

HALT!

Elvin moved quickly from shadow to shadow, shunning the infrequent pools of light from the street lamps. It was late. That in and of itself was no crime, but Elvin had larceny on his mind.

The night air was cold and small clouds of exhaled vapor trailed him as he ducked from alley to alley. Tonight was the perfect night for a break in. The early freeze was keeping most people off the streets and the new moon provided him even deeper shadows in which to lurk.

He moved deftly through the shadows, or at least he did until he started sliding and, with a yelp, landed firmly on his back.

Elvin cursed and then clapped his hand over his mouth. He came up to a crouch and looked about furtively for the slightest hint that he had been seen.

Minutes passed and neither sight nor sound came to Elvin that indicated that his position had been betrayed by his unplanned trip to the ground. He stood upright, slowly, breathing out a heavy sigh of relief. On the look out for future patches of ice, Elvin continued towards his target.

Elvin was not counted among the finest thieves of Daggerfall, but he did take pride in what his skills had been able to provide for him. While he never admitted to being anything but the best, he knew deep down that he was average, or maybe worse.

Deep in thought, he did not realize that he had reached his destination until after he had already passed it by.

Grumbling to himself, Elvin retraced his steps until he found himself crouched in the doorway of Mad Tharn's Discount Emporium. He had chosen this place a week earlier because of its wide variety of merchandise and due to the shoddy nature of the locks. Reaching into the folds of his cloak, he withdrew a leather wrapped bundle containing the tools of his trade, lock picks. Taking a last look around to make sure he was not being observed, he set to work on the lock.

Elvin had only broken six of the lock picks before he felt the lock release and the door creak slowly open.

Meanwhile, across town...

A roaring fire warmed the members of Watch Patrol Barracks #12 as they lounged around the recreation room. Sergeant-at-Arms Rale Aughton sat at the long table, playing cards with several of his subordinates.

Zenithar had smiled upon him, for once, and the pile of gold in front of him had grown large. He smiled to himself as he looked upon his bounty, leaning back into his chair as he awaited the next deal. Suddenly, the noise and activity of the rec room became still.

He heard it, they all heard it. A primal call and then everyone was on their feet, grabbing up helmets and buckling on swords.

Rale was the first out of the door, his tenor voice clear in the chill night air. Soon, his call was taken up by the others as the guards of Watch Barracks #12 charged unerring towards their target, their cries the harbinger of criminal doom.

Meanwhile, back across town...

Elvin could barely contain his excitement as he surveyed the rows of shelves. Sure, most of it was junk, but any and all of it was his for the taking. He strolled leisurely up and down the aisles, selecting only the best trinkets and googaws to place into his satchel.

He was busy perusing the selection of porcelain, hand painted cows when he heard a distant cry that sent a flow of icy water down his spine.

Elvin stood motionless, straining to hear, fearing to hear. Then he heard it again and it was closer this time.

The smiling cow that he had been holding slipped from his fingers and fell to the floor with a crash. The sound shocked him into action and he sprinted for the door.

As Elvin exited the building he saw the first of his armor-plated pursuers enter the square from the south. The first was soon joined by a second and then a third until it seemed that the entirety of the Daggerfall Watch had been mustered against him.

Elvin turned and ran down the nearest alley. He sprinted through side streets, bounded across avenues, and ran down the boulevards, vainly trying to shake his pursuers. No matter how fast he ran or how many zigs he zagged, they stayed doggedly on his trail. Their chorus in the night driving him forward like a deer before the wolves.

As Elvin ran head long down a particular alley, he suddenly found himself taking flight. His flight was tragically short lived soon he came crashing back down to earth, sliding down the ice and into the side of a building.

His head swam and darkness crowded in around his vision. He could hear the Watch's cries grow louder around him and he knew that soon they would be upon him.

Elvin's final thought, before surrendering to the blackness, *How can guys in that much armor run so fast?*



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