

**SWORDS OF HAVEN**  
**The ADVENTURES**  
**of Hawk & Fisher**

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**Hawk & Fisher**  
**Winner Takes All**  
**The God Killer**

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**SIMON R. GREEN**



**A ROC BOOK**



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AFTERMATH

# Swords of Haven

## The Adventures of Hawk & Fisher

In the dark city of Haven, where everything's for sale, city  
Guard captains Hawk & Fisher cannot be bought.

Hawk & Fisher

They're two tough cops in a city of magic and mayhem.  
A husband-and-wife team with fast blades and even faster  
mouths, who dare to cleanse Haven's corrupted soul. Together  
they are the perfect crimebusters ... with a touch of magic.

**Hawk & Fisher**

The war against crime is forever.

“I think what charmed me about it is the absolutely unabashed manner in which Green has copied the style of almost any current cop/detective/sleuth TV show—the situations and dialogue are straight off your current screen.... Green makes this peculiar combination of classic fantasy and modern tube script work; it's good fun and ideal light reading.”—*Asimov's Science Fiction*

“Green's very different approach to writing fantasy adventure—bearing a strong resemblance to the private eye novel—works surprisingly well.”—*Chronicle*

“Simon R. Green's books are fun books that grab you, suck you in, and don't let you go. They are always fun, and the Hawk & Fisher books are no exception. Hawk and Fisher are a couple of honest, straight-talking, tough-as-nails Guards who use steel as often as wits to keep themselves out of trouble. They bully their way through situations, often just letting their reputations work their magic. The plots are straightforward with just enough of a twist to keep you guessing until the end. If you've read and enjoyed Green's other books, you don't want to miss these books. If you haven't read Green before, *Swords of Haven* is a good way to get a taste of his style of writing.”—SF Site

“Swift, intriguing, and lively. Green has a marvelous gift of leavening grim situations with wicked wit, and the intrigues are intricate enough to leave even the most practiced mystery solver puzzling. A stormer of a series. Fine stuff.”—Prism UK

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**Some things can never be forgiven.**

## A HiddEN DARkNESS

Haven is a dark city.

The narrow streets huddled together, the plain stone and timber buildings leaning on each other for support. Out-leaning upper storeys bowed to each other like tired old men, shutting out the light, but even in the shadows there was little relief from the midsummer heat. The glaring sun scorched down on the sprawling city, driving all moisture from the air. The streets were parched and dusty and thick with buzzing flies. Being a seaport, Haven usually got all the rain it wanted, and then some, but not in midsummer. The long days wore on, and the baking heat made them a misery of sweat and thirst and endless fatigue. The days were too hot to work and the nights too hot to sleep. Tempers grew short and frayed, but it was too hot to brawl. Birds hung on the sky like drifting shadows, but there was never a trace of a cloud or a breeze. Haven at midsummer was a breeding ground for trouble. The heat stirred men's minds and brought forth hidden evils. Everyone watched the skies and prayed for rain, and still the long dry summer dragged on.

Hawk and Fisher, Captains in the city Guard, strolled unhurriedly down Chandler Lane, deep in the rotten heart of the Northside. It was too hot to hurry. The grimy, overshadowed lane was a little cooler than most, which meant the heat was only mildly unbearable. Flies hovered over piles of garbage and swarmed around the open sewers. The squat and ugly buildings were black with soot from the nearby tannery, and the muggy air smelt strongly of smoke and tannin.

Hawk was tall, dark, and no longer handsome. He wore a black silk patch over his right eye, and a series of old scars ran down the right side of his face, showing pale against the tanned skin. He wore a simple cotton shirt and trousers, but didn't bother with the black Guardsman's cloak required by regulations. It was too hot for a cloak, and anyway, he didn't need one to tell people he was a Guard. Everyone in Haven had heard of Captain Hawk.

He didn't look like much. He was lean and wiry rather than muscular, and he was beginning to build a stomach. He wore his dark hair at shoulder length, swept back from his forehead and tied with a silver clasp. He had only just turned thirty, but already there were a few streaks of grey in his hair. At first glance he looked like just another bravo, not as young as he once was, perhaps a little past his prime. But few people stopped at the first glance; there was something about Hawk, something in his scarred face and single cold eye that gave even the drunkest hardcase pause. On his right hip Hawk carried a short-handled axe instead of a sword. He was very good with an axe.

