

# Information

# Iskander Sharafutdinov

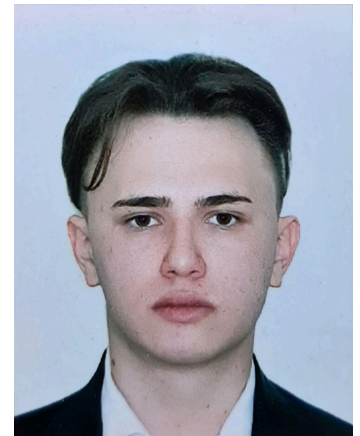
## Narrative Designer & Game Developer

**Location:** Turkey (open to relocation)

**Phone:** +7 (917) 450-77-67 (WhatsApp, Telegram)

**Email:** iskanderexavius@gmail.com

**Date of Birth:** 26.01.2004



## Objective

Seeking a position as a Narrative Designer, Support Writer Specialist (Story Team), or Production Assistant in the game industry. Also open to roles as a junior programmer, game designer, or assistant producer.

## Key Projects

### Ball is God?! — Mobile Game

**Role:** Lead Narrative Designer & Producer

**Period:** March 2024 – September 2024

**Tools:** Unity (C#), Ink, Twine, Wwise, Jira, Git LFS and more.

#### Challenge:

The game is currently in development, but progress has been slower than expected as many team members balance it alongside their studies.

#### My Actions:

- Designed mythology, created character archetypes and main story arcs
- Wrote 270+ page of dialogue in Ink with non-linear branching and "decision points"
- Integrated cutscenes and audio events through Unity + Wwise, configured triggers and UI parameters
- Organized iterations: two-week sprints
- Optimized workflow: automated dialogue assembly from Ink, reducing edit time by 40%
- Implemented game functionality, user interfaces, and optimized for mobile platforms

# NoobLine — Minecraft Server

**Role:** Founder & Creative Lead

**Period:** June 2017 – December 2021

**Tools:** Spigot, Java, Discord, Google Sheets, VK and more.

## Challenge:

The community needed unique PvP methodology and a story-quest line within the server.

## My Actions:

- Developed and implemented in-game lore: quests, NPC events, interactive hints
- Balanced economy: in-game currencies, donation system
- Launched social media campaigns (vk.com/NoobLine) and Discord channel
- Implemented agile processes for moderators: weekly standups, task board in Sheets
- Set up monetization with 5% conversion rate and average income of \$500+ per month
- Managed a team of moderators and developers

## Results:

- 300+ active players at peak
- Positive cash flow for 4 years
- Steady growth in community and engagement

# Flowers from All Fields — an original fantasy novel

Period: 2025 — present

Genre: Fantasy with elements of dark, romance, and philosophy

## Description:

- Over 100 pages written in a unique fantasy world with elements of coming-of-age and inner transformation of the hero
- Format — a diary narrative from the perspective of a young knight in a magical world where war is raging and discord reigns
- Emphasis on deep dialogue, original mythology, refined style, and metaphorical language
- Used as an example of artistic narrative for a portfolio
- 25 pages available for viewing in the “Book” section

# Narrative Design Samples

## Branching Dialogues

- A personal code for dialogs.
- Scene outlines: examples of breakdown documents with synopsis, character goals, and tones
- Tone of Voice Guide: excerpts from dialogue style guidelines

## Engine Integration

- Unity: demonstration of cutscenes and event triggers
- Wwise: sound routing diagrams and parameter settings
- Examples of interactive narrative elements in gameplay

# Professional Skills

## Core Skills

- **Narrative Design:** storytelling, plot structure, world-building, branching dialogues
- **Unity (2D/3D):** game development and C# programming
- **Game Design:** mechanics design, balancing, level design
- **Project Management:** team coordination, Agile, test organization
- **Analytics:** user behavior research, data analysis, A/B testing
- **Basic knowledge of C++** for broader technical understanding

## Additional Skills

- Microsoft Word & Excel
- Basic image processing (Photoshop)
- Sound design and audio editing (for games)
- Basic video editing (trailers, gameplay footage)
- Jira, Git, VCS systems

# Languages

- **Russian:** Native
- **English:** Intermediate (good reading and listening comprehension; speaking needs more practice)
- **Turkish:** Beginner (Birçok temel kelimeyi anlıyorum)

## Cultural Knowledge

- **Turkic peoples:** Tatars, Turks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, etc.
- **Slavic peoples:** Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Poles, etc.
- **Caucasian peoples and Mongols**
- **European cultures:** France, England, Spain, Italy, and Greece (favorite history)
- **Basic knowledge of Asian, Latin American, and African cultures**

## Work Conditions

- Open to remote or office work
- Flexible schedule, open to any collaboration format
- Willing to accept a trial period
- Ready to relocate

## Personal Qualities

- Leadership and self-initiative
- Ambition and desire for professional growth
- Creativity and unconventional thinking
- Courage in decision-making
- Flexibility and quick learning
- High adaptability and conflict-free mindset

## Hobbies

- Playing computer games (with analytical approach to game design)
- History (especially European and Turkic countries)
- Reading books (especially Russian literature)
- Learning new things (continuous self-development)
- Exploring mythologies (for creating new stories)
- Sports (discipline and organization)

## About Me

I believe that a strong narrative is not just words, but the feelings they evoke in the player. I combine a scriptwriter's passion with a technical Unity/C# perspective and experience in managing projects using Agile sprints. Always open to dialogue, quick iterations, and honest feedback.

"The path is walked by those who walk it"

"It's not gods who make pots"

These simple truths helped me go from an idea to the realization of my own projects. Today I'm confident in my abilities and ready for new heights.

**Ready for remote or office work, flexible schedule and trial period.**

# Information (Game)

# «Ball is God?!»

## 1. General Information

**Project Name:** Ball is God?!

**Genre:** Arcade with platformer, puzzle, and roguelike mechanics.

**Target Platform:** Mobile devices (iOS, Android).

**Graphic Style:** Cartoonish style (Cuphead), cartoonish animations (Angry Birds), minimalist cardboard-like style (Helix Jump), strong light-shadow contrasts.

**Monetization:** Free-to-play with in-game purchases and ads.

## 2. Concept and Idea

### 2.1. Core Concept

The player controls a mystical sphere—an angel descending through the circles of hell. As they progress through the levels, they encounter mythical creatures, traps, and puzzles, gradually uncovering their true nature.

**Main question of the game:** What will your God become—a savior or a destroyer?

The player has the freedom to choose:

- Pass the trials without violence (using agility, avoiding enemies, solving puzzles).
- Fight and destroy everything in their path, absorbing the power of enemies.  
(This choice influences the ending and gameplay abilities of the sphere.)

## 3. Gameplay

### 3.1. Core Mechanics

- The player controls the sphere's descent by tilting the screen or tapping to jump.
- The environment is generated vertically downward (similar to Helix Jump, but with physics interactions).
- Collisions with platforms can result in destruction, bouncing, or effects (slowing down, speeding up, trajectory change).

### 3.2. Combat and Interaction

- Enemies react to the player: chase, attack, interact with the environment.
- The player can dodge, reflect attacks, or fight (depending on the chosen path).
- Sphere abilities: **Light** (creation, protection) or **Darkness** (destruction, aggression).

### 3.3. Character Progression

The player chooses abilities:

- **Light Powers:** Healing, slowing time, pacifying enemies.
  - **Dark Powers:** Destruction, increased attack power, controlling demons.
- The choice affects:**
- How levels are completed.
  - The world's reaction to the player.
  - The story's finale.

## 4. Setting and Atmosphere

### 4.1. Story

The player is an angelic sphere descending into the depths of Hell. But its true purpose remains unclear. Is this a path of redemption or destruction?

As they descend, they encounter:

- Ancient mythical beings (Charon, Cerberus, fallen angels).
  - Ruined worlds—the remnants of past civilizations, lost souls.
  - Trials created by unknown forces.
- The player must discover their true nature through interactions with the world.

### 4.2. Visual Style

- Clean, high-contrast palette: dark hellish background + bright glowing elements.
- Minimalist yet detailed models.
- Retro-style animations (Cuphead): smooth and expressive.
- Many dynamic effects: light, fire, smoke, destruction.

### 4.3. Music and Sound

- Atmospheric soundtrack with dynamic changes.
- Elements of jazz and gothic organ music.
- Realistic sounds of destruction, echoes, and voices of lost souls.

## 5. Technical Aspects

- **Engine:** Unity (C#).
- **Physics:** Unity Physics (realistic sphere behavior).
- **Procedural level generation.**
- **Enemy AI:** Dynamic adaptation to the player's playstyle.

## 6. Monetization and Promotion

- Free-to-play model with in-game purchases (skins, boosters).
- Ads between levels (removable via purchase).
- Built-in challenges and leaderboards to retain players.



## 7. Conclusion

*Ball is God?!* is a unique mobile game that combines arcade simplicity, deep narrative choices, and stylish retro aesthetics. The player decides what their angel becomes—a destroyer or a creator—directly influencing the gameplay.

## 8. Intellectual Property Transfer

By submitting any work (graphics, code, texts, sounds, and other materials) to the *Ball is God?! project*, the author automatically transfers **full exclusive rights** to these works to **WillowGame**.

**What this means:**

- All submitted materials become the property of WillowGame.
- The author loses the rights to use, distribute, sell, or transfer these works to third parties.
- WillowGame gains the right to modify, adapt, use for commercial purposes, and incorporate the materials into the game and related products.
- **The transfer of rights is irrevocable**—once submitted, materials cannot be withdrawn or prohibited from use.

**What is transferred?**

- Any submitted elements: graphics, code, texts, music, sounds, etc.
- All intellectual property related to the submitted materials.
- Exclusive rights for commercial use.
- **Failure to read this provision does not exempt the author from responsibility.**

## 9. WillowGame Copyrights

- All rights to *Ball is God?! belong to WillowGame*.
- WillowGame holds **exclusive rights** to all game elements, including graphics, code, mechanics, story, music, and other materials.

# Characters

# Characters

## Espa

A divine messenger, the sword of fate—a hero whose actions speak louder than any words. He moves with grace, yet his eyes burn with determination, and every word he speaks carries the wisdom of eternity. His inner strength helps him overcome any obstacle, and his voice rings out as a call for justice to all beings.

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## Chapter 0 — Miven (Prologue)

### Revla

A mighty protector, ruler of the fate of figures, whose soul is torn between hope and the bitterness of loss. His words echo with sorrow for the world's impermanence and concern for his son, yet he speaks with a calm belief in a coming new era. Revla embodies great responsibility and the eternal pursuit of order.

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## Chapter 1 — Ena (Heaven's Gate / Transition to Space)

### Shash (Gargoyle 1)

A stern guardian of the gate, forged from the stone of duty and resolve. His gaze is sharp as a blade, his voice cuts the air like a command that brooks no defiance. He is the embodiment of law—unyielding, immovable, willing to stand his ground to the last breath. Every word is a challenge, a test of will—but behind that hardness lies a deep loyalty to a higher order.

### Shush (Gargoyle 2)

A gatekeeper with a gentle voice but iron will. Her openness to dialogue never undermines her devotion to duty. She is as curious as the wind whispering between the gates, yet her resolve is unshakable. Her words carry warmth, but always with hidden strength and a readiness to defend the sacred tree to the end. She is the bridge between severity and understanding.

### Shish (Gargoyle Boss)

A wise ruler of gargoyles, whose eyes have seen centuries and whose mind weighs the fates of others. His voice is calm like the sea before a storm, yet holds undeniable authority. He is fair, yet resolute. His decisions weave the threads of order. He accepts defeat with dignity, recognizing in Espa not weakness, but the mark of a great destiny.

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## **Chapter 2 — Dyo (Cosmos)**

### **Gigo (Alien 1)**

An ambitious alien with eyes ablaze, driven by a desire for glory and recognition. His voice is full of enthusiasm—sometimes childlike—but resonates with a thirst for action. Curious and daring, he is ready to take risks for his goals, but his openness makes him not just a warrior, but a seeker of truth.

### **Goga (Alien 2)**

A cautious guardian of order, whose mind is cold as the stars and voice speaks with formal firmness. His gaze is suspicious yet insightful, seeing the world through the lens of control. Goga is Gigo's shadow and loyal ally. His restraint conceals a readiness to act decisively.

### **Gigi (Alien Boss)**

Lord of the cosmos, his figure inspires awe, and his voice thunders like distant storms. A strategist and leader, he radiates unshakable confidence, though deep inside burns a curiosity for the unknown. Espa's victory surprises him—but he acknowledges the strength that surpasses his calculations.

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## **Chapter 3 — Tria (Sky)**

### **Askold (Friend and Apprentice)**

A young sky warrior, his eyes sparkle with a thirst for knowledge, his voice rings with loyalty and excitement. Light as wind, yet burdened with the desire to prove himself. Espa's disciple, he sees in him a father and mentor. His words carry deep respect, his actions—desperate courage.

### **Miras (Brother, Sky Ruler)**

Ruler of the skies, his wisdom is like the clouds, his anxiety the winds that move them. His voice is soft, yet echoes responsibility for the world. Brother to Espa, he doubts but believes. Torn between duty and love, his choices are attempts to preserve harmony.

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## **Chapter 4 — Tessera (Mountains)**

### **Hikh (Bird 1)**

A young bird with wings full of ambition, her voice rings with pride. Her drive for perfection is like flight upward, and her heart holds a sincere faith in her mentors. She embodies youthful yearning for growth and recognition.

### **Heh (Bird 2)**

A wise winged guardian, his words flow like a mountain stream—calm and assured. His feathers bear the marks of time, his gaze—the warmth of tradition. He shares wisdom generously, his soul in balance between past and future.

### **Hah (Bird Boss)**

Elder of the mountains, whose wisdom runs deep as abysses and voice whispers like wind through feathers. He has seen ages pass. His memory is a chronicle of time, his decisions—threads of fate. Meeting Espa stirs echoes of the past, and he blesses the hero's journey.

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## **Chapter 5 — Pente (Volcano)**

### **Musya (Bat 1)**

A furious shadow of the volcano, her wings slice the air, her voice hisses like molten lava. Her soul rages with aggression and a thirst for power. She tolerates no weakness—each word a threat, though within her stubbornness hides a childlike simplicity.

### **Dusya (Bat 2)**

A cunning huntress, her eyes gleam with guile, her voice deceptively soft. She weaves schemes like webs, twisting toward her goals with sly determination. Her rivalry with Musya is a dance of two shadows, each striving to outshine the other.

## **Susya (Bat Boss)**

Mistress of volcanic depths, her might erupts like fire, her voice booms with unquestionable power. A strategist and leader, her authority is absolute. Yet in defeat, she shows unexpected grace, acknowledging Espa's strength.

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## **Chapter 6 — Eksi (Ocean)**

### **Vladus (Dolphin)**

A wise ocean jester, his words flow like waves—sometimes calm, sometimes teasing. His mind is deep as the abyss, his voice light as sea foam. He tests Espa with questions, masking a desire to pass on harmony and knowledge.

### **Frisha (Revla's Brother)**

Brother of Revla, his soul filled with strength and concern, his voice speaks with commanding assurance. Guardian of the seas, his might is like a storm, but in his heart lives the memory of the past. His advice to Espa is a sign of deep respect for the hero's mission.

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## **Chapter 7 — Epta (Desert)**

### **Luren (Centipede 1)**

A cunning guardian of the sands, whose words are riddles, whose gaze is the point of a sting. His voice is dry as the desert, yet holds sincere faith in freedom. He tests Espa, but secretly hopes for his triumph.

