

Dahveed Asks Jonathan for a Forge for Lotan.

After dark, I entered the fortress. Jonathan and Michal were on the battlements in their favorite corner, and I waited in the darkness by the bottom of the stairs until they came down. When they walked by, I fell into step on the other side of the hassar.

Michal was so deep in thought, I don't think she knew I'd come. Jonathan noticed me in a moment and his hand jerked toward his girdle. But he said nothing until his sister had gone through the private gate.

"Do that again, and I'll pin your ears back."

"Yes, Hassar."

He groaned softly. "Don't start saying that again! What do you want?"

"To thank you for restraining Abner."

"I simply reminded him of the honor he owes the king. Was there anything else?"

He'd done more than that, I knew. And from the way he was fingering the king's signet, I would wager he had pulled rank on the king's cousin at the very least. "I also need a forge," I answered him.

"Are you going to tell me why you want this forge?" he pushed, turning to me in the dark.

"To work bronze."

"That's not very helpful information, Dahveed."

"You can say 'no', Jonathan," I reminded him, amused.

"And have you build one out in the hills somewhere making me wait for weeks to learn what you want it for? Yes, you can have a forge. I'll send an order in the morning to clear one for you. Anything else?"

I considered. "Nadab might be upset. I took a lot of bronze from the armory today."

"And what am I supposed to tell him?" the hassar asked, the exasperated tone entering his voice as he folded his arms across his chest.

"That most of it will come back, one way or the other."

Jonathan sighed. "Leave. You have my permission to go. Vanish, before I decide we can't afford to have you in the army any longer and—"

I left, keeping my laughter to myself and hearing the laughter in his voice as well.