Captain Fisher walked at Hawk's side, echoing his pace and stance with the naturalness of long companionship. Isobel Fisher was tall, easily six feet in height, and her long blond hair fell to her waist in a single thick plait. She was in her mid to late twenties, and handsome rather than beautiful. There was a rawboned harshness to her face that contrasted strongly with her deep blue eyes and generous mouth. Like Hawk, she wore a cotton shirt and trousers, and no cloak. The shirt was half-unbuttoned to show a generous amount of bosom, and her shirt sleeves were rolled up, revealing arms corded with muscle and lined with old scars. She wore a sword on her hip, and her hand rested comfortably on the pommel.

Hawk and Fisher; partners, husband and wife, guardians of the city law. Known, respected, and mostly feared throughout Haven, even in the lower Northside, where the very rats went round in pairs for safety. Hawk and Fisher were the best, and everyone knew it. They were honest and hard-working, a rare combination in Haven, but more important still, they were dangerous.

Hawk looked about him and scowled slightly. Chandler Lane was deserted, with not a soul in sight, and that was ... unusual. The afternoon was fast turning into evening, but even so there should have been people out selling and buying and making a deal. On the lower Northside everything was for sale, if you knew where to look. But all around, the doors and shutters were firmly closed despite the stifling heat, and the shadows lay still and undisturbed. It was like looking at a street under siege. Hawk smiled sourly. If his information was correct, that might just be the case.

"There's going to be a full moon tonight," said Fisher quietly.

Hawk nodded. "That'll bring out the crazies. Though how anyone has the energy even to plan a crime in this heat is beyond me."

"You do realise this is probably nothing more than a wild goose chase, don't you?"

"Not again, Isobel, please. The word is he's hiding right here, at the end of this street. We have to check it out."

"Three months," said Fisher angrily. "Three months we've been working on that child prostitution racket. And just when we're starting to get somewhere, what happens? The word comes down from Above, and we get pulled off the case to go looking for a vampire!"

"Yeah," said Hawk. "And all because we raided the Nag's Head. Still, I'd do it again, if I had to."

Fisher nodded grimly.

The Nag's Head was a hole-in-the-wall tavern on Salt Lane, just on the boundary of the Eastside slums. The upper floor was a brothel, and the word was that they were interested in acquiring children. Cash in hand, no questions asked. Child prostitution had been illegal in Haven for almost seven years, but there were still those with a vested interest in keeping the market open. Like many other places, the Nag's Head kept itself in business by greasing the right palms, but one man had made the mistake of trying to buy off Hawk and Fisher. So they had paid the place a visit.

The bravo at the door tried to bar their way. He was either new in town, or not particularly bright. Hawk gave him a straight-finger jab under the sternum. The bravo's face went very pale and he bent slowly forward, almost as though bowing to Hawk. Fisher waited till he was bent right over, and then rabbit-punched him. The bravo went down without a murmur. Hawk and Fisher stepped cautiously over him, kicked in the door, and burst into the Nag's Head with cold steel in their hands.

The staff and patrons took one look at them and a sudden silence fell over the crowded room. Smoke curled on the stuffy air, and the watching eyes were bright with fear and suppressed anger. Hawk and Fisher headed for the stairs at the back of the dimly lit room, and a pathway opened up before them as people got hurriedly out of their way. Three bravos crowded together at the foot of the stairs with drawn swords. They were big, muscular men with cold, calculating eyes who knew how to use their swords. Hawk cut down two of them with his axe while Fisher stabbed the third cleanly through the heart. They stepped quickly over the bodies and pounded up the stairs. The upper floor was ominously quiet. Hawk and Fisher charged along the narrow landing, kicking open doors as they went, but most of the occupants were long gone, having disappeared down the fire escape at the first sound of trouble.

One of the prostitutes hadn't been able to get away. Hawk found her in the last room but one. She was dressed in torn silks too large for her, and wore gaudy colors on her face. She was chained to the wall by the throat, and her back ran red from the wounds of a recent whipping. She sat slumped against the wall, her face pressed against the rough wood, crying softly, hopelessly. She was almost twelve years old.

