

# Birth of a New Hero

By Holly Lisle

Aaran av Savissha, black-sheep youngest son of the nomadic Tonk clan chieftain Roobyn av Savis, fled to the sea at the age of sixteen, and discovered that even more wildness and danger and freedom than he had as a nomad were to his liking.

He's been the Hagedwar tracker for various Tonk privateers hunting down pirates and slavers off the coasts of Hyre ever since. His philosophy, boiled down to 'Live hard, die young, and leave a good-looking corpse,' has given him a woman or three in every port; a congenital incapacity to hang on to his profits (good Hagedwar trackers are WELL compensated); an impressive collection of hair-raising tales and bawdy ballads; and a determination to keep living this good life forever.

His dreams of the perpetual good life end when he tracks a cry for help back to a hermitage in the deadly Islands of the Fallen Suns. His captain won't take the wolf-pack (privateer fleet) that far into forbidden waters. So Aaran either pretends he didn't hear the plea, or talks his Ethebet's-Keeper cousin, who does know how to handle money, into buying a ship with him. And hiring a crew. And taking on investors.

Aaran takes the plunge, risking everything – and discovering that he's rescued about a hundred virgins guarded by terrifying Obsidian warriors – and led by Hawksparr, a blind nun who can see both the past and the future and who is possessed by a goddess of war. Who has bad news for him, and the Tonks.

I've spent the morning thus far getting to know Aaran, and digging up things I thought would be useful for him (from whence, also, came the little collection of links I wouldn't usually post – research can land you in the damndest places.) Aaran isn't the sort of man I'd have ever wanted to date, but

he's going to be ... well ... interesting for the involuntarily-cloistered Hawkspar.

Poor Riknir, though. First he lost the book title. It was going to be RIKNIR, remember? Then, when it became SEAFOX, he faltered in the POV role, and Hawkspar took over as the primary voice. And now he's gone completely, relegated back to existing only in his role in TALYN.

I guess when characters start backing out of the story, the writer needs to listen. Only ... maybe sooner next time.

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