



The Rose of Shanhasson

Joely Sue Burkhart

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The Rose of Shanhasson is a superb blend of fully-realized fantasy and scorching romance. Joely Sue Burkhart dropped me into her fantasy world and left me breathless. The Rose of Shanhasson is one of the best fantasy romances I've read in years! ~ Larissa Ione, New York Times Bestselling Author

As Our Blessed Lady's last Daughter, Shannari must rule as High Queen or the Green Lands will fall into eternal darkness. Her destiny is to shine against the Shadow, protect the land and people with her magic, and keep the Blackest Heart of Darkness imprisoned. Her blood is the key, powered by the love in her heart. However, Shannari's heart is broken, her magic is crippled, and the nobles must have forgotten the dire prophesies, because everyone wants her dead.

Only love can restore her magic, but her scars testify how love can be corrupted. So when a barbarian warlord conquers her army and professes a love like no other, Shannari's first instinct is to kill the mighty Khul. Even worse, one of the Khul's guards used to be an assassin—a very skilled assassin, if the darkness in the Blood's eyes is any indication. The same darkness festers deep in her heart and draws her to the wickedly dangerous man as inexorably as his Khul's unshakable honor. Her weakening heart is not only torn between love and duty, but also between two magnificent warriors.

Yet neither warrior will be able to help her when Shadow calls her name.

A Complete Reverse Harem Epic Fantasy

Book 1: Beginning of a menage

Book 2: Menage

Book 3: Full harem

Warning: two of the men in the harem die (one in book 2, one in book 3), though everyone is reunited at the end.

The Rose of Shanhasson Details

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Author : Joely Sue Burkhart

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From Reader Review The Rose of Shanhasson for online ebook

Penny Watson says

The Rose of Shanhasson by Joely Sue Burkhart

I am feeling pretty conflicted about this story. There were some things that I loved about it...cool paranormal stuff going on, beautiful and well-written imagery of this fantasy world, and two sexy heroes. There were also some things I didn't love...too much detail about the political conflict, the blood sucking/biting thing was a little off-putting to me and reminiscent of a vampire story (but it's not a vampire story), and I found the heroine's repetitive complaint (I can't fall in love, I must return to my people) irritating and one-note.

Unfortunately, the best thing about this book also turned out to be the worst thing! Burkhart does an amazing job building the sexual tension between the heroine Shannari and the secondary hero, Gregar. The climatic scene at the end of the book when she finally admits her love for both Rhaekhar (the primary hero) and Gregar, is awesome. (I must admit that I really love both of these heroes...they are intense, sexy alpha males all the way). So I was definitely expecting a lusty conclusion to this story, especially after being teased about the threesome "sharing their blankets." Well, I got to the end of the book and my jaw dropped. After the huge build up for this menage, Burkhart leaves us hanging. In the immortal words of Spongebob, "Well, tartar sauce!" The emotional conflict was resolved, but I guess any sexual satisfaction will be taking place in the next book of the trilogy. Needless to say, I am feeling pretty irked about the whole thing. She should have put off the emotional resolution, too. Having one without the other is nothing but a Big Tease. So, I'm not really sure how to grade this...I loved some of it, and I was disappointed with some, especially the "go take a cold shower" ending. Grade: B-

Penelope

Talltree says

3.75 stars

Bookaholics says

The Rose of Shanhasson by Joely Sue Burkhart

Paranormal Romance – November 1st, 2009

4 1/2 stars

The Rose of Shanhasson enthralled me with its lush imagery and vivid characters. I felt as if I had been swept away into a world that blended the richness of the Medieval Era combined with stunning fantasy and magic. Since this is smaller publisher I hope that this romance will enjoy the wide readership it deserves.

