
AN ADVENTURE FROM ABSURDISTAN
MINA AND THE DAY SHE GOT UP!
SEVEN METRES OF PURE ADVENTURE
Based on a true fictional event.

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PROLOGUE

The Call of Destiny

There are moments in life when a person is faced with a decision that changes everything.

Moments when courage matters more than common sense. When determination must triumph over comfort. When the familiar world suddenly seems small and the unknown calls your name.

For some people, it is the ascent of Mount Everest.

For others, the crossing of the Sahara.

For Mina, it was a Tuesday at 2:17 p.m.

She was lying on her sofa.

Her legs had disappeared beneath a cosy blanket, a half-read magazine rested on her stomach, and a large mug of cocoa stood on the side table. A ray of sunlight fell through the living-room window and bathed her little fortress of cushions and blankets in golden light.

Mina was happy.

Perfectly happy.

It could have been a wonderful afternoon.

Then her phone rang.

Mina opened one eye.

The phone was lying on the other side of the sofa.

A distance of approximately forty centimetres.

She regarded it for a while.

“Outrageous.”

With a deep sigh, she stretched out an arm and fished for the device.

An unknown number appeared on the screen.

“If this is advertising, somebody is getting sued.”

She answered.

“Hello?”

“Good afternoon. Möbelmann Deliveries. We have an order for Ms Mina.”

Something in her face changed at once.

“My sofa?”

“That’s right. We’ll be with you in about five minutes.”

Mina smiled.

It was no ordinary smile. It was the smile of a queen who had just learned that her realm was about to gain another province.

Her new sofa.

Burgundy velvet.

An extra-wide lounging area.

Soft cushions in which entire afternoons could presumably disappear without ever being found again.

She had ordered it weeks ago, after a research campaign even Lena had described as impressively thorough.

Mina had compared fabric samples, tested cushion firmness and calculated reclining surfaces.

She had even drawn up a floor plan of her personal comfort zone.

And today was the great day.

“Wonderful,” said Mina. “I’m delighted.”

“Excellent. See you shortly.”

“See you.”

She ended the call.

Contentedly, she sank back into her cushions.

Three seconds passed.

Then her eyes opened.

Slowly, she turned her head.

Her gaze travelled across the living room.

Past the coffee table.

Past the enormous monstera.

Through the opening beyond it.

And finally towards the hallway, at the distant end of which stood the front door.

A dreadful realisation crept into her mind.

The delivery men would ring the bell.

At the front door.

And somebody would have to open it.

Mina looked around.

Nobody.

The others were out.

Pinky was presumably asleep somewhere.

Goldie was nowhere to be seen either.

Mina looked at the remote control with the large red sofa button.

For one fleeting moment, she considered making a sofa appear outside the front door and hoping the delivery men would understand the hint.

But no.

This particular sofa was special.

And special things demanded special sacrifices.

Mina picked up her phone and opened the friends' group chat.

Mina: "Girls. I require moral support."

Lena answered first.

Lena: "What happened?"

Mina: "The delivery company is coming."

Ruby: "Ooh! Your new sofa!"

Mina: "Yes."

Lena: "And?"

Mina stared at the keyboard.

Then she typed the words that would change this day for ever.

Mina: "I have to go to the front door."

There was a pause.

Ruby: "Oh."

Lena: “Seven metres.”

Mina: “You measured it?”

Lena: “Of course.”

Mina: “Why?”

Lena: “Yesterday you asked whether we could move the door closer to the sofa.”

Mina remembered.

It had been a perfectly reasonable question.

Mina: “I could die.”

Lena: “Statistically very unlikely.”

Mina: “Your compassion warms my heart.”

Ruby sent a heart and promised to bring cinnamon rolls later.

Mina put the phone aside.

Then she pulled the blanket up to her chin one final time.

She knew what had to be done.

And she knew there would be no turning back.

At least not until the delivery men had gone again.

CHAPTER I
Farewell to Safe Harbour

At 2:19 p.m., preparations began.

First, Mina raised herself onto her elbows.

A simple movement, one might think.

But this is how many great expeditions begin: with a motion that appears insignificant and yet seals the fate of the traveller.

She sat up.

The blanket slipped from her shoulders.

Cool living-room air touched her arms.

Mina shuddered.