Fisher joined Hawk in the doorway, and swore angrily as she took in the scene. The chain was too heavy to break, so Hawk levered the bolt out of the wall with his axe. Fisher tried to comfort the child, but she was too frightened to say much. She'd been abducted in the street two years ago, and been brought to this room. Her abductors put the chain around her neck and locked it, and she'd never been out of the room since. Both Hawk and Fisher told her she was free now, but she didn't believe it. *There's a man who comes to visit me, she said quietly. He was here today. He'll never let me go. You can't protect me from him. No one can. He's important.*

She didn't know his name. No one ever told her their name.

Hawk and Fisher never did find out who he was, but he must have had influence. Only two days later, the child was stabbed to death in the street. Her attacker was never found. Hawk and Fisher were officially taken off the case and sent to join the other Guards searching for the supposed vampire that was terrorising the Northside. They raised hell with their superiors, and even talked about quitting the Guard, but none of it did any good. The word had come down from somewhere high Above, and there was no arguing with it. Hawk and Fisher had shrugged and cursed and finally given up. There would be other times.

Besides, it seemed there really was a vampire. Men, women, and children had been attacked at night, and occasionally bodies were found with no blood left in them. There were dozens of sightings and as many suspects, but none of them led anywhere. And then a lamplighter had come to see Hawk, and there was no denying the horror in

his voice as he told Hawk and Fisher of the dark figure he'd seen crawling up the outside of the house in Chandler Lane....

"All the Guards in Haven, and that man had to choose us to tell his story to," grumbled Fisher. "Why us?"

"Because we're the best," said Hawk. "So obviously we're not afraid to tackle anything. Even a vampire."

Fisher sniffed. "We should have settled for second best."

"Not in my nature," said Hawk easily. "Or yours."

They chuckled quietly together. The low, cheerful sound seemed out of place in the silence. For the first time Hawk realised just how quiet the empty street was. It was like walking through the empty shell of some village abandoned by its people but not yet overgrown by the Forest. The only sound was his and Fisher's footsteps, echoing dully back from the thick stone walls to either side of them. Despite the heat, Hawk felt a sudden chill run down his back, and the sweat on his brow was suddenly cold. Hawk shook his head angrily. This was no time to be letting his nerves get the better of him.

Hawk and Fisher finally came to a halt before a decrepit two-storey building almost at the end of the lane. Paint was peeling from the closed front door, and the stonework was pitted and crumbling. The two narrow windows were hidden behind closed wooden shutters. Hawk looked the place over and frowned thoughtfully. There was something disquieting about the house, something he couldn't quite put a name to. It was like a sound so quiet you almost missed it, or a scent so faint you could barely smell it.... Hawk scowled, and let his hand fall to the axe at his side.

*Vampire... revenant ... that which returns...*

He'd never seen one of the undead, and didn't know anyone who had. He wasn't altogether sure he believed in such things, but then, he didn't disbelieve in them either. In his time he'd known demons and devils, werewolves and undines, and faced them all with cold steel in his hand. The world had its dark places, and they were older by far than anything man had ever built. And there was no denying that people had disappeared from the Northside of late ... and one person in particular.

"Well?" said Fisher.

Hawk looked at her irritably. "Well what?"

"Well, are we going to just stand here all afternoon, or are we going to do something? In case you hadn't noticed, the sun's getting bloody low on the sky. It'll be dark inside an hour. And if there really is a vampire in there ..."

"Right. The undead rise from their coffins when the sun is down." Hawk shivered again, and then smiled slightly as he took in the goose flesh on Fisher's bare arms. Neither of them cared much for the dark, or the creatures that moved in it. Hawk took a deep breath, stepped up to the front door, and knocked loudly with his fist.

"Open in the name of the Guard!"

There was no response. Silence lay across the empty street like a smothering blanket, weighed down by the heat. Hawk wiped at the sweat running down his face with the back of his hand, and wished he'd brought a water canteen. He also wished he'd followed regulations for once and waited for a backup team, but there hadn't been time. They had to get to the vampire while he still slept. And besides, Councillor Trask's daughter was still missing. Which was why finding the vampire had suddenly become such a high priority. As long as he'd kept to the poorer sections of the city, and preyed only on those who wouldn't be missed, no one paid much attention to him. But once he snatched a Councillor's daughter out of her own bedroom, in full view of her screaming mother ... Hawk worried his lower lip between his teeth. She should still be alive. Vampires were supposed to take two to three days to drain a victim completely, and she couldn't become one of the undead until she'd died and risen again. At least, that was what the legends said. Hawk sniffed. He didn't put much trust in legends.