Shannari's destiny is a hard one. The prophecy foretells that she will wear the Rose Crown and that she is the avatar of the Goddess. But the Goddess no long speaks to Shannari and she has no clue how to fulfill her destiny! Still, she dedicates her life toward the will of the Goddess. Unfortunately, as a soldier and a princess

there is little time for pleasure or relaxation. When she has tried to love she has been betrayed or used for the greater good. Her needs as an individual and particularly as a woman have been ignored. Caught between a forced alliance with a power hunger madman who wants her dead and a disgusting and traitorous lecher Shannari feels trapped. But she knows her duty. When these negotiations are interrupted by the invasion of desert barbarians Shannari finds herself surrendering. But the desert warrior doesn't want Shannari for mere politics. He wants Shannari for herself and that may be the most dangerous reason of all.

Rhaekhar had a vision of Shannari. He knows he must make her his. But Shannari has built a wall around her heart. Breaking it down will be no easy task. Especially since her life is much more than her own. And Rhaekhar must decide if he can share her...

This was an epic romance with characters I enjoyed. I loved that the hero knew the heroine was destined for him and would not give up his pursuit. The heroine was noble, honorable and fiery. In addition to the strong characters, this story excited me because it was original, unexpected and thrilling. Because the world is both familiar (has aspects of the Medieval Era) and fantasy I found it easy to orient myself but was constantly surprised and intrigued. The only thing which may disappoint some readers is that this book does not end conclusively. I can only assume that the author must be planning a 2nd or even 3rd book. So while Shannari triumphs there are still more battles and heroics which will no doubt bring more drama to this intense series!

Reviewed by Steph from the Bookaholics Romance Book Club

Kym says

Well wasn't that just as I expected. A lot of similarities to the Their Vampire Queen series. Surrender is way too simple for this author. In places where the imagination has room to run with the story, it falls flat. I would have loved more real fight from the Rose of Shanhasson! For all of her talk of being good with her sword or all the darkness in her, it was all just talk. She only seriously used her sword twice and both times she surrendered easily. As for the Khul, I applaud his consistency. She is his and he made it so.

Overall, this story didn't grab me the way it could have. So much potential wasted.

Cecilia Gjersvold says

I come from a background of reading historical romance, mostly set in Scotland 17th century. Somehow I came across the prologue to this book, The horse master of Shanhasson. I was intrigued by element of BDSM and the male dominance of the book so I decided that I would like to try the next book in the series.

The heroine Shannari is a strong woman fighting to fulfill her destiny. She meets the king of a warrior tribe, Khul Rhaekhar and the attraction is immediate although Shannari refuses to be claimed.

The author paints a vivid picture of this fantasy world and the war of good and evil that rages in the country. I would not mind if Rhaekhar came to claim me, his character is a strong, intense alfa male who I would say easily wins the readers heart. I really enjoyed the detail provided on the tribe culture and customs. The Khul's life guard Gregar adds a thrilling element of forbidden love.

The sex is steamy and rough. Always consensual which is good. Biting and blood is strongly present in the sex. I like the connection the magic of blood gives the characters in this story.

LWB Marissa says

When Joely Sue Burkhart asked if anyone was interested in reading and reviewing the Rose of Shanhasson I raised my hand immediately, I liked the blurb but I forgot this tiny little thing... out of all genres, fantasy is my least favorite one. And although this story is labeled as a fantasy romance (and I heart romance), I avoid this genre as much as possible. I dread the extensive world-building and lengthy descriptions of everything and nothing that slows down the pace of the story. It is just not my thing. And when I read the first line of the book "Blessed Lady Above, why have you forsaken me?" I had this misgiving that I would be in trouble with this one.

But no! This story blew me away almost from the start. How to write a review of the Rose of Shanhasson when my heart still throbs? How to write a review that will do this story justice? Joely Sue Burkhart has created a different, unique world with different realms; each upholds their own traditions and have their own rituals. A world where everything revolves around political intrigues, power and hidden agendas. In this world I met Shannari, the last daughter of the Blessed Lady, heir to the Rose Crown and High Throne, Rhaekhar, warlord and Khul of the Nine Camps of the Sha' Kae and Gregar the Shadowed Blood and former Death Rider. Joely Sue Burkhart does not need lengthy descriptions to introduce the reader to the fantasy world of the Blood and Shadow series, gradually the characters introduce themselves and their realms.

