



The Harsh Cry of the Heron: The Last Tale of the Otori (Tales of the Otori, Book 4)

By Lian Hearn

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***The Harsh Cry of the Heron* is the fourth book in the *Tales of the Otori* series by Lian Hearn. Don't miss the related series, *The Tale of Shikanoko*.**

A dazzling epic of warfare and sacrifice, passionate revenge, treacherous betrayal, and unconquerable love, *The Harsh Cry of the Heron* takes the storytelling achievement of Lian Hearn's fantastic medieval Japanese world to startling new heights of drama and action. Fifteen years of peace and prosperity under the rule of Lord Otori Takeo and his wife Kaede is threatened by a rogue network of assassins, the resurgence of old rivalries, the arrival of foreigners bearing new weapons and religion, and an unfulfilled prophecy that Lord Takeo will die at the hand of a member of his own family.

The Harsh Cry of the Heron is the rich and stirring finale to a series whose imaginative vision has enthralled millions of readers worldwide, and an extraordinary novel that stands as a thrilling achievement in its own right.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Australian writer Gillian Rubinstein, writing as Hearn, concludes her bestselling Otori fantasy epic (*Across the Nightingale Floor*, etc.) with another magical tale of life and death in feudal Japan. Thanks to his enlightened leadership, 15 years of peace and prosperity have passed since Otori Takeo united the Three Countries, but his enemies continue to plot their revenge—including the Tribe, a ninja-like group of assassins, and the duplicitous Lord Zenko, one of Takeo's retainers. Perhaps the greatest threat, however, is the prophecy of a holy woman that Takeo will die only at his son's hand; his only son, an unacknowledged bastard, is being raised by his sworn enemy Kikuta Akio, the head of a Tribe family. With his beautiful (and legitimate) daughter and heir Shigeko by his side, Takeo must navigate these treacherous shoals to save his lands and his legacy from destruction. Hearn seamlessly fuses fact and fantasy to create a sprawling, bewitching realm of magic. There's enough background in this fourth installment that a new reader will have no problem following along, and fans will be heartened to know that this "Last Tale" will be followed in 2007 by a prequel. (Sept.)

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From [Booklist](#)

The Otori saga concludes in this gripping novel, set in the years after the previous book in the series, *Brilliance of the Moon* (2004). Otori Takeo has brought peace to the Three Countries and rules them with a benevolent but firm hand; however, his old enemies still bear him malice and continue to plot against him. Lord Arai joins forces with Takeo's bitter brother-in-law, Zenko, hoping to bring down Takeo, while the emperor of the region has dispatched a deadly warlord to attack Takeo, who knows there is only one person who can kill him: a prophecy has decreed that only his son can end his life. While Takeo and his wife, Kaede, only have daughters, Takeo does have a child that Kaede doesn't know about, 16-year-old Hisao, who has been raised by Lord Arai to hate Takeo. To ensure his daughter Shigeko's reign, Takeo decides to try to make peace with the emperor and even offers Shigeko's hand in marriage to the warlord Saga. The Otori saga gets better with each book, and this is the most absorbing entry in the series, complete with intrigue, magic, romance, and action. A perfect final chapter to the story that began in *Across the Nightingale Floor* (2002).

Kristine Huntley

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Review

"One of the most thrilling new series of our time." -- *The Times (London)*

"Part Shogun, part Lord of the Rings and entirely enchanting." -- *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*

"Seizes you from start to finish." -- *The Washington Post*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

James Miguel:

Do you consider one of people who can't read pleasurable if the sentence chained from the straightway,

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