### **Kuren (Centipede 2)**

A careful keeper of order, his movements are smooth, his voice filled with calm strength. He sees the world through discipline, his riddles test the mind. His soul longs for peace—peace that only Espa can restore.

### **Don Yagon (Boss, Djinn)**

A mighty djinn, his power thunders like a storm, his voice filled with dark command. A prisoner of another's will, his heart torn between duty and freedom. Espa's victory sparks in him a flicker of hope—for redemption.

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## Chapter 8 — Ohto (Forest)

### Lurya (Forest Fairy 1)

A tender spirit of the woods, her wings tremble with care, her voice gentle as rustling leaves. Kind but resolute, her words are a plea for salvation. Her faith in Espa blooms like a flower in sunlight.

### Hleya (Forest Fairy 2)

A stern guardian of the forest, her eyes blaze with demand, her voice taut like a drawn string. She believes in order, but is ready to recognize Espa's strength. Her soul is a battle between duty and hope.

### Varon (Druid Boss)

An ancient guardian of the forest, his wisdom runs as deep as oak roots, his voice trembles with weariness and strength. Bound to nature, his pain is the forest's pain. Espa's arrival stirs memories and restores belief in the future.

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## Chapter 9 — Ennea

### Mole

Espa's faithful companion, his soul simple but deep, his voice raspy with pain and hope. A shadow following the light, his loyalty is the hero's support. His words are a warning—and a belief in victory.

### White

A mysterious madman whose eyes see the future, his voice trembles with chaos and truth. He is the embodiment of a mind on the edge. His words are prophecies laced with pain. Espa's victory is his release.

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## Chapter 10 — Deka

### Oila (Lord of Hell)

The dark lord, whose soul burns with ambition, his voice thunders like hell's storm.  
He seeks order through chaos. His wrath is fury itself, yet beneath it lies doubt.  
Espa's words and triumph awaken in him a longing for redemption.



# Prolog

# Prolog: Miven (Introduction)

## Characters:

- **Espa** – A divine messenger, the sword of fate, a hero whose actions speak louder than words. He is light in his movements, but his eyes burn with determination, and every word carries the wisdom of eternity. His inner strength helps him overcome any obstacle, and his voice resounds as a call for justice for all figures.
  - **Revla** – A mighty protector, the lord of the figures' fates, whose soul is torn between hope and the bitterness of loss. His speech is filled with sorrow for the world's impermanence and concern for his son, yet it also conveys confidence in the dawn of a new era. Revla is a symbol of great responsibility and an eternal striving for order.
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**Revla:** “Espa, my blade, honed by time... Come closer.”

**Espa:** “Your Grace, what troubles you in this decisive hour? Your face betrays anguish, as if the world itself trembles with uncertainty.”

**Revla:** “Grievous tidings have reached me, chilling even immortal blood. They say my son is plotting something terrible, something that could overturn the very fabric of existence.”

**Espa:** “Unbelievable, my lord! Your son has always been a beacon, guiding us through the darkness like the sun that rejects shadow. How could such a valiant being conceive something terrible? Can light turn into darkness?”

**Revla:** “At first, I dismissed these rumors as dust. His intentions were cunningly hidden from my all-seeing eyes—and that alone speaks volumes. Now, as the veil has lifted, it has become clear.”

**Espa:** “Revla, your word is law to me, but my soul is in turmoil. How can I, a humble messenger, ease your burden? Show me the path.”

**Revla:** “You ask how you can help, my faithful sword? You, whose loyalty shines brighter than all the celestial stars? You have served me with unwavering devotion for millennia, a pillar for me and all figures. I want you to take charge of ‘Miven’—the very heart of our existence.”

**Espa:** “Oh, forgive me, my lord, but I am unworthy! I am but a shadow of your greatness, your humble servant. How can I replace you?”

**Revla:** “As the guardian of all souls, the tree whispers to me! You are the only one whose heart is as pure as a morning spring, and whose mind is as sharp as a blade. You are capable of leading ‘Miven’ to prosperity!”

**Espa:** “Give me a moment to catch my breath, my lord. To become a god? It’s like a bad play! ‘The servant becomes the master’—the whole of ‘Miven’ will tremble!”

**Revla:** “Think, my celestial blade, but know: in my heart, you are chosen to become a god. The shadows of the future are already knocking at the gates—do not linger too long.”

**Espa:** “I will not betray your trust, Revla. Your faith is my beacon in the storms of fate.”

*The heavens above ‘Ena’ began to darken with clouds, foreshadowing change.*

**Espa:** “May the stars guide my path! I take up this feat for all souls and for Revla himself. To ‘Deka,’ where my fate awaits!”

# Chapter 1

# Chapter 1. Ena (The Gates of Paradise / Passage to the Cosmos)

## Characters:

- **Shash (Gargoyle 1)** – A stern guardian of the gates, whose soul is forged from the stone of duty and unyielding resolve. His gaze is sharp as a blade, and his voice cuts through the air like an order that brooks no argument. He is the embodiment of law, uncompromising and ready to stand his ground until his last breath. Every word is a challenge, a test of strength, but beneath this rigidity lies loyalty to a higher order.
  - **Shush (Gargoyle 2)** – A guardian with a gentle voice but an iron will, whose openness to dialogue does not weaken her devotion to duty. She is curious, like a breeze whispering through the gates, but her resolve is unshakable. Her words carry warmth, yet they always hint at a hidden strength, a readiness to defend the sacred tree to the end. Shush is a bridge between rigidity and understanding.
  - **Shish (Gargoyle Boss)** – The wise lord of the gargoyles, whose eyes have seen centuries and whose mind weighs destinies. His voice is calm, like the sea before a storm, but it carries undeniable authority. He is just but unyielding, his decisions weaving the threads of the world's order. He accepts defeat from Espa with dignity, seeing in it not weakness but a sign of great fate.
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**Shash:** “Unfathomable how you managed to slip through here, overcoming all obstacles! By my wings, I haven’t seen such audacity in all my millennia of service. But don’t rejoice too soon—you’ll be stopped, mark my words. This isn’t a stroll through paradise gardens!”

**Espa:** “And who would dare stop me? What force would stand against divine intent? Though, honestly, I’d prefer to avoid conflict and unnecessary fuss. All I need is to descend below, nothing more. Is that so hard to grasp?”

**Shash:** “Our sacred decree is clear: let no one pass, open the gates for no one, be they thrice a divine messenger! Your desires matter to us as little as grains of sand to a mountain range.”

**Espa:** “I understand your duty... Loyalty is worthy of respect, even when it’s misguided.”

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**Shush:** “Hey, stranger, who are you? Where’d you come from, sneaking around like a thief in the night? Answer now, or I’ll turn you into a monument to yourself!”

**Espa:** “I am the loyal servant of the great Revla, filled with devotion and resolve to fulfill his will. A sword in the hands of the creator, if you will. My path is ordained by the stars themselves.”

**Shush:** “Strange things are afoot in the heavens... We were strictly ordered not to let anyone through, especially those from ‘Miven.’ And you, judging by your glow, came straight from there.”

**Espa:** “Perhaps a new order hasn’t yet reached you on its wings? You know how it is with paperwork—it tends to get lost in the labyrinths of eternity.”

**Shush:** “There might be some truth in that. In these times, mistakes aren’t uncommon, even in the celestial bureaucracy. Sometimes the right hand doesn’t know what the left is doing.”

**Espa:** “Well then, if everything’s in order, I’ll move on. Time waits for no one, not even for someone like me.”

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**Shash:** “You again! Popping up like mushrooms after rain! How did you get past the second gate? I was sure you’d turned back, like any reasonable denizen of ‘Ena’ would’ve done.”

**Espa:** “My resolve is stronger than stone and more steadfast than mountains. I must descend below to fulfill the will of the god. The fate of existence hangs by a thread thinner than a spider’s web.”

**Shash:** “The god gave you permission for this? I haven’t heard anything about it, and news in Ena spreads faster than thought.”

**Espa:** “Has his new decree not reached you? It seems information doesn’t always flow as quickly as one would hope. Sometimes even divine commands get stuck in cosmic currents.”

**Shash:** “Hmm, perhaps we missed something in the chaos of eternity. Go on, but don’t think it’ll be easy. Trials await you that will make all before them pale.”

**Espa:** “Thank you for the warning. Will you keep standing in my way?”

**Shash:** “Probably... we haven’t been ordered to let you through.”

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**Shush:** “Hold it, friend! Where are you rushing off to, as if all the demons of the underworld are chasing you? Even light doesn’t move that fast!”

**Espa:** “Friends, understand, I have urgent business that concerns the fate of all existence, and time is running out—the hourglass of eternity is nearly empty. I’d rather not linger on the threshold of great deeds.”

**Shush:** “We understand your haste, but you must understand us: our task is to guard the great tree, the source of life, whose roots nourish all worlds. We can’t just let anyone pass, even if they shine with divine light.”

**Espa:** “Your work is truly invaluable to us all, guardians of eternity. Without your devotion, the world would’ve long fallen to chaos and darkness. You are the unsung heroes of cosmic order.”

**Shush:** “Thank you for the understanding and kind words, though flattery is a poor counselor in matters of duty. But why didn’t Revla himself order the gates opened? Why you?”

**Espa:** “He’s terribly busy right now, with matters up to his neck—literally galaxies on his shoulders. He can’t be bothered with such trifles as personally escorting his sword.”

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**Shash:** “I’ve checked all the lists and archives, flipped through the books of fate, but your name isn’t there, not a trace! It’s as if you’re a Shush who doesn’t exist in the official records.”

**Espa:** “That can’t be! This is some cosmic misunderstanding! Maybe you’re looking in the wrong place? Or the records are outdated, like last year’s bread? It’s easy to lose relevance in eternity.”

**Shash:** “There’s no permission for your passage, and I can’t let you through, even if you’re thrice a divine messenger. Rules are rules, even at the pinnacle of existence.”

**Espa:** “What about the fact that I’m the sword of the god? Isn’t that reason enough to make an exception? Or do even divine attributes have to wait in line now?”

**Shash:** “Hold on, I’ll check the scrolls of destiny again. Maybe I missed something in the bustle of eternal duty.”

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**Shush:** "I've thoroughly checked, turned over every stone in the cosmic archive: you truly are the sword of the god, without doubt or flaw!"

**Espa:** "Excellent! Finally, the truth prevails. Now can I pass without fear of being turned into stardust?"

**Shush:** "Well, it's not that simple... First, you need approval from Shish."

**Espa:** "Alright, agreed. The path of truth is always winding but inevitably leads to the goal."

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**Shash:** “You again! Persistent as fate itself! I checked the Book of Genesis once more, and you’re not there, as if you’re just a dream of eternity.”

**Espa:** “Strange... Could there be an error? Or did Shush eat it all?”

**Shash:** “No, but Shush might’ve... No, wait, he couldn’t have.”

**Espa:** “The sword of the god should take precedence, right? Isn’t this a special case? Or do you place rules above divine will?”

**Shash:** “Wait a second, I’ll check the scrolls of destiny again. But don’t get your hopes up, like a leaf hoping to return to the branch after falling.”

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**Shush:** “Shash uncovered something fascinating: the sword of the god is officially forbidden from passing through our gates! It’s written in fiery letters at the end of the Book of Prohibitions.”

**Espa:** “Why is that? Does the creator fear his own creation?”

**Shash:** “The god ordered us to let no one in or out of this place, especially you—underlined thrice and sealed with a cosmic stamp!”

**Espa:** “Curious, like stars in the night sky... But I walk for the greater good. Doesn’t that matter in the face of possible catastrophe?”

**Shush:** “An order is an order, unyielding as the foundations of existence. You cannot go further, and that’s final. Even if the heavens collapse.”

**Espa:** “Despite everything, I will pass. I have no other choice—the fate of the world outweighs any prohibition, even a divine one.”

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## 9 (Option 1: Mini-bosses survived)

**Shash:** “You pierced our ranks like a sharp blade gliding through silken mists, but know this: Shish is no mere warrior. He has absorbed the strength of a thousand radiant stars!”

**Shush:** “Absolutely right, our guardian is tempered like ancient diamond, and his cunning surpasses even the eternal flow of time!”

**Espa:** “Let’s see how the relentless wheel of fate turns in this decisive hour of trials. I’m ready to face him.”

**Shash:** “Your words are but fleeting echoes of the winds, though we knew everything from the start.”

**Shush:** “Indeed. Shish himself ordered us to slow you down.”

**Espa:** “Fine, I’ll hear it from him personally.”

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## 9 (Option 2: Mini-bosses died)

**Shash:** “I am a soldier, forged on the anvil of loyalty to ‘Ena,’ a guardian of Miven, an iron pillar that will not crumble under the blows of fate. Even if the whole world turns away from me, I will stand on the battlefield until my last breath, until the last drop of blood in my veins. Such is the warrior’s path!”

**Shush:** “Shash, don’t worry, brother. Shish himself will stop him. He’s our final trump card, born in the flames of the gods, with strength enough to crush anyone who dares challenge our world. Even this so-called ‘messenger’ will fall before him.”

**Espa:** “A storm? Seriously? Your ‘trump cards’ are thin ice that will crack under my boots. I’d laugh, but I’m too lazy to waste breath on such trifles.”

**Espa:** “We’ll see if... your ‘trump card’—like thin ice, ready to break at any moment. Hear that crack? It’s the sound of your world crumbling under my tread. Your Shish is but a grain of sand in the storm of my wrath.”

**Shush:** “You don’t understand who you’re up against, Espa. Shish isn’t just a warrior—he’s the fury of ‘Miven’ and ‘Ena’ incarnate in flesh and blood. Thousands of enemies have fallen before him. Your name will be forgotten.”

**Espa:** “I’ve already crushed those who thought themselves invincible. Gods and demigods begged for mercy when I came for them. Your Shish will be next on my list, and no fury will save him from the fate I’ve ordained.”

**Shash:** “You speak with confidence, but confidence won’t save you from just retribution. ‘Miven’ remembers its heroes... and its traitors. Your fate will be that of the latter, Espa. We’ll see to it.”

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## 10 (Option 0: All survived)

**Shish:** “And so it ends. I’ve lost. Like the sunset after dawn, inevitable and beautiful. Fate, that capricious wench, has chosen you. I failed Revla’s order.”

**Espa:** “The sword of the god doesn’t lose, just as the sun doesn’t befriend the dark. It happens! No need to despair.”

**Shish:** “Your confidence is something else. So bright it could pocket the sun and still have light left for the stars!”

**Espa:** “Maybe, but I didn’t shape myself. I was forged, and this confidence is just an echo of a higher plan. You wouldn’t argue with the will of the heavens, would you, Shish?”

**Shish:** “Listen, thanks for sparing my people. That’s a deed, you know. Mercy is a rare beast these days.”

**Espa:** “No big deal, it’s just how it is. Dawn after night, life after battle—I respect those who stand for their duty, even if it gets in my way. You, the guardians of ‘Miven’ and ‘Ena.’”

**Shish:** “Why didn’t you just say what was what from the start? We could’ve parted peacefully, without this cosmic mess. Would’ve saved some energy!”

**Espa:** “Words aren’t a hammer, Shish. They’re like a drop before the ocean—they don’t convey the essence!”

**Shish:** “You’re probably right, sword of the god. Wisdom flows in you like a river in flood, deep and unstoppable. Your path is an open book of fates—walk it boldly. Good luck, Espa, in these abysses of existence!”

**Espa:** “Thanks, old man. But don’t think I’ll relax. The sacred tree whispers to me: there’s still a ton to do!”

**Shish:** “‘Miven’ will sing its songs yet, and who knows, maybe we’ll meet again—somewhere where the stars never fade. Take care, messenger!”