As last daughter of the Blessed Lady, Shannari is destined to wear the Rose Crown and to be the next High Queen of the Green Lands if she can restore her crippled magic. She dreams of uniting the Green Lands, they are now scattered and political intrigues run rampant. If she fails or dies a dark prophesy awaits her people, then Lygon, Lord of Darkness will be free again to rule the world. Shannari is surrounded by enemies; she seeks an alliance with other realms to help her people. But the other realms have their own agenda's and no one is willing to help her. She is engaged to Prince Theo; he wants the High Throne for himself, he won't share it and sees her as a threat. Over the years he has sent many assassins to kill her, so far all have failed. Shannari is one of the three key-characters in this story; we follow her on her trying journey to fulfill her destiny. She is persistent and loyal to her duties and destiny. But shadows hang all about her, a sign of great evil. She stands her ground in the crisscross of political scheming and battle in a world that is dominated by men. She has learned the hard way not to trust anyone but herself and was betrayed by the man she once loved, consequently she has given up on love, she thinks people who believe in love are fools. But the Blessed Lady has provided a way to help Shannari accomplish her destiny, although she does not know it.

It is here that Rhaekhar and his Blood enter the story at page ten. This is also the moment that my mouth went dry and my heart started to throb, for Joely Sue Burkhart knows how to create drop dead gorgeous men with honor, rituals and traditions. This is how she describes Rhaekhar:

"The warlord stared back at her, his golden gaze strangely intense. His long brown hair was intricately braided at each temple, heavy with colored beads and rings. The only clothing he wore was a green cloth wrapped about his hips, leaving his legs from mid-thigh completely bare. His immense chest gleamed like polished bronze in the sunlight crisscrossed with white scars. In fact, his entire body bore such fine lines, all except his chiseled face. Bands of gold, leather and horsehair encircled his biceps. A broadsword nearly as long as she was tall hung across his back, thankfully sheathed."

With details like this Joely Sue Burkhart kept my eyes glued to the pages.

Rhaekhar is the Khul of the Nine Camps of the Sha'Kae, he has come with his men and Blood to the Green Lands because of a vision he had as a young lad. The Great Wind Stallion promised him he would have a love like no other, the Rose of Shanhasson (Shannari). He came to collect what is his and won't leave without her. He defeated Shannari in battle and now she is honor bound to go with him. But all of the Nine Camps of Sha'Kae are scheming for more power, and bringing an outlander to their Camps might just split the Sha'Kae asunder.

Rhaekhar is cold, calm and controlled in battle, he always has a grip on his emotions. He believes in all those things that Shannari does not, love, trust and loyalty. Shannari is Rhaekhar's Na'lanna (beloved); they share this bond that allows them to share their hearts and minds through blood. The more blood they share the stronger the bond. And though Shannari fights Rhaekhar every step of the way she cannot deny the strong, instant chemistry between them.

The third key-character is Gregar; he is one of the nine Blood. The Blood have sworn their lives to Rhaekhar to protect him. They share a blood bond by sacrificing blood; they considered this a great honor. Each one has a special gift, Gregar can wrap the cold Shadow of Death about himself and disappear, he also used to be a Death Rider. He does not get along with Rhaekhar's nearest Blood Varne, they are constantly at each other's throats and are very competitive. Their bickering is intense but also hilarious. As a Death Rider he has this compelling urge to sacrifice Shannari's blood to their God Vulkar because he feels drawn to the shadows that hang about her, as Rhaekhar's Blood he feels the need to honor and protect her, therefore he is constantly at war with himself, and his growing feelings for her do not help either. This dark-haired warrior is wicked, has a sharp tongue but is loyal to the bone to both Rhaekhar and Shannari. He is a complicated, mysterious character and there is still so much more to unravel.

