

Jinasin, Out and About
Tales of the Stormthrower

She was now 9 years old. Her elaborate party for her father's subjects was done. She got her small birthday party in the park. She was a big girl now. Time to see how the city really looked like. Time to be responsible.

After breakfast she would have three hours before the servants would start to miss her. Secretly she put some bread in the little pouch she had found. Put away some fruit to eat in her room, and turned left to cross the corridor past her parents room. She did not need light to know where she was going. Knew the doors, could find them blindfolded.

The path she had chosen, was a bit of a gamble. The door opened to the brightly lit chamber of justice. The golden tables glittering in the light radiating from the high stone dais. The judging seat chiseled out of it. As the chamber was empty, she used her father's seat, to climb onto the dais. Reaching the windows she may look through, when her father was in session. On condition she was very quiet off course. The windowsill was just low enough for her to climb over. Had played on it before. The hard part was climbing it while keeping a small lamp burning, she took from the dais. It would not stay on the nice twirls the sill was made of. In the end she just jumped for it keeping the lamp in front of her. Feeling the decorations of the twirls point in her belly, balancing on it. But she pushed on, and miraculously landed on her feet in the secret corridor.

It would go on for miles. She had riddled one of the soldiers of the palace guard once, and he said, it ended up out in the city. Off course he wouldn't tell where, but that was what she was here to find out. As secret corridors go, it was a good one. Pitch black, and she was alone for the whole time, she walked along it, reaching the dead end. Hoping to find one of the secret locks she had been researching, but expected a better one, after all this was a royal secret corridor.

No stones worth mentioning, ever so slightly sticking out, movable or hiding a secret metal stick. Nothing to open this secret door. She moved a bit back searching the corridor, until it hit her, and she started to hum the baby songs her teachers had made her memorize. Song after song left the stones dead as a doornail. It started humming back at the next hymn though. Hummed it again, now louder, and slowly the stone in front of her rolled away. Bouncing on something, and she could just squeeze through it, before the passage was closed again.

The niche in the royal bypass was again, only a nice decoration, she had memorized in seconds. Walking away from it, following the traffic. Hugging the wall, as she had seen so many kids do when she was ridden through town. Knew she was just a kid now. Joined on the intersection, the grownups on the roundabout. Running to keep up. Circled the fountain and hugged the wall again on the road going upwards from it. Checked back whatever was on the roundabout below, and recognized one of the palace guards, wearing plain clothes. Just walked on. If he had spotted her, she just made the record for the shortest walkabout ever.

The road gradually wined itself up a level, and as there were no signs she went through the city map she had memorized, counted off the heading she needed to go, and jumped in the traffic of the next roundabout. Recognized the weird pavement of this footpath, going into the great hall of iron, and fell in line with the dwarves walking into this residential area through the iron gate guarding it. Thought to see the tools of the trade depicted on its arch, but was pushed along to fast to be sure. Pushed through the black tunnel towards the light.

Blinking a few times, she quickly jumped out of the stream, onto a driveway, thinking the owner of it would have a hard time living here with all this traffic. Climbed it a bit closer towards the door, so she could look over the heads of the people, into the maze of driveways, spirals, platforms and huge holes, searching for the funnels making you go into the darker areas of this hall. Chose her direction and jumped back into the moving stream of dwarves. Just wanted to do some spirals first, but after two, she had to switch and run over onto a quieter driveway as the fast walking adults made the ascent way to difficult. Waited for the car to overtake her, then turned around on the highest point of this road, finding it was actually heading towards a platform. Not the one she had chosen, but it too enabled her to stare past the thousands of columns, supporting this hall. Both ends shrouded in the twilight of the underground. Its wall lined with the homes of all the dwarves involved in making the iron plates found in the vaults under the palace.

Hidden behind a memorial stone she ate her bread, and drank some juice. Ever staring into the great hall. Trying to follow dwarfs with distinct clothing, as they entered the maze, twisting through the columns.

A government car snapped her out of her dreams. She reentered the maze, and descended over the driveways spanning over the middle of the hall, evading the cars as much as she could. Picked up her pace as a woman came closer, with a meddling stare in her eyes, and made it onto the bridge over the funnel leading into the workshop quarters. Waited patiently for the heavy traffic to pass. Then asked, and got a ride on an empty transporter truck. Alternating her field of sight between the dotted ceiling, with the many snake like roads above her, and the end of the funnel they were ever circling down towards.

The truck finished the last small circle, and slowed down while riding into the exit. Already on the side of the truck hugging the footpath next to it, she jumped at the intersection, thanking the driver with a shout. In a niche she closed her eyes again, and once more recited the song she had made. Started off to squeeze through the busy traffic to the other side, counting down the streets as the song told her. Recognized the mosaic of the weapon workshop roads from a picture she had found, bending with them to find the domed square she was aiming for.

Started with the big hammer finding the square, passing the shops looking at their decorated signs, until the plain axe was hanging over the door. Although it was not as richly carved as the other signs, she had heard the boasts of the palace guard. Telling it to be the best maker of war axes in the city.

With the huge door stuck, she had to throw her little weight against it, before she finally managed to get it open. Patiently waiting inside for the artisan to make time for her. Watching how he was sanding down an axe handle, regularly comparing it against the measuring rod stuck on the side of his workbench. When he looked satisfied he wrapped it in cloth, and finally came over, asking what he could do for the little girl. She put on her most determined face, and asked if she could hold and practice with an axe of his, being the best in the city. She had saved for a year, showing a bag of coins. It was never enough to buy one from him, but if he could?.

The artisan smiled, put her coins back in the bag. If she was determined to learn how to work with an axe, he would love to make one especially made to fit the young princess.

She curtsied, not really surprised he had recognized her. Then got the money back, with the only request, to spent it on those who needed it more. She promised.

The next hour ticked away, with the artisan measuring her hands and strength. Putting weights on sticks, and letting her swing them. Rummaging through his mock shafts he asked if the princess wanted the axe to stay a secret for a while, as at the end of the hour, one of the palace guard captains was scheduled for a measuring. She shrugged, got to see what she wanted to see, maybe it was wiser to take a lift from the captain, back to the palace, as she missed her lunch hours ago, and who knows what idiot would pick her up to impress his or her king.

So she waited when the artisan was satisfied with his measuring, and jumped out of the shadows, when the captain came in, making a perfect bow, requesting a ride back home. It took him a while to recover, stammering how in heavens name she was able to get this far out of the palace. Then looking at the owner of the shop, he got a nod, even before asking the question, and she followed the captain to his vehicle, riding it a bit too fast home.

The next week she had to come into the throne room, during his weekly session. Where she was given a little axe out of the hand of the artisan, requesting her to show off some moves. Easily she made the first practice moves she had seen her brothers do. Proving the artisan's skill, and most importantly challenging her big brothers.