“The climate is hostile.”

She looked at her faithful sofa.

How often had it carried her?

How many cosy evenings had they spent together?

How many mugs of cocoa had been drunk here, how many books read, how many exceptionally important naps taken?

Nobody knew.

Some numbers were simply too vast to record.

Mina stroked one of the cushions fondly.

“You were always there for me.”

The cushion remained silent.

But Mina understood.

She had to be strong.

With solemn purpose, she reached behind her and produced an adventure hat she kept for occasions such as this.

So far, she had worn it only while repotting a particularly large houseplant.

Today, it would finally fulfil its true destiny.

She placed it on her dark, slightly untidy bun. A few purple flowers peeked out beneath the brim.

Her silver hoops moved as she nodded with determination.

Then she took a small packet of cat treats from the side table and slipped it into her pocket.

One never knew what wild creatures one might encounter on a journey like this.

In her other hand, she picked up the sofa remote.

The red button glowed temptingly.

One press, and she could make a new sofa appear anywhere.

A safe way station.

A place of rest.

A refuge.

Mina studied the device.

“No.”

She put it back.

“Anyone undertaking an expedition must occasionally manage without sofa technology.”

Then she considered her cocoa.

One final sip for the road.

The warm chocolate gave her strength.

For a moment, she closed her eyes.

When she opened them again, she seemed changed.

More resolute.

Taller.

Ready.

Slowly, she pushed her feet over the edge of the sofa.

Her toes touched the carpet.

One small step for humankind.

One monumental step for Mina.

She drew a deep breath.

Planted her hands on the cushions.

Tensed her legs.

And stood up.

It was 2:20 p.m.

The world held its breath.

Somewhere outside, a bird sang.

A car drove past.

A door closed in the neighbouring house.

Yet all these sounds seemed unimportant beside what had just occurred.

Mina was standing.

Free.

Upright.

Without sofa contact.

She looked down at the seat she had just abandoned.

The cushions still bore the shape of her body.

A silent witness to former security.

“Farewell, old friend.”

She took one step.

Then another.

The edge of the rug drew near.

Mina stopped.

Behind her lay safety.

Ahead, the unknown.

She looked down at her feet.

Then back at the sofa.

“I should have gone to the loo first.”

But it was too late now.

The expedition had begun.

CHAPTER II
The Coffee Table Chasm

The first part of her journey went surprisingly well.

Mina had already covered almost a metre and a half when she encountered an obstacle that would have shaken the courage of any ordinary person.

The coffee table.



It rose before her like a vast rock formation whose sharp-edged outcrops blocked the narrow passage.

Its surface was littered with the remains of a long-vanished civilisation.

A television guide.

Two coasters.

An empty biscuit box.

And a solitary hair clip whose origins no one could explain.

But the true danger lay below.

There, where the wooden corner projected at a treacherous angle.

Mina stopped.

Her eyes narrowed.

“Ah.”

She knew that corner.

She had underestimated it once before.

Three weeks ago, she had walked past it barefoot and struck her little toe.

An event whose consequences remained with her to this day.

Not physically.

But emotionally.

“So we meet again.”

The corner did not answer.

Naturally not.

It was a table corner.

Mina still did not trust it.

Slowly, she shifted her weight onto her left foot.

Her right moved cautiously outwards.

Centimetre by centimetre, she edged sideways past the dangerous projection.

She held her breath.

The distance between her little toe and the wood was barely the width of a hand.

One careless step.

One false move.

And it could all be over.

The air brushed the brim of her adventure hat.

The crescent-moon pendant at her neck swayed gently.

Mina stretched out one hand for balance.

Then it happened.

Her foot almost caught on the edge of the rug.

She wobbled.

The table corner seemed to leap towards her.

Mina's eyes widened.

"NOT THE TOE!"

With a manoeuvre that would have impressed a seasoned mountaineer, she twisted her body, planted her right foot out to the side and recovered her balance at the final possible moment.

Silence.

She stood.

Unharmed.

The table corner had been defeated.

Mina looked back.

Then she raised her chin with dignity.

"Not today, you wooden idiot."

She could have celebrated.

Perhaps she should have.

But the next challenge was already waiting ahead.

And it was hot.

Very hot.

