



By The River

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After a bad breakup, Adam Kavanaugh returns to his sleepy old river town to find himself. His family hasn't changed, but he has some work to do readjusting to small town life, so much that he wonders if he's made a mistake by coming home.

But from the moment Leith Marshall pops out of the Ohio River and smiles at him, there's no turning back. Between Leith's swimmer body, sweet laugh, and gentle soul, Adam is head over heels. Leith lets Adam into his little world bit by bit, from his mother's abandoned aquarium shop to his elderly father's fairy tale delusions.

Which might not be so delusional after all. Leith does have a certain affinity for water. It seems almost to listen to him. The current never pulls him downriver, the tub doesn't splash, and the pool hardly moves around him even at an all out sprint. He can't spend a night away from his river, and then there's the way he sings. Adam has to admit, he'd steer his ship straight into the rocks for that.

So maybe Leith inherited a few things from his mysterious mother. It doesn't mean he'll disappear like she did. That's absurd.

Right?

By the River is the "water" in the Elementals project.

By The River Details

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From Reader Review By The River for online ebook

Chris says

3.5 stars. Good m/m paranormal romance about a guy in his mid-twenties who feels drawn to return to his home town, where he becomes enthralled by a mysterious and naive college swimmer. As MandyM noted, while this was beautifully written, the HFN ending felt very tenuous... as if the "for now" might only be a few minutes or days.

Natalie says

This was so, so beautiful: a perfect little tale of a man who moves back to his hometown and falls head over heels in love with a bewitching swimmer. I loved how this seemingly simple story flirted with mythology and folklore. The writing is *great*, and one of my very favorite things about this author is the way she combines the ordinary with the magical. By the end, my eyes were prickling with tears, and I think I held my breath for the last few pages. Well worth a read!

Kazza says

No great dramas, no screaming shrews or homophobic parents. Nice story. Nice characters. A change from some of the other books out there in the genre. By The River is not too long, just right for the story itself. It certainly has some sexy moments. I also liked the interesting and strong look at people and how they vary. Full review at **On Top Down Under Book Reviews** - <http://bookreviewsandtherapy.blogspot...>

Mel Bradley says

Word Count: 30,388 (72 pages epub)
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This was my first time reading Katey Hawthorne – and I'm glad I picked it up. The summary of the book was a bit mysterious – I couldn't tell if I was going to get a shifter book or a love story from the description, so I did not have many expectations going in.

The story was about a hometown guy moving back home for no reason other than he was pulled back there. In fact, it seems like he's lived his life and made decisions because they felt right – without ever looking into the reason behind them. On one of his runs he sees another man that he's attracted to, and from then on, they are inseparable. Oh, and did I mention that the man lives on the river?

The read itself was intriguing, I kept wanting to see what was next and ended up reading it in one sitting (a

very quick, short read). The attraction and pull between the main characters was very well-written. However... I am still unsure how/why/if there was a fantasy element in the book. It was never really explained and that was a bit... peculiar. In addition, this book practiced one of my biggest pet peeves – it ended in the MIDDLE of the story. I still have no idea why he was different, how it ends up, why the craziness is there, what happened to his mom, did they return, and so on. She cut the book way too short and kept me wondering (which is NOT a good thing once I get to the end).

The sex and heat, was good though – it was more about their connection than the actual act most of the time. In fact, I believe they only had “sex” once, but were active along the way. The characters seemed connected and very much into each other – and it was hard to look away!

Out of four...

Overall Read: ♥♥

Sex Heat: ♥♥♥

Plot: ♥

This is a quick read and HOT – vanilla sex for sure, but if you like a strong connection with a little bit of mystery, than this is a great read for you. It combines heat and sometimes graphically describes the actions, and other times hints at what’s going on. If you are able to look over the plot holes (and incomplete story), than I would recommend this.

Jess Candela says

3.5 stars

The writing style of this was almost poetic, and gave a real sense of magical possibility. And yet, this book didn't work quite as well for me as others I've read by this author.

I thought Adam's perception, understanding, and acceptance of Leith's otherness was insufficiently explained. Maybe I was just supposed to accept it as part of Adam's tendency to trust and act on his feelings, but I wanted something more than that.

I also wanted more explanation about the significance of his tattoo, since it seemed to be meaningful that he chose exactly the bird he did and no other. Why? I guessed that it was related to his understanding of Leith's otherness, but if Adam is also "other" in some way, that was never made clear enough for me.

A few times I found myself thinking, "I'd like to buy a pronoun." Not that it was ever unclear to whom was being referred, but because it became so noticeable it detracted from my ability to stay in the story. If it had just been Adam's speech/thoughts, I would've simply attributed it to his style, and that would've been fine. I might not even have noticed, beyond appreciating the flow. But Leith and everyone else seemed to speak with exactly the same lack of pronouns, and that disconcerted me.

