

GODKILLER

HANNAH
KANER





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Voyager



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Dedication

For my father, who reads every word

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PROLOGUE

Fifteen Years Ago

HER FATHER FELL IN LOVE WITH A GOD OF THE SEA.

The god's name was Osidisen, and her parents named Kissen and her brothers in honour of his attention: Tidean, 'on the tide'; Lunsen, 'moon on water'; Mellsenro, 'the rolling rocks'. And, finally, Kissenna, 'born on the love of the sea'. Osidisen filled their nets with fish, taught them when to ride a storm and when to hide, and brought them safe home with their catch each day. Kissen and her family grew up in the sea's favour.

But the sea god didn't bring fortune to the lands of Talicia. Eventually, the villages on the hills were enticed by a god of fire, Hseth, and her promises of riches.

Everyone wanted the wealth of the fire lovers. In Hseth's name the Talicians burned their boats and felled their forests to forge weapons, heat brass, and make great bells which rang from sea cliff to mountain border. Osidisen's waters emptied, and smoke rose over the land. Soon other, darker stories of violence spread from town to village: sacrifices, hunts, and purges in the fire god's name, enemies and old families burned for the fire god's pleasure.

One night, the night after Mellsenro's twelfth birthday, when his fingers were inked with his name, eleven-year-old Kissen woke to smoke, strangely thick and sweet smelling. It scratched at her throat.

She came to, and realised she was being carried by men with cloths tied over their mouths, their faces daubed with coal dust, and bells shining in their hair like little lamps. Kissen's limbs wouldn't move, and her chest was heavy as if dreams still lay on it. The sweet smoke, she recognised it: a sleeping drug made by burning sless seeds, along with other scents she didn't know. Below her house, the sea was lashing at the cliffs. Osidisen was angry.