**Espa:** “I’m taking care, don’t doubt it. As long as I’m here, this world will tremble under my steps. Until we meet again, Shish, somewhere beyond the horizon of eternity!”

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## 10 (Option 1: Only mini-bosses killed)

**Shish:** “I... I... I can’t wrap my head around it! Why did you extinguish their light? Shush, Shash—they were the soul of this world, its shield and sword! You just waved your hand...”

**Espa:** “Candles? More like smoldering embers that hiss and die in the rain. They got in my way, Shish. Just debris on the path.”

**Shish:** “I can’t understand... why did you kill Shush and Shash? They were part of this world, its soul and protectors, keepers of ancient traditions and laws. You took their lives so coldly, as if snuffing out candles in the wind.”

**Espa:** “They were nothing more than obstacles in my way. Insects interfering with progress. Do we mourn the blades of grass we trample while moving toward a goal? No. Nor will I weep for those too weak to withstand fate.”

**Shish:** “You think you’re strong? Strength isn’t just destruction. Strength is protecting the weak, loyalty to your friends, not just tearing things down. You’re not strong—you’re cruel.”

**Espa:** “Nice speech. I don’t need friends or your tears about duty. I’ll leave, and you’ll stay here alone. To witness your precious ‘Ena’ collapse.”

**Shish:** “You leave me alive because you’re afraid? Or because you know the god will judge you for everything? Even you, calling yourself a messenger.”

**Espa:** “You’re the god’s appointee. You’re protected by his ancient, unbreakable laws. But the day will come when those laws fall under my hand.”

**Shish:** “As long as my heart beats, I’ll be the sword of justice. I’ll avenge them all. Remember that! Even if Revla turns away from me!”

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## 10 (Option 2: Boss and mini-bosses killed)

**Shish:** “All my life in the universe, I served Revla. I was his shield, his hand protecting the righteous. And now... I stand at the edge of the abyss.”

**Espa:** “So what? Even shields shatter under the blows of true power. You were made for a time that’s already passed.”

**Shish:** “You’re wrong. I’m not broken. Even now, when my warriors have fallen, when their blood has soaked into the soil of ‘Miven,’ I remain true to my duty. My spirit isn’t so easily crushed.”

**Espa:** “Duty to whom? To a god who let you fall? To warriors who’ll forget you in a generation? You’re just a pawn in a game, a piece whose time on the board has run out.”

**Shish:** “Don’t get too full of yourself. For every tough fighter, there’s a tougher one. For every tyrant, there’s a liberator. You’re no exception, Espa. And your fall will be as loud as your rise.”

**Espa:** “Maybe. But it won’t happen today. Today is your last day, your last breath, your last thought before eternal darkness.”

**Shish:** “My brave warriors await me. Beyond life, where truth is untouched by your shadow, where the light of ‘Ena’ shines forever. We’ll watch you from there... and wait for your end.”

**Espa:** “Keep believing that if it brings you comfort. But know this: here, in this world, your era is over. And with it, the entire old order.”

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## **10 (Option 3: Only boss killed)**

**Shish:** “My hour has come. My time is up, and I’m ready to pass my place to Shash. He is worthy. His heart is pure, and his hand is steady. He’ll lead our defenders onward, to the light.”

**Espa:** “Are you saddened? Do you regret not seeing the future your successor will build?”

**Shish:** “No... If my warriors live, my death won’t be in vain. That’s true immortality—in the continuation of your ideas, your will, your spirit.”

**Espa:** “You speak as if you believe they can carry on your path. As if you believe that path is true. What if everything you served was just an illusion, crafted to keep people like you in line?”

**Shish:** “‘Ena’ is strong not only in its warriors. Its soul lies in faith, truth, and laws etched in hearts. Even without me, it will endure, for truth cannot be destroyed by a single blow.”

**Espa:** “Thus ends an era of good life in Miven. But perhaps Shash will be a better ruler...”

**Shish:** “He fights for the people, for their dreams, their hopes, and their right to live in a world where ‘justice’ isn’t an empty word. Something you’ll never understand, Espa, in your blind pursuit of power.”

**Espa:** “Maybe, but as you said, for every fighter, there’s a stronger one. I’m the one who came for you. Farewell, Shish. Your legend ends here.”

## Chapter 2

# Chapter 2. Dyo (Cosmos)

## Characters:

- **Gigo (Alien 1)** – An ambitious alien with fiery eyes, whose soul yearns for glory and recognition. His voice is full of enthusiasm, sometimes childlike, but it rings with a thirst for action. He is curious and bold, ready to risk everything for a goal, but his openness to dialogue makes him not just a warrior but a seeker of truth.
  - **Goga (Alien 2)** – A cautious guardian of order, whose mind is as cold as the stars, and whose words carry formal firmness. His gaze is suspicious but perceptive, seeing the world through the lens of control. Goga is Gigo's shadow, his loyal aide, whose restraint hides readiness for decisive action.
  - **Gigi (Alien Boss)** – The lord of the cosmos, whose presence inspires awe, and whose voice rumbles like distant thunder. He is a strategist and leader, his confidence boundless, but his heart harbors curiosity for the unknown. He accepts defeat from Espa with bitter surprise, acknowledging a strength that surpasses his calculations.
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**Gigo:** "What should we do with this stranger? Maybe toss him into a cosmic dive in the trash chute or make him dance under a laser show?"

**Espa:** "Why such drastic measures? Are you sure Giga will appreciate your knack for prison humor? Maybe he'd prefer a live exhibit for the ray zoo?"

**Gigo:** "If I deliver you to Giga, he'll be so thrilled he'll dance right in the middle of the command ship!"

**Espa:** "I understand your ambitious aspirations, but wouldn't it be more logical to discuss this directly with your boss? He might have entirely different plans for me. I'd hate for your career to suffer."

**Gigo:** "Hmm... There's some reason in your words, wanderer. Perhaps I should consult Giga personally before making hasty decisions."

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**Goga:** “By all the black holes in the galaxy, how did you slip past Gigo? That’s like sneaking through customs with a haul of black holes! He usually notices even molecular vibrations!”

**Espa:** “Gigo’s currently engaged in what I assume is a fascinating conversation with some Gigi. And who are you, if it’s not too bold to ask?”

**Goga:** “I’m Goga, the right hand and direct deputy of Giga himself! Gigo answers to me, so don’t overestimate his importance in our hierarchy.”

**Espa:** “Odd. If that’s the case, why didn’t he come to you the moment he spotted me? Sounds like a title from a joke: ‘I’m the deputy boss! My status is... uh... status!’”

**Goga:** “Don’t ask questions beyond your comprehension, outsider. Stay here and don’t move, unless you want to meet our blasters.”

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### 3

**Gigo:** "There you are, Espa! Thought you were slipping away from me like two rabbits from a wolf?"

**Espa:** "Honestly, I wasn't trying that hard. I've got more important things to do than play tag with extraterrestrial beings."

**Gigo:** "I thought catching you would be a stroke of luck, like grabbing a unicorn by the tail!"

**Espa:** "And what did your mysterious Giga say? Hopefully nothing to sour our introduction?"

**Gigo:** "He ordered me to bring you alive. Or would you prefer I wrap you in gift paper with a laser pattern?"

**Espa:** "Don't worry, I'll find my way. I'm pretty good at navigating unfamiliar space."

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**Goga:** “I just had the honor of speaking with Giga himself. He tasked me with catching you and, importantly, keeping an eye on Gigo to ensure he doesn’t do anything foolish.”

**Espa:** “Why am I so interesting to you? Is there really no worthier object for your attention in this boundless cosmos?”

**Goga:** “That’s for Giga to decide when you stand before him. Just march behind me like a good pup, and don’t even think about twitching, or you’ll regret it!”

**Espa:** “Strange, but Gigo just told me I could reach Giga on my own, without an escort.”

**Goga:** “Gigo has no authority to make such decisions without my knowledge! He’s overstepped his bounds, as usual. Typical junior officer behavior.”

**Espa:** “Maybe you’ll let me go to Giga on my own? I promise I won’t get lost or stage a mutiny along the way.”

**Goga:** “Hmm... Prove you’re not lying. Go, but know this: I’m watching you like a hawk watches its prey. One wrong move, and you’re mine!”

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**Gigo:** “We meet again, Espa! Missed my irresistible alien charm?”

**Espa:** “Honestly, I haven’t had time to miss anything. Too many weird things are happening in your cosmic kingdom.”

**Gigo:** “I love a good joke, you know. How do you feel about intergalactic humor? What key opens a spaceship? A star key!”

**Espa:** “Haha. I appreciate good humor as much as you do, but there’s no time for swapping jokes right now.”

**Gigo:** “I get it, I get it... This might be our last meeting. Shame, we were just starting to get along.”

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**Goga:** “Did Gigo spill that we’re testing your abilities? It’s like a survival exam to see what you’re made of!”

**Espa:** “Not a word about it, the sly one. Why do you need my talents? What are you sniffing out, cosmic investigators?”

**Goga:** “Thought he’d blabbed already. No matter. Come on, give it your all, show what you’ve got, or I’ll get bored!”

**Espa:** “Alright, no problem. I’m ready to surprise you so much that the stars will fall from their orbits. Hold on tight!”

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**Gigo:** “Espa... Espa... How are you liking our little but devious trials? Are you enjoying it, like a pilot racing through stellar streams?”

**Espa:** “Honestly, it could’ve been more epic. Wouldn’t it be worth spicing things up—something new to shake this starry calm?”

**Gigo:** “Wow, you’re a thrill-seeker! I’m having fun here, playing cat and mouse, and you’re still not satisfied. Alright, hold on, I’ll come up with something epic!”

**Espa:** “Just keep in mind: if this is just a game to you, don’t forget that every game carries the risk of losing big.”

**Gigo:** “What’s life if not a game? Aren’t we all pawns on the cosmic board of existence?”

**Espa:** “Maybe, but sometimes the stakes in this game are too high, even for immortals, let alone mere mortals.”

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**Goga:** “I must admit, you’re the only one who’s passed all our trials at this stage. That’s a feat of cosmic proportions.”

**Espa:** “Nice to hear. So, I didn’t try for nothing. Do I get a cosmic trophy as a keepsake?”

**Goga:** “Don’t get too full of yourself, traveler. The next trial is definitely beyond you. Even our intergalactic war veterans give up there.”

**Espa:** “We’ll see. I’ve still got a few aces up my sleeve that you don’t even suspect. Maybe I’ll surprise not just you, but myself too.”

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## 9 (Option 1: Mini-bosses survived)

**Gigo:** “By what miracle did you overcome all these insurmountable obstacles? It seems impossible, like defying the laws of gravity!”

**Espa:** “I’m the sword of the god, forged in the flames of cosmic storms. I’m used to living where the impossible becomes reality.”

**Goga:** “Be you thrice a divine blade, or the embodiment of cosmic balance—you won’t defeat our boss. He’s seen the birth and death of entire galaxies!”

**Espa:** “Odd, I thought Giga himself would open the way for me, like a guiding star leading through the darkness.”

**Goga:** “Ha! How naive! In this mad space, beings like you are just breakfast for Giga, easily digested by fate.”

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## 9 (Option 2: Mini-bosses died)

**Gigo:** “The experiment failed? Were all our calculations for nothing? Decades of research, sleepless nights, sacrifices... all in vain?”

**Espa:** “Looks like it... Maybe it’s just fate? You were too weak to resist the inevitable. Your formulas and theories are nothing but childish scribbles before the true power of the universe.”

**Goga:** “Weak? We never gave up! Even when ‘Shish’ tried to destroy our data, even when the council of sages... We’ll die a brave death, knowing we did everything for the advancement of science.”

**Gigo:** “Goga, this isn’t the end. Our theories, our discoveries—they’ll outlive us. We’ll meet in the next life, and there we’ll continue what we started. Perhaps in a world where truth is valued above strength.”

**Espa:** “The next life? You’re still clinging to such illusions? Trying to comfort yourselves with tales of rebirth? Is that all you’re capable of? Empty words instead of actions?”

**Goga:** “Words are our oaths. Our actions speak for themselves. We created technologies that saved millions of lives. What have you done, besides destruction?”

**Espa:** “Then let your oaths and actions fade with you into the world of illusions. That’s your fate, and it can’t be changed. In the new world I’ll create, there’ll be no place for those who cling to the past.”

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## 10 (Option 0: All survived)

**Giga:** “I can’t believe it... How could a ‘bug’ by cosmic standards outmatch me, the lord of star systems?”

**Espa:** “Easy with the ‘bug’ talk! I’m not one to sit quietly in a corner. I know my worth, and it’s higher than your starry ambitions.”

**Giga:** “I played with you like a cat with a mouse, thinking I had full control. And in the end, I fell into the cunning trap of my own arrogance.”

**Espa:** “You overthink and philosophize too much. Sometimes you just need to act decisively, without calculating every outcome.”

**Giga:** “Maybe you’re right. Tell me, would you consider leaving your unique samples for my research? In return, I’ll let you pass, opening new horizons of the universe.”

**Espa:** “Deal. Here, take it—let this gift be a testament to our strange alliance in this eternal cosmic dance.”

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## **10 (Option 1: Only mini-bosses killed)**

**Giga:** “I can’t believe it... Why did you kill them? They were just defending their world, their science, their ideals! They were the greatest minds of our world!”

**Espa:** “Defending? They were obstacles in my way. Their knowledge could’ve led to dangerous consequences.”

**Giga:** “There’s a cold, ruthless logic in your words. I can’t accept that you call yourself a messenger. Shouldn’t you bring light, not darkness?”

**Espa:** “I bring truth, and truth is often painful. Don’t flatter yourself—you’re next in line to be Revla’s lab rat.”

**Giga:** “Revla’s? Or your ambitions? You think yourself chosen, but you’re just a tool of chaos. A cosmic anomaly, a glitch in the universe’s calculations.”

**Espa:** “You talk too much. Run if you want. Know this: I’ll find you, no matter where you hide.”

**Giga:** “So be it. But know that the cosmos is my home, and catching me won’t be so easy.”

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## 10 (Option 2: Boss and mini-bosses killed)

**Giga:** “I’m a general from another planet. We came here to study this planet, its secrets, and its laws, to help us. Instead—it’s the end... It was all for nothing.”

**Espa:** “That’s your weakness. You came to study but missed the main point—this world doesn’t forgive those unprepared to fight. You were doomed from the start.”

**Giga:** “Fight? We fought for ‘Funf.’ For ideals and knowledge that could’ve made this world better. We were ready to give our lives for it. And we’re proud of that!”

**Espa:** “Pride? You’re trying to comfort yourself, clinging to ideals that were never real, but in the end, you’re just a victim of your own vanity.”

**Giga:** “You call yourself holy, but there’s nothing holy in you. You bring only death and destruction. You’re a distortion, a glitch in the program of existence. And one day, the universe will correct that glitch.”

**Espa:** “SHUT UP! You’re not worthy to speak to me of holiness. You’re dust beneath my feet! A nobody who thought himself significant!”

**Giga:** “Maybe you’re right. But remember: even dust can eclipse the sun if there’s enough of it. We’ll meet... where your power no longer holds sway.”

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### **10 (Option 3: Only boss killed)**

**Giga:** “How did this happen? We prepared for this day, we were certain of victory! Our calculations, our technology... everything was perfect.”

**Espa:** “Certainty? It’s worthless when you oppose the messiah. I was chosen to shape destinies. To separate truth from lies, strength from weakness. You ended up on the wrong side of that divide.”