The ending also disconcerted me, as it seemed abrupt and I still had so many questions. But then I pondered for a while, and decided that I had enough information to feel good about the HEA, and that while more story would have been nice, it wasn't necessary.

Maybe I just needed my hand held more than usual when I read this. Certainly I felt more stupid than usual

while reading it. Whether that was me or the story is an open question.

Sandra says

Not quite four stars due to the abrupt ending that left the story slightly unfinished. I liked the relationship between Adam and Leith, their easy banter and even though it smacked of insta-love, I believed the romance between them.

TJ as Adam's younger brother was a good secondary character, even if he only had one major scene. He brought a voice of reason to the table and gave his brother something to think about.

I felt like Adam grew into himself in this novella, and for once experienced real love - the one where you love someone so much that you just want them to be happy, no matter what it might cost you.

And I very much enjoyed Leith's character - eager to learn, wistful, and more or less dancing to the beat of his very own drummer. He had a supernatural quality about him, something ethereal that drew me in from the start, much like Adam was drawn to him. Like a siren song, perhaps, though muted to an extent.

The writing was beautiful in some places and too purple in others, but overall well done. A better editor might have suggested the removal of 'impossibly' - one of my pet peeves.

At only 70 pages on my Nook, this was a quick read, something to take with you to the beach on a hot Summer day to devour while the wind is in your hair and the sound of crashing waves in your ear. Fitting, too.

** I received a free copy of this book from the author. A positive review was not promised in return. **

DarienMoya says

4.5

I am so in love with this story, just so freaking in love. It's hauntingly beautiful, with unique characters, and the writing just seems so very real. I am so in love with this small little town, and I felt so important to be invited to get to know Leith and Adam.

Adam has moved back to his hometown, after sampling life in the big city. He has no idea what he wants out of life but he is sure about one thing, he needs to be home when he decides that he needs to stop running and face the world head on. While out working on his fitness, Adam sees someone floating in the Ohio River and heads over to offer his help somehow. He soon realizes that the person is at ease in tumultuous water, so very at peace.

The super swimmer turns out to be Leith Marshall (sexy as hell), a member of the same swim team his brother TJ swims on. Adam and Leith have instant chemistry, and Adam finds himself seeking the company of a man others would categorize as odd. To Adam, Leith is perfect even with his strange ways. He fears travelling because he doesn't want to be away from the river, he has this crazy affinity for water and it does

crazy things when he's in it, plus he sings alone in the bathtub and it is insanely beautiful to hear. Yet, Adam falls hard, and what once was odd becomes *whatever* because it's coming from Leith.

With Adam, Leith starts to open up and finds a true friend. He has him taking baby steps away from the father others call crazy. Leith's past has somehow shaped his future, but Adam starts leading him down a new path. However, this path might lead to losing Leith forever. Sometimes you do crazy things for the people you love, and Adam is definitely in love with Leith.

Gosh, I love this story! It's so sad, happy, and beautiful and a whole bunch of other feelings combined. Leith and Adam are beautiful together, and I am so happy they have each other. They invited me into their private world filled with rainbow fishes, life, and love. The story is clearly very intimate, and I am glad the author took the time to introduce Adam's brother. He sheds light on how life was for Leith growing up, his innocence, and brings home how he is just more than the world and no one understands it. TJ also sheds light on his brother's life before which was never a real part of the story. I really wished the part about Adam had been left out; I was thinking new beginnings and had no interest in his past.

The reader is never told exactly what Leith is, but it doesn't seem to matter and it shouldn't matter. I loved Adam because of his acceptance, and the way he treated Leith (*all kinds of awesome*). Love Leith, he is so quirky and interesting and I wanna see him in a Speedo.

Overall, I really enjoyed reading this story. The writing was awesome, and the characters and the story were beautiful. There is just enough intrigue to keep the reader guessing and hoping for something, I am not quite sure what I am hoping for but I want it to be good. I would categorize this as HFN, I somehow feel that Leith and Adam's story is just beginning and it's cloaked in so much mystery. Seriously though check this one out; it is very enjoyable and sexy.

I believe this quote sums up the awesome:

"Everyone pretended he was just some weirdo, denying his existence so they didn't have to hurt their tiny brains, trying to fit him into the world."

Vio says

3.5 stars

Lovely flowing story with intriguing elements and sweet guys, it was a very likable romance that has a dreamy feel to it. So this is where it gets tricky for me the ending, I wasn't feeling the warm and fuzzies in fact I was fearful that certain predictions would eventuate its all a bit mysterious and up in the air, not quite finished. It felt more like a HFN rather than a HEA. I guess we'll have to wait and see what happens in the next book.

