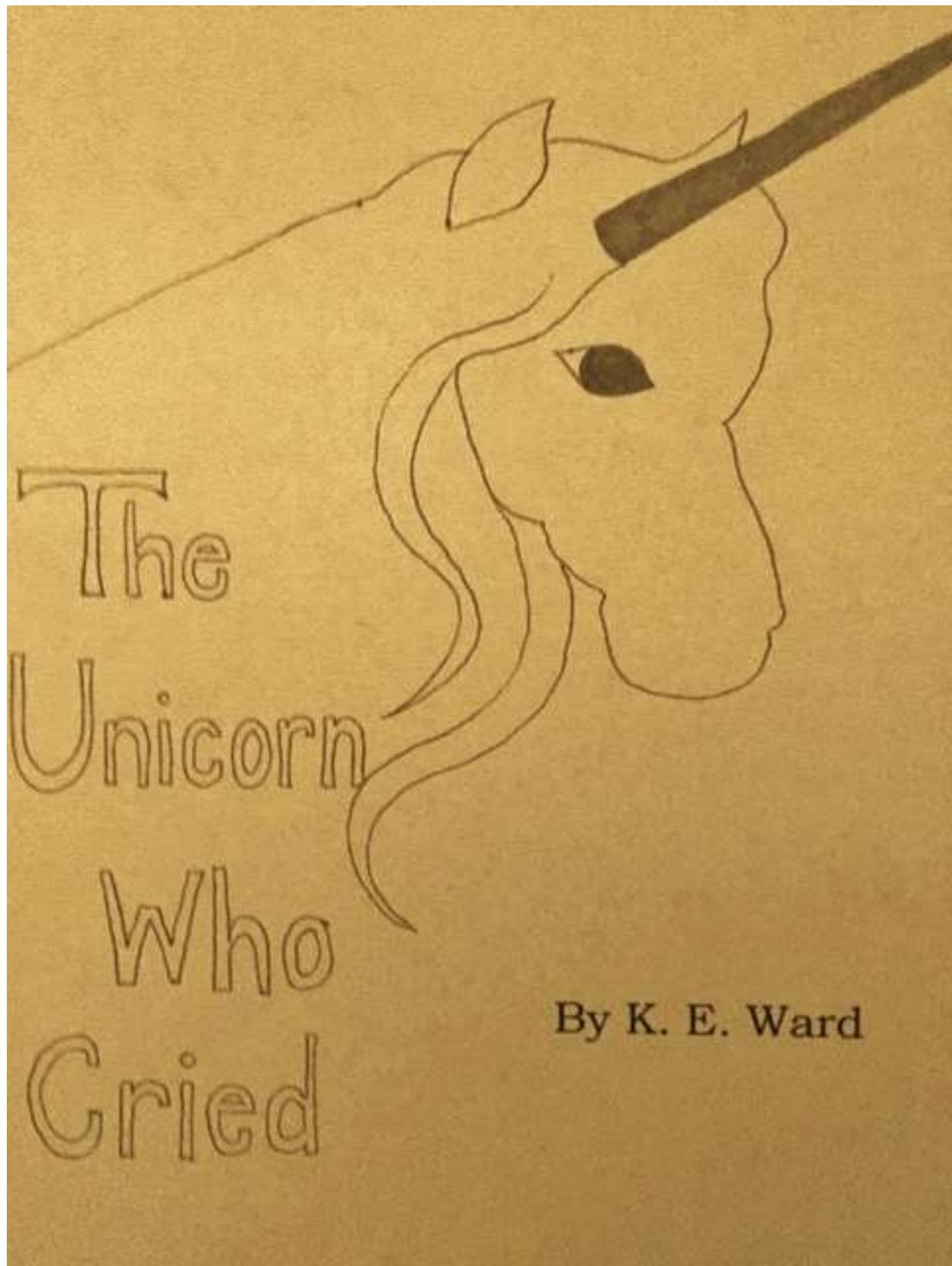


The
Unicorn
Who
Cried

By K. E. Ward



Dedicated to my mother.

The Unicorn Who Cried

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There was a unicorn one time who lived in the Forest of Mist, deep into the heart of the Land of Memories. His name was Nathaniel, and he was a very good-looking unicorn.

He thought his mane was very long and white, with brilliant sheen. His body was also white, his muscles rather strong by now, although he wasn't old. Although, he didn't know how old he was. He thought perhaps he was a youth.

But he was sad. He cried often. He cried about a girl and a prince, but especially about the girl.

The girl, also a youth, came to the Forest of Mist. Her name was Annabelle, and she loved to come to the little lake in the center of the forest and gaze into the water, drifting her finger along the surface. She could see her reflection and the hint of blue sky above her, what little she could see of that and the clouds in the spaces between the tops of the trees, high in the sky.