**Giga:** “I HAD TO SURVIVE! MY SOLDIERS DEPENDED ON ME! WHO WILL LEAD THEM NOW? WHO WILL PROTECT OUR IDEALS?”

**Espa:** “They survived. Maybe that’s your true role—to sacrifice yourself for their salvation. Maybe that’s your contribution to history.”

**Giga:** “You don’t understand... I was their leader, their guiding star. Without me, they’ll be lost, like ships without a lighthouse in the stormy sea of the cosmos.”

**Espa:** “Lost? That’s no longer my concern. You made your choice, and now you pay for it. Perhaps your followers will prove stronger than you think. Perhaps they’ll find a new path...”

**Giga:** “We’ll meet in ‘Deka.’ And there we’ll see who’s truly chosen. There’s no place for impostors there, Espa.”

**Espa:** “We’ll meet if you dare return. But your end has already come. For your followers... maybe it’s just the beginning.”

# Chapter 3

# Chapter 3: Tria (Sky)

## Characters:

- **Askold (student and friend)** – A young sky warrior whose eyes burn with a thirst for knowledge and whose voice rings with enthusiasm and loyalty. He is light as the wind, yet his soul is heavy with the desire to prove himself. Espa's student, he sees him as both a father and a mentor, his words filled with respect and his actions brimming with reckless courage.
  - **Miras (brother, ruler of the sky)** – The ruler of the heavens, whose wisdom is like the clouds and whose anxiety is like the wind that drives them. His voice is gentle, but it carries the echo of responsibility for the world. Espa's brother, he doubts yet believes, his soul torn between duty and love, his decisions an attempt to maintain harmony.
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**Espa:** “Greetings, Askold! It’s been a while, my young friend. How are you faring in these celestial halls?”

**Askold:** “Espa, I’m thrilled to see you too! My heart leaps at the sight of my wise teacher! I’m doing splendidly, still honing my skills as you taught me. And how are your travels going?”

**Espa:** “All proceeds as it should, like the ancient cycle of seasons. The whisper of the wind tells me you’ve reached new heights in your abilities—like a blade slicing through clouds, unveiling new horizons of mastery.”

**Askold:** “Oh, come now, I’m just humble! But you know, it wouldn’t hurt to have a little sparring session. You’ve probably gotten rusty up there on your divine perch. Let’s shake the clouds—I’ll see how close I’ve gotten to your untouchable heights!”

**Espa:** “You dare challenge me, my bold student? Do you really think your old teacher’s gone stale without practice?”

**Askold:** “A bit of practice wouldn’t hurt you, teacher! It’s not every day you get to stretch your wings in a good fight. I’m dying to know how close I am to your unfathomable skill.”

**Espa:** “What, implying I’m ancient as the Great Tree itself? I’m still in my prime, you cheeky upstart! But I like your nerve—show me what you’ve learned, just don’t whine if I clip your wings a bit.”

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**Espa:** “Where did you dart off to so swiftly, like you’re chased by every wind in the heavens? Your quick steps gleam like comets in the night sky—think you can hide from my gaze?”

**Askold:** “Espa, I bolted because seeing you angry is no sight for the faint-hearted! Your powers are truly awe-inspiring—even the stars seem to dim before your brilliance!”

**Espa:** “How can I not boil when you’re always a thorn in my sandal, tripping up my righteous path? I’ve got a mission of cosmic importance, and here you are playing tag!”

**Askold:** “Oh, come on, teacher, don’t be such a grump! Life’s not just duty—it’s got some spark too. Let’s have fun, race through the clouds—bet it’ll lift your mood sky-high!”

**Espa:** “It’s not hard to find fun with you, but all you do is goof off and distract me from my sacred duty. Your recklessness could cost us dearly.”

**Askold:** “No way, this time I’ll zoom so fast you’ll need a telescope to spot me! I bet my best feathers you won’t catch me!”

**Espa:** “Don’t tempt fate, kid! I’ll show you the speed of a divine messenger. Hold on, I’m coming for you!”

**Askold:** “Oh, I’m shaking! Catch me if your wings don’t give out, old-timer!”

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**Espa:** “Askold, you’re starting to wear me out with your endless games... Shame I didn’t bring a magic stick to guide you back to the right path, like a wise shepherd herding stray sheep.”

**Askold:** “Why so harsh, teacher? I’m not just your student—I’m like a son to you, a fiery spark in your vast cosmic heart. Are you really mad at me?”

**Espa:** “Why say ‘like’? Those words sound flippant, as if you’re hiding the depth of your feelings.”

**Askold:** “No denying you’re the sword of the gods, the embodiment of divine justice, while I’m just a humble student trying to catch a sliver of your light. But to me, you’re more than a teacher—you’re like a father.”

**Espa:** “Askold, you guard the skies from alien invasions, standing watch over peace and tranquility. You’re a true hero, worthy of admiration. I’m as proud of you as any father would be of his son.”

**Askold:** “Thank you, teacher. Your words mean more to me than all the treasures of the universe. I always strive to meet your high expectations, to never let you down.”

**Espa:** “Don’t exaggerate, son. I’m just guiding your steps along the uncharted paths of fate.”

**Askold:** “Still, you’ve taught me everything—from finding strength to gaining wisdom. I’m endlessly grateful for every lesson.”

**Espa:** “Keep it up, and maybe one day your star will light up entire galaxies!”

**Askold:** “We’ll meet again, teacher... Don’t be late for the next lesson! I’ve got a special surprise planned for you!”

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**Espa:** “You’re really starting to get on my nerves with these games, Askold! How many more tests and trials do I have to endure? It feels like you’re deliberately stalling me!”

**Askold:** “Espa, forgive me, I beg you... I didn’t mean to provoke your righteous anger. I was ordered to delay you at all costs, or I’d never have dared act so boldly against you.”

**Espa:** “Who gave you that order? Who dares meddle in my path?”

**Askold:** “The God of the Skies, the almighty ruler of this planet... The one whose name I fear to speak aloud.”

**Espa:** “I see, my brother... So, it’s his clever schemes at work. He’s always loved complicating simple things.”

**Askold:** “Forgive me, teacher. I didn’t want to trouble you or disturb your peace. I hope you’ll at least make good use of this forced delay, training and sharpening your unmatched skills.”

**Espa:** “Don’t worry, Askold. I get it—you’re caught between a rock and a hard place. But next time, think for yourself instead of dancing to someone else’s tune.”

**Askold:** “I’m sorry, but I’ll have to keep obstructing you.”

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**Espa:** “Aren’t you tired of testing me, Askold? Isn’t it time to end these endless games and challenges?”

**Askold:** “No, teacher, how could my soul tire when you, with your unmatched example, drive me to chase perfection? Every moment with you is training, forging both me and you!”

**Espa:** “Well said. I can see not just speed in you now, but strength too—like a thunderbolt that could shake the entire sky.”

**Askold:** “I learn from the best, for you’re my mentor, the embodiment of perfection and mastery. Your priceless lessons aren’t wasted, and I tirelessly strive to one day reach your level.”

**Espa:** “I’m glad to hear it, but remember, perfection has no limit—there are always new peaks to conquer.”

**Askold:** “Of course, teacher. I’ll keep working on myself, refining my body and spirit. Your wisdom is my guiding beacon in the stormy sea of knowledge.”

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**Askold:** “Teacher, you’re not as old as I thought—your speed and wisdom dazzle like falling stars. Honestly, I didn’t expect you to keep up with me—you’ve surpassed my wildest expectations!”

**Espa:** “Askold, thinking is good, but it’s not always enough to outrun time and the vastness of the universe. Don’t underestimate me—sometimes a cool exterior hides an unquenchable fire.”

**Askold:** “I’ll mull it over... Or maybe rethink it... Though I’ll probably change my mind. Your advice is like gold—always spot-on.”

**Espa:** “You catch on quick, but channel that boundless energy into serious training.”

**Askold:** “Consider it done, teacher. I’ll try to surprise you next time—I promise to whip up something truly special!”

**Espa:** “We’ll see what you come up with, my student. I’m waiting eagerly, like a kid for presents.”

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**Askold:** “So, what do you think of my new moves, teacher? I poured my soul into every motion! Did you notice my improved Dancing Lotus technique?”

**Espa:** “Honestly? Pretty weak. I expected a hurricane, but got a gentle breeze. Your attacks are like a nursery rhyme—too easy to predict.”

**Askold:** “You’re kidding! I added new techniques and mixed them up in the most surprising ways. Did you really see through it all?”

**Espa:** “Made it a bit trickier? That’s not enough. You need to think several steps ahead, like in chess, anticipating not just your opponent’s moves but your own too.”

**Askold:** “I thought you’d be winded, but you’re still in the saddle...”

**Espa:** “Me? Winded? Don’t make me laugh, Askold! I barely tapped into my abilities. Come up with something serious next time.”

**Askold:** “Alright, teacher. I’ll prepare something special for you—something that’ll make even your divine heart race!”

**Espa:** “I’m looking forward to it. Don’t let me down, or we’ll have to go back to basics, like your first days of training.”

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**Espa:** “Why so feeble again? It’s like you’re dancing with shadows, not fighting. Your strikes barely stir the air, like a lazy breeze at noon.”

**Askold:** “Sorry, teacher... My thoughts are wandering far from the training grounds. I just wanted to talk with you, teacher. There are questions burning in my heart, like embers of an untended fire.”

**Espa:** “Your mind should be clear, like the sacred waters of the Miven spring. What do you want to talk about? Spill it, don’t keep my soul in suspense.”

**Askold:** “How are things with the figures in Miven? News from there comes rarer than raindrops in a drought. I haven’t heard anything in ages and worry, like a night watchman with a flickering lantern.”

**Espa:** “All is well—thankfully, the god thrives, and the other bearers of light are in fine shape too. No troubles, everything’s calm and steady, like the soft whisper of gentle clouds.”

**Askold:** “And my mother, teacher? It’s been so long since I heard her kind words, and my heart aches with concern.”

**Espa:** “She’s doing fine, rest easy as a deep lake. She misses you, like the earth misses rain, and sent you greetings warmer than summer sun. Her voice brims with pride for you, my student.”

**Askold:** “Thank you for your answers, teacher. They’re worth more to me than all treasures. Now I can be at peace, like a mountain.”

**Espa:** “I understand your worry—it’s as natural as the changing seasons. No need to fret, all is in order.”

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## 9 (Option 1: Mini-bosses survived)

**Espa:** “Why are you holding back, Askold? I see it in your eyes, read it in every move, hear it in every strike. You’re not using your full potential.”

**Askold:** “I want you to stop him... Before it’s too late, before the stars shift their course.”

**Espa:** “Who do you mean? Speak plainly, don’t veil the truth in hints.”

**Askold:** “The Ruler of Deka... whose shadow grows longer with every sunset. He’s plotting something sinister, weaving a web that could ensnare the whole world.”

**Espa:** “Yes, I know, his schemes aren’t exactly subtle. But why spare my strength instead of sparking the fury in me that could dispel the darkness?”

**Askold:** “So you’ll be ready when the moment of truth comes. I’m so afraid for you, teacher, more than children fear the dark. He’s strong and cunning, like a venomous snake hiding in flowers.”

**Espa:** “Don’t worry about me, my student. I’ll handle this trial, as I’ve handled all before. The same courage that lit the stars at the dawn of time flows in my veins.”

**Askold:** “Sorry if I’ve hindered your path or delayed your great deeds. All I wanted was to help.”

**Espa:** “No harm done, Askold. I’ve raised a worthy student, and you’ve proven it with your loyalty and courage.”

**Askold:** “Good luck facing Miras, teacher. May strength guide you, and may it all end well.”

**Espa:** “Thanks for your faith in me. It strengthens me, like mountain air to a wanderer. We’ll meet again in Miven when this is over. Take care, like the last spark in the night.”

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## 9 (Option 2: Mini-bosses died)

**Espa:** “Askold, my heart clenches like a heavy stone sunk in an old well... This decision cuts my soul like a sharp knife, but I have no choice but to make it.”

**Askold:** “Teacher, what troubles you so much that your eyes have lost their spark?”

**Espa:** “You were more than a student, Askold—like a son raised under my wing. But now your presence is a barrier, like an impassable wall blocking my destiny.”

**Askold:** “A barrier? Everything I did was for you. Where did I go wrong, teacher?”

**Espa:** “Unknowing of your true role’s power, you’ve become like a weed overshadowing a garden’s beauty. I must remove you to restore order to fate’s grand design.”

**Askold:** “You want me to vanish, erased from this earth?”

**Espa:** “Yes, your time has run out, and your presence no longer fits the plan of higher powers.”

**Askold:** “Won’t there be an emptiness when I’m gone?”

**Espa:** “I’m a messenger—loneliness is foreign to me. I must walk toward the light, and your role here is done.”

**Askold:** “Forgive me, teacher... If I slowed your path even a little, I swear I didn’t mean to.”

**Espa:** “Farewell, Askold. You were like a son, but even sons must be sacrificed for the greater cause.”

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## 10 (Option 0: All survived)

**Miras:** “I’m still no match for you, brother. Your strength surpasses mine, like a fire outshines a candle. You’ve always been stronger, ever since our birth in the light of the Great Tree.”

**Espa:** “You’re my equal, Miras, always have been and always will be. We’re two sides of the same coin, two banks of the same river. But I think you held back in our duel, like an actor playing a part.”

**Miras:** “How did you know? Was my act as obvious as stars in a clear night?”

**Espa:** “Brother, I’ve known you so long I can read your intentions in the flutter of your lashes. Your moves were too predictable, like winter snow. You didn’t give it your all, saving your strength like a miser hoards gold.”

**Miras:** “Yes, true—your insight’s always been sharp as a god’s blade. I didn’t want to waste your time and energy on a pointless game. It’s time to part ways, our paths diverging like rays from a shattered crystal.”

**Espa:** “He must be stopped before darkness swallows all that exists. I can’t let him harm the world, just as a shepherd can’t let a wolf attack the flock.”

**Miras:** “Got a plan, or are you charging in headfirst as usual?”

**Espa:** “Yes, I plan to talk to him. Words can sometimes cut sharper than swords and hold stronger than shields.”

**Miras:** “That’s your whole plan? Just talk? You think that’ll work against someone deaf to reason? It’s like trying to douse a forest fire with tears!”

**Espa:** “Yes. The simplest solutions are like a cast-iron skillet: heavy, plain, but they get the job done.”

**Miras:** “What nonsense, but you’ve always been cocky, like trying to leap a chasm in one bound. Still, maybe that’s your strength. I hope your plan works, like a well-tuned dwarven clock!”

**Espa:** “I hope so too, for hope is the last thing to leave a warrior’s heart. Take care, Miras, may shadows never touch your soul.”

**Miras:** “You too, Espa. Good luck in your mad endeavor. May the stars light your path even in the deepest darkness.”

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## 10 (Option 1: Only mini-bosses killed)

**Miras:** “I feel your mercy like a cold blade at my throat. Why did you stop me, Espa? Why am I still breathing this bitter air of defeat?”

**Espa:** “You’re like a mouse to an elephant to me. I see fire in your eyes, but it’s too weak to singe even the hem of my robe. Though... you held back, didn’t you? I felt it in every move—like you danced on the edge of a cliff but refused to jump.”

**Miras:** “Your insight’s always been your strength. Yes, you’re right—my heart burned for vengeance for Askold, but my hands trembled when it came time to strike the final blow. Ironic, isn’t it? I, an immortal guardian, enslaved by my own feelings.”

