



Universidad
LATINA *de Panamá*
SUMMUM DESIDERIUM SAPIENTIA

Universidad Latina de Panamá

Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación y Desarrollo Humano

Traducción del libro “Los Poetas de Twingfir” de

Theö Stamper. Págs. 95 — 167

Proyecto final de graduación presentado como requisito para optar

Por el título de Licenciatura de Inglés con énfasis en Traducción

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Translation of the book “Poets of Twingfir” by

Theö Stamper. Pages. 95 — 167

Final graduation project submitted as a requirement for a
Bachelor’s Degree in English with an Emphasis on Translation

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David, 11 de septiembre de 2025

Señor
Theo Stamper
Autor de
"Los poetas de Twingfir"
E. S. M.

Respetado Señor Stamper:

Por este medio le solicitamos la autorización para la traducción parcial de la obra escrita por usted, titulada "Los poetas de Twingfir". Dicha traducción estará siendo realizada por el estudiante:

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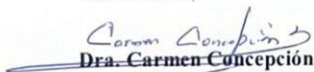
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Sin más que agregar, le agradecemos su valiosa atención y contribución.

Atentamente,


Dra. Carmen Concepción
Directora Ejecutiva



Firma del autor



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Introduction

Translation is essential because it enables communication between speakers of different languages and promotes mutual understanding. Moreover, it allows cultures to interact, exchange ideas, and preserve knowledge across borders. Through translation, important literary works, scientific discoveries, and historical documents become accessible to a wider audience. Additionally, it supports global collaboration in fields such as business, education, and diplomacy. Translation also strengthens inclusivity by giving people access to information in their native language. Furthermore, it contributes to cultural appreciation by revealing the values and perspectives of other societies. Overall, translation plays a crucial role in connecting the world and fostering cooperation.

Translation techniques help translators accurately convey meaning from the source language to the target language. These techniques provide structured methods for solving linguistic and cultural challenges that arise during translation. Additionally, they guide translators when adapting idioms, metaphors, or culturally specific references. By applying these techniques, translators ensure clarity, naturalness, and consistency in the final text. Furthermore, translation techniques support decision-making and help maintain the author's intended tone and style. They also allow the translator to balance faithfulness to the original text with readability for the target audience. Ultimately, their purpose is to produce a translation that is both accurate and effective.

The purpose statement of this final project is to translate at least fifty pages of the book *Los Poetas de Twingfir*, written by Theö Stamper, while applying various translation techniques that will determine our knowledge on how to implement them properly and functionally. In this project, we will try to answer the following question how does the implementation of certain translation techniques reflect the meaning and content of the book *Los Poetas de Twingfir*, written by Theö Stamper.

In the first chapter of this translation work, we discuss the theoretical foundations of translation and the importance of applying proper translation techniques. Additionally, we provide an overview of the principles, methods, and linguistic considerations that guide the translation process. In the second chapter of this final project, we translate fifty pages from the source text in Spanish to the target language, English, and we present them in two columns for clarity and comparison. This bilingual format helps readers observe the choices made and understand how the meaning was transferred. Furthermore, this chapter highlights the challenges encountered during the translation of idiomatic expressions and cultural references. In the third chapter of this translation work, we propose several conclusions and recommendations based on our findings. We also discuss the main difficulties we faced and how specific techniques helped resolve them. In addition, a glossary of key terminology used throughout the translation is included to support reader comprehension. Finally, the project

concludes with a