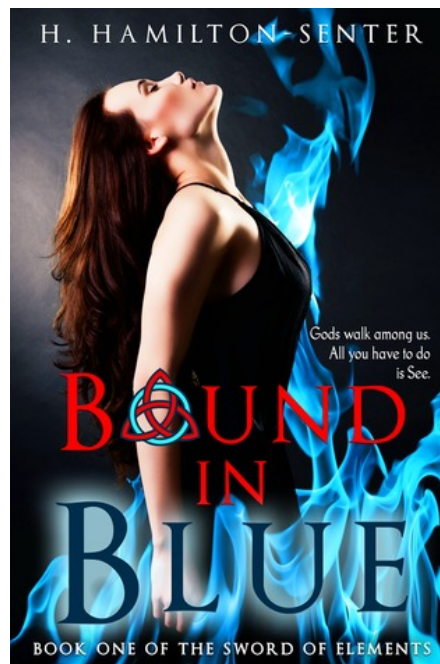




Bound in Blue

Heather Hamilton-Senter

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Gods walk among us—all you have to do is See.

High school senior Rhiannon Lynne couldn't get noticed even if she walked stark naked into the cafeteria and started playing the ukulele. While tap dancing. As if that weren't strange enough, Rhi has synaesthesia—she feels in color. It takes being almost drowned by a Celtic river goddess for her to discover she's been bound by a spell that has hidden her from the world and her own mysterious heritage.

As Rhi starts to see that her colors belong to magic, she finds herself at the center of a conflict between gods, humans, and the lost world of Avalon. She'll need to figure things out fast if she wants to be a player in the coming conflict and not a pawn. Each side has a claim on her loyalty, but each one could decide she's the real threat.

Hopelessly attracted to a god of thunder; deeply connected to a boy with no memory of his past; irresistibly drawn to a creature with a taste for flesh—Rhi's choices could decide the fate of worlds, but their choices could decide hers.

Maybe not being seen wasn't so bad after all.

Bound in Blue Details

Date : Published June 9th 2014 by Two Paths Publishing

ISBN : 9780993822506

Author : Heather Hamilton-Senter

Format : Paperback 376 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Young Adult, Urban Fantasy, Magic, Mythology

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From Reader Review Bound in Blue for online ebook

Anastasia says

This was just a stupid book. I hated the characters.

Emma (howlsmovinglibrary) says

I won a free copy of this book in a competition, so this might be in part why this book didn't agree with me. Although I love YA, I tend to be pretty selective about which books I read, and unfortunately this book had a lot of the things I tend to try and avoid. However, I'm really grateful for being able to read this copy for free, so I wanted to give a detailed review that gave all aspects of it justice, so that hopefully this book will find the right audience.

This book had the feel of self-publishing about it - really good writing but not enough editing. The plot meandered quite a bit and really the story could have been about a third of the length, with either less digressions at the beginning, or less of the false endings in the last 20% or so. There was a lot going on and in many ways that was a good thing, because it meant there was a large cast of characters and a good depth of research, but I think it really did impact on the plot. There were points where the pace would pick up and I was literally unable to put the book down, and then suddenly, meh..., particularly with the strange Melusine storyline.

When Rhiannon Lynne's mother Viviane dies, Rhi discovers that she wasn't her mother at all, but instead an ancient goddess - The Lady of the Lake - trying to protect her from the various remaining players of the Arthurian court. As Viviane's protection spells fall away, Rhi finds herself coming into new, and dangerous, powers which she must learn to contain with the help of the Greylanders, a series of superpowered teenagers and adults drawn from Arthurian legend and folklore.

GOOD POINTS

There were some very interesting characters in this book. While I didn't particularly like Rhiannon (see below), I did like some of the secondary characters a lot - particularly Peter, Miko, Thomas Redcap and Vivianne. The relationships between Rhi and Peter (platonic friendship) and Rhiannon and Viviane (a strangely cold maternal bond) were unique and well done - I liked the fact that Peter didn't get drawn into any compulsory love interest and also that Viviane was reflective of her source material, as a cool, manipulative politician. I also liked the idea of casting King Arthur as villain, and empowering Guinevere more, as (for instance in Mists of Avalon) she's usually a pretty wet blanket.

I could also tell the book was very well researched, even if this meant that some dialogue was a bit exposition heavy. Rather than being sketchy about things, Hamilton-Senter is very specific about where her characters are drawn from folklore, and recasts their motives to make them new, interesting characters with morally ambiguous and nuanced storylines. All good stuff.

