



## River Secrets (Books of Bayern, Book 3)

By Shannon Hale

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Razo has always thought of himself as pretty much useless-too short, too weak, too slow-only good for catching with his sling the odd squirrel for his mother's cookpot. But when he is asked to join the king's soldiers on a peacekeeping mission and the peace they are sent to protect is being sabotaged, Razo finds that his squirrel-killing talents come in handy, and his way of noticing the unusual, thinking through to the truth, and befriending the unlikeliest of people will serve him better than anyone could have predicted.

Set in the magical lands introduced in the acclaimed novel, *The Goose Girl*, *River Secrets* is a mystery and a coming-of-age tale that is impossible to put down. Shannon Hale's lyrical writing, unforgettable, characters and intriguing setting give this book the timeless quality that any classic must have.

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## River Secrets (Books of Bayern, Book 3) By Shannon Hale Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

*Starred Review.* Grade 6-10—A companion to *The Goose Girl* (2003) and *Enna Burning* (2004, both Bloomsbury). Enna and Isi's friend Razo is small and bullied; he has always considered himself pretty useless, so he is thrilled to be chosen as one of a hundred Bayern soldiers accompanying an ambassador on a peacekeeping mission to the Tiran capital. Tirans lost the war with Bayern, largely due to Enna's forbidding ability to burn people, and their army was shamed. When Razo discovers burned bodies, he first fears that Enna has reneged on her promise to stop using her powers, then realizes that she isn't guilty. In this part mystery, part coming-of-age story, Razo learns why he is so important to the king's mission. He befriends Lady Dasha, the daughter of the ambassador who was sent in exchange to Bayern. Like Enna and Isi, she is a young woman with elemental powers. The burner is exposed and captured; peace is assured, as is the romance between Razo and Dasha. Hale's portrayal of a group of extremist Tirans for whom war is sacred and putting one's life in peril is honorable connects the story's medieval folkloric setting with today's news in a chilling way. As in the companion books, this high fantasy is rich in detail and lyrical in writing. While it helps to have read the two previous books, *River Secrets* stands on its own. But fans of the genre will no doubt rejoice in immersing themselves in this magical world by reading all three.—*Connie Tyrrell Burns, Mahoney Middle School, South Portland, ME*

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From [Booklist](#)

*\*Starred Review\** Hale, whose most recent novel, *The Princess Academy* (2005), was named a Newbery Honor Book, continues the story begun in *Goose Girl* (2003) and *Enna Burning* (2004) in this stirring, stand-alone adventure. The kingdoms of Bayern and Tira have just completed a war, and Bayern teenager Rizzo is astonished when he is chosen to join a company of the castle's best soldiers on a diplomatic mission to Tira. A poor swordsman with a reputation as "a brave fool," he knows that his most noteworthy talent may be "cramming two cherries into a single nostril." Once the company arrives in Tira, though, he learns why he was selected: he sees and remembers everything, without "seeming to pay attention to anything beyond dinner," making him an excellent spy. Tension between the kingdoms heightens with a series of recurring, pyrotechnic murders, just as Rizzo falls for an intrepid young Tiran. The story's pace is leisurely, but Hale's accomplished writing will easily pull readers into her vividly realized world. The expertly chosen, often poetic details set and pace the story, and the fully drawn characters, whose dialogue crackles with wit, will point readers to the underlying themes of cultural prejudice and the corruption of power that touch on contemporary political debates. Suspenseful, magical, and heartfelt, this is a story that will wholly envelop its readers. *Gillian Engberg*

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#### **William Lyons:**

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#### **Scott Fisher:**

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#### **Eliza Gold:**

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