CHAPTER III

The Cocoa Volcano

The volcano rested on a small side table between the coffee table and the living-room doorway.

Some time earlier, Mina had placed a second mug of cocoa there.

A reserve.

For emergencies.

For difficult times.

For situations in which one already had cocoa but required another.

Now, however, this sensible precaution had become a dangerous threat.

Steam rose from the mug.

Thick white clouds curled through the air.

The dark brown surface shimmered mysteriously.

A tiny bubble burst.

Mina froze.

“Activity.”

She approached with care.

The route to the front door passed directly beside the little table. The mug stood perilously close to the edge.

One accidental nudge could unleash a flood of molten chocolate.

Mina leaned forwards.

She studied the surface.

Then she blew on it.

A second little bubble popped.

“The volcano lives.”



She looked back towards the safety of the sofa.

The distance had grown alarming.

Almost two metres.

A retreat was still possible.

But at what cost?

The delivery men might arrive at any moment.

Mina had to continue.

She removed her adventure hat and fanned herself.

A short break was necessary.

Scientific expeditions demanded a cool head, after all.

Her phone vibrated.

A message from Lena.

Lena: “How far have you got?”

Mina photographed the cocoa.

Mina: “Volcanic eruption. Route blocked.”

The answer arrived a few seconds later.

Lena: “That is a mug.”

Mina: “That is probably what they said at Pompeii.”

Lena: “Pompeii did not involve cocoa.”

Mina: “You weren’t there.”

Lena sent a single full stop.

Mina interpreted this as silent recognition of her argument.

Then she turned back to the hazardous terrain.

The solution was obvious.

The volcano had to be secured.

Carefully, she reached for the handle.

Heat seeped through the porcelain.

Mina lifted the mug a fraction.

The liquid shifted.

A dark wave washed against the rim.

She stopped at once.

“Easy. Very easy.”

Like an experienced volcanologist soothing an unpredictable force of nature, she waited patiently for the surface to settle.

Then she raised the mug completely.

And took a sip.

The chocolate was perfect.

Warm.

Sweet.

With exactly the right amount of cocoa.

Mina smiled.

“Nature should also be appreciated.”

She placed the mug farther back on the table, where it could no longer endanger anyone.

Then she slipped carefully past.

Not a drop had been spilled.

No one had been harmed.

Disaster had been averted.

Another victory.

But her joy did not last.

Beyond the volcano began a green world.

A world of shadows.

A world where light barely reached the ground.

Mina put her adventure hat back on.

She looked at the immense leaves crowding the passage to the hallway.

Her expression grew grave.

“Monsterastan.”

And somewhere deep within the undergrowth, something rustled.

CHAPTER IV
The Jungle of Monsterastan

Monsterastan began where a reasonable person would have seen a large houseplant.

At that moment, Mina was not a reasonable person.

She was an explorer, two metres and eighty-seven centimetres from safe harbour, cut off from all dependable upholstery and surrounded by foliage large enough to swallow entire expeditions.

The monstera stood in a heavy pot beside the living-room doorway. Its leaves reached far across the route, as though they had decided overnight to annex the passage to the hall.

Mina cautiously lifted one.

It brushed the brim of her hat.

She stopped.

“First contact.”

The leaf swayed innocently back into place.

Inside the green thicket lived a peculiar kind of twilight. Sunlight fell in thin bands between the leaves. Dust motes drifted through them like tiny insects above an unknown river. Somewhere, water dripped.

Mina looked down.

The saucer beneath the pot.

The plant had been watered that morning. Three drops had gathered on the floor.

“Swampland,” she observed.

She placed her left foot on a dry patch and edged sideways between the pot and the door frame. One leaf settled on her shoulder. A second almost caught in her crescent necklace. A third nudged her from behind, not hard, but with the unpleasant certainty of a plant that knew its laws applied here.

Mina fought on.

One more step.

Then she heard the rustling again.

Closer this time.

She froze.

Deep among the leaves, two eyes opened.

Sage green.

Motionless.

Fixed on Mina.

The jungle held its breath.

A small paw slid soundlessly over the rim of the pot. Then came another. Above them, a three-coloured face slowly rose into view.

White. Blue-grey. Peach.

A pink collar glittered in the shadows.

The tiger of Monsterastan had found her.