BAD POINTS

However, this is partly why Rhiannon annoys me so much as a character, because after Hamilton creates a very strict folkloric origin story she suddenly just goes...BUT RHIANNON'S DIFFERENT! I initially liked Rhi's magic - a kind of synesthesia which ends up being linked to the energies of the people and the beings around her, which she can manipulate. However, when this becomes connected with killing and reviving the

dead, this all gets a bit misty. Basically, Rhiannon could pretty much do anything she wanted to. Most powers need a limitation for them to be interesting, and this didn't seem to have that.

This is partly because Rhi is a classic Mary-Sue, that girl who doesn't think anything of herself but somehow magically becomes the prettiest/most powerful/most desirable person in the known universe. If this book did suffer from one thing, it was the biggest romantic plot tumour I think I have ever encountered. No book should have three love interests, it just DOESN'T WORK. Rhiannon and Daley, for me, was the most jarring, as it literally made no sense. Rhiannon met Daley and Tynan, and Tynan was nice and friendly to her while Daley is a jerkass, but because of his brooding eyes or whatever Rhiannon goes away from this - and all subsequent meetings - with, 'oh I like Daley. even though he hasn't said two words to me, I don't know anything about him, and he's generally a dick'. The kisses they had were manufactured, demonstrated by the fact that their chemistry IS LITERALLY MANIFESTED AS LIGHTNING - I felt like the author had to artificially create a sense that they are good for each other, rather than subtly creating it through dialogue or, you know, actual affection.

This does not mean that I believe Rhi and Tynan should be together. Oh no, that was creepy to the extreme, and while I feel like Hamilton may have managed to get across some of the issues of consent and unrequited love, their relationship still made me seriously uncomfortable. Not just because of the way that Tynan acted, but because Rhi was also kind of cruel to him. I think Hamilton was trying to make a more nuanced relationship where Rhi wants to be friends, trying to show that friend-zoning is cruel, but it meant that no specific boundaries were ever set - Rhi would never say 'no' out loud, we'd just hear her thinking 'god I wish Tynan would go away, why is he still here?', meaning that the whole thing was just a hot mess.

I liked the third love interest, which develops later in the book, but I think that it would have benefited from more specific development - if Hamilton had just chosen one strand of romantic intrigue to pursue rather than dividing her energy three ways I think the book would have felt better written overall, as you'd be able to give one relationship more growth and development rather than artificially creating three. As it was, it felt unrealistic, forced and a bit ridiculous - very first Twilight book.

Rhiannon's Mary-Sue-ness also had a bad aftertaste - which is her holier than thou attitude. The slut shaming in this book was pretty hard to stomach. I disliked the way that sexual women = bad, to the point where when Lacey goes slightly to the dark side, ie. practices witchcraft, she is described as donning a 'hooker-like' style that causes her ostracisation from the entire school, it's described as weird and strange and wrong, when really it's just a life style choice. Morgana was treated in exactly the same way, on like the second page. Similarly, while Miko's story had actually a lot of potential for its moral ambiguity and sympathetic motives, it pretty much equates some kind of sexual activity (a vampire bite) with being permanently tainted and dirty. NOT COOL.

I think this book had potential, but needed to be fine tuned to make a better final product. There were many cliches and the interesting ideas got drowned out by all the excess weight. I didn't struggle to finish it though, and did enjoy reading it.

Angie says

If you are heavy into greek mythology, this would be a good book for you. I like mythology, but don't want to go overboard. I found this book to be overkill a tad, to the point where it was almost hard to keep up with who was which god (who goes by many names and you have to keep track of the current name). Anywho...

Rhiannon's mother dies, leaving Rhi alone in her house with her best friend Peter's parents as guardians.

She's always had trouble being noticed by anyone, but it feels like more than that. When 3 new students start at school, Rhi finds herself drawn to them. Did I mention Rhi can see feelings in colors? As she starts to realize these colors are related to magic, she unravels the mystery behind her mother and the new students. Too bad she can't go back to being unseen..

Crystal says

I liked it, but I felt like I've read a version of it before. It wasn't bad, but not a favorite.

Nereid says

Now this book was a complete surprise as I randomly picked it up because I liked the concept of the story as it had a different take on Arthur and the legends of Avalon. Rhi is such a likeable character as she is thrust into a world she is not prepared for and it is sink or swim from the get go. Some loveable characters show up and Robin Goodfellow has always been a favourite of mine. While the twists just keep coming, you are engaged enough to want to find out what happens next. By the end of the story which I did not see coming, I was anxiously checking to see if the next book had been released and alas it has not so it will be a long wait till September. I would definitely recommend it to anyone who loves this type of story and the legends become new again with a revamp as to how it all began.

