



River Secrets

Shannon Hale

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Razo has no idea why he was chosen to be a soldier. He can barely swing a sword, and his brothers are forever wrestling him to the ground. Razo is sure it's out of pity that his captain asks him to join an elite mission--escorting the ambassador into Tira, Bayern's great enemy.

But when the Bayern arrive in the strange southern country, Razo discovers the first dead body. He befriends both the high and low born, people who can perhaps provide them with vital information. And Razo is the one who must embrace his own talents in order to get the Bayern soldiers home again, alive.

Newbery-Honor winner Shannon Hale returns the reader to the intrigue and magic of Bayern, first introduced in her critically acclaimed novel, *The Goose Girl*. Enter a world where even those with no special magical skills find in themselves something they never imagined.

River Secrets Details

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Author : Shannon Hale

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From Reader Review River Secrets for online ebook

Kirsti says

I enjoyed this one much more than the previous book, which wasn't bad either. This one felt more wholesome I suppose, and I really enjoyed reading about Razo and watching him grow up and mature. He gets a really good, interesting story and a cute romance too. Enna and Finn are there as background characters, although we see little of Geric and Isi. I wonder who's story we get to see next?

A really awesome YA series. Released recently with new covers, so easy enough to find to buy. Five stars!

Tamora Pierce says

Complex and edge-of-your-seat tense as the Bayern folk try to work out a peace with enemies still traumatized by the secret fire weapon that worked such havoc on their soldiers. Enna, the source of that burning, is with the delegation, working for peace, even when she knows it will mean her life if she is identified. Razo the forest boy is the main character, a friend of the queen's brought to observe the success of the peace mission. He is the one to discover someone in Tira is trying to hatch a plot to destroy the peace and re-start the war. He also finds himself drawn by the daughter of the Tiran ambassador, a spirited girl who leads him a merry dance, keeping him and the reader in suspense all through the book!

Ally (The Scribbling Sprite) says

I've been blowing through these audiobooks, but I guess I finished this one too fast, because I can't listen to Forest Born until July 1st. I've maxed out the number of titles I'm allowed to borrow for the month. Whoops :/

Right now, though, I am satisfied, because Razo is my favorite, and Dasha is my favorite, and Razo + Dasha are my favorite.

Much love for this book <3

Grace Morris says

4.5 Stars. =D

If The Goose Girl took on a fairytale vibe and Enna Burning a dark tone, then *River Secrets* takes a happy, light, mysterious tone.

So I'll quickly get into why I took a 0.5 stars from my rating.

Basically, the previous two books had the characters learn how to speak the languages of different elements. Both of them had moments of adventure, and well, Enna Burning had a lot going on.

I didn't expect things to pick up right away in this book, BUT, when I got around page 100+ and the main character still didn't have anything to do with any of the languages, well, I was waiting as the book is only 290 pages.

Unlike the past two books in the series, this book is the least fantasy-like. To me it felt more like a *Nancy Drew* or *Hardy Boys* novel (which is a compliment as *Nancy Drew* was a favorite when I was younger).

Anyway, it was more like a mystery. So yes, this book had the adventure in it to, it was just different from the last two books, and that was okay.

What I REALLY LIKED:

Anyway I really like that mystery aspect of it and that Razo was put to the task of spying and trying to figure out who was the murderer.

And Razo is. A. Great. Character. I won't even lie, he is the best!!! He could make me laugh by his antics. He's short, so he makes his hair stick up to make himself appear taller. A little cute tree rat.

Content in Book:

1. Violence. (Burning people with fire. Stabbing people with swords and knives. Fighting against people. Using water against people. And beating people.)
2. Some girl was flirtatious with Razo and even sat on his lap. Nothing ever happened.
3. Magic-like elements. It's more like a language, however this book seem to have more of a magic-like feel.
4. A person drowning.
5. Someone trying to use poison.

Who Would I Recommend This Book To:

Those who first read the *The Goose Girl* and *Enna Burning*.

Those who like more magical elements that aren't too magical-like and are believable. Those who like fictional but believable worlds. Those who like books with a little romance, but isn't centered on it.

Will I Continue With the Other Books:

YES! I just need to pick up *Forest Born* =D.

Special thanks to my good friend, Angela (Coffee&Chapters), for recommending me this book. Also take a look at her really cool YouTube channel
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKUJ_Ke6eOqz0BFMwU3t8zA. =)

Joy says

Oh I've waited to get a copy of this book for so long that I could scarcely believe it when the librarian said we'd got a copy in. Oh oh oh oh I can scarcely believe my own good fortune.