Quote Gregar:

"If Khul or I ever offer blood, you will taste it, without question or hesitation. Any time, any place, no matter who watches."

"It will honor us greatly, Shannari. Everyone in Camp will recognize such a great honor. Tasting blood is not a thing of darkness here, but of honor."

Joely Sue Burkhart beautifully pens down the beginning of a triangular love affair. First of all Rhaekhar has to conquer Shannari's heart and trust which is almost like an mission impossible, except that for Rhaekhar nothing is impossible. Then by accident or fate Gregar and Shannari create their own blood bond, Shannari is not ready to accept that she now has a bond with two men, she feels guilty towards Rhaekhar. But both men give Shannari the space to discover things on her own, helping her to accept the things as they are. The bond the two men have with Shannari only grows stronger from chapter to chapter. The romance and sexual tension radiates from the pages, the love scenes between Rhaekhar and Shannari are hotter than hot, the chemistry between Shannari and Gregar smolders and with each page it grows till Shannari can no longer deny the deep bond the three of them share.

While I was all wrapped up in the erotic entanglement of Shannari and her two warriors, the rituals and traditions of the Sha'Kae, I almost forgot the dirty battle for the High Throne. Shannari's journey to fulfill her destiny has faded a bit into the background but many characters connected to her destiny pass in review. Shannari's father, the king, is not a very strong leader, he means well but makes the wrong choices, yet his

heart is in the right place. The Duke of Pella is a dangerous man, he is only looking for ways to gain more power and to enrich himself. But it is Prince Theo who raises the hair on my neck, he is a real pervert but more to the point he is used as an instrument by the Lord of Darkness to release evil. So at the end of the book the battle for the High Throne has only just begun and many questions are still unanswered, making me want to devour the second part in this trilogy, The Road to Shanhasson on the spot.

Joely Sue Burkhart creates a rich and layered story by interlacing different elements like world-building, characterization, fantasy, suspense and romance perfect to a tee. I love her writing, it is fast-paced, smooth and easy to picture. It is like watching a movie. Her jump-off-the-pages characters are profound and her warriors addictive. The darkness and shadows of evil are perfectly mirrored in the characters that are corrupted by power. The storylines are fresh and original and I loved the traditions and blood rituals of the Sha'Kae, but perhaps they do not fit within everyone's comfort zone. The provocative erotic scenes raised my blood pressure to the max; there really is not a thing in this book that I did not like!

It has been a while that a story took me by surprise and left me breathless, but Joely Sue Burkhart did it. The Rose of Shanhasson is intense, erotic, dark and addictive from start to finish, a perfect read!

Katerina says

I think Ms. Burkhart is slowly becoming a favorite of mine. I am not a huge fan of Shannari and her warrior-princessing mostly because of her being so prim and proper. On the other hand Gregar.. I so don't want to read him dying. I prefer him to the Khul.

Soleil says

“Love; the greatest Gift of all and the greatest Sacrifice.”

If you haven't heard that before, you've obviously never read “The Rose of Shanhasson”, the first book of Bloods and Shadows, by Joely Sue Burkhart.

In which case? You're missing out and I'll tell you why.

Joely Sue Burkhart weaves a perfect blend of romance and fantasy. Her poetic prose sucks you in and refuses to let you go as we learn all about this delightfully heart wrenching love story about Bonds, Honor, Duty and above all else, Love and Sacrifice.

I knew Shannari would be the type of character I could easily identify with. That alone would have been enough to make me want to finish the story. It would have been enough for me to find it enjoyable.

But-oh man!

I fell in love with this story on page 17, with the introduction to Rhaekhar and his Nine Blood.

Gregar, oh Gregar! He was so deliciously wicked and dark that I knew he would end up being my favorite.

Which is not, of course, to say that I didn't love Rhaekhar as well, but *le sigh* I will always, always, always prefer the dark tortured soul. That's just me. Hell, I even liked Varne!

