

Avylynn's Backstory

The story of Avylynn the Paladin - The long and short of it

SHORT VERSION:

Avylynn's parents were killed in the goblin raids of Tilverton and she ended up on the street when she was almost three. Kind merchants felt compelled to feed her, and Avylynn was able to use her innate magic sense to melt into the shadows and avoid the evil that surrounded her-until Lana showed up when Avylynn was five years old. The younger girl had been misplaced by the Count and countess Fironstra when they visited on the King's business, and she clung to Avylynn like a younger sister. Avylynn's defeat of a vampire attracted the notice of one of the High Priests of Lathander, who took her in for Paladin training. Count Fironstra was so grateful, he subsidized Avylynn's studies and had her visit his summer manor outside of Whillip during the planting season each year, (at the insistence of his beloved Lana!) At about nineteen, Avylynn is feeling the call to do good works for Lathander.

LONG VERSION:

Avylynn clutched at the loaf of bread protectively as she glanced around the alley with a wary eye. Lana tugged on her shoulder, her soulful eyes piercing Avylynn as they gazed at each other. Lana was three or just small for four years old and she never stopped following her older, adopted 'sister' around the entertainers quarters or down the market lanes. Avylynn sighed. It might be easier to scrounge food for herself, but every time Lana stared at her like that, it tore at Avylynn's heart. Lana put Avylynn in mind of a lost hart bleeding in the brush. So beautiful, innocent, and broken. Desperate for Avylynn's protection. Avylynn ground her teeth. How in Lathander's name was she going to feed them both when this was gone?! Three years out in the streets had sharpened her sense of self-preservation, but this was no place for Lana.

Doubt clouded Avylynn's emotions for a moment, until she angrily forced it to go away. Lana now tugged impatiently at Avylynn's ragged smock, drooling a little. "Is it safe?" Avylynn nodded, her eyes flicking up and down the alley, once again. "For the moment." Avylynn didn't sense any danger nearby, but it was always present, like a scratch she couldn't itch. And she felt a sense of foreboding deep inside of her.

Avylynn rolled her shoulders uncomfortably and broke off two large chunks of bread. Lana squealed in delight. "Hush," Avylynn muttered sternly, and Lana clapped her hand over her mouth, looking about fearfully. Nothing moved. Avylynn searched the alley with her thoughts just to be sure, then quickly handed Lana her portion. Lana grinned up at Avylynn, almost glowing as she ate contentedly, not even bothering to keep a watch out for trouble. Avylynn gave her a rare smile and then tensed as she felt and then saw the multi-colored energy swish past her. Probably a displacement spell... which was why she didn't sense it before. A shadow appeared from within the alley, which became a black, cloaked figure who stumbled slightly and rubbed his eyes as he bore down on the girls. Evil seemed to drip off the Aura surrounding him, and immediately Avylynn knew they were in deep trouble. 'Cleric,' she thought. 'Probably evil cleric, by the looks of him.' 'Wait for it,' the unearthly voice that had always been inside her mind advised her.

The man gave them a disarming, crooked grin and glanced down at the girls as he leaned on his staff and straightened his clothing. In a flash, Avylynn leaped to her feet, hid the bread in her mismatched clothing, and brought out the twisted bit of fire poker that she had sharpened into a short spear of sorts. Lana followed suit as quickly as if she were Avylynn's shadow, grasping her bit of broken bit of glass and holding it aggressively in front of her. The man grunted in surprise at them when he looked up. He scratched his unshaved whiskers for a moment. Then, he grinned malevolently, as he considered the two small children who were standing fearlessly in his way. He spoke, rasping out the words. "Aye, lasses! Good evening. You

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wouldn't have a bite of bread to share with an unarmed old man, now, would you?" "Go find your own food!" Lana snarled at him from under Avylynn's elbow. "And, so I shall," he retorted, looking at them with eyes that contracted and pulsed slightly red. "Such tasty looking morsels had best not be out wandering in the marketplace this late in the day! You might find trouble. Excuse me," he added, grinning wide enough that they could see the delicate curved fangs that protruded from his mouth. Then, he turned his back to the girls and did the most disgusting thing Avylynn had ever heard of on the streets. He faced them once more. "Now, what should I do with you?" he muttered to himself with a horrid grin. "Oh, I know. It's time for a snack." He inched closer. The girls found themselves backing up toward the street, despite the extra danger lurking out in the open. With a smirk, the man pounced on Lana, laughing as she cut his arm with her shard of broken glass. He locked eyes with Avylynn, daring her to attack, but Avylynn found herself staring at him transfixed, unable to move. 'NO!' she screamed inside her head with all her might. 'NOT LANA!' The evil man smiled once more, his fangs protruding from his mouth. 'NOW!' commanded the voice. Something broke inside Avylynn and without thinking she plunged her poker stick straight up into the Vampire's chest. He glared down at her, about to attack when a flash of light illuminated the alley. "AAAAHRRRRRGHH!" The vampire shouted, just before he exploded into thousands of little black motes.

