

Book of a Thousand Days

By Shannon Hale

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When Lady Saren refuses to marry a man she fears, she and her maid, Dashti, are locked in a tower with just a tiny flap open to the outside world. As food runs low and the weather changes from broiling hot to unbearably cold, it is all Dashti can do to make them comfortable in their dark prison.

Not long after their confinement begins, Saren's suitors arrive—one welcome, the other less so—and she orders Dashti to speak to them. Impersonating Lady Saren is a crime punishable by death, but Dashti will have to play the role many times if she is to save them both from the tower and the dangers outside. As she takes control of their desperate situation, Dashti begins to understand her own astonishing talents and believe that even a low-born maid can find true love.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 5–9—When Dashti the muckermid from the steppes region throws in her lot with Lady Saren, little does she expect her loyalty to be tested by being bricked up in a tower with the Lady for seven years as punishment for Saren's refusal to marry the evil Lord Khasar, rather than her own preference, the handsome and gentle Khan Tagis. A series of first-person journal entries chronicle the differences between Dashti's resourceful, optimistic, and pragmatic personality and that of Lady Saren—a 16-year-old girl/woman who is prone to depression, fearful of the world, and unable to function independently. The full cast production of the fantasy by Shannon Hale (Bloomsbury, 2007) captures the lyricism of the author's language, although the voice of Dashti seems extremely young and naïve. The inclusion of many snippets of "healing songs" detracts from, rather than adds to, the story. Fans of Hale's previous books will enjoy this latest offering. Despite the somewhat predictable plot, the story is one of inspiration and hope.—*Cindy Lombardo, Cleveland Public Library, IL*

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From [Booklist](#)

In this retelling of a brothers Grimm fairy tale, Chelsea Mixon ideally portrays Dashti, a servant bound to rebellious Lady Saren, whose role is read by Rozlyn Jakes-Johnson. The tale is told through Dashti's journal entries, in which she recounts her imprisonment in a sealed tower with Lady Saren, who defied her father's command to marry. Dashti's communication with Khan Tegus (Saren's true love), vanquishing of an evil tyrant, and eventual escape are among the plot developments. The story is perfect for a full-cast reading. All of the actors add layers of meaning, enlivening even the minor characters. Saren transforms from addled to self-assured, Khan Tegus (played by Conor Nolan) from romantic to ruler, and Dashti from subservient to self-confident. Mixon proves especially effective when singing melodic renditions of "healing songs." An enchanting listening experience. Grades 6-9. --Mary Burkey

Review

"Hale delivers another winning fantasy. . . Readers will be riveted as Dashti and Saren escape and flee to the Khan's realm where, through a series of deceptions, contrivances, and a riotously triumphant climax, the tale spins out a thoroughly satisfying ending." - starred review, *Publishers Weekly*

"Hale has created a richly imagined, mythical land. . . A highly successful romance." - starred review, *School Library Journal*

"[A] mix of exotic, fully realized setting; thrilling, enchanted adventure; and heart-melting romance." - *Booklist*

"A rousing, even spellbinding tale." - *Kirkus Reviews*

"This newest tale takes proud place among Hale's growing shelf-full of folk-fantasy adventures whose protagonists give "spunk" a good name." - *Horn Book*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Joyce Loza:

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