But then, Joely makes it exceptionally hard to dislike her characters.

Except, you know, the REALLY evil ones. :cool:

The Sha'Kae al'Dan? A fascinating culture. The parallels? Superb!

The Love scenes? Passionate, scorching and surprisingly believable given some of the circumstances.

I highly recommend "The Rose of Shanhasson" to any lover of romance, fantasy, or for people like me who want it all in one.

My heart is still racing and my eyes are still a little moist, I need to go grab some Klennex

Jennifer Mathis says

The Rose of Shanhasson is an epic story that swept me into a land of sword-weilding princess,barbarian warriors and magic bonds. However it's not for the weak stomached as there is alot of decribed pain and blood. All around a well wrote story that leaves me wanting more and just my luck this is the first of the series:)

Jennifer says

Shea5 so stubborn!

I really am enjoying this book, but both is the main character so freaking stubborn and makes me want to strangle her half the time lmao. I cheered at the end of this book and I cannot wait to start the next in the series.

Ronni says

As a fan of the fantasy genre, I have lamented the lack of romance and strongly drawn female characters. The late Robert Jordan, George RR Martin, Brandon Sanderson, et al, are some of my favorite authors, but they just cannot create a compelling romance or write a decent sex scene! In her Shanhasson novels, Ms. Burkhart gives homage to the great fantasy authors that I have mentioned above (and I see a bit of Diana Gabaldon, as well), and her fantasy world-building contains the romance elements, which are sadly missing from traditional fantasy. Thank you, Ms. Burkhart!

? BookAddict ↗ La Crimson Femme says

I worship Ms. Burkhart. She is an amazing writer. Each time I read one of her books, I think, why didn't I read this book earlier? I am so glad I purchased this book and enjoyed it thoroughly. Shannari is a literally a warrior princess. I love this strong yet prim and proper lead female character. What I enjoy about Ms. Burkhart's writing style is that she doesn't explain her world or tell me how it works. She reveals the world like a rose opening from a bud into full bloom.

Something that really spoke to me in this story was Gregar and Shannari's relationship. I am reassured that I'm not an anomaly because of how Ms. Burkhart explained Gregar and Shannari's dark ties through dreams. (view spoiler)

While I loved Shannari's and Gregar's relationship, I loved her relationship with Rhaekhar just as much, in a completely different way. He is an alpha male with a wicked sense of humour. He's also amazingly compassionate. Ms. Burkhart's men are impossible to compete with, in real life. There are no men who could possibly be like them. They are everything a strong woman wants in a mate. Her men make me yearn for things that I thought I'd long forgotten or repressed.

I recommend this book to those who enjoy strong lead characters who aren't afraid to hold themselves to higher standards. This was truly a romance story which melted my heart. The surprise menage a trois with the edge of danger makes me shiver. Love it!

Maria M says

3.5*

I expected this to be as good as the Queen Takes Knights series bc that just blew me away and remains as my fave this year, but there was just so much pain and uncertainty and fear in Shannari in this book that it overshadowed so much of the story for me. I loved khul and her shadowed blood though!! I love how intensely they love shannari!! I def want to see what happens next.

Susi says

I received this book from the author and I'm totally biased cuz Joely is one of the nicest people I know and I totally adore her work. You have been warned!

I haven't read a romantic fantasy book as good as this one for a long time. It has everything I love about this genre and even a bit more. I always like it when the fantasy is something special. I don't want to read about orks and elves any longer. I have so had enough of those.

I appreciate it when the author creates something new and creative and not just a Tolkien copy. I love the invention of new races and divine creatures. I love it when the different cultures speak individual languages. Yes, I know it's totally crazy but I'm one of those people who actually owns a copy of the Elvish Dictionary.

But back to this book. The world we find ourselves in is kind of medieval with a touch of magic and more

than enough divine intervention. The people in this world believe in the power of their deities, so they all try to stay on the good side of the one they chose to follow.