Lara says

Everyone pretended he was just some weirdo, denying his existence so they didn't have to hurt their tiny brains, trying to fit him into the world.

I am in love with this story and these characters. This is the first thing I have read by Katey Hawthorne, but I am head over heels for her writing style. I think the word beautiful has been so over used in all the reviews of this book, but it really just fits. The entire thing was mesmerizingly beautiful. It was a magical love story. No angst, no drama, just love. I'm in love with the cover. I'm in love with the river. **And I am SO IN LOVE with Leith.** Talk about magical! And Adam is so perfect for him.

It appears that this is going to be a series, because there is not really an ending in this book. It kinda just stops mid-story. I don't think I would call it an HFN, more a to-be-continued. Because to me, it is clear that there is a HEA for these two from the first moment they meet.

"I want you Adam. I want you forever."

Adam didn't know when always had turned into forever, and he didn't care because he meant them both and might've from the beginning.

Katey Hawthorne says

Sleepy river town. Lost artist. Sweet swimmer. Tattoos and fairy tales. Coming late July 2012. Yay!

<http://www.kateyhawthorne.com/p/by-ri...>

Anke says

Might be the format on my kindle, but without breaks between the scenes it was a bit difficult to read. And might be my ESL, but overall the whole story felt elusive to me, I couldn't quite grasp it.

Lauren says

3.5 stars - This was short and sweet. It was beautifully written, too. It's not my favourite by this author (I absolutely adore her Superpowered Love series) but it's still a nice read. Leith was such a sweetheart.

Heather C says

I really enjoyed this. It was sweet. It was different. My only issue was that I found some of the wording odd to the point I didn't understand what the author meant.

Elizabetta says

What I like most about this is the mystery of it, not only in the storyline but in the writing. How the wording doesn't give too much away, let's you linger in the shadows of it. How it conjures up a dreamy, other-worldly feel. Just as Adam learns to let Leith have his freedom, the author lets the reader have freedom to interpret the story between the lines.

This skirts playfully around water mythology. Adam and Leith's story is linked strongly to the river that runs through their hometown, directly behind Leith's back yard. In fact, water plays such a strong role that it becomes the third character in this romance. Adam returns to his hometown, in search of something. Or, maybe himself. Leith is a gifted athlete, a real talent on the college swim team. He is connected to water in some mystical way, has a sweet siren song that weaves its spell on Adam. And the reader is lulled in too.

I had to suspend my 'but, they just met' criticism and just go with the flow... so to speak. (Really though, what *did* draw Leith to Adam so quickly?) And running through it is a message about small town phobias and self acceptance. Adam discovers that yes, maybe you can go home again.

This is sweet, quiet storytelling, nothing momentous really happens. A gentle kind of love story floating on the surface of darker fears.

Don Bradshaw says

Reviewed on Hearts On Fire... <http://heartsonfirereviews.com/>

This was a beautiful love story built on trust, commitment and a little fear. The first in what appears to be a series, this story was a perfect start. Adam moved away from the tiny little town in West Virginia as soon as he could and never looked back. He went through lives and loves with disregard just making it as an artist in Washington D.C. Sometimes when you run so hard away from something though you wind up running smack dab into it and Adam wound back in the tiny little river town he grew up in. Leith is a college senior on the swim team with Adam's younger brother TJ. Adam is attracted to Leith the first time he sees the unassuming young man at a swim meet. Leith is a loner with no real friends to speak of except for the Ohio river across the street from his and his father's run down house. Leith somehow has an affinity with water. His father believes that it came from Leith's mother but it sounds more like a fairy tale than any reality until Adam actually sees just how water and Leith embrace each other. Love blossoms between the two men much to the chagrin of TJ who seems to know Leith better than one would think and knows his brother only too well. Both Adam and Leith take chances on each other and grow through their trust and love. Ms Hawthorne did an excellent job of developing the characters of TJ, Leith and Adam fleshing them out slowly yet fully. The mysterious affinity that Leith has for water was woven through the story well and while it kept me guessing right until the end, it never overwhelmed the love story as sometimes happens with a paranormal book. I couldn't help but fall in love with the sweet, giving and somewhat innocent Leith. TJ was the voice of reason in the story and brought Adam to attention often. The story line flowed beautifully without a hiccup. There were a couple of plot twists but Ms Hawthorne delivered on a sweet HEA ending. I'm anxiously awaiting book two. I recommend this well written love story to anyone looking for a feel good book with plenty of great sex.