Traci Loudin says

Great use of worldbuilding and Arthurian legend! An enjoyable read.

Anna (Enchanted by YA) says

****I received the ebook free as a review copy from the author/publisher in exchange for an honest review****

It has been such a long time since I looked at Celtic/ Arthurian legends – the last time must have been while watching the TV drama Merlin when I was 11, so this took me back! I loved that though, especially when the story is so different to everything I'd heard before.

Hamilton-Senter definitely knows what she's talking about when it comes to the original lore and it helps a newbie like me understand exactly what's happening and who everyone is! There were *so many names*, that initially it was hard not to get bogged down and lost, but once the background information is out of the way and the action kicks off, everything falls into place.

Of course there were multiple times when I thought the bad guy(s) was obvious, and looking back I could see the evidence practically *screaming at me* which I was blindly ignorant to. It didn't help that there was never a clear "right" and "wrong" side – something more books need.

Every character had their place in the story (though that didn't mean I had to like them

*cough*Lacey*cough*) so it was interesting to see their changing roles. As a main character Rhi is likeable as well as relateable, and relationships she had with other characters were beautifully crafted. However a major connection I couldn't get behind at first was the romantic interest between her and Daley; when the l-bomb dropped it was out of nowhere, and considering the circumstances... you'd understand my doubt of its genuineness.

That aside, this was such an enjoyable book that takes a fresh-spin on old tales, and I'm looking forward to more.

Posted on: <http://enchantedbyya.blogspot.co.uk/>

Gail says

When you read a lot of books, some of them start to sound like others you have read. This one was sounding familiar- girl starts to get powers, other people do too-they work together to fight evil. What was different was that they are fighting against King Arthur- Merlin- and We find out Guinevere was with Merlin and Arthur chose Morgana over her. Not quite the way I remember the stories. The Lady of the Lake is in the story as well as Goodfellow and others who are trying to figure out what to do as it seems like neither side is a good choice.

Lesley says

3.5 to 4 stars. Steeped in mythology ... I loved how things were twisted from the tales we know. Making the myths and story line feel new. However, at times it felt slow, but I was interested enough to push through. I'm interested to see where this goes.

Chantelle says

LOVED this book. And my rating had little to nothing to do with the fact that I know the author. I can't wait for the next books to come out. I seriously finished it in three days- it was almost impossible to put down. I actually read the full thing twice, which is something I never do. A terrible book to read for five minutes of spare time, unless of course you like to be stopped before the big mystery is revealed, or what the characters thought was the big mystery- or the great solution to become a success, or more accurately an addition to the problems which already exist. Full of strange creatures, unpredictable characters, and a whole bunch of unexpected twists in the story, the ONLY bad thing about this book was the occasional swearing. Other than that, I definitely recommend this book to readers.

Julie Hall says

I received the book Bound in Blue, written by Heather Hamilton Senter from Library Thing. This is a fantastic story and I loved it! I wish we could all find out that our problems in life are truly caused by the fact

that we are magic and don't yet know it. Wouldn't it be wonderful for a teenager in school to find out that no one noticed them because they actually had a magical shield hiding them? I get a double meaning out of this book on that level.

The story is intriguing and has some cool twists and turns in it. The characters are bold and fully developed, not typical, not common, but interesting and unique. I thoroughly enjoyed my journey with Rhiannon. This little lady is a heroin. She is brave and the author gave her a rich personality with a realistic attitude. I mean how would you react to finding out you are magic, have been watched your whole life and now you hang out with vampire/fairies, witches, wizards, warriors and you have a crush on Thor?

Congrats to Heather Hamilton Senter for giving the world a wonderful experience. I cannot wait to read book two, Caught in Crimson. I will also be checking out the story of Lacey McInnis in To make a Witch. I fell in love with the characters and now I do not want to let them go.

Gia says

Not a bad effort.

This initial offering had definite potential but it was at times somewhat convoluted as if the author wanted to make sure she put to use all of the research she'd done. I did like the use of the mythology however it was just the execution that could use work.

I was also at times disappointed with the character relationships, in fact the only ones I found effortless were Rhi, Peter and Lacey. Most of the others felt awkward a lot of the time but it was the interactions with, 'the good guys' that I tended to find damn right disingenuous.

Hopefully now that the foundations have been laid in terms of the world building this is something that will be better developed in book two.

