



Stalking The Unicorn

Mike Resnick , Boris Vallejo (Cover Artist)

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It's 8:35 pm on New Year's Eve, and Private Detective John Justin Mallory is hiding out in his Manhattan office to avoid his landlord's persistent inquiries about the unpaid rent. As he cheerlessly reflects on the passing of a lousy year, which saw his business partner run off with his wife, he assumes the bourbon is responsible for the appearance of a belligerent elf. This elf informs him that he needs the detective's help in searching for a unicorn that was stolen from his charge. When Mallory realises the little green fellow is not going to disappear with the passing of his inebriation, he listens to the elf's impassioned plea that the stolen magical beast must be returned to his care by daylight or his little green life will be forfeited by the elves' guild. Join detective Mallory on a New Year's night of wild adventure in a fantasy Manhattan of leprechauns, gnomes, and harpies as he matches wits with the all-powerful demon The Grundy in a race to find the missing unicorn before time runs out!

Stalking The Unicorn Details

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Author : Mike Resnick , Boris Vallejo (Cover Artist)

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From Reader Review *Stalking The Unicorn* for online ebook

Alazzar says

Stalking the Unicorn is a detective story and, as such, contains a lot of what you'd expect from a detective novel: a smart-talking protagonist, a high dialogue-to-action ratio, and lots of shady characters.

Oh, and detecting. There's plenty of detecting.

What Resnick brings to the genre is the fantasy-setting of an alternate Manhattan inhabited by leprechauns, trolls and the like. Personally, I think adding this type of stuff to the noir world of a P.I. only makes things more interesting--after all, it adds more possibilities, and in a detective novel that just means more chances for clever mysteries. (Also, I can't imagine why you'd read a book about normal people when you could read one that has goblins and demons and crap. That's just common sense.)

The other thing that sets *Stalking the Unicorn* apart from others in the genre is the decidedly light-hearted tone of the book. Resnick injects a lot of humor into his story, even if there are times when I think he extends jokes beyond their necessary conclusion. (More than once I felt like we hit the punchline and should have continued with the story, but the author had other ideas: he'd let the protagonist fire out a few more unnecessary questions, just to set up more gags.)

At the end of the day, *Stalking the Unicorn* isn't my favorite fantasy-detective story of all time (that title probably goes to Roger Zelazny's *Amber* series, which I didn't even realize starts out as a detective story until someone brought that idea to my attention), but it was certainly good enough for me to willingly seek out more of Resnick's work in the future.

Aiyana says

This novel is, quite simply, a lark. A tongue-in-cheek noir mystery send-up wherein the detective finds himself hired by a mythical creature, and is thrown into the back alleys of reality to be pitted against demons, leprechauns, and an obnoxiously affectionate cat-woman. Very fun.

Stephen says

3.5 stars. Another good, fun read by Resnick, this time taking on classic detective story taking place in a fantasy setting. Not as good as the Dresden Files by Jim Butcher or The Garrett Files by Glen Cook, but still worth reading.

? Irena ? says

I had fun reading this story. It didn't grab my attention as I thought it would but it was fun nevertheless. Actually, it was near perfect until near the end.

When you first meet the protagonist, Private Detective John Justin Mallory, you find out that the mob is after him (well, after his double-crossing wife-stealing partner, but they don't know that), his wife left him and he is broke. The thing I *loved* the most since any mention of cheating in any kind of book ruins the story for me is that he is kind of over it. And both the wife and the partner get the kind of 'respect' they deserve.

"And to top it off, the two-timing bastard took my slippers." "Your slippers, Mr. Mallory?" Mallory nodded. "Doreen for the bourbon was a fair trade, but I'm going to miss those slippers. I'd had them for fourteen years." He paused. "That's a hell of a lot longer than I had Doreen."

When an elf appears to hire him, Mallory doesn't believe he is real at first - *'Now, sing your song or dance your dance or do whatever you're going to do, and then make way for the elephants.'* The elf problem in short: he was guarding a unicorn and someone stole it. He *really* needs Mallory to find the animal before the sunrise or his guild would kill him.

Them, or the Grundy.

The job takes Mallory to a completely different Manhattan where goblins, trolls, moving stuffed animals, snow gorgons, the Gnomes of the Subway, ghosts of the Stock Exchange, talking mirrors and gorillas and so many other creatures live. He quickly learns the rules of this weird parallel world and he even finds friends. Enemies too, because this Manhattan is definitely not without its dangers and Mallory is not the only one after the stolen unicorn.

Near the end he has this encounter with the opponent and it is underwhelming. The book continues for a while (Mallory dealing with some other characters and the main *item* in the story). There are some other issues I had with a couple of comments in the book but they aren't important for this review.