They were fir trees, and as every in the forest and in the land was, they were magical. Within the trees there were memories, which grew with the trunk and sap. The trees were very old, and perhaps they remembered a lot of things from deep into the past.



But Annabelle was on a walk to find the unicorn that day. She loved him so much. She talked to him, and he would talk back. They got along so well that they spent so much time together.

Annabelle and Nathaniel were such friends. Once, a long time ago, a witch had casted a spell that the prince she desired would mistake her for a unicorn, and that he would never be able to see he again.

He lived in a different land, however, one at a lower elevation than the Land of Memories. There was no way to travel to the Land of Memories and the Forest of Mist if one were a mortal.

In the Land of Memories, the spell the witch had casted had no power, but in the Land of Sleep, the prince she loved stayed.

She had been there once. It was very difficult. She was captured by the witch, and the witch casted a spell on her and Nathaniel. They were able to break free, and that was when she met Prince Ethan.

She fell in love with him when he took her into his castle after she had escaped from the witch.

But that was when the spell began to work, and he saw only a unicorn who went away from him, into the sky.

Now, in the Land of Memories, Annabelle and Nathaniel had a conversation about the prince.

“How will we ever break the spell?” she asked.

“Annabelle, I don’t know.”

“Perhaps we can find a fairy to use her powers against the witch.”

“You’re right! There is a fairy named Twinkle who will do just that for us. Let us go and find her.”

Annabelle stroked Nathaniel’s mane in appreciation. “Yes! Let’s do that.”

They started off on their journey. Because they were still in the Land of Memories, they did not fear anything. Everything was so quiet, and the air was so soft. It was a little heaven, but the mortals from the Land of Sleep were missing, and she loved them.

Just then they found the fairy, who was lounging in the branch of a tree.

“Twinkle!” Nathaniel said. “You must help us break a spell. I know you have magical powers. Annabelle has a very good reason to do so. Please, help us.”

Twinkle yawned and said, “Nathaniel, whatever is reason enough for me to use my magic for you?”

“Please,” Annabelle said. “I love a prince in the Land of Sleep. The witch from the Forest of Thorns casted a spell against us, so that Prince Ethan would never know the difference between the two of us.”

“And I see that you love him,” said Twinkle.

“Yes, Twinkle, of course. It broke my heart. Please, let him become immortal and come to the Land of Mist, let there be a bridge between the two lands, so that we might walk from place to place whenever we want.”

So, the fairy agreed. She started that afternoon throwing fairy dust on the Land of Sleep. She flew all across it, all the while saying, “Sleep, sleep, sleep no more. You will love her evermore.”

That night Prince Ethan slept.

But in the morning, the witch was at the foot of the bed. “Awwwhh, me. I see that the horrid fairy has made mischief, because now you are becoming immortal!” She lifted her wand to cast another spell, but just then Twinkle flew quickly in front of her and took her wand.

She lifted it and used it to defeat the witch. Unable to use her power anymore, she retreated into the Forest of Thorns, never to come out again.

So, Twinkle spoke to Prince Ethan, “Prince, I have made you immortal. Your Annabelle lives, and she is up in the Land of Memories. Please, come with me so that you can be together, forever, and be happy.

And so he did, and he and Annabelle were so happy, and so were Nathaniel and Twinkle, and so were the rest of the forest and lands.

* * *

The Magical Garbage Can and Fate

She saw what could have been a metal garbage can, but it could have been about eight feet tall. She touched her fingers to its cool surface, and a groove appeared. She stood back, appalled that she knew it had not been there before. It had literally materialized before her eyes. Pressing it gently, she saw the groove extend higher, turn a ninety degree angle to the right, travel sideways, and then making another ninety degree angle until it stopped at the base of the can. A doorway appeared, and then she saw visions of masked men and a dance of three women in black dresses, circling around each other. Gray smoke seared upwards before her eyes, and she knew that these beings were from the darkness. She looked past them.

The door opened by itself, pushing the air in such a way that made a whoosh, a sound like a powerful electrical current thrumming as it did. When the door had completely opened, she stepped inside. A spiral staircase, and then another. They

were zig-zagged steps that led into many rooms. The air looked to be covered in a white gauze, because it was so smoky, and as she placed her feet upon each stair, a gentle vibrating massaged her toes: perhaps it was the electrical energy she had heard before.

Square windows were like eyes all around, because she could not get past the sensation that they were looking at her, and each, she already knew, led to another dimension. She passed great lands with passionate wind and restless black trees scraping against a gray and dark blue sky. She passed realms made up of intense reds, pulsing like a heart that was independent of a body.

She came upon a hallway with many rooms, each representing a year of her life. Each year had its own soul, and these timelines brushed against each other, communicating in quiet tones. A flash of lightning struck, trembling the marble floor beneath her feet.

