

Reviewed in PW and Kliatt

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle

Lest I forget. TALYN received favorable reviews in both Publishers Weekly and Kliatt.

Kliatt gave the story synopsis (with lots of spoilers), then said, "For some reason, the narrative alternates between first-person Talyn and third-person Gair. Still, it's an unusually thoughtful work, unsparing of detail, with characters who must solve their own problems before they save the world."

PW complained in more words about the alternating first and third, but said, it was an "extremely well-written story. It's fascinating to be in the head of Talyn of the Tonks as she deals with being a career soldier abruptly dismissed when the foreigners known as Feegash broker a cease-fire in the 300-year war between her people and the neighboring Eastils. It's intriguing to also see through the eyes of Skirmig, ..., and Gair, the Eastil captain ..." (the removed portions in this case are to pull out spoilers to the plot). The review goes on to say that readers "will likely be captivated by this stern and stirring treatise on the dangers of enforced peace and the virtues of paranoid preparation for the worst."

They liked the book. They didn't get the structure.

Okay. So. Why DID I write the thing in alternating first and third?

Because it WAS fascinating to be in Talyn's head, and to hear her voice. I didn't want to hear 230,000 words of her voice, though. That's a whole lot of time inside the head of one person.

Staying behind her eyes alone would also have forced me to neglect the other main character, Gair, who carries about 40% of the story, and who is not with Talyn for most of the book. I didn't want to write dual-first-person, though; I wanted the reader to be closet to Talyn, and to stand a step back from Gair, and also from Skirmig (whose POV scenes are very, very rare.) Both of their roles change through the course of the story, and both needed to keep a few secrets.

I'm followig the same first/third structure in HAWKSPAR, as well, and for the same reasons. The main character has about 60% of the book, and carries it in first person, the alternate main character gets 40% of the book, and carries it in third.

It's an unusual novel structure, I know, but I don't think it's particularly mentally taxing. I'll be interested to see if readers catch the flow of it more easily than reviewers.

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