Overall, *Stalking the Unicorn* is an entertaining story. I'll definitely continue with the series.

graveyardgremlin says

What do you get when you cross a down-on-his-luck private eye, a randy elf, a femme feline, a miniature horse, and a whole host of other oddball characters? Well, if you answered, "The book this review is about, you dolt," or something to that effect, then congratulations, you are right (and slightly hurtful). You get a gold star.

Stalking the Unicorn instantly had me hooked with the appealing characters, interesting plot, and tongue-in-cheek humor. The story flowed well and at a nice, clipped pace for a good part of the book. Unfortunately, it fizzled out a little bit nearer the end and lost some of my interest. I think too much was revealed too soon and the book probably could have lost around thirty pages. However, the plot picked back up some of its steam at the end, which saved the book from being three stars. Altogether, this is an easy and fun read that's a good starter to a series, and which I look forward to the next installments. If you like absurd humor, zany dialogue, detective work, and an urban fantasy setting all mixed into one big stew, than you'll probably enjoy this book.

Fun fact: Mike Resnick is the father of author Laura Resnick. I picked both of their books up about the same time without realizing it until after I had read her first Esther Diamond book. :)

Kati says

Very similar to Simon R. Green's "Nightside". This quirky adventure is based on funny dialogs rather than on real action or suspense. Thanks to a little green elf who hires him to find a stolen unicorn, PI John Justin Mallory finds himself in an alternate New York where there are yellow elephants instead of taxis, horses talk and stuffed animals don't actually realize they are already dead, where hawkers sell suntan lotion in the middle of a blizzard and there's a Department of a Redundancy Department, among other things. Hilarity ensues, of course.

But what I love most is, that amidst all the crazy stuff, Mallory is still a rather ruthless man, punishing and getting rid of anybody who betrays him or hurts his friends and without remorse too. Thanks to Mallory's personality, the book feels grounded, not just... out there.

DeAnna Knippling says

Detective work and depression: in fiction, at least, they seem to go hand in hand. Having done freelance for a while now, I have to wonder if it's an occupational rather than personal hazard caused by waiting for work to come in...

Anyway, I started out kind of frustrated with this book. It just RAMBLES. A detective goes to the fairy version of NYC, trying to find a unicorn. Before the plot complications start to set in (it *is* a detective novel, after all, and someone's always lying), it's just a random wandering through alt-NYC, looking for this unicorn. More of an insiders thing, maybe? I just didn't need to take a fantasy tour of a city I'm not familiar with in the first place.

Or maybe I did. I just relaxed and enjoyed it after a while. Yes, a lot of was peripheral, but by the time the book was finished, a good bit of it had been integrated back into the plot, and you were left with a real feel for where you were. Decent twists, characters eh, enjoyable setting.

What ended up pushing this from three to four was the sense of inspiration, those intuitive jumps that happen every so often and that, in your chosen field, are the best. I think he captured those particularly well.

Jeff Yoak says

I'm a big fan of the hard-boiled detective genre from Sam Spade, through the detective-poets like Spenser and McGee. This started out as a brilliant twist -- take a well-drawn character of that genre and immerse him in a case of fantasy. It started strong, answering questions like what Sam Spade might have done after his wife ran away with his partner, bill collectors at his door and a couple of whiskeys down the hatch if a client wandered in, and that client happened to be an elf. How would McGee compute his fee, half of the value of whatever is taken from you if recovered, if what was taken was a unicorn? Would Spenser enlist Hawk to deal with a leprechaun named Flypaper Gillespie? This promised to be an entertaining fusion.

Unfortunately, it quickly descends into a farce, or a parody at best. After the first quarter of the book, all the

action comes from our hero being confronted with more and more fantastic items. I would have found the book better if some basic fantasy were introduced and then it became typical of mystery novels. As it was, I found it starting to drag, and not wanting to finish it out.

Jon says

This one started a little slow for me and I almost put it down around 40 - 50 pages in. I decided to stay with it and by the end I was enjoying myself. My initial problem was that I just didn't really care about any of the characters. By the end I was still so-so about the main character Mallory but I did like three members of his merry band. The ending was decent and it set things up for the sequel. At this point I'll probably pick up the next in the series but I'm not in a huge rush.

Lynn says

Today's post is on 'Stalking the Unicorn' a Fable of Tonight by Mike Resnick. It is the first in a short series consisting of three novels and many short stories. It is published by Pyr and is 280 pages including some appendixes with some side information from the story. The cover has the back of the hero to the reader with the Other Manhattan before him and us. As you are reading the book remember to look at the cover as you do because you will see things from the book, I think that it is fun but that could just be me. The intended reader is anyone who likes urban fantasies, witty stories, and just fun reads all around. There Be Spoilers Ahead.