Besides very decidedly being my favorite YA author, Shannon Hale is a mastermind of the uncliche, well-written fantasy. You won't find wizards or elves in her book, but very believable characters that any young person can relate to, and strong, unhidden themes of love, loyalty, sacrifice, and honor.

River Secrets was bloody brilliant.

Since the very first book in the Bayern series (The Goose Girl) Razo has been my favorite character. He's short, likable, comedic, and so much like my fun but annoying nephew that I took to him immediately. When I found out that this book was to be devoted entirely to him, I could scarcely contain my glee.

In her own flowing, poetic, and beautiful way - Shannon Hale weaves yet another story that is sure to intrigue readers of all ages.

Now that the war with Tira is over, Bayern seeks to reestablish good relations with it's neighboring countries. The King decides to send over an ambassador accompanied by a host of guards, in exchange for one from Tira. But when they choose Razo - Razo, who is called the worst swordsman this company ever boasted and a child who fell into some armor among other things - to be a part of the elite and gifted guardsmen.

And if Razo's inequality with the rest of the group isn't trying enough, not to mention the peril they face in still-hostile Tira, then the Tiran ambassador's redheaded daughter, Dasha, who may be a terrible enemy or a needed ally, certainly isn't helping.

If you haven't read any Shannon Hale yet, go now This lovely author deserves a hundred times more recognition than she gets. Be on the lookout for her witty, down-to-earth analogies too, sprinkled heavily throughout her books. They absolutely amaze me.

Anne Osterlund says

Razo isn't much good at anything. He's as short as the girls. He isn't handy with a sword. And he always ends up in the thick of trouble. It's beyond him why the captain the guard would choose to appoint him for the delicate—and dangerous—mission into Tira. To secure peace only a year after recent war.

Naturally Razo is the first to discover a burned body.
And then there's the assassination attempts.
And the girl who calls him a tree rat.
All in all it's just possible he should have stayed home.

I loved Razo's voice: his modesty, his self-deprecating humor, his ecstasy over small things. And his apparently complete disregard for protecting life and limb—his own, that is.

Coralie says

So, this is the third book in Shannon Hale's Books of Bayern series. Personally, although I did very much enjoy the book--and even more so the second time around--it just isn't as good as *The Goose Girl* or *Enna Burning*. But that could just be because I adore the first two books. Either way, it's still an excellent read and a lovely addition to the series.

This book focuses on Razo, a comical and humble character. He's forest born, but adapts pretty well no matter where you stick him. He's loyal as they come, but when he's sent on a dangerous mission to Tira, Bayern's long-standing enemy, to help pave a new peace, he questions his captain's choice. Razo doesn't know why he's been picked to go along for the adventure, but he's sure grateful! As Razo is thrust into this whole new world in the heart of Tira, we really get to see his character shine. He's tethered by a few familiar faces, but for the most part, we get a new cast in this book.

The setting too, is all new, save for the introduction. I loved getting to see more of Tira's culture and meet Tiran people. His Radiance was such a cool factor and I loved how clever Razo was in cultivating a relationship with him and his people. The city can be a little confusing, but there's a convenient map in the front of the book to help with that, and I never found that the geography pulled me from the story. The Tiran culture was presented in sharp contrast with the Bayern culture, but slowly, as the relationship of the people progressed, so did the presentation of the Tiran culture.

Oh my! The plot for this one, though quite different from previous plots, was intriguing in its own way. This story held more mystery than the first two. There's tension between Tira and Bayern, fueled by the fresh wound of a lost war and a long history of violence. The Bayern have come to Tira as a sign of trust and in an attempt to form some kind of peace, to show the Tiran they aren't all as horrid and morbid as the Tiran have been told. They've come at a pivotal time where the Tiran have an upcoming assembly that will determine whether they return to war or take hold of the preferred peace. And someone's out to mess with this fragile peace and to stir up more trouble! Razo finds himself in a sticky mess, that's for sure! Watching him struggle with the decisions before him, balance the future of two countries, and still remain good ole Razo was one of my favorite parts of the book.

As always, Hale's writing is exceptional. Even in the new country, she maintains the same ancient and homey style in her writing. It's simple, easy to read, and yet strangely stirring. I did find one typo in my copy of the book.

There is no foul language, but there is a little bit of mild violence. The book doesn't take place during the war, but it does take place in the contentions of the aftermath of that war. There was very little romance, though Razo did think back to a lost love from his forest days a few times and a romance from the previous book continues, with nothing more than a kiss here or there. There was one kitchen maid that was...a little sensual for about a half a page in one scene, but the book is clean and not explicit in any way.