CHAPTER V

The Tigress and the Tribute

Pinky, Goldhain's lucky cat, Minister for Cuddles and self-appointed owner of every horizontal surface, sat among the leaves and stared at Mina.



Her expression said many things.

Above all, it said that Mina was travelling along a route which Pinky had just declared to be Pinky's route.

"Pinky," Mina whispered.

Pinky blinked once.

Slowly.

It was the blink of a predator considering its options.

Mina did not retreat. Retreat was not an option. Besides, it would have meant passing the volcano and the table corner

again, and no one expected a heroine to face the same horrors twice before dinner.

She reached into her pocket.

The soft crinkle of the treat packet transformed the situation at once.

Pinky's ears rose.

"I come in peace," Mina said.

The cat took half a step forwards.

Her name tag swung beneath her chin. In the narrow shaft of light, it looked like the amulet of a jungle queen.

Mina took out one treat and held it between two fingers.

"Tribute."

Pinky inspected the treat, then Mina, then the treat again. She appeared to be deciding whether one piece was adequate payment for the passage of an adult woman.

Apparently, it was not.

Mina added a second.

Pinky emerged from the undergrowth.

What followed would later be known as the Treaty of Monsterastan, provided any later chronicler ever heard of it. Mina presented the offering. Pinky accepted it with great dignity, chewed three times and then sat down in the middle of the passage.

Mina waited.

Pinky washed her chest.

"The treaty included safe passage."

Pinky raised a hind leg and turned her attention to her left ear.

“I have witnesses.”

There were no witnesses.

Pinky knew it.

At that moment, the doorbell rang.

The sound cut through the flat like the horn of a besieging army.

Mina jumped.

Pinky did not.

Pinky did not believe in haste. Haste was a problem for other people.

The bell rang a second time.

“They’re here.”

Mina looked at the cat. The cat looked back.

Then Mina rustled the packet once more and tossed a third treat towards the living room.

Pinky shot after it.

The tiger had been appeased.

The way was clear.

Mina stepped out of the jungle and reached the beginning of the hallway.

Behind her, Monsterastan closed once more.

Ahead lay the endless expanse.

CHAPTER VI

The Endless Expanse of the Hallway

The hallway was long.

Not objectively. Objectively, it measured four metres and thirteen centimetres, a figure Lena had probably entered into a spreadsheet.

But objectivity was a luxury reserved for those still lying on sofas.

To Mina, the hallway stretched to the horizon.

The front door at the far end looked small and distant. The ceiling light fell upon the runner, which cut through the barren landscape like a narrow road. To the left rose the doors to the kitchen and bathroom. To the right stood a chest of drawers bearing a key basket, three unopened letters and a single pair of sunglasses.

Relics of earlier travellers.

Mina set off.

Step by step.

The living room receded behind her.

After five steps, she looked over her shoulder.

The sofa was still visible, but only as a dark and promising shape beyond the monstera.

She raised one hand in farewell.

Then she continued.

Her phone vibrated again.

Ruby: “Still alive?”

Mina typed as she walked.

Mina: “Hallway. Supplies sufficient. Morale unstable.”

Ruby: “Shall I call and sing to you?”

Mina: “The situation is serious, but not that serious.”

A message from Lena followed immediately.

Lena: “You should be around the five-metre mark by now.”

Mina stopped and looked around.

“How does she know?”

A quiet knock came from the front door.

“Ms Mina? Möbelmann!”

The voices came muffled through the wood. They were close and yet unreachable.

Mina put away the phone.

The final stretch had to be completed without contact with the outside world.

She passed the chest of drawers. Her reflection appeared in the narrow mirror above it: hat crooked, bun even more so, a scrap of monstera on one shoulder and an expression of determination that briefly impressed even Mina.

She removed the leaf.

“No weakness.”

The floorboard creaked beneath her foot.

She stopped.

It creaked again.

Mina tested the board with the toe of her shoe.

“Unstable ground.”

With a mighty step, she crossed it. Beyond waited the upturned corner of the runner, a recognised hazard for several months.

Mina lifted her knee, climbed over it and landed safely.

The front door now filled her view.

Two more steps.

One.

Then she placed both hands against the cool wood.

She had arrived.

Almost.

For between Mina and freedom stood two locks.