From the back- It's a 8:35 pm on New Year's Eve, and private detective John Justin Mallory is hiding out in his Manhattan office to avoid his landlord's persistent inquiries about the unpaid rent. As he cheerlessly reflects on the passing of a lousy year, which saw his business partner run off with his wife, he assumes the bourbon is responsible for the appearance of a belligerent elf. This elf informs him that he needs the detective's help in searching for a unicorn that was stolen from his charge. When Mallory realizes the little green fellow is not going to disappear with the passing of his inebriation, he listens to the elf's impassioned plea that the stolen magical beast must be returned to his care by daylight or his little green life with be forfeited by the Elves' Guild. Join John Justin Mallory on a New Year's night of wolf adventures in a fantasy Manhattan of leprechauns, gnomes, and harpies as he matches wits with the all-powerful demon, the Grundy, in a race to find the missing unicorn before time runs out!

Now I have reviewed Resnick's work before and I love him. His wit is just wonderful in all his writing and this is no different. John Justin, as I call him, is a wonderful hero for many reasons. He is witty, he is full of common sense (always a plus for me), he rolls with the punches, and he uses everything in his power to do the Right Thing. The side characters do more than just move the story along; they add to the plot. The villain is a demon who is power hungry and because John Justin is from our world he just is not afraid. John Justin is just the best. I cannot give these books the highest praise. Resnick takes all the fantasy tropes and makes them new again. The whole book takes place in about nine(9) hours. Each chapter at the start has the time that pass in the chapter at the top under the chapter number- for example Chapter Nine 12:08 am to 12:45

am. I like that because it just raises my opinion of Resnick as a writer, to tell that wonderful story in less a day or even half a day. A writer who can tell a whole story in so little time passing impresses me. The best part of the story is the dialog. Resnick is a master with it and this time is no different. But you will just have to read it for yourself.

I give this Five out of Five stars because it is a masterpiece. I get nothing for my review. I bought this book with my own money and I own it with pride; go forth and do the same.

Clay Rylee says

I loved "Stalking the Unicorn" by Mike Resnick and look forward to reading more of the John Justin books. The humor and wit in this book is wonderful and kept me going back and forth between chuckling to outright laughing as the story flowed onward with a non-stop pace. Also I really appreciated the appendixes at the end of the book that fill you in on some of the events that happen after the story is done. All in all I highly recomend this wonderful book.

Mary says

Titel der deutschen Erstausgabe: "Einhornpirsch"

Originaltitel: "Stalking the Unicorn: A Fable of Tonight" John Justin Mallory Mystery #1

James says

Full review here:

<http://jamesgenrebooks.blogspot.com/2...>

While I ended up liking the book, it does come off a bit like what would happen is Dashiell Hammett had written The Phantom Tollbooth.

Ellie says

3,5 stars. This book was intended to be a parody of your dectective story set in an urban fantasy setting full of nonsense and satire. The result was odd and sometimes a bit clunky, especially since the protagonist (Mallory) was such a cliché of your stereotyped 80's noir detective that it I felt it weighed down on the story instead of helping it take off in the first chapters. But the author managed to make it work after a while and I found the book very enjoyable on the whole. The "other Manathan" is joyously chaotic, unpredictable and full of winks. Never a dull moment.

Mike (the Paladin) says

First a few words about, parody. I've read a few (and for that matter concerning movies, seen a few) parodies I liked. As a rule however I don't like parody for parody's sake. I'd call this book a semi-parody. It's a sort of urban fantasy with a twist placed in what might be called "an alternate earth", or "alternate New York". In reading it I vacillated from a lower rating (2 stars) to a higher rating (possibly as high as 4 stars). I really didn't care for it at first...but it grew on me a bit as it progressed.

The early part of the book seemed a little strained to me, the first "continuing joke" running on a bit long. As the protagonist (Mallory) moved into the alternate world and the story moved along either the humor got better or I just got more enured to it. Still, there were times (without any spoilers) when I almost lost interest again, but it always picked back up. In the end, I'd say I enjoyed the book pretty well. One of the biggest draw backs for me was the excessive use of a certain phrase (that probably won't bother some as much as me)...it's usually abbreviated, "gd" and annoys me greatly.

Still, not a bad book and since I got the second book out of the library at the same time I plan to read it next *Stalking the Vampire*. I'll plan on letting you know what I think of that one. As for this, 3 stars and a pretty good story.