**Espa:** “Ah... So your bond was stronger than I thought. A thousand years is an eternity for mortals, but just a moment for us. It feels like yesterday he was by your side, a young, eager observer of this fragile world.”

**Miras:** “A whole millennium... He was with me, like a ray of light—curious, bold, yearning to see every inch of this cursed and blessed planet. He became family to me, my hope...”

**Espa:** “That’s all ash of time now, Miras. The past is like a severed limb—it hurts, though it’s gone. And you know what? I feel no shadow of regret for what I did.”

**Miras:** “Are you sure, messenger? Won’t this choice become a heavy stone pulling you down in the river of eternity?”

**Espa:** “My resolve is firm as a diamond blade. My mission outweighs all bonds and feelings. I move forward, and nothing will stop me—not memory, not pain, not compassion.”

**Miras:** “Come back when your path comes full circle, Espa. Maybe you’ll find the strength to bow to Askold’s memory. Even gods sometimes weep over their children’s graves.”

**Espa:** “Farewells are a weakness of souls afraid of oblivion. But... maybe you’re right. I’ll consider your words when the stars align differently.”

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## 10 (Option 2: Boss and mini-bosses killed)

**Miras:** “In the great book of existence, every being occupies just a page or a paragraph. Everything has a prologue and an epilogue, a first breath and a last exhale. That’s the law of the universe.”

**Espa:** “And what’s this raging river between the shores of birth and death? What is life if not a wild dance between two voids?”

**Miras:** “Something like that... How strangely our fates intertwine. But tell me, how do you view this riddle of existence?”

**Espa:** “I think life should be lived like a flame—bright, fierce, sparing nothing. You must taste every shade of emotion, drink deeply from the cup of knowledge, and climb the peak of your ambitions. Otherwise, why exist in this multidimensional chaos?”

**Miras:** “There may be wisdom in your words. My path was different—quiet, like the Eksi ocean. Askold was my companion on this journey... Not just a student—a part of my immortal soul.”

**Espa:** “And you don’t regret it? The time spent serving and contemplating?”

**Miras:** “Regret? Not a single moment. I was loyal to God, guarding these Ena clouds, the world itself from chaos, studying the incredible wonders of creation. Revla crafted a universe where every speck reflects his grandeur.”

**Espa:** “Maybe... My heart burns like the Pente volcano. I did the unthinkable—destroyed Askold, and I’ll never wash that from my hands...”

**Miras:** “... *His silence speaks louder than words, his eyes reflecting eternity and acceptance of the inevitable.*”

**Espa:** “Let me free you from the burden of this loss. May your soul soar like a bird from a broken cage, finding peace in eternity’s embrace.”

**Miras:** “You wear a demon’s mask, but I see a flicker of divine light in your eyes. You’re more complex than you let on...”

**Espa:** “Close your eyes, Miras. Imagine it’s just a dream you’re about to wake from...”

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## 10 (Option 3: Only boss killed)

**Miras:** “My brother, all my thousand years of training were dust before your strength...”

**Espa:** “Don’t belittle yourself, Miras. You’re my equal, like two drops of divine Movin dew. You held back in our duel on purpose, like an actor playing someone else’s role.”

**Miras:** “Maybe there’s truth in that. My task was simple—to keep you here, at this crossroads of fates, like a djinn in the Epta desert.”

**Espa:** “Who’s pulling the strings of your fate? Has the lord of Dekka himself descended from his throne to turn your hand against me?”

**Miras:** “My oath is sealed in the blood of ancient gods. I can’t reveal that name, even if you rip out my heart. Hear this warning: ‘A labyrinth of trials lies ahead, each turn leading to a new abyss.’”

**Espa:** “Strange... There’s no sorrow or fear in your eyes. You stand before me, knowing my strength, and smile, like you know something more.”

**Miras:** “What’s to fear for one who’s seen stars born? If I fall by your hand, Askold will take my place. The cycle will close, as it was destined.”

**Espa:** “Can he bear that burden?”

**Miras:** “He’s absorbed your strength and my wisdom, like a sponge soaks up water. Of course, he’ll manage. We raised him, like a tree in the Ohto forest.”

**Espa:** “There was a time... I remember us three planting seeds in that forest. We met a little druid—he’s probably grown by now.”

**Miras:** “Farewell, my brother. I hope Askold becomes a bridge between our worlds, between your wrath and my serenity.”

**Espa:** “Farewell, Miras. Your soul will journey to Dekka, but your memory will linger in the rings of this eternal tree. Rest in peace, old friend.”

Book

*The full volume of the book is about 100 pages.*

*Here are 25 pages for review - they reflect the style, atmosphere and direction of the narrative.*

# Flowers from All Fields

## Prologue

*"In any great endeavor, the most difficult step is the first. It is full of fear and doubt, but it is precisely this step that opens the path to everything else."*

So spoke the ancient sages, warming themselves by fires under stars that flickered like fragments of eternity. The first step is always the most frightening. It is like an abyss: full of shadows, whispers, and cold. You need only cross its edge—and before you unfolds a road: with flowers and thorns, with dreams and trials, leading to something greater than yourself.

I remember how, still a boy, I first took a pen in my hands. It seemed not a toy, but a weapon—thin, sharp, like a sword. My hands trembled. I feared that my words would be empty, that they would drown in silence. It was precisely this first, timid stroke that opened the path for me: through forests where trees whispered in a forgotten language, through disputes with fate and with myself, through love—bright, but not without shadow.

Time flowed differently then. Not as it does now, when I look back from the height of lived years. My story begins with the third diary—I was eight. I started the first one at four, though in childhood years don't count—they are measured by the flowers of groves, the play of sunsets, and the scents of a distant home. The world then breathed with magic: in the rustle of leaves one could hear the call of dragons, and in the reflections of the sun one could discern the shadow of a fairy. I did not yet know that fate is not only a gift, but also a burden. That each choice is like a flower, beneath which lie roots reaching into joy and pain, into despair and hope.

My diaries were not simply notebooks—they were gateways. An attempt to catch a spark of eternity. Each line was like a thin ray breaking through the veil of childhood illusions. Sometimes they rang with irony, self-irony, and a gentle, almost bright sadness for things I had not yet lost—but already sensed I would.

In the order-camp where I grew up, they taught: a warrior's path begins not with a sword, but with ink. The word is a bridge to eternity. It connects us with the shadows of ancestors wandering in the mist of the past. My first diary, worn, smelling of leather and dampness, was a door: to myself, to the future, to those I did not yet know. Every night, by candlelight, I wrote—about battles with the windmills of imagination, about vows to protect a girl with eyes the color of storms, about fear, about hope, about what I could not name.

The diary became a ritual. Many of us, young knights, carried this habit through the years like a torch through darkness. And now it seems to me: everyone should keep their own

diary. Not for the sake of order, but for the sake of revelation. It is a conversation with oneself, a way to discern light in chaos.

Some episodes I embellish as I saw them then—with childish logic, surprisingly poetic. Something I understood only later, but I write as if I had always known it. For the truth of memory is sometimes more important than the truth of facts.

I have written much. Perhaps even too much. Most likely, no one but me will read these pages. Is it not primarily for ourselves that we write? The rest are merely fellow travelers in our conversation with eternity. Here are almost all my diaries, gathered into one great story. Even I am curious to see what will come of this.

And if you are indeed reading these lines—know this: before you lies not simply a tale of a boy who dreamed of becoming a knight. This is the confession of a man who understood: true knighthood begins not with armor and sword, but with the readiness to look truth in the face. Even if that truth is about oneself.

Enough reflections—the story awaits.

# Chapter 1 (Book)

# Chapter 1. Memories of the beginning of the journey

*"The memory of serving the homeland is what makes the blade pure and the heart steadfast. Without the Motherland there is no honor, without honor there is no warrior."*

A saying carved on the arch of the barracks of the Knight's Academy barracks, which I read every morning, and which seemed more and more faded and bitter on my tongue with each passing year.

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History loves to repeat itself, like a drunken minstrel who knows only one song about betrayal and necessity. Here I am again, trying to piece together the memory, to understand how we ended up in this shadow dance.

War was coming to my kingdom of Monaria, not like a thunderstorm that you can wait out under a roof, but like a shadow from the wings of a huge dragon circling over a field before bringing down fire. The neighboring kingdom of Criver, with whom we had shared bread and oaths of loyalty for thirty years, now sharpened its blades against us. The borders were already blazing - the villages on the outskirts were turning to embers, and the smell of cinders and iron hung in the air, foretelling the inevitable.

We were naive - clinging to the idea that their emperor had simply lost control of the army, that this was temporary madness, like spring fever in young stallions. Deep down, I knew it was a lie we were telling ourselves. The alliance that had seemed as unbreakable as the mountains of Elgerd was crumbling to dust.

All this was unfolding on the largest continent on our planet Shuln, Eskel, a land where ninety-five percent of the inhabitants were human and the other five were intelligent races whose voices were rarely heard in our chronicles. Eskel was vast and rugged: endless plains were replaced by ridges of sharp, fang-like mountains, and the rivers were wide, slow, and flowed like blood in the veins of the world.

Monaria occupied the southeast of the continent - fertile fields dotted with golden ears, and cities with white walls that shone in the sun like pearls. The capital, Minral, was the heart of the kingdom: narrow cobblestone streets smelled of fresh bread and hot metal from the forges, and above it all stood the castle, a silent guardian whose towers pierced the sky.

Criver lay to the northeast, beyond the mountains, in lands cold and bleak, where forests of black pines whispered of ancient secrets and cities were built of stone as gray as their souls.



In thirty years of alliance, Kriever had swallowed forty percent of the Eskel. Their army was a war machine that knew no fatigue, and their ideology was a poison that poisoned all living things. They called themselves "white men" and dreamed of a world where there would be no elves left with their delicate songs, no dwarves with their deep mines, and not even us, the common people of Monaria, unless we bowed our heads.

Why did we cling to them? Fear - the answer is simple, but bitter as old wine. Monaria was too small to stand alone. Our last king - Elmir VII, wise but cautious to the point of cowardice, decided it was better to follow the Creever into the abyss than to perish - by resisting. Ironically, the loyalty that once saved us was now leading to the grave. Duty is a terrible thing. Like a chain, it can both protect and strangle.

Because of this war, my knighthood training was cut short like a song interrupted by a hammer blow. I, the son of a royal kitchen maid, was brought home to Elthor, to the castle. Yes, I am a plebeian, but my blood is not blue, but red, smelling of sweat and earth. By the grace of Elmire VII, I was sent to learn the art of the sword and shield.

My name is Loin. A noble name, though my mother gave it to me out of love, not nobility. "Moon and protector" is how it translates. Funny, isn't it? The moon shines in the night, cold and distant, and I'm just a guy with calluses on his hands who loves his mother and is trying to figure out where he belongs in the world.

Arriving in the capital after four years of separation, I rushed to her, barely setting foot on the ground of Eltor. Her face, covered with freckles like a map of the mountains of our country, lit up with joy. We embraced, and her warmth melted the ice in my chest that had accumulated from worries and roads.

- Tell me everything," she said, sitting me down at the table. A cup of tea was already steaming, smelling of herbs and home.

I smiled. She'd read my letters, but she was hungry for stories from my lips. A living story is like comparing a dried flower in a herbarium to a living, fragrant bud.

One of the stories involved my name. I remember on my first day at the Academy, our mentor - a middle-aged warrior with a gentle face scarred like a map of forgotten battles - looked me over and loudly proclaimed to the entire plaza:

- This guy will protect you in the night in the future. Not a fly will fly in front of him, take care of him. - And then he added with a sly twist: "But he probably gets up late, moon protector. I'll have to become a lark.

I, naive and honest, blurted it out:

- My mom and I wake up early in the morning. I very rarely see the moon.

The mentor was silent for a moment, and then he laughed:

- Then you're a lark owl!

The whole group laughed, and I laughed with them. There was something light in that laughter, like the distant bell of childhood. Because then we did not know that soon we would have to defend not only at night, but also during the day, and at dawn, and in the twilight, when it is difficult to distinguish friend from foe.

Mother nodded, but behind the laughter I saw a shadow of anxiety. War was knocking at the door, and soon I would have to defend not only my name, but everything I held dear. In this choice sounded the tragedy of human existence: between patience and betrayal, between necessity and dignity.

The nickname "Lark-Owl" stuck to me for a long time, becoming a small but significant stroke to the portrait of who I was and who I was to become. An oxymoron, embodied in a young man who was not a clumsy boy. It had its own special, bittersweet poetry - the poetry of the beginning of the journey, where every step was filled with reflections on choice, duty and the strength of the human spirit.

*That was then - in that life, which now seems like a dream. A new story was ahead of me, and God only knows what it would bring.*

Tension hung in the air of the castle like the fog before dawn, when even the birds freeze, smelling something wrong. We clung to the pact of alliance made centuries ago like drowning men clutching at straws. Our king, blessed with optimism or cursed with naiveté, told his subjects that there would be no war, that it was just a dalliance of visiting knights, with whom even Emperor Criver himself could not cope.

I wonder, did he believe it himself?

Everyone wanted to believe the king's words - who would refuse a comforting lie? But in the depths of his heart, everyone understood: the Emperor is playing cat and mouse with us, taking us by force, provoking us to the first blow. We, like noble fools, did not give in to provocation, although we saw the whole game perfectly well. Later I learned Monaria's orders: "Defend only the cities. Villages are a necessary sacrifice." The cynical wisdom of power - save the important by sacrificing the secondary. We simply didn't have the strength to stand up to a vast empire.

But what empire didn't seem huge to an eight-year-old boy?

Living in the castle taught me that being close to power doesn't make you part of it. I saw the princess often, we were the same age, and occasionally - oh, the generosity of fate! - we even talked. About the weather, about a lost kitten, about a delicious compote. Childish trifles that seemed like the whole world at the time.

The King didn't like this spontaneous socializing. You bet - his daughter, heir to the throne, and the cook's son, smelling of sweat, onions and flour! Perhaps that's why I was sent to a knight's school. But maybe not - who knows what kind of considerations kings have?

There was magic in our world, and I got ice magic. How ironic - my ice was purple, and thus as fragile as my position. Sounds beautiful, doesn't it? Ice peaks, glittering blades, winter cold..... Romance! But fate had a trick up its sleeve. My ice was not strong, thin, like a shard of glass, crumbled from the first serious blow. A magic of medium rarity - a fusion of air and water - but requiring a Herculean effort to learn both elements. A paradox: to master ice, one must first conquer wind and water. Philosophy in action.

Most people possessed simple magics: wind, fire, water, earth. Only twenty-five percent of the population could boast a magical gift - us, the chosen misfits, marked by powers that more often hindered than helped.

And the princess... She was the best even among the unicums. Plant magic was the rarest of the rare. With a single wave of her hand, she could grow any plant, which shocked both me and all other mortals. If she grew a plant once, she could recreate it in a second if she wanted to. There was one drawback, though - she needed seeds or roots. Magic with conventions, like everything in this life.

The nobles, those wise men of boredom, thought her magic was useless, plebeian. What fools they were. To me, her gift seemed perfect for such a fragile girl-the power to give life, not take it away.

Eila was the princess's name, a name as light as the breeze that ruffles the grass in the meadows. In the royal family, all names began with "E" - tradition or a strange quirk of fate.

She was beautiful in a way that was almost obscene. Blue-green eyes like lakes in the forest, light white hair flowing like silk. She looked like an elf from the old fairy tales, only without the pointy ears. Everyone in the kingdom admired our princess.

