

# HAWKSPAR Confession

By Holly Lisle

I've discovered that I'm terrified to revise **Hawkspar**. I freeze when I pick up the manuscript; my mind goes blank when I open the document.

If you've been following my weblog for long, you know about my struggles with this book. If you're new, this HAWKSPAR link and this one will tell you as much as you care to know. After a solid first-draft run and a promising lurch into the revision, I find myself fighting with this, and failing miserably, and now I'm forced to look at why I'm failing.

It isn't because I don't know what I want to do with the revision. What I want to do is pretty simple.

**I want to strengthen the heroine.** First time through, I started the girl who will be Hawkspar out in a position of extreme weakness, and allowed her to wallow in that weakness for quite a while before she grew a backbone. This time through, I want her to face the same oppression and danger and the same horrors, but to choose to go into them rather than to be dragged in whining and wailing.

**I want to tie in the Tonk elements early on.** Both of my main characters this time are Tonk, though one was ripped from the arms of her murdered mother when she was little, and has been raised in a very odd monastery ever since. That would be the girl who grows up to be Hawkspar. In the first draft, I didn't permit her to remember being Tonk, so that she had to grow back into it. It didn't work well, and this time I need to clean that up.

**I want to tie the first elements of the book together with the better stuff I came up with as I went along.** I'm always a hell of a lot better toward the end of the first draft of a story,

once I've discovered what it's actually about. This tends to leave me with a lot of first-part manuscript housekeeping, though, and in the case of **Hawkspar**, this remains true.

That's it. I already know I nailed the ending, I already know how to get to the ending, but I cannot get my body and my brain together on the page. And I've figured out exactly why.

I'm scared shitless to work on it, because I might not be able to make it good enough.

Because it is the book that follows **Talyn**, and **Talyn** was the best thing I've ever done. Not by a little. By a lot. By an order of magnitude, or maybe two. It feels from where I'm standing at this moment as if something magical happened to me while I was writing that book – that I hooked into some part of myself that I didn't even know existed – some part of me that is a hell of a lot better writer than I am. Standing *here*, looking back at *there*, I don't know how I did that.

Worse – far worse – I don't know if I can do it again, because I cannot for the life of me figure out where it came from the first time.

And I want to do it again. I can feel in my gut that **Hawkspar** could be that good. The bones are there. I have the world that I adore, I have a couple of characters I love, I have a story that grabs me, with things that matter at stake. But every time I start into the revision, the terror digs in its talons and I shudder to a petrified halt, afraid that I'm going to screw it up, lose the story, kill the magic, or worse, that the magic will never show up at all. And then I find myself as I am right now, with my heart racing and my hands shaking and my mouth dry, because I am afraid to put the pen on the page and start making the changes I know I have to make.

I've been worried by books before, but I've never been *here*. I have never been frozen for months, working on everything else in the world because I'm too afraid to touch the book I

want to do more than anything else.

With that said, with my fear put forward and into words, admitted both to myself and to you, maybe I can now do this thing. I may be scarce for a while. If I am, that means I've managed to embrace the fear and push myself into the words. So I'll hope you don't see me for a while.

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