



2008

Rapunzel's Revenge

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Reynolds, Kate (2008) "Rapunzel's Revenge," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 29 : Iss. 1 , Article 8.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol29/iss1/8>

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Hale, Shannon and Dean. *Rapunzel's Revenge*. Illustrated by Nathan Hale. Bloomsbury, 2008. ISBN 9781599900704. \$18.99. 144 p.

Reviewer: Donna Cardon

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fairytales; Graphic Novels;

Subject: Rapunzel--Juvenile fiction; Graphic novels--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Newbery Honor author Shannon Hale has teamed up with her husband to create a delightfully whacky graphic novel version of Rapunzel. Rapunzel is the sheltered and lonely (supposed) daughter of a powerful southwestern patrona, Gothel. On her twelfth birthday, Rapunzel discovers the terrible working conditions outside the hacienda walls and the truth about her real parents who have been forced to work as slaves in Gothel's mines. Rapunzel denounces her former life so Gothel uses plant magic to grow a giant tree and imprisons Rapunzel in its top. The magic that Gothel uses to grow the tree also makes Rapunzel's hair grow, and she eventually uses her hair to escape. Rapunzel meets a thief named Jack, of course, and together they set off to bring an end to Gothel's evil control over the region.

The way Hale has twisted a familiar fairy tale to make the female character stronger is reminiscent of Levine's *Princess Tales* (e.g. *Princess Sonora and the Long Sleep*, Harper 1999). This is definitely a strong girl book. Jack repeatedly leaves the fighting to Rapunzel who uses her hair like a bull whip to defeat the bad guys. The text is spare, mostly dialog, allowing the illustrations to tell the remainder of the story. Nathan Hale's illustrations are colorful, fun, and full of action. They clearly communicate not only what is happening, but also how the characters feel. Nothing but pure fun and a great book for reluctant reader girls.

Volume 29, no. 1 (Sept/Oct 2008)