Bambi Fogleman says

Bound in Blue
H. Hamilton Senter
Sword of element book 1

This book is an interesting read to be honest I almost stopped reading twice. I love my myths of history, Greek, Celtic, Egyptian, Norse and many more. She redid a classic tale and combined them in a unique way that was unexpected and intriguing! The story is very well written and thought out! I am waiting for book 2 of this series to come out to see where this adventure in the magical world will lead.

Tynan explained
Rhiannon is Gaelic it means great queen.
Lynne is Gaelic as well it means lake.

After watching the only mother Rhiannon ever knew die whatever is she to do?

That's when fate steps in and starts putting her on her path destined to follow. The mother that raised her left people and clues to find where she needed to go but if she never found them they were instructed not to contact her daughter.

She has always been the girl never seen and the 3 new students at school can help with why.

Never knowing that her mom wasn't who gave birth to you and that the world is more than you ever thought could exist what is real? What is good and what is evil? Most importantly what is right and what is wrong?

Join these Highschoolers on an adventure to find who they are and can they protect the world from the past?

What happens when Rhiannon finds her birth parents?

How is the white haired man the mother who raised her told her to hide from comes for her again?

Cherri-Anne says

There were no good sides.

No wrong and right. No black and white. Only all the colors of the world in between.

OHMYOHMYOHMYOHMY! What a fantastic, intriguing & unique take on the Althurean legend!! I have always been fascinated with King Arthur, Merlin, Morgan le Fay, so when I found out that this book/series had a connection to it, well I couldn't wait to read it! I was not disappointed one bit! I just wish I understood the 'language' a little better so I could say the names properly! I loved the characters, the magics, the wholly unique mythology/history behind the story, and as frustrating as this all was, I thoroughly did enjoy & appreciate all of the mystery & intrigue that goes on and on and... There is a fantastic variety of characters, young, old, god or legend, those that can wield magic & those that ARE magical, but I loved the fact that they are ALL FLAWED!! Not a one seems to be a definite lock as to which side they are on, what they are after or whether their help or training is actually helping Rhi or not. I think that those are key points to remember, especially if you are to like, understand or even just tolerate Rhi & the rest of gang. Having Rhi go through all she has, well it's no wonder she makes the decisions she does! Good, bad, right, wrong, annoying or not, I love how she is able to do so many 'cool' things! Heather did a fantastic job with it all! Such creative & unique tricks, talents, abilities, heck ALL OF IT! Heather is definitely one very gifted author and I cannot wait to read all of her books! If this one is any indication of things, then I can't wait to find out what else she has in store for me to discover! I mean, to find out what she has in store for Rhi, of course! If I had to list one part that I would change, it would be either adding a glossary or mini reference guide about each character that included all of each characters names, abilities, etc. It wasn't hard to follow them all, but I did find myself flipping through to refresh my memory of who a character was. That is also very well just my memory that had the problem! Either way it did not make things complicated, nor did it affect the flow of the story. This is my first book of Heather's but boy am I now addicted! I CANNOT wait to read the next book(s) in this series!

Seregon says

Warning: may contain spoilers

Rhiannon Lynne is a high school senior who just lost her mother. Or who she thought was her mother. Upon

her mother's death, a woman named Morgan (who Rhiannon judges pretty harshly) says she's her mother's sister. Rhi finds out that's both true and untrue at the same time. She's been raised by her "mother", Vivianne to be 'small...or invisible'. It's something she's done without knowing why she should do it or how she can. She sees in colors, without realizing they are energy vibrations representing emotions. She's not sure what it means, but when she meets Miko in the ladies room, things start to change.

She learns that she and her best friend forever, Peter, are magical beings, and that the legend of King Arthur and Avalon are anything BUT false. Unfortunately so is head cheerleader and all out annoying diva, Lacey.

She learns to train to harness her powers and fight the evil that is in the human realm, and it seems everyone wants her as their own personal pawn.

I enjoyed the story and characters except for Lacey. She's literally the only one I felt was useless and didn't evolve or change at all. To me she was disposable. I would have liked if she changed her attitude either positive OR negative, or maybe found an additional power or trait, but as it was it didn't happen and she ended up "moving away" with an instructor.

As time goes on and Rhi learns to use her powers better, she starts becoming less "invisible". Unfortunately, that means needing to fight off the entities she's needed to hide from her whole life...

For a debut novel, this is a really good use of mythology, legend, and great use of using those things in a modern and human world and making them work. :)
