pointed brush of its tail. It stopped near where she'd blown the horn, and stood watching her, the wind ripping the fur between its ears and around its neck.

"What now?" whispered Violet.

It crouched down before her and she had the horrible realization that the wolf wasn't her guide to the north; it was her transport. She had been expecting another carriage, or at least a horse, not a strange wild animal.

"Oh no, no, I don't think I can do that." Violet backed away, but the wolf stayed exactly where it was, glancing back over its shoulder

and nothing to worry Vyvle about. If she had a handkerchief, she could wrap it around her thumb for a moment until the scab formed. She pushed both hands in her wonderfully deep pockets, searching for a handkerchief. She found nothing but a silver pine cone and a single, purple flower.

THE FORGOTTEN FLOWER

She tucked the pine cone back in her pocket, but held the flower in the palm of her hand, the cut on her thumb forgotten. A lovely flower, with five blue-purple petals. Not a bloom she recognized, not in the flower beds. Whatever was it doing

it. Its sweet, heady scent drifted up her nose, a rush of memories. Laughter in the woods, her wrists. A purple gown. A dance. "What now?" she said aloud. "I'm watching her from the cottage window, too far to reach the flower in her hand. Violet - the sweetest of them all." It was as if the soil in the bare patches of earth, the soil

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began to shake and move as stubby green shoots pushed their way out of the ground before her eyes. Something was growing. Violets. With the shoots, came the realization she shouldn't be in the garden or the cottage at all; there was somewhere else she should be.

The shoots divided into heart-shaped leaves, the loose soil falling from them as they unfurled and grew toward the light. She knew her name wasn't Marigold at all. It was Violet. The troll in the cottage had enchanted her somehow and made her forget. She had to get away.

As the buds sprang open into sweet violet flowers, Violet noticed Vyvle was no longer watching at the window. The cottage door opened. Violet dropped the armfuls of lilies of the valley on the grass and ran toward the gate.

AT THE GATE

The gate was less than a minute's run, but somehow, Vyvle was right behind her. Violet could hear her calling out, "Marigold! Marigold, come back!"

The troll snatched at her sleeve and caught it, wrenching Violet's arm back at an unnatural angle. Violet kept running and managed to

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THE CURSED UNICORN * THE BLAZING UNICORN

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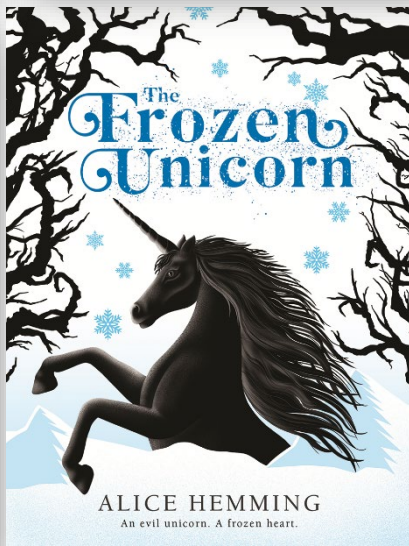
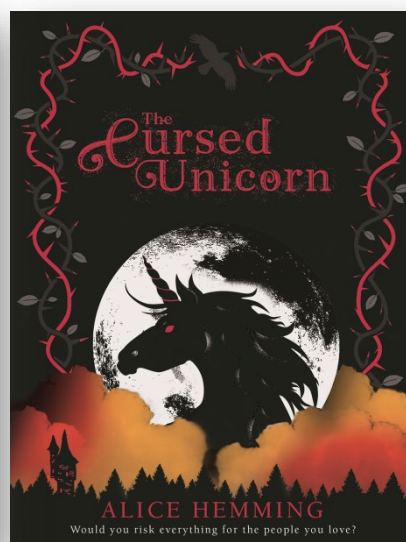
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Magic and adventure await in these thrilling epic unicorn fairy tales.



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