"Over here, quickly!" A voice called from behind them. Avylynn risked a glance over her shoulder. A tall man in a white cowl was gesturing frantically in their direction with one hand and holding up a holy symbol in the other. He emanated a strong, healing energy. The girls turned and quickly walked to him. "Oh, dear, goodness me!" the tall man said, shaking his head and gaping at Avylynn. "You must come quickly, yes, that's the only thing that can be done! Up to the temple, now, before more of his kind show up." "Both of us?" Avylynn asked suspiciously and jutting out her chin defiantly. "Yes, yes, of course. This is no place for children to wander about after nightfall." The priest gestured once more and started off at a smart clip toward a distant glowing tower. He turned to make sure they were following him while he walked. "My name is Densen, by the way. I'm a priest of Lathander," he added breathlessly, keeping his holy symbol aloft. "That was some fine turning! I've never seen the glory of Lathander shine that brightly, myself. But it will bring out the worst riff-raff out to investigate in a tinge. We'd best make haste," Densen added, puffing. 'He didn't seem used to much exercise,' Avylynn thought, for Densen didn't say another word until he had safely closed and latched the temple door behind the two wary girls. He took a moment to catch his breath, before touching the cassock of another priest who happened to walk by. "Mihel, would you get our guests some of the night stew? I believe we still have enough to satisfy you, even if it isn't spiced up to the king's heaven." Avylynn crossed her arms and squinted at him. "Excuse me, but why are we here?!" Densen stared at her in surprise. "Because girl. This is where you belong! Lathander himself told me to go right to you...gave me a jolt every time I didn't walk fast enough to his liking. In fact," Densen added, rubbing his backside, "You have been called to become a Paladin for Him. Great ghosts, girl, didn't you feel Lathander in the light back there?!" "Well, yes. But I thought it was you," Avylynn admitted. "Not me," Densen chuckled. "And, probably the only reason why you lasted so long out on the streets, too. I can see by the state of your clothing, that you've been out there, roughing it, for a few years, at least." Avylynn stared down at her threadbare smock, wondering if she had ever had a life before the streets. She didn't know. Densen turned to Lana. "Now you, Miss. There is something interesting about your clothing, too. You've only been on the streets for a few months, yes?" Lana nodded. Months. Years. It was all the same to her. "Hmm. This elegant, colored weave along your collar reminds me of something... in the pattern of...a royal crest, perhaps?" He paused, thinking out loud, then smartly clapped his hands. "Yes. That's it! Count Fironstra put out notices around the city about a half-year ago, offering a reward for the safe return of his youngest child! I shall have to write to him straight away, but not before you've had something to eat, mind! "NO!" Lana shouted, startling Priest Densen. "I'm not leaving Avylynn, and YOU CAN'T MAKE ME!" "Lana!" Avylynn scolded. "Hush now. We'll figure it out later." Lana hung her head, but still glared at him. Densen looked uncomfortable and without another word, he turned on his heel and walked away, occasionally shaking his head, as he led them deeper into the Temple building, where mouthwatering smells emanated.

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MUCH LATER:

Avylynn toyed with the thick golden chain her holy symbol rested on, feeling how it pulsed slightly with the heat and glory of Peylor. It was time to deliver Count Fironstra's messages to him. She smiled at the thought of visiting the manor, again. But, by all that was holy, they would be late for the Festival if Priest Densen didn't hurry up, like now! Avylynn couldn't wait to see her little 'sister' Lana, again, even if it was for only a few ten-day sets. And, to see Lana's handsome older brothers, who sparred and joked with Avylynn every chance they got. She waited, stoic, but impatient, with an ear turned to the Watch-hall, the way she'd been trained to do over these past fourteen years. Reflexively, Avylynn threw out her magical senses, but nothing was amiss in the hall, the court or the surrounding gardens in this part of the city. Yet, somehow, Avylynn knew, *something* was different. She hadn't felt this way since the day the Vampire materialized in that alley so long ago and changed the course of her life. The feeling was like a tingle, or warning, deep inside her soul.

Avylynn couldn't wait to get back out in the fresh air, where she didn't feel so constrained, and she could feel the warm glow of her God shining down on her. Lathander's light could disperse anything. And, where was Priest Densen?! Avylynn listened down the hall, sorely tempted to wrap Priest Densen's things in a bundle, toss it in the pack, and let him sort it all out later. They only had a few days to get to Count Fironstra's manor if they wanted to join the Highharvestide festivities in the town of Whillip!

It wasn't as large as this city, but it was enchanting, nonetheless. Avylynn had fond Planting and Growing-time memories of accompanying Lana and her siblings through the marketplace, whenever her father's secure fortress had become too dull for their youthful exuberance. In fact, Count Fironstra insisted Avylynn go to the Market with his daughter every time she showed up at his manor, since Avylynn was the only one who could keep Lana from sneaking off into the Foundry or along the Baker's Lane the moment his soldiers' backs were turned.

Priest Densen abruptly stumbled through a doorway. "Ready to go, Avylynn? I promise I have all the parchments this time!" He said, grinning up at her, while Avylynn rolled her eyes and smiled fondly at him. "Absolutely!" she said firmly. Priest Densen hastily stuffed the parchments into his pack and they headed out.