



[Home](#) > [Top Picks: All Books](#) > The Tengu's Game of Go



The Tengu's Game of Go

Book 4 in the Tale of Shikanoko

by Lian Hearn

Price: \$13.00(Paperback)

Published: September 27, 2016

★★★★★
Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

From the Publisher:

An epic four-volume adventure in mythical medieval Japan: a world of warriors and assassins, demons and spirits

In *The Tengu's Game of Go*, the final book of Lian Hearn's epic Tale of Shikanoko--all of which will be published in 2016--the rightful emperor is lost; illness and murder give rise to suspicions and make enemies of allies. Unrest rules the country. Only Shika can end the madness by returning the Lotus Throne to its rightful ruler.

As destiny weaves its rich tapestry, a compelling drama plays out against a background of wild forests, elegant castles, hidden temples, and savage battlefields. This is the medieval Japan of Lian Hearn's imagination, where animal spirits clash with warriors and children navigate a landscape as serene as it is deadly.

The Tale of Shikanoko, Book 1: *Emperor of the Eight Islands* (April...

[More](#) +

Rate This Book

★★★★★ | [Rate/Review](#)

 Add To Wishlist

[Add To Bookshelf](#)

Share This Book

About The Author





Lian Hearn

Release Info

List Price: \$13.00 (Paperback)
Published: September 27, 2016
Publisher: FSG Originals
Pages: 256
ISBN 10: 0374536341
ISBN 13: 9780374536343

Get This Book

Go to your preferred retailer, click to choose a format and you'll be taken directly to their site where you can get this book.

[Personalize / Add More Choices](#) +

What We Say

NOTE: This is a review of all four books in the series, with minimal spoilers. The best-selling author of the "Tales Of The Otori" adventures has another winner in "The Tale Of Shikanoko." Call it a Japanese "Game Of Thrones" and you'll get a good idea of the fun on tap here. While George R.R. Martin's cycle draws upon the epic fantasy of Tolkein, writer Lian Hearn harkens back to the classical models of Japanese works like "Revenge Of The Soga Brothers" and "The Tale of The Heike." Martin is looser, rawer and more sprawling. Hearn is more formal and rooted in the ethos of honor familiar to fans of movies by Akira Kurosawa and the like. And here's the really good news for "GoT" fans: Hearn has already written a complete 1000+ page epic, it's been split into four parts and they come out one after another, with the finale Volume 4 out in September. So, no waiting. Believe me, once you start you'll be glad you won't have to wait long to reach the end. In the first two books -- "Emperor Of The Eight Islands" and "Autumn Princess, Dragon Child" -- our story begins with a lord who (Lear-like) creates turmoil by splitting apart his family and demanding the eldest son take the wife of the second-born son, sending the latter off to a rival clan. He's determined the family will survive a coming civil war one way or another so each son is thus paired with a rival clan. Needless to say, this proves disastrous. The vivid characters come tumbling out, especially our hero Shikanoko, who tumbles from one home to another, first targeted by a jealous uncle, then coming under the sway of a mountain sorcerer, later learning the wily ways of a thief and finally becoming the servant of yet another master. Taking center stage at one point or another are royalty, commoners, men of magic and women of cunning, monkeys, demons, and the young but wise true Emperor, who must go into hiding when a usurper takes the throne. It's tremendous fun, with Hearn taking the point of view of a particular character for each chapter. To her credit, the people who seem like villains (and sometimes truly are), become complex, full-bodied people we have empathy for even when they do terrible things. You know you're in good hands when a chapter begins with a certain character (such as the resourceful young girl Hina or the perennially frustrated second son Masachika) and think, "Oh good!" because you were wondering about them. And when the next chapter picks up the tale of someone else, you're eager to hear about them. There's magic here, from an enchanted mask made from a stag to imp demons who love to fulfill the unspoken dark desires of our hero. (He really should have killed them at birth as the old sorcerer warned, I fear.) This story has the engrossing feel of a Japanese legend, right down to the tropes -- the rape of a woman by someone she loves, magical reveals that cheat on climaxes and the like. I loved the movie "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" and still wish for a decent English translation of the novels it was based on. Indeed, even most of the classic tales Hearn references in this book are available only in dry academic versions, if at all. (Just as we await a truly thrilling English language translation of the Chinese Monkey King stories. One exception for Japan is the 2012 translation of "The Tale Of The Heike" by Royall Tyler.) With meticulous attention to detail for the period, along with a bone-deep appreciation of Japanese culture, Hearn's homage to those masterpieces is as close as we're going to get for the moment and tremendously entertaining in its own right. True it doesn't deepen the complexity of the characters the way, say, "Crouching Tiger" added a moral, modern complexity to the grand entertainment it delivered. But "The Tale Of Shikanoko" has romance, intrigue, fantasy, passion, betrayal, sacrifice and the old-fashioned pleasure of truly having no idea what will happen next. Fans of fantasy and mythology shouldn't hesitate...unless they want to wait till September so they can gobble it up all at once. -- Michael Giltz

What You Say

Filter by

No Reviews Found