And a handle.

CHAPTER VII

The Final Boss



The upper lock sat at a height that, under ordinary circumstances, would not have deserved mention.

These were not ordinary circumstances.

Mina lifted the key ring from the basket beside the door. She found the correct key on the third attempt, inserted it and turned.

Nothing happened.

She turned it the other way.

A heavy metallic clunk rang through the hallway.

The first bolt had fallen.

Mina breathed out.

The second lock waited lower down. She bent, positioned the key and felt the adventure hat slide forwards. She caught it with one shoulder, held the key steady and turned at the same time.

A manoeuvre of remarkable technical precision.

The second clunk sounded.

“Ms Mina?” asked a voice outside. “Everything all right?”

“Yes,” Mina called. “I’m just opening the fortifications.”

A short silence formed behind the door.

“Right.”

Only the handle remained.

Mina straightened. She wrapped her hand around it. The metal was smooth. The spring inside resisted with the accumulated power of decades of door history.

She pushed.

The handle moved.

The door did not.

Mina pushed harder and pulled at the frame at the same time. A draught slipped through the gap. Light appeared. The door gave a centimetre, then two.

And suddenly it opened completely.

Daylight flooded in.

Two men in work clothes stood before Mina. Between them, carefully wrapped in blankets, rested a piece of furniture of majestic proportions.

The man in front regarded Mina's hat, the dishevelled flowers and her solemn expression.

"Ms Mina?"

Mina braced one hand against the door frame.

"You found me."

The man checked his clipboard.

"We have a sofa for you."

They folded back the blanket.

There it was.

Burgundy velvet. An extra-wide lounging area. Deep, soft cushions. Armrests that looked as though they had been designed by people who understood what truly mattered in life.

For a moment, Mina forgot every hardship.

"It's beautiful."

The second delivery man nodded. "Where would you like it?"

Mina opened her mouth.

Then she looked over her shoulder.

The hallway lay before her.

Long and silent.

Beyond it waited Monsterastan. Beyond that, the cocoa volcano. The coffee table chasm. And in the very distance, her old safe harbour.

The first delivery man followed her gaze.

"The living room?"

Mina said nothing.

Something rustled in the green thicket.

A small three-coloured figure sat down in the middle of the hallway and began to wash one paw.

Mina looked at Pinky.

Pinky looked at Mina.

The return route was guarded.



Slowly, Mina removed the adventure hat.

“Gentlemen,” she said, “I hope you’re insured against tigers.”

EPILOGUE

The Return Journey

At 2:31 p.m., the second expedition began.

It proceeded more slowly, because two delivery men were manoeuvring an extra-wide sofa through a hallway which Lena had measured correctly but reality had apparently built more narrowly.

Mina led the way.

She flattened the raised corner of the runner. She warned them about the creaking floorboard. She negotiated with Pinky, who had recognised the new sofa as her lawful property at first sight. She held up the monstera leaves, secured the cocoa volcano and pointed with an outstretched arm towards the corner of the coffee table.

“Particularly careful here. It’s treacherous.”

The delivery men nodded as people nod when they have decided not to ask any more questions.

At last, the sofa reached the living room.

It was put down, aligned, shifted another twelve centimetres and, at Mina’s request, moved three centimetres back again.

Then it was done.

The men said goodbye.

The front door closed.

Mina stood before her new sofa.

Pinky jumped up, turned around twice and settled precisely in the centre of the extra-wide lounging area.

Mina looked at her.

“You contributed nothing to this journey.”

Pinky closed her eyes.

Mina sat down beside her. The velvet yielded softly. The cushions received her as though they had been waiting for this moment all their lives.

She pulled the blanket over her legs and reached for the mug of cocoa she had rescued along the way.

Her phone vibrated.

Lena: “Delivery successful?”

Mina took a photograph: burgundy velvet, Pinky curled up in the middle, Mina’s feet beneath the blanket.

Mina: “Expedition complete.”

Ruby: “And? Was it worth it?”

Mina looked over the rim of her mug at the old sofa now standing opposite her. Then at the new one. Then at Pinky, who was purring softly.

She smiled.

Mina: “Seven metres of pure adventure.”

Then she pressed the red button on her sofa remote.

A small sofa appeared beside the front door.

For future emergencies.