Olivia Rollins says

Pretty much pure happiness. I mean, Razo. <3 <3
4.5 stars.

Sheri says

I would have to call this Shannon's worst work I've read. The storyline was boring and dragged a lot. The entire first half of the book was devoted to Razo's feeling bad for himself and whining a lot. "I'm so short. I suck at everything. Nobody likes me. My girlfriend married someone else. I am no good at swordplay. Woe is me. etc etc." This was repeated page after page after page. Finally, about 3/4 way into the book, the story started going somewhere. There was a pleasant fight scene at the end which I enjoyed. The idea of a 'water fingers' gift was cool.

Overall, it's an okay read if you have endless hours of boredom facing you. I won't be reading it again. It just wasn't on par with the quality of Goose Girl. Sorry Shannon, you have failed me.

Drew says

Such a happy ending! I loved this book series!

Katie Tatton says

I plugged through this one, hoping it would catch my interest later in the book like Enna Burning did. Alas, it was not to be. Shannon Hale (the author) was quoted as saying that Razo was her favorite character, the easiest to write, the most real to her. Unfortunately, that's not the case for me. Razo is the short, funny guy in the group who questions his worth in the war and wonders if he'll ever get over his first love. As the youngest son, he wishes he was the best at something, just for once. He is shocked and happy when he is picked to accompany the ambassador on her peace mission to Tira. Enna and Finn accompany him in the group, and they're having trouble because apparently Enna's just watched "Ten Things I Hate About You" and is wishing for a Heath Ledger-esque show of foolishness and Big Declaration of Love (like singing and dancing on the bleachers to "Can't Take My Eyes Off of You" in front of the entire soccer and track teams while he dodges campus police.) So anyway, pretty darn predictable in that lonely Razo will find a great girl, turn out to be crucial to the success of the mission, and I'll be darned, he even grew a few inches to boot. Sigh.

Erin says

This is possibly my favorite of Shannon Hale's books so far (although it is hard to choose). The plot was perhaps slightly more predictable (just slightly), but Razo's character is absolutely hilarious! I love how Hale takes time to add in little funny or observant tidbits that aren't necessarily pertinent to the plot, but that add depth to the characters. This is definitely a worthwhile read (but read Goose Girl and Enna Burning first.)

Josie says

I liked Razo in previous books, but I suspect that was because he only played a small part. A whole book from his point of view felt like a bit much. But I liked that he had a Journey and that he didn't wallow in self pity and uselessness for the entire book (although there was a lot of that in the first third). He gradually realised (or was told) that he has good qualities: observance, slinging, etc.

I could have done without all the imagery. I know the similes and stuff were what made the writing so Bayern-ish in *Enna Burning* (I think it's a forest-born thing) but Razo used them TO DEATH. All that stuff about eyeballs itching or sweating. So annoying! There were some good lines, though, like, "Loafing is just a hobby of mine," or when Enna tells Razo, "You'd eat a plate and call it pleasantly crunchy." Oh, and I did like the descriptions of Ingridan! I found myself wishing it was a real place, because it would be a beautiful city to visit.

The mystery wasn't done particularly well? It just seemed like random people were named as suspects for doing the least suspicious of things, then of course it turned out to be the first person Razo had ruled out, simply because he thought Ledel liked to do things by the book and so would never start a war dishonestly. (What kind of logic is that, anyway?) I also didn't like how easy it was for anyone to learn fire. I mean, seriously? ANYONE can be taught it? It makes Enna's talents less special.

All the Dasha stuff was annoying -- the is-she-good-is-she-bad stuff, I mean. It was so obvious she was good, so Razo's dilemma (I love her but she might be trying to kill me!) felt completely ridiculous. And while we're on the topic of romance, how awkward was all the Finn/Enna drama? I cringed at the harp scene. Don't get me wrong, I love Finn and Enna together, but I don't think publically serenading your girlfriend magically erases all the issues in your relationship...

Kailey (BooksforMKs) says

This one is somewhat different from the other Books of Bayern, in that our main character, Razo, does not discover an ability in "nature language" as our previous main characters have done. He falls in love with a girl who has an ability to speak with water, but he himself does not have an ability.

I like though, that while the other books are about a person discovering a strength, an ability, a power that they have, this book has the same basic theme, even though our main character does not have an ability.

Razo is a self-proclaimed screw-up. He's the clown, the oddball, the dork. But he also discovers a strength that he has that no one else has.... he notices things. He has an amazing memory and an attention to detail that comes to him naturally. He is smart without seeming to try! He is good at something. He is special and set apart for something good.

