

## Holland's First Novel Proves a Worthy Read

by Amy Strickland, Staff Reporter, CQ Sumter High's Newsmagazine, 20 April, 2007

Rating: 3 out of 4 stars

A unicorn horn with powers that could possibly bring back the dead has been stolen from the local magic school. A young protector-fighter and guardian of the Church of Tal, named Clara is sent along with the school's master wizard's best apprentice Alexcia to seek out the kingdom's master thief Bocard. The thief denies having to do anything with the robbery but agrees to give them information if they do him one service: bring him the cursed necklace of the Terrersylvanous elves.

Now two people divided by religion come together to embark on a journey to find the necklace and to hopefully be a little closer to finding the missing horn.

Local author John Holland published *The Necklace of Terrersylvanous*, his first novel, just this year. While serving overseas in Afghanistan, Holland would write and e-mail chapters to his wife...who would edit and e-mail them back.

Holland's characters are well rounded and full of life, all struggling with interesting questions about ethnicity and religion.

Each character is layered with secrets.

The plot focuses mainly on the young protector's quest to find the necklace and receive Bocard's information. But this is much more than a fantasy/fiction book. It deals with lessons that everyone should learn: the importance of accepting others and having faith.

I really enjoyed reading this story, but no book is perfect.

I struggled with Alexcia's character at first. She was just a flirtatious witch.

I was pleased to discover her growth into a very gifted magic handler.

The reader can see how she truly does live up to being the star apprentice at the magic school.

Throughout the book, it is obvious that religion is central. The main religion, which worships Tal, appears to be a variation of Christianity.

Near the ending of the story Alexcia and Clara seem to have gotten past the religious differences and become closer.

One could compare them to Tolkien's elven prince Legolas and the dwarven warrior Gimli, who are bitter enemies divided by their races at the beginning of *The Lord of the Rings* series but who later become the best of friends.

Altogether, I really did like *The Necklace of Terrersylvanous*, and I do intend on reading more of Holland's work.

*The Necklace of Terrersylvanous* is book one in a ten-part series of *The Protector Chronicles*. The second installment, *The Destruction of Don-Bar* will be published in March of 2008.

He has proven himself with this first novel, and I'm sure his future work will be most impressive.