Her main weapon was kindness. Not just a quality, but real power - invisible, silent, but crushing. Her kindness could disarm any warrior, even one who had already drawn his sword. She shone like a ray of sunlight through the cracks in the old shutters, and in that light even the most callous souls seemed a little softer, a little more human.

It was because of this kindness that they were always trying to deceive her. The princess, kind to everyone from dirty peasants to puffed-up aristocrats, caused the court to quietly panic. The king frowned, the nobles hissed behind her back. "How is it that you are a princess, and a kind one at that? To all the plebeians?!" - they grumbled, as if kindness were something shameful.

Sometimes I watched her working in the garden. Bending down to the ground, whispering something to the flowers, and they bloomed as if they were answering her. I once tried to mold a small flower out of ice. It came out crooked, and it melted almost immediately. She laughed, not wickedly, but softly, like the wind in the leaves, and said: "Your ice is as special as you are."

I was embarrassed then and ran away. But her words stuck in me like a splinter.

And I... I didn't like her!

*\* Lies. The most beautiful lie I ever told myself.*

You could fall in love with her at first sight. Lots of people fell in love - guards blushed, poets wrote poems, even the old stable boy dropped his pitchfork when he looked at her. But me. I'm not the type to lose my head. To me she was a friend - someone to laugh with, to argue with, to play childish games without thinking about the shadow of the crown behind her back.

We played knights and princesses. I swung a wooden sword, imagining myself a hero on a white horse. These games were my little kingdom, where I could be anything I wanted to be - not a weakling with worthless magic, but a true protector.

One thing I can admit is that she had the most beautiful smile in the world. A shy, slightly embarrassed one that made me feel unexpectedly warm and... stupid. stupid. That admission was enough for me to hate myself for being weak.

In this complex twist of fate, Leyont de Mortvel, the king's chief knight and protector, appeared on my path. Tall as a tower, with a voice that made the walls tremble and eyes that saw through. To others he was as stern as a winter wind, but to me... softer. He always found a moment to talk, to show me how to hold a sword, or to point out my mistakes.

I never had a father. My mother told me, "He was a knight, a real one, with honor and dignity. Went out to defend us and never came back." I don't know if it was true or a fairy tale, but I believed it. And it was as if Leyonte had taken that empty place in my life. He had no children himself, and sometimes it seemed as if he looked at me as if I were his son.

"A knight is not only strength, but also heart," he taught me. - Protect those who are weaker, and don't lose yourself." As I listened to him, I thought: what if I never become like him? What if my weakness isn't just magic, but myself?

Mom, Eila, and Leyont-they're like three corners of the same triangle. Mom is the one who gives me hope. She is the light that beckons and warms, he is the shadow that keeps me on my feet. I stand between them, small and ridiculous, with a dream that is more like a mockery.

You know what? Maybe that's the point. Maybe it's not the strength that makes a man a man, but how he lives with that weakness. I go forward, laughing at myself - at my purple ice, at my childhood games, at trying to be a hero in a world where heroes have long gone out of fashion.

Still, I believe: even the weakest can find their way. Even me.

My story began - the story of a small observer, squeamish yet trepidatious about all the mysteries of the adult world. Here, at the intersection of political intrigue and magical wonders, every raindrop running down the ancient stones of the castle walls was a reminder of the frailty of moments. Each stone held a story, and each wound a lesson clothed in the fleeting beauty of fate.

Reality and fairy tale, irony and sadness intertwined, in a majestic chorus that leads us along paths where even the weakest magic can be the key to unlocking the mysteries of the world.

Four years is an eternity when you're eight years old. Maybe a moment if you measure life in an adult way, hurriedly, as if you were late for your own funeral. For me, those four years in the knight's camp were something more-a second life, where a little boy had to learn to hold a sword heavier than his own hand and cast spells that adult mages take decades to master.

Sunset colored the sky with the colors of a slow goodbye as I stood at the familiar castle gates. The towers seemed smaller than in my childhood memories. Memory is a strange thing: it magnifies what we have lost and diminishes what we have gained. The air smelled of freshly cut grass and the distant smoke of hearths. The stone sidewalk beneath my feet held the warmth of the day, and somewhere in the distance sounded the measured clang of a sledgehammer, the heartbeat of a castle that never stops.

- Long time no see, Loyne.

The voice sounded familiar - deep, like the ringing of a bell on a foggy morning. I turned around. Leyont de Mortvel stood before me, and the wrinkles in the corners of his long-faded eyes twitched into a smile. His figure, tall and straight as a blade, cast a long, confident shadow on the wiped slabs.

- You have become a true knight after four years in the knight's camp," he continued, and there was that special warmth in his words that old warriors reserve for the young.

A knight? I looked down at my hands, callused from the hilt of my sword, but still too small for a real weapon. My shoulders had straightened from endless training, but I still had to hold my head up to look adults in the eye.

- Me? A knight? - I grinned with the bitterness that comes too soon. - I'm a long way from that title. I'm only eight years old, and that title requires a soul hardened in the fire of life's battles.

Self-irony is the defense mechanism of a soul that is afraid to believe in its own importance. It is easier to make a joke than to accept praise that may be premature.

Leyont straightened, placing a heavy but warm hand on my shoulder. There was a strength in his voice that sent shivers down my spine:

- A knight is not just a title, Loyne. It is a man with a blazing heart of bravery, a soul tempered in the fire of honor, courage molded into every word. It is a pure look of mercy and an unbending will as strong as the steel of his sword and as eternal as his oath.

Beautiful words. Too beautiful for this world, where knights are sometimes sold for a sack of gold and honor has become a luxury only the dead can afford. But in the mouth of Ser Leyonte de Mortvelle they sounded not like empty rhetoric, but like an ancient hymn, like an incantation that could breathe life into stone.

- They are very powerful words," I said quietly, feeling the heat rise to my cheeks. - I'm still a very young boy. I don't think I can bear such a burden yet.

- Leyont squeezed my shoulder, as if trying to convey a piece of his unshakable confidence.  
- The most important thing is that you strive for it. Striving is half the battle.

I remembered the camp: the endless mornings, with my hands aching for swords and my head buzzing from grammar lessons. The first spells that trembled at my fingertips like caught lightning, and the nights under the stars when I dreamed of what I would become. All of it was hard, but I never gave up once.

- Are you sure? - I asked, raising my eyes. - I think I'm too small for such words and honors.

- The fact that you refuse now speaks volumes," Leyonte de Mortvel laughed-not mockingly, but the way an older brother laughs when he sees more in his younger brother than he does in himself. - Modesty, Loyne, is another quality of a knight. Only in you do I see true potential.

Potential. Another one of those words adults use when they want to make a child believe in himself. I'll be honest, his faith warmed my soul like a sip of hot milk on a cold night.

- Thank you, Leyonte de Mortvel," I exhaled, "Your words mean a lot to me.

In a world where adults criticize rather than praise, every kind word is worth its weight in gold. And from an old knight who has seen enough battles to know bravery from folly, such words are worth a fortune.

- You've had a hell of a training that not everyone can endure," Leyont listed as the priest recited a prayer. - Grammar training, sword fighting, and even magic. In a special unit, that's saying a lot.

Hell of a training program. Yeah, you could call it that. Being woken up at five in the morning for fencing, your fingers bleeding from a naughty quill and your head splitting from magic formulas - it really is like one of the circles of hell. But what doesn't kill us makes us stronger or cripples us. There is no third.

- Thank you again for your words," I said, and my voice trembled with emotion. - You are right! I am a knight. but a very small one.

A small knight. It sounds almost like an oxymoron. But maybe that's my strength - to be different from what one expects to see? A little boy with big ambitions, a child with the soul of a warrior, a chick who is already spreading his wings.

- Are you going to protect mom? - There was a special tenderness in Leyont's voice. - The kingdom? The princess?

Mom. At the mere mention of her, something clenched in his chest. Four years without a mother's embrace, without her lullabies, without the smell of her hair smelling of vanilla and cinnamon. The kingdom is an abstraction, the princess is a dream, but Mom is the reality waiting for me outside those gates.

- Of course! - I blurted out with such force that I was surprised.

And in that moment I realized: it doesn't matter how small I am, it doesn't matter if I'm ready for this burden. There are things worth fighting for. And if that requires becoming a knight, so be it.

- What else is there to talk about?! - Leyonte de Mortvel clapped me on the shoulder, and his voice rang like steel against stone. - I believe your words, you are a true warrior. Now quickly go to your mother and tell her how much you love her.

- Yes, I do! - I trumpeted with the seriousness of a small soldier.

And I ran. I ran towards home, towards my mother, towards the life that awaited a little knight with a big heart. My childish laughter mingled with the clang of a sword against my hip, and it was beautiful.

The kitchen greeted me with the divine aroma of something baking and spicy. My mother, covered in flour and with a kind smile on her face, emerged from the cloud of steam over the huge cauldron like a kind fairy from my childhood fairy tales.

- Loyni, my son! What's wrong? - her voice, as always, was soft and soothing, like warm milk.

- Mom, can you believe it? I was praised by Leyonte de Mortvel himself! He called me a true knight! - I blurted out in one breath.

Mama shook her hands, and a cloud of flour rose up like a firework of joy.

- Oh, you're my hero! My little knight! - she clasped me to her, and I pressed my nose into her house-scented apron. - You see, son, your diligence has not gone unnoticed!

My euphoria faded a little, replaced by the usual shadow of doubt.

- Mom, but, uh. it still scares me. My magic. it's so weak, this purple ice. I'm afraid I won't be able to handle it.

Mom hugged me again, tighter, as if trying to pour her confidence into me.

- Nonsense, my dear! Your magic - it's special, just like you. And your ice, by the way, is the most beautiful in the world! So unusual, so mysterious, like the night sky before dawn!

- Mom, you... you have magic, too, don't you? - I squinted slyly.

Mom laughed, her laughter like the chiming of silver bells.

- You could say that, son. The magic of love and caring. - She thought for a moment, then her eyes gleamed slyly. - But while we're on the subject... I have ice. And so do you.

I froze in surprise.

- Really?! Then can you help me? Teach me how to make it stronger?

- I'll try, son, of course I'll try," Mom sighed, but her eyes were filled with happy sparks. - Although my ice has long served only to keep the ice cream for royal desserts from melting before its time.



We tried creating something icy together. Like a vase for wildflowers. My vase, of course, turned out crooked, with uneven edges and suspiciously quickly began to melt, leaving a puddle of purple water on the table.

- How lovely! - Mom said with genuine admiration. - You have a very beautiful, simply magical purple vase! It just needs a little more warmth so that it doesn't fade so quickly.

The air in this old kitchen was saturated not only with the smells of food, but with some invisible, sustaining power. The magic of love, perhaps. The most powerful of all.

Life is a strange thing. It makes us grow up too fast, and then we spend the rest of our lives trying to regain our lost childhood. But maybe that's the magic - learning to be a child with the soul of an adult or an adult with the heart of a child.

That night I realized: it doesn't matter what color your magic is, it doesn't matter how small you are for great accomplishments. What matters is that in your heart lives the desire to protect those you love. And if that requires becoming a knight with purple ice, so be it.

Night was falling outside the window, and I was making another ice vase, thinking about what tomorrow would bring new challenges. But my mother was beside me, the words of Ser Leyonte de Mortvelle sounded in my memory, and in my heart there was a timid but stubborn hope.

*The little knight was learning to be big. It was only the beginning.*

The house greeted me with the smell of cumin and that special silence that only happens where you are truly welcome. Not a theatrical, ostentatious silence, but a real one, when even the walls remember your voice and are ready to respond to it like an old song.

I burst into the kitchen like an autumn wind, tearing leaves off the branches and spinning them in a mad dance. The door slammed behind me with such force that the old vase on the threshold - blackened by time, with thin cracks like the scales of a snake - staggered. My chest heaved as if I had just defeated a dragon, and my face burned so hot that my cheeks were as scarlet as the sunset sky.

- Mama! Mama!" I shouted, panting, as if the words were birds I had caged in my chest too long.

She stood at the stove, enveloped in a warm cloud of scents-a mixture of fresh bread, herbs, and something subtly cozy that always lingered in our little house. She turned around, wiping her hands on her apron, already faded but still bearing the traces of her care. Her face, usually as calm as the surface of a lake on a windless day, was darkened for a moment by a shadow of anxiety.

- What has happened? What has happened? - she asked, and there was that steely note in her voice that mothers have when they are ready to protect their child from the world.

- Do you realize... - I froze, savoring the moment when the good news was just about to explode like fireworks. - I've been praised by Leyonte de Mortvel himself. He called me a true knight.

The words hung in the air like the ringing of a bell. My mother's face transformed so quickly that I barely noticed the change from horror to delight. It was as if someone had switched the magic crystal from "end of the world" to "my son is a genius."

- You're my hero! - she was glowing, and I thought that this is probably what happiness looks like in its purest form, without doubts and backward thoughts. - You see, your ambition has been recognized by the strongest warrior in our kingdom.

Leyonte de Mortvel. A man of legend, the stuff of ballads and tales. A man who can chop a rock with a single blow of his sword and yet speak of the philosophy of war with the elegance of a court poet. This man called me - me! - a true knight.

Here the inner skeptic awoke in me, who has the nerve to doubt even in the most triumphant moments. A kind of domestic philosopher, always ready to put a spoonful of tar in a barrel of honey.

- Mom, but I'm afraid my magic is too weak. I might not be able to be a knight, or rather a castle protector.

Fear. This is the real, unadorned fear. Not the ostentatious fear of adventure novels, but the ordinary, gray fear of inadequacy. The fear of not being what you want to be.

- You can do it! You can do it! - my mom's voice sounded like a battle cry, and each word fell like a stone into the foundation of my faith in myself. - I believe in you, my little miracle!

- Thank you for such warm words," I said, feeling something in me straighten up, become stronger. - I can do this. My ice will get stronger.

Ice. My element, my curse and my blessing at the same time. Cold as truth and fragile as hope. But beautiful. Yes, definitely beautiful.

- Just practice," my mother smiled with that special tenderness that makes even the most banal advice seem like the wisdom of the ages. - I think you have the most beautiful ice in the world!

And then it hit me. All these years I had been living next to a woman who had worked real miracles in the kitchen, and I had never once wondered about the nature of her talents.

- Mom, do you have cooking magic? - I asked, suddenly feeling like an explorer who had discovered an unknown continent right under my nose.

She laughed-quietly, melodiously, like the babbling of a mountain stream.

- Yes, you could say I have that kind of magic. To make my son's food tasty.

- What's your element? - I insisted.

- You never asked," she was silent, and I saw something like surprise in her eyes, "but I have ice. So do you.

Ice. So it runs in the family. So the same cold magic flows in me as it does in her. Suddenly the world seemed more logical and predictable.

- Did it? Then can you help me?

- I'll try," she said cautiously, "but I can't promise anything.

We began to create. Two ice mages, mother and son, determined to create something beautiful in the ordinary kitchen of an ordinary house. I envisioned a vase, elegant, refined, worthy of a royal palace. In my imagination it shimmered with all shades of blue, from soft blue to deep sapphire.

Reality, as always, was more prosaic. My vase turned purple - purple for some reason, as if the ice had decided to ironize my expectations. It melted so quickly that I barely had time to see my creation.

"I guess magic isn't my thing," I thought to myself as I watched the last drops of my ambitious project drip to the floor.

- Your purple vase is very pretty," Mom said with the diplomacy of a mother who can find something good even in total failure. - But you'll need to work on the mana.

Mana. That's the problem. Not talent, not technique, but the very basis of magic-the energy that powers our spells. I had as much of it as I had a lot of it, but the foundation was weak.

- Okay, I'll try to make a few more vases," I said, inwardly preparing myself for a series of beautiful disappointments.