And that is really the main theme of all these books: discovering that you are special and full of worth, no matter if you have a supernatural power or not.

As always, the book is well-written, the characters are complex and endearing, the plot moves along with wonderful suspense and action. I loved it! I read it all in one day.

LeiAnn says

If there was a 4.5 stars, this book would be it. I can't justify 5 stars because then it would be in competition with some of my favorite books of all time, and it's not QUITE there.

I think this book is an excellent example of character development. Not only do we see the improvement of the main character, but we see continued progression in characters from previous books. I had no idea I loved Razo as much as I do. In previous books, he was just the comic relief. Truthfully, I think he's portrayed that way because that's how all the other characters see him, including in *River Secrets*. But there's so much more depth to Razo than we've ever seen before. Who knew Bettin broke his heart as badly as she did? Who knew he had a photographic memory? And by the end of the book, I loved him even more for the man he'd become. I really liked Dasha as well. I never once thought that she was evil, and I think that's because I saw her through Razo's eyes, and he never doubted her.

Last night, at 11:11 pm, I kissed all my fingers and wished that Shannon Hale could write more books, faster. And that I'll die before she quits. I love her! She is a very serious contender for my favorite (living) author!

Jessica Mae says

Great book! I did enjoy *The Goose Girl* and *Enna Burning* a little more because the plots were more intriguing, but there are plenty of reasons to love *River Secrets*, too.

First of all: Razo. If you don't find him incredibly endearing then we need to have a talk. This whole book revolves around him gaining more confidence in himself. I love his brotherly relationship with Enna, and how Talon kind of mentors and believes in him. You can't help but see Razo as your own little brother, and feel so proud of him when the book is through.

Another thing I loved, as I always do in Shannon Hale's books, is her world-building. Her world gets bigger and bigger in each book, and in *River Secrets* you're more thoroughly introduced to the country of Tira. Tira reminds me of a cross between Greece and California. And there's *Water Speech* now, so that was fun to see. (Maybe not as cool as water bending from *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, but still pretty cool.)

Now onto Book 4: *Forest Born*!

Cara says

This was a perfect way too round up the series. I was really excited about this one since it had Razo as the main character. He is the funniest character of the series and I'm so glad he got to shine in his own book. You get to see past characters fairly often and some good new characters as well.

Here is a quick run down of the book: Razo and the other soldiers of Bayern's Own must go to Tira to help along with the peace that is trying to be formed. Of course this doesn't turn out to be easy when burned bodies are being found thus making it harder for war not to happen again. I don't want to give too much away, but suffice to say that Razo's talents get to be displayed and there are interesting subplots as well dealing with Finn and Enna (who are seen a good deal in this book).

Definitely a must read for people who have read the first two in the series.

Later Note: Just found out that there is a fourth book in the series called *Forest Born* . Can't wait till it comes out!

Ash says

Great, great book!! I really liked it. I was so glad to see that the next book in the series was about Razo. He's always so funny and a trustworthy friend.

Quick overview: Razo is chosen to join an elite mission to escort the ambassador to Tira. Razo can't think of any other reason that he would be chosen except out of pity, which is what most of his fellow soldiers think. In hopes of making peace with Tira they enter into the capital only to find that some Tiran are not so easy to forget their defeat in the war. Burned bodies are showing up. To make sure the Bayern soldiers return home and possibly avoid another war, Razo is going to have to use his talents to figure out who is trying to frame Bayern for the burnings before the assembly votes on whether to start the war again. But time is running out.

I know my overview's a little scratchy, but if you've read the other two books it doesn't really matter. You already know how great these books are. I admit that I liked this one better than Enna Burning, but I like all the books. Though Goose Girl is my absolute favorite. The book is a little slow at the beginning, but then begins to pick up pace. It kept me guessing all the way until the end. I loved that Razo finds that although he doesn't have special magic it's his own talents that save the day. A great book!!

Hailey (HaileyinBookland) says

4.5*

I really love this series, but this was my least favourite. I found it to be more predictable and a bit slower, especially following the amazingness that was "Enna Burning." But, I love Razo and he was a pleasure to follow!

Addy S. says

I absolutely LOVED Razo. He's crazy, and his being short and untalented with the sword won him a title as a spy.

I loved the book. The romance wasn't bad, and I only caught one minor part that Shannon Hale didn't have to include to make the story enjoyable.

Great job!! Sadly, I only have one more to go.?