At the end of the hallway was the end of her life. She stepped into the room and there was a gigantic marble, and a voice which told her, "Do not dare look into the marble! It is not for you to know your fate!"

Knowing that the voice knew what it was talking about, she wished to be back on earth, out of the metal garbage can. "You're absolutely right," she replied. She

slammed the door on the end of her life, and ran back through the garbage can/maze/house.

Once she was safely outside of the garbage can, she sighed in relief and thought to herself, “What a trip.”

* * *

The Pocket Scrying Mirror

There was a two-story house which had a spiral staircase and a grandfather clock. Its couches were made of floral fabric and had long, round, red and gold, velvet pillows. There was a coat of dust upon everything: the hardwood, marble, and carpet floors, the furniture, the clock, and the decorations, which included stained glass lamps and a crystal ball.

A family lived there. An old man of fifty-two years came to visit often. He was a professor of sociology at the university, and also understood a thing or two about philosophy. He knew his government, politics, and history. He kept up with the

news on a daily basis, for he had a subscription to a popular newspaper. His name was Professor Wilnton, and he carried something strange in his coat pocket.

It was what looked at first like a pocket watch, but it had no face and no hands. Its back surface was genuine gold with paisley design on it. Its front surface was dark, convex, and subtly reflected light. It was a pocket scrying mirror.

A scrying mirror was an object wizards used to see pictures of things far away, or perhaps ghosts. One might also see angels, an oracle, God, or the devil. One might have long conversations with them this way; but most of all, it was a magical way to see things that ordinary people would not be able to see.

Once, Dr. Wilnton came to knock on the family's door, whose name was, "The Harrisons." It was comprised of four people: a father, a mother, a son, and a daughter. He knew this particular family because the son was a student of his, and he got along very well with the rest of the family. They happened to go on vacation a lot, though, and when he knocked, there was no answer. He knocked again and again. But he decided that they were not there; they must have been on vacation again.

But loving the house so much, Professor Wilnton wanted to go inside, so he checked the door to see if it was locked. Indeed, it was not. He pushed open the door and stepped inside.

Inside it was very quiet, but Professor Wilnton, having magical powers, knew that music had recently been played in that house. He could feel its vibrations. He knew that it had been beautiful music.

He pulled out his pocket scrying mirror to find out what had happened to the Harrisons. He looked into its curved surface, letting the light glint at it a little bit, and saw them standing by an ocean shore in their bathing clothes, playing on the sand and in the water.

“Oh, I see,” he said. “They have gone to the sea.”

His magic was quite powerful, because he was a good wizard. He used his power to float through the house, not wanting his footprints to be on the floor so that they wouldn't know he snooped. He floated upstairs and into the boy's bedroom, so that he could know if he was doing his summer reading. Disappointedly, he found that Gregory had opened up a book, but had not gotten very far.

He floated back downstairs. He did one more thing: he used quite a lot more power to cast a spell for the Harrisons to remember him, think very hard about how wonderful he was, decide to invite him over in the future, when they had returned from vacation, and to throw him a huge party for his birthday.

After all, that was what he wanted from the beginning. Feeling a little selfish for using his power to give himself a delightful party, he chastised himself for being

so greedy. But he didn't get a lot of parties. He wasn't remembered enough, either. He had such power that he could have used it to make himself a millionaire, but all he wanted was a little affection.

Professor Wilnton. Professor of sociology. Great conversationalist. Wizard. Lonely.

* * *

My Mother, a Poem

By K. E. Ward

My mother, the poet

Finds the words to tell a tale;

She writes beauty, but she never knows it.

Her grace will never fail.

The dance of the rhythm of her song

Drives deep into the heart within.

The list of her virtues is long,

And love, with her, will undoubtedly win.

My mother is so beautiful,

As I remember her from long ago.

Her voice is soft and wonderful,

And her gentleness and love I'll always know.

My mother, Elizabeth, is a queen,

A mother, a lioness, and a love.

Her song of courage, it lies between

The highest clouds up above.

Her loveliness is brighter than a precious gem,

Her sorrow deeper than a low depression,

But courage becomes stronger when

A sinner comes to quiet confession.

Mother, dear, did you not know that after the rain has passed,

What you see clearly is brighter than any star,

Because the Savior shines at last

For a yearning eye which looked wide and far.

My mother, my love,

Who lived so well,

Will fly up above

With a tale to tell.

* * *

Tree Poem

Two trees, with branches intertwined.

As they grow, they knot around each other,

Leaf to leaf, a caressing of leaf, branch, bark, trunk, and life.

From the bases of their trunks,

To beneath the soil where the roots begin,

They grow with each other.

With air, soil, and sun, they thrive.

Two thriving trees,

Like us.

* * *

Change

Like the change of seasons,

So do our lives change.

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