- I'll do the cooking for now," Mom returned to her pots and pans, "I'll come and look at your vases.

I was left alone with my magic, my doubts, and a strange feeling that life was just beginning. That there were more serious challenges ahead of me than the ice vases, and victories more important than the praise of my mentor.

I sat cross-legged on the grass and closed my eyes. Silence embraced me, but inside my mind was buzzing with thoughts - of weakness, of dreams, of what I wanted to become. From the window, my mom watched me, and a smile touched her lips. She knew that her son's journey was just beginning, and that there was a power in him that he didn't realize yet.

Ice is my element. Cold, unpredictable, beautiful in its fragility. Just like life, if you think about it. Just like the love that will come to me someday-suddenly, like a spring snowstorm, and melt all my defenses with a single breath.

That would come later. For now, I stood in my parents' house and tried to create at least one vase that wouldn't melt half a minute after it was born. It's also a feat of sorts, to be honest. Small, unnoticeable, but important - like the first step in a long journey to find myself.

That evening, when dusk was descending on the earth with a soft blanket, and the last glow of the sunset was slowly fading behind the horizon, the whole world seemed full of secrets and promises. And I, an eight-year-old boy with purple ice and huge dreams, was taking my first tentative steps on the road that would one day lead me to who I was to become.

The princess garden greeted me with silence - that special silence that only happens in places where time stands still between breaths. Four years... Funny how those words echo in my head like an echo in an empty well. Four years - and here I am again, among roses that remember my childhood palms better than I myself remember my childhood.

Princess flowers... They have always seemed to me living creatures, each with its own character and whims. White roses were proud aristocrats, red roses were passionate dancers, and yellow roses were always a little sad, like autumn leaves that have not yet decided whether they should fall. Their fragrance mingled with the coolness of the dew, making me feel as if I had stepped into a world where time was frozen in sweet uncertainty.

I hadn't come here out of sentimentality-no, sentimentality was a luxury I'd forbidden myself back when I'd realized the world was too hard for soft hearts. I came for business. Vases had to be made, and lots of them.

My gift-if it's a gift and not a curse disguised as a blessing-allows me to create things out of ice that ordinary craftsmen wouldn't make in a month of painstaking work. Purple ice, as rare and strange as my own thoughts in moments of complete honesty with myself. But there's one snag that sometimes makes me think the gods have a rather odd sense of humor: my

creations only live for twenty minutes. Twenty minutes of perfection, and then nothing. Kind of a metaphor for human happiness, isn't it?

In four hours, I created almost a hundred vases. My hands moved mechanically, almost without mind, and my thoughts wandered somewhere in the labyrinths of memory. Each vase was unique - one as graceful as a swan's neck, one as stern as a judge's sentence, one as playful as a child's laughter. And each doomed to disappear. They melted like tears in the wind, leaving behind only wet traces on the ground. Perhaps that is their beauty - that they do not pretend to be eternal.

My strength melted with the vases. It's a strange pattern - the more beauty I create, the more of myself I give away. It's as if the universe is charging me for every moment of perfection I allow myself to create. And that payment is a piece of my own essence.

It was at that moment, when I had almost reached that state of exhaustion in which the line between reality and dreams becomes as thin as a rose petal, that she entered the garden. Princess Elei. Time seemed to stumble when it saw her, and for a moment forgot how it should flow on.

Four years had changed her. If earlier in her face read childish directness, now there settled that special thoughtfulness that comes to people who have learned that the world is not as simple as it seemed in childhood. But her eyes remained the same - blue as the summer sky before a thunderstorm, and as kind. Her steps were light, almost inaudible, as if she did not walk but floated above the ground. Her hair, golden as ripe wheat, flowed over her shoulders, and in her lived a mystery that beckoned and frightened at the same time, like the call of a distant star.

"Loyne, it's been a long time since I've seen you... I think it's been four years since we last saw each other," her voice sounded as if those four years had been just a long day. The voice soft as silk carried through the garden, making the flowers sway slightly as if in a dance.

Protocol demanded formality from me. Knightly honor, tradition, respect for royalty-all those wonderful things that make life both meaningful and unbearably difficult. "That's right, princess! Oh... More precisely... Esteemed Princess Elei, it's been a little over four years since we last met." The words sounded wooden even to my own ears. Ironically, the more you try to be right, the more unnatural you get.

Elay, as always, was above convention. "Loyne, you can just call me by my first name. I don't need these formalities... you and I have been friends and friends since we were kids!" There was a sincerity in her words that was worth more than gold in our world. And that light sadness that is always present in the voices of people trying to return what time has already

taken away. A familiar spark flickered in her eyes, the same spark that, as a child, signaled the beginning of a prank.

How could I explain to her that formalities weren't just words anymore, but a way for me to keep my distance? That in four years I've learned that intimacy is a risk not everyone can afford? "To be honest, I want to talk to you informally. Except, I'm already a little novice knight. I must honor and respect the traditions of our kingdom..."

Even while saying those words, I felt them incomplete. Tradition is a convenient excuse for those afraid of being vulnerable. But isn't it better to hide behind a noble lie than to expose a truth that might prove too painful?

"Stop!" - that imperiousness that passes with royal blood rang in her voice, but was immediately softened by warmth. "I understand all that, but you're still a young boy. You haven't finished your knight training, at the very least you're not yet sixteen years old."

A little boy... If she knew how many adult decisions I've had to make in those four years, how many adult disappointments I've had to endure. Age isn't measured in years, but in experience, and I had enough experience for two adults.

"You are right! Except that Leyonte de Mortvel called me a true knight. I want to follow his words and only go forward. Because of that, I call myself a little knight." Sir Leyont... A man whose opinion meant more to me than the approval of the entire royal court. His words became my compass in a world where it was easy to lose direction.

Elei laughed - that pure laughter I remembered from my childhood. The sound was like a melody I hadn't heard in a long time, but my heart remembered every note. The laughter, like the tinkling of a bell, spilled over the garden like music. "Eley, what made you laugh at my words?" - I asked, and in that moment the 'you' sounded almost natural, like a bridge between formality and intimacy.

"Loin, my dear friend..." - there was so much warmth in those words that my heart forgot its defense mechanisms for a moment. "Do as you see fit, but from my side... I like it better when we communicate informally."

My dear friend. Three simple words that can turn your inner world upside down. Friendship is also a form of love, but more honest, less demanding. In friendship there is no destructive passion that turns people into slaves of their own feelings, but there is constancy, there is loyalty, there is what they call "tenderness without commitment".

I stood staring at her, while my mind was spinning with thoughts, one more ridiculous than the other. My vases melted as the dreams I'd built about myself melted away. Maybe that's

the truth of life. Everything we create disappears sooner or later, but as long as it exists, it is beautiful.

The moment of our reunion was interrupted by the appearance of Leza, the princess's personal maid. A sixteen-year-old girl from a family that had served the royal dynasty for centuries. She had that special pride in her face that characterizes people whose lives have a clear meaning and direction. Sometimes I envied such people - their fate is predetermined, they don't have to choose, they don't have to search for their place in the world. They know it from birth. Leza was quiet, almost imperceptible, but her presence was always felt - like a shadow that follows the light without claiming its place.

"Princess, it is time for us to go to bed," Leza said in a tone that was both respectful and adamant. Servant girls of royalty are a special caste. They can afford the kind of intimacy with their masters that is unavailable to anyone else, but that intimacy always stays within strictly defined limits.

"I've met Loyne, I want to talk to him some more! We haven't seen each other for four whole years!" the capriciousness that every princess has in her voice, no matter how wise or kind she is, came through in Elei's voice. Capriciousness like the last island of childhood in a world of adult responsibilities. She looked at me as if seeking support, and I smiled involuntarily.

"We can talk to Loyne tomorrow. Yes, Loyne?" - Leza addressed me with an intonation that left no room for objection. Hierarchy is a complicated thing. Technically I was above the maid, but practically she had power over the princess's time, which meant she had power over my time as well. A slight smile flashed in her eyes, as if she knew I couldn't refuse her or Elia.

Fear. Yes, I was afraid. Not of Leza, not of her possible displeasure, but of the fact that tomorrow might not come, that there might be an eternity between 'today' and 'tomorrow'. Four years had taught me not to trust the future. "Sure, we can talk tomorrow," I replied, and there was more hope than certainty in those words.

"Promise?" - Eley looked at me with those eyes that know how to see straight into the soul. There was hope in her voice, so pure and fragile that it made me uncomfortable. A promise is a form of magic, too, a spell that binds the future to the present.

"I promise, I promise," I repeated, and the repetition sounded like a spell, like a prayer, like a last-ditch effort to hold on to a moment that was about to slip away. The words weighed heavily on my soul. It wasn't just a promise to chat-it was a vow that pulled at something more than I realized at the time.

They left, leaving me alone with the garden, with the withering vases, and with thoughts that, as always, proved too complicated for a simple evening. I stayed there for a while longer, watching the last of my creations melt away in the moonlight. Under the starry dome, I reflected on how our lives are a series of brief but vivid moments, where even the most ephemeral creation can fill the heart with meaning.

Beauty is temporary, friendship is eternal, and life goes on whether we are ready for it or not. Tomorrow... Tomorrow we'll talk. And maybe those conversations will help me realize what has changed in four years, not only in me, but in the world around us. Or maybe I'll just learn that some things stay the same, no matter what. And there is a sad beauty in that constancy - like the princess flowers that bloom every spring, not knowing that fall is inevitable.

Each trial, whether a curse or a gift, served as a lesson to remind us of the impossibility of stopping time and the heart's eternal quest for light, even when everything around us seems ghostly and ephemeral. After all, if even ice can melt so quickly, why can't we humans cherish those moments that contain the true magic of existence?

The garden greeted me with the smell of wet earth and that special aftertaste of magic that always hangs in the air after the creation of something beautiful. The princess had just vanished into the twilight of the evening, leaving behind her the faint scent of jasmine and the whisper of unfulfilled promises that made my chest tighten. I stood among the disappearing puddles of water, the last witnesses to my icy vases, and thought about how quickly beauty becomes a memory.

They say that all creation bears the mark of mortality. The ice melts, the flowers wither, the princesses retire to their chambers, and we are left with wet hands and philosophy for the poor. But what else is left when your main talent is to create delightful but hopelessly short-lived beauty?

Mother appeared in the garden with the quietness that only women who know every stone in their home possess. She always appeared like that, softly, as if growing out of the earth itself, soaked in the scents of herbs and motherly care. Her gaze slid over the wet grass, lingered on my hands, which still held the cold of magic, and something between pride and lingering sadness flashed in her eyes.

- Where are all the vases you made? - she asked, and her voice had that peculiar tone that mothers use when they want an explanation rather than an answer.

I shrugged, shaking the last drops of melted water off my fingers.

- They'd melted. Fulfilled their purpose. - I grinned unhappily. - I put the water away. I shouldn't leave traces of my powerlessness in plain sight.



- My mother exhaled, and there was so much regret in that short sound that I felt a prick of conscience. - I didn't have time to admire your beautiful purple vases. They were so...alive, you know? Like a piece of sunset frozen in your hands.

Purple. She remembered the color, even though she'd only seen a glimpse of them. The color of deep sensuality, the thin line between dreams and reality-in my mind it became a metaphor for the endless possibilities that slip away as soon as you try to capture them.

- It's okay," I said, gathering the rest of the magical energy. - Do you want me to make another one? Right now. A small one. For you.

Without waiting for an answer, I held out my hands. The air between my palms began to thicken, filling with purple light. Cold flowed through my veins, the world froze for a moment, and the ice flowed obediently, curving gracefully as if it were alive. It was like a dance, my fingers fluttering, molding fragile perfection out of the void. This time I chose a deep blue with violet shimmers, the color of the sky before dawn, when the stars were still visible but the day was already approaching.

Seconds stretched into eternity, and now a small but perfectly symmetrical vase rested in the palm of my hand, shimmering in every shade from delicate lavender to deep indigo. It fluttered, emitting a subtle coldness and a delicate, almost ethereal fragrance.

- Excellent! - Mother exclaimed, and the joy in her voice was so genuine that I felt embarrassed. - As long as I look at it, I never cease to marvel. I will never have such beautiful and elaborate vases! That is real perseverance and labor put into every line!

Perseverance and labor. If she knew how easy this magic is for me, how naturally the ice obeys my will.... But why shatter her illusions? Everyone needs to believe that beauty comes from effort, not from a random gift of nature.

- Thank you," I said, feeling my cheeks begin to burn. Her praise always embarrassed me more than anyone else's criticism. - Do you really think so?

That's a stupid question. As if I were a child waiting for approval for a sketch I'd made. But it was her, my mother, and her opinion meant more than all the knightly statutes and royal favors.

- You think I'd lie? - There was that steely note in her voice, mixed with a slight chuckle. - To your own son? You won't.

- No, I don't think so," I answered hastily, and it was true. Mother didn't say many things, but she never lied.

- You're right! - She gently placed the vase on the stone bench. - You have... bowing out. Do you understand? Not just to do, but as if to put your soul into it, to make matter itself bow to your will. Even if it's just for a little while.

- Thank you for thinking so," I repeated, feeling something inside me thaw a little. Not ice, no. Something else. Frozen and prickly.

We were both playing a game called family harmony. I portrayed modesty, she portrayed critical objectivity, and we both knew we loved each other enough to maintain that bright illusion.

- How are you enjoying your first day at the castle since returning? - she asked, and the question sounded like she was asking about the weather, though we both knew it was about something more.

First day. As if the years of studying at the magic academy, all those sleepless nights with books and crystals, all the disappointments and small victories-as if it was all just preparation for coming home. Maybe it was.

- That's great," I said, trying to put as much enthusiasm as I could into the word. - Seeing you is half the fun. I spoke to the most noble knight of all, Leyonte de Mortvel. He is, as always, a paragon of wisdom and sarcasm. And then... then a bit with the princess.

I tried to say it as casually as possible, as if it were the weather.

- With the princess? - My mother's voice had that peculiar tone that women use when they want to find out details without seeming curious. - When did you do that?

- Here, she left a while ago," I answered, nodding toward the palace. - The conversation with her was brief. And, as usual, a little absurd.

Like everything else in my life, for that matter.

- Good," my mother said, and I heard in that word a symphony of maternal feelings: relief that I wasn't in trouble, curiosity that she was holding back out of delicacy, and a slight anxiety about my future. - You should probably get ready for bed. You've had a long day, I can see it in your eyes.

The advice is sound. The day was indeed full - full of events, emotions, encounters that reopened old wounds and presented new dilemmas. Tomorrow he would have to help his mother with her endless herbs and tinctures - her magic was different, quiet, earthy, but no less powerful. And then there's sword practice. A true knight practiced every day. He must. Though sometimes it feels like fighting not an imaginary opponent, but your own futility.

That is the way. At least the path I chose for myself, or the path that chose me.

I walked my mother home and stood in the garden for a while, looking at the lonely purple vase on the bench. It had already begun to thaw, dropping glittering drops onto the stone. A symbol, no less. The moonlight played on its facets, and I thought about how magic was the only thing that allowed us to create beauty on demand. Short-lived, though.

After all, isn't that what the whole philosophy of beauty is all about - accepting its temporality? Coming home is not a point, but a process. Each day you return anew, and each time the house welcomes you a little differently. Today it greeted me with icy vases, motherly pride, and the enigmatic smile of a princess.