The story is all about Shannari. She is a princess but not the kind we normally think of when hearing that word. She had to defend herself more than once and got gravely hurt in the process - physically and even more so emotionally. She is a strong character with deep bonds to her people. She knows what her destiny is and she is not afraid to sacrifice herself on the way. She knows what the important and right thing to do is but all this knowledge doesn't make her feel better. She knows there is no way around it so she will hold her head up high and just live through it.

The first time she meets Rhaekhar is in a battle and she sees him as a strong warrior and also as the barbarian he is. But OMG, I want my own barbarian now. Nope, I take that back I want my own PAIR of barbarians now. *wicked grin* But more about that later.

Rhaekhar is the Khul of the Nine Camps of the Sha'Kae al'Dan, so to speak their leader. He is the best in everything *wink* and has to stand up to all expectations in order to stay Khul. He's an alpha male from head to toe and he never gives up when his goal is in sight. And his goal is to have Shannari. Not as some low sex-slave as some of our dirty minds might think. No, he wants to marry her and spend the rest of his life at her side- forever. He knows from a vision that she is the one and he will fight for her hard with all he has and let me say that this would win my heart ASAP. He's a kind man although he rules with a strong hand. But he has a good heart and wants to make everything right.

And then we have Gregar *big sigh*- the Shadowed Blood. A Blood is a kind of personal bodyguard for the Khul and all 7 of them should never leave his back. And with never I mean like not even in the personal moments we sometimes have. *blush* Gregar is a special one- he has so much darkness, shadow inside that it sometimes broke my heart. He's a passionate man with a really wicked grin and oh so many other good characteristics but he really can be scary from time to time. I can't even say for sure why I loved him so much. Perhaps cuz I wanted to hug him and make it all better? I'm really not sure but Gregar is so my new book boy friend. We get the first glimpse at a wonderful love triangle but at the end we have to be patient for the next book to get a better look at my beloved Gregar.

The Rose of Shanhasson grabbed my heart from the first sentence to the last word and I wanted to scream for the next book when I closed this one. Okay, it's probably not for the faint of heart with all the blood and shadows in it but I felt honored with every drop. The emotional build up was heart wrenching from time to time and the sexual tension will boil your blood. The fantasy is fascinating and wonderfully developed, the storyline thrilling through the whole book. All in all a must read for all the fantasy lovers out there who love to read something hot and spicy. The Rose of Shanhasson so deserves the title na'lanna for me.

Kat Desi says

This wasn't my first Joely Sue Burkhart read so I'm familiar with her way of storytelling but I have to be honest, I was completely blown away by this book! I firstly The Horse Master of Shanhasson, so I had some expectations.

The author did not merely meet them, but she had indeed exceeded them!

I'm usually a speed reader, but this book I knew I had to read slowly as to savor this reading experience. Literally at the first page, I was completely hooked. Also, I'm more than surprised that this book has not

garnered the attention that it actually deserves!

The author had weaved a unique vast dominion where the kingdoms are currently in chaos. Shannari, the last daughter of the Blessed Lady and is the rightful Queen of the Green Lands, but her magic is crippled and she finds herself helpless against the other scheming individuals vying for a place on the throne. She then feels that the Blessed Lady had forsaken her when Rhaekar, the Khul of the Sha'Kae al'Dan, and his Nine Blood steal her away back to their camp

Her writing style, completely poetic, left me mesmerized as the events unfolded. She created characters with depth, characters impeccably developed. The worldbuilding... just wow.

Shannari's journey doesn't end at the last page. I look forward to reading the rest of the series and anticipate what will happen on the journey back to Shanhasson.

A few days later, I'm still overwhelmed at what I had experienced this book. I highly recommend this to Epic/Dark Fantasy lovers and Romance lovers alike. This book is not for the squeamish, however. :)

This copy was kindly provided by the author in exchange for a fair and honest review.
