

Hawkspar and Slavery and Freedom

By Holly Lisle

One of the themes that I hadn't planned, but that keeps recurring as Hawkspar works her way toward her date with destiny, is what it means to be a slave versus what it means to be free. This particular theme keeps presenting itself in different guises, and every time, it keeps catching me by surprise.

Another of the themes – one I planned – is how we become who we are, and how we choose who we will be next. Those two themes are tangling together in odd ways as Hawkspar, a woman who has been all her life a slave, and who has inherited a power she doesn't want, finally comes face to face with the people who would have been hers had she not been stolen away by slavers. She's presented with the religion she would have followed, the customs she would have observed, the language she would have spoken. She aches for what might have been, and at the same time cannot find the bridge to cross that will take her from the woman she is to that woman she could have been.

The woman she could have been would have been free in ways she cannot imagine. The woman she is has been bound by duty to remain a slave to sacrifice herself for the freedom of the people she would have been and now cannot be.

And I'm struggling to make sense of her struggle, and play fair with all the parts of it – duty and obligation and hope and despair and everything else. Today is turning into a complicated day for me, but I can't let it become a complicated day for the writing. This stuff has to be clear as water, and right now it feels like mud.

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