"We should have stopped off and picked up some garlic," he said suddenly. "That's supposed to be a protection, isn't it?"

"Garlic?" said Fisher. "At this time of the year? You know how much that stuff costs in the markets? It has to come clear across the country, and the merchants charge accordingly."

"All right, it was just a thought. I suppose hawthorn is out as well."

"Definitely."

"I assume you have at least brought the stake with you? In fact, you'd better have the stake, because I'm bloody well not going in there without one."

"Relax, love. I've got it right here." Fisher pulled a thick wooden stake from the top of her boot. It was over a foot long, and had been roughly sharpened to a point. It looked brutally efficient. "As I understand it, it's quite simple," said Fisher briskly. "I hammer this through the vampire's heart, and then you cut off his head. We burn the two parts of the body separately, scatter the ashes, and that's that."

"Oh, sure," said Hawk. "Just like that." He paused a moment, looking at the closed door before him. "Did you ever meet Trask, or his daughter?"

"I saw Trask at the briefing yesterday," said Fisher, slipping the stake back into her boot. "He looked pretty broken up. You know them?"

"I met his daughter a few months back. Just briefly. I was bodyguarding Councillor DeGeorge at the time. Trask's daughter had just turned sixteen, and she looked so ... bright, and happy."

Fisher put her hand on his arm. "We'll get her back, Hawk. We'll get her back."

"Yeah," said Hawk. "Sure."

He hammered on the door again with his fist. *Do it by the book....* The sound echoed on the quiet, and then died quickly away. There was no response from the house, or from any of its neighbours. Hawk glanced up and down the empty street. It could always be a trap of some kind.... No. His instincts would have been screaming at him by now. After four years in the city Guard, he had good instincts. Without them, you

didn't last four years.

"All right," he said finally. "We go in. But watch your back on this one, lass. We take it one room at a time, by the book, and keep our eyes open. Right?"

"Right," said Fisher. "But we should be safe enough as long as the sun's up. The vampire can't leave his coffin till it's dark."

"Yeah, but he might not be alone in there. Apparently most vampires have a human servant to watch over them while they sleep. A kind of Judas Goat, a protector who also helps to lure victims to his master."

"You've been reading up on this, haven't you?" said Fisher.

"Damn right," said Hawk. "Ever since the first rumours. I wasn't going to be caught unprepared, like I was on that werewolf case last year."

He tried the door handle. It turned jerkily in his hand, and the door swung slowly open as he applied a little pressure. The hinges squealed protestingly, and Hawk jumped despite himself. He pushed the door wide open and stared into the dark and empty hall. Nothing moved in the gloom, and the shadows stared silently back. Fisher moved softly in beside Hawk, her hand resting on the pommel of her sword.

"Strange the door wasn't locked," said Hawk. "Unless we were expected."

"Let's get on with it," said Fisher quietly. "I'm starting to get a very bad feeling about this."

They stepped forward into the hall and then closed the front door behind them, leaving it just a little ajar. Never know when you might need a quick exit. Hawk and Fisher stood together in the gloom, waiting for their eyes to adjust. Hawk had a stub of candle in his pocket, but he didn't want to use it unless he had to. All it took was a sudden gust of wind at the wrong moment and the light would be gone, leaving him blind and helpless in the dark. Better to let his sight adjust while he had the chance. He heard Fisher stir uneasily beside him, and he smiled slightly. He knew how she felt. Patiently standing and waiting just wasn't in their nature; they always felt better when they were doing something. Anything. Hawk glared about him into the gloom. There could be someone hiding in the shadows, watching them, and they'd never know it until it was too late. Something could already be moving silently towards them, with reaching hands and bared fangs.... He felt his shoulders growing stiff and tense, and made himself breathe deeply and slowly. It didn't matter what was out there; he had his axe and he had Fisher at his side. Nothing else mattered. His eyesight slowly grew used to the gloom, and the narrow hall gradually formed itself out of the shadows. It was completely empty. Hawk relaxed a little.

"You all right?" he whispered to Fisher.

"Yeah, fine," she said quietly. "Let's go."

The hall ended in a bare wooden stairway that led up to the next floor. Two doors led off from the hall, one to each side. Hawk drew his axe, and hefted it in one hand. The heavy weight of it was reassuring. He glanced at Fisher, and smiled as he saw the sword in her hand. He caught her eye, and gestured for her to take the right-hand door