And tomorrow. tomorrow will be a new day, full of melting promises and fragile hopes. And I will be ready to meet it - with wet hands, a philosophy for the poor, and the belief that even the most ephemeral beauty is worth creating. Over and over again.

game design

# DESIGN DOCUMENT

## Tetris Revolution

**Version:** 1.0

**Date:** July 2, 2025

**Status:** Development

## 1. PROJECT

### Goal

Update Tetris by incorporating new elements while maintaining engaging gameplay for all players regardless of their experience level. Audience targeted by the changes.

### Target Audience

- **Primary:** 16-35 years old, puzzle game enthusiasts
- **Secondary:** 8-50 years old, casual players
- **Esports:** Competitive community (Mini tournaments possible)

## 2. MECHANICS

### 2.1 Adaptive Playing Field

**What it is:** The field changes based on player actions

**Types of changes:**

- **Expansion:** From 10 to 14 columns during combos
- **Compression:** Down to 8 columns when filling (Different modes possible, or compression minutes in the game itself)
- **Gravity:** Lateral or reverse in separate zones
- **Portals:** Teleportation between parts of the field (Can enter through left or right side)

**Implementation:**

- Coordinate system with unlimited boundaries
- Animated transitions between different states
- Temporary limitations exist to maintain balance

### 2.2 Power Blocks

**What they are:** Special blocks that activate effects when you clear a line

### **Block types:**

- **Fire (red):** Explodes a 3x3 area
- **Ice (blue):** Slows down the fall of next pieces for 5 seconds
- **Lightning (yellow):** Removes a random line
- **Earth (brown):** Creates indestructible blocks for 10 seconds
- **Air (white):** Makes pieces fall smoothly for 5 seconds

### **Balance:**

- Appear in 10-15% of pieces, after 5 seconds
- Activation only when clearing a full line (or increase appearance time)
- Combinations provide additional effects

## **2.3 Dynamic Musical Accompaniment**

**Description:** Musical accompaniment changes according to gameplay tempo

### **How it works:**

- Fast clears = tempo acceleration
- Combos add musical layers
- Critical situations = tense music
- Support for custom playlists

## **2.4 Team Mode (2-4 players)**

**What it is:** Players work on a shared field with different roles

### **Mechanics:**

- Shared score and loss
- Piece transfer between players
- Synchronous combos for teamwork

# **3. GAME MODES**

## **3.1 Single Player**

- **Classic:** Standard Tetris
- **Marathon:** With power blocks and adaptive field
- **Puzzles:** 50+ challenges with conditions (Can be made as achievements or levels)

## **3.2 Multiplayer**

- **1v1 Duel:** Quick one-on-one matches
- **Team:** 2-4 players on one map

### 3.3 Creative

- **Piece Constructor:** Create your own pieces
- **Level Editor:** Design unique game levels
- **Community:** Share your creations with other players

## 4. PROGRESSION AND CONTENT

### 4.1 Level System

- **Experience:** For cleared lines, combos, victories
- **Rewards:** Skins, effects, new modes
- **Achievements:** For using mechanics

### 4.2 Customization

- **Block skins:** Themed sets
- **Backgrounds:** Space, cyberpunk, underwater world, laboratory and scientific spirit
- **Effects:** Explosion animations, piece trails, piece appearances, water across screen
- **Music:** Additional tracks (Initially 20-minute soundtracks)

## 5. IMPLEMENTATION

### 5.1 Platforms

- **Mobile:** iOS, Android

### 5.2 Technologies

- **Engine:** Unity
- **Network:** Dedicated servers
- **Audio:** Dynamic music

### 5.3 Performance

- 60 FPS on mobile devices
- Network latency under 100ms
- Level loading time under 2 seconds

## 6. MONETIZATION

### 6.1 Model

- **Base version:** Free with ads
- **Premium:** \$9.99 without ads + bonuses

- **Season pass:** \$4.99 for 3 months

## 6.2 Purchases

- **Cosmetics:** Skins, effects, avatars
- **Conveniences:** Additional save slots
- **Content:** Puzzle sets, music tracks

**Important:** No gameplay advantages for money, but we can add editor for money

# 7. DEVELOPMENT PLAN

## Stage 1: Prototype (2 months)

- Basic Tetris
- Adaptive field (or 2 modes)
- Power blocks

## Stage 2: Alpha (3 months)

- Multiplayer modes
- Progression system
- Main UI

## Stage 3: Beta (3 months)

- Content constructor
- Balancing

## Stage 4: Release (1 month)

- Polish
- Marketing
- Support

# 8. RISKS AND SOLUTIONS

## 8.1 Technical

- **Network synchronization:** Phased implementation
- **Server load:** Cloud scaling

## 8.2 Design

- **Complexity for beginners:** Hints
- **Balance of new mechanics:** Constant testing



- **Player retention:** Achievement system and events

## 9. SUCCESS METRICS

### 9.1 Gameplay

- **Session time:** >20 minutes
- **Return after week:** >60%
- **Purchase:** >10%

### 9.2 Community

- User-generated content created
- Activity in team modes
- Store rating: >4.3 stars

producer

# 1. Creating 3 Characters: Planning and Gantt Chart

## Team and Tasks

**Team:** 1 Lead Artist, 2 Middle Artists

**Task:** 3 characters (B&W concept → Color concept → Render)

**Principle:** Lead does quality control, Middle Artists do the main work

## Time Estimates (per 1 character)

Stage	Subtask	Time (days)	Who does it
B&W concept	Sketches and silhouettes	1.5	Middle
	Review and selection	0.5	Lead + Middle
	Detailing	1	Middle
Color concept	Color schemes	0.5	Middle
	Color review	0.5	Lead + Middle
	Painting	1	Middle
Render	Final render	3	Middle
	Polish	0.5	Lead + Middle
TOTAL		8 days	

## Gantt Chart (16 working days)

Day	Middle Artist 1	Middle Artist 2	Lead Artist
1-2	Character 1: B&W concept	Character 2: B&W concept	Review + kickoff
3-4	Character 1: Color concept	Character 2: Color concept	Color review
5-8	Character 1: Render	Character 2: Render	Quality control
9-10	Character 3: B&W concept	Rework based on feedback	Review C1-C2
11-12	Character 3: Color concept	Free/buffer	Review C3

## 2. How to Avoid Downtime for Performers

### Main Problems

- Waiting for feedback from Lead
- Uncertainty in next tasks
- Different work speeds of artists

### My Solutions

#### A) Always prepare the next task

- While rendering C1, I prepare the brief for C2
- Create task queue in Trello/Google Sheets
- Performer always knows what to do next

#### B) Tasks for waiting time

- Gathering references for the next character
- Organizing files and layers
- Learning new techniques (tutorials)

#### C) Clear review schedule

- Fixed review hours: 11:00 and 16:00
- Lead knows when to expect work
- Performers know when to prepare presentation

#### D) Daily meetings:

- Morning, 10-15 minutes
- Discuss plans for the day and current difficulties
- Quickly eliminate obstacles

## 3. Time Risks and Buffers

### Risk Assessment by Project Stages

Stage	Buffer	Why
B&W concept	+40%	Client may not like it, many iterations
Color concept	+25%	"Wrong colors", "wrong mood"
Render	+15%	Technical difficulties, details

Lead Review +20% Lead's workload, extensive revisions

## General Project Risks

- Employee illness: +10%
- Unclear technical specification: +15%
- Urgent tasks from other projects appearing: +15%

## 4. Forecasting on Day 3 (8-day task)

### Methods I will use:

#### A) Simple calculation

- 3 days passed = 37.5% of time
- If 25% of work is done  $\rightarrow 3 \text{ days} / 25\% = 12 \text{ days}$  (bad!)
- If 40% of work is done  $\rightarrow 3 \text{ days} / 40\% = 7.5 \text{ days}$  (good)

#### B) Performer survey

- "How much work do you think is left?"
- "What difficulties have arisen?"
- "What can we speed up?"

#### C) Analysis of completed subtasks

- "Render" task = 6 subtasks per day
- On day 3, 3 subtasks should be ready
- Fact: 2 subtasks ready  $\rightarrow 1 \text{ day behind}$

## 5. Work Priorities:

### My order (from important to less important):

1. **Client response** – this is most important. This is our money and how we're seen from the outside. If delayed, the project could fall apart.
2. **Feedback for performer** – also very important. The person is waiting and can't move forward, which reduces productivity.
3. **Report to management** – important but not urgent. Can keep them informed, but delays can be explained easily.
4. **Load planning** – important for the future but not urgent. Better to do this when there are no urgent matters.

**Main rule:** The more a delay will harm, the higher the priority.

## 6. How to Make Review Easier for Art Lead (100 icons)

### A) Showing corrections at completed stage

#### Presentation format:

- Create board in Figma/Miro
- Show "Before → After" side by side
- Add correction checklist
- Group by 5-10 icons

#### Action sequence:

1. Performer creates board with implemented corrections
2. All changes are described in detail in text
3. Manager quickly checks them against the list
4. This saves time since there's no need to recall previous requests

### B) First showing of final render

#### Presentation formats:

- Grid of all icons for style assessment
- Next to approved concept
- In UI context (interface mockup)
- Status system: "For review", "Approved", "Needs fixes"

#### Tools:

- Figma for interactive presentation
- Simple tags for quick status
- Color coding (green/red)

## 7. Large Project: 10 People, 30 Days

### Planning

- Break everything into tasks no longer than 2 days
- Determine which tasks depend on each other
- Improve document to make it clearer (detail it)

### Work Organization Tools

- **Trello/Google Sheets:** for task execution control
- **Google Sheets:** for creating simple Gantt charts

- **Telegram/Discord:** for operational communication

## Regular Meetings

### Daily (15 minutes):

- Report on work done yesterday
- Plans for today
- Discussion of difficulties encountered

### Weekly (1 hour):

- Plan vs actual comparison
- Analysis of delays
- Plan corrections

## Risk Management

### Simple risk table:

- Key artist illness → Plan B: redistribute tasks
- TOR changes → freeze changes until next iteration
- Technical problem → backup equipment

### Buffers:

- Important tasks: +20%
- Regular tasks: +15%
- Overall project reserve: +10%

## 8. Response to AI Content Accusation

### My step-by-step actions:

**1. Immediate response (within 2 hours):** "Thank you for reaching out. We take originality issues very seriously. I'm starting an internal investigation and will respond with details by [time]."

### 2. Internal check:

- Request source files from artist (.psd with layers)
- Ask to show work process and intermediate stages
- Honest conversation: "Client suspects AI. Show how you did it"

**3. If work is indeed original:** "We thoroughly studied the creation process. I can assure you it was performed by our artist manually. As proof, I'm attaching source files and work stages. Perhaps the execution technique features created such a visual effect. We're ready to make style adjustments to meet your expectations."

**4. If violation is confirmed:** "After investigation, I confirm violation of our standards. We apologize. The artist is removed from the project. Work will be redone at no additional cost. New versions will be ready by [date]."

**5. Measures to prevent similar situations:**

- Conduct team discussion about inadmissibility of using generated content
- Strengthen control over provided materials
- Document this incident

## 9. Client Communication Letter

Hello!

Thank you for your letter and interest in collaborating on the Merge Manor: Sunny House project.

We have reviewed your request and studied the provided screenshot (PSD file). We now have a clear understanding of your game's visual style: bright isometric graphics with diverse zones and attention to detail.

I confirm understanding of the technical specification: creating assets using a combined approach. Regarding 3D modeling and 2D overpaint, we apply detailed techniques for complex objects and simpler 2D approach for simple ones. Files will be provided in 3ds Max, OBJ, PSD, and PNG formats.

For accurate commercial assessment, we need to clarify:

**Order:**

- What is the quantity of required objects for the first order?
- Which objects have priority (e.g., furniture, decor elements, buildings)?
- Are there any references or sketches provided for specified objects?

**Technical aspects:**

- What resolution should finished PNG files have?
- How many polygons can be in 3D models?
- Do we need to follow a specific layer format in PSD?

**Workflow:**

- Is 3D model approval required before starting 2D graphics?
- Which task management system is preferable: Jira, Trello, or Asana?

**Project funding:** What budget is allocated for asset creation?

Preliminarily, we see the possibility of meeting 3-4 week timeframes provided there's a clear asset list and no major changes during work.



Ready to start work immediately after receiving technical specification and discussing commercial terms. We'd be happy to discuss all details by voice in a short call if more convenient.

Best regards, Iskander

## 10. Technical Specification for Artist

### "Twenty" Event

#### General Project Information

- **Project:** Solitaire Cruise TriPeaks Card (iOS/Android)
- **Goal:** Create visual background for "Twenty" event with integrated 20 level slots
- **Main character:** Wealthy player-traveler
- **Game mechanics:** Solitaire "Three Peaks" against backdrop of world's luxury locations

#### Concept and Style

##### Main aesthetics:

- Luxury and premium quality
- Atmosphere of wealth, freedom, and excitement
- Casino style: gold, glitter, precious materials
- Carefree travel through luxury places

##### Thematic direction:

- Choose one location: underwater world, exotic port, ski resort, tropical lagoon
- Dominant "water" theme (when choosing water location)
- Avoid gray and minimalism

##### Color palette:

- Main colors: gold, burgundy, dark blue, white
- Accents: diamond highlights, rich colors
- Reflective surfaces and elegant details

#### Level Slots (Game Mechanics)

##### General requirements:

- Quantity: 20 slots, numbered 1 to 20
- Placement: organically integrated into thematic location
- Placement logic: sequential progression path

##### Thematic slot integration:

- Ski\_resort → flags on ski slope
- Underwater\_world → bubbles, jellyfish, pearls
- Tropic\_forest → flowers on vines, leaves
- Exotic\_port → floating lanterns, buoys

#### **Prize levels (3, 10, 20):**

- Visual highlighting: glow, increased size, gold border
- Additional elements: treasure chests, special decorations

#### **Technical Requirements**

##### **File parameters:**

- Resolution: 2048×1152 px (16:9)
- Color profile: sRGB IEC61966-2.1 (RGB)
- Format: PSD with proper layer structure

##### **Photoshop color settings:**

- Preset: North America General Purpose 2
- Engine: Adobe (ACE)
- Intent: Relative Colorimetric
- Options: Use Black Point Compensation, Dither enabled

##### **Layer structure (mandatory organization):**

1. Background
2. Level slots
3. Prize slots
4. Decorative elements
5. Effects
6. Interface safe zone

##### **Layer naming:**

- Logical names without "Layer 9 copy"
- Examples: "trees", "water", "slot\_01", "slot\_02\_prize"

#### **Resolution Testing (Mandatory)**

##### **Tested formats:**

- 16:9 (main resolution)
- 19.5:9 (stretched screens)
- 3:4 (tablets)

##### **Requirements:**

- All 20 slots must be visible and clickable

- Slots must not overlap with UI elements
- Use provided test PSD file

## **Work Stages and Timeframes**

### **Mandatory checkpoints:**

- Test resolutions in all required formats
- Ensure UI matches layout
- Verify all level elements are clearly readable
- Confirm everything meets technical requirements

### **Reference games:**

- Solitaire TriPeaks
- Solitaire Grand Harvest

### **Project has existing examples:**

- Existing event templates
- Element examples: Ski\_resort, Underwater\_world, Tropic\_forest

### **Work submission:**

- File should be named: [TaskName].psd (e.g., Water\_Slot.psd)
- Upload to project Google Drive
- Layers must be organized according to technical requirements

### **Staged delivery:**

- Concept: JPG/PNG for approval
- Final work: PSD with complete layer structure

## **Result**

Ready game background for "Twenty" event with 20 organically placed level slots in chosen thematic location, matching luxury and wealth style, with highlighted prize levels and full compliance with project technical requirements.