So. HAWKSPAR…long story short.

written by Holly
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It ain't all over yet, but here's what happened with HAWKSPAR, and where I am now:

Back in November-ish of last year, the editor working with me on HAWKSPAR (we'll leave names out of this) told me about 55,000 words needed to come out of the 190,000-word story if I wanted to have it printed as one book instead of broken up into two (breaking it up into two dooms the book in question). I didn't know where I could make those cuts and still leave the story intact, and said as much, and asked her to help me figure out where I could do the slicing. She agreed to help me, and I went on to write another book for another editor in the meantime. I got a couple of e-mails from her telling me it was taking longer than she'd thought, but she'd have the request for revisions to me by X date or Y date.

And then she quit her job to go elsewhere, and I still hadn't gotten my edit requests. I got an e-mail from the new editor—again, no names—saying "Hi, I'm your new editor, I'll be taking over HAWKSPAR."

And then I got an e-mail forwarded through my agent asking how many galleys I wanted.

Now, a warier and more cynical person than I would have smelled a rat, but I just figured the publisher had decided to go ahead with the book at full length, and **I got all happy**.

Then one day a few weeks later, the copyedits showed up on my doorstep, and the other shoe dropped. Hard.

My ex-editor had not passed the book on intact. Neither had she made sensible cuts in it (which she wasn't supposed to do anyway, but for now never mind that). She had not in any way, shape, or form edited the book. What she had done was absofuckinglutely unbelievable. **She had simply removed every scene from the hero's POV**, with no regard to continuity, missing information, missing storylines, missing characters, or anything else. This brought the book down to the length the publisher wanted, but left the manuscript an incomprehensible, reeking mess in the process. The hero, after all, carried half the story, half the love interest, and about 90% of one central, especially critical, storyline, as well as large parts in almost all of the rest of them.

This editor sneaked what she did past me, never letting me know she had cut the book, never letting me see what she had done, never sending me a copy of the manuscript, or an email, or anything. Instead, she sent the gutted HAWKSPAR on to a copyeditor and to galleys simultaneously as if it were finished work approved by me, before scooting out the door to her new life. And, when I hit the ceiling over what had been done to my book, she had the nerve to defend what she did in a way that had the new editor e-mailing me and telling me "I know that the book was cut with your and its best interest in mind."

I don't get angry all that often, but over this, I was livid. And I've been fighting for the integrity of the book since then. As of today, we're asking for an extension so that I can cut the 55,000 words in a sane fashion (won't be asking for the help of an editor again, though). If the publisher won't see its own editor's responsibility in this and give me the time I've asked for, then the book will go out at full length, but in two volumes, where it will sell like crap (a fact the new editor admits), and sink into oblivion without further notice.

For all of you folks who think you want to make a living doing

this, realize that although nothing like this little cautionary tale had happened to any of my previous long, long list of books, it happened to this one, and there’s no guarantee that I’ll be able to fix the thing.

And for those of you who are considering buying the book, check back. I’ll let you know whether I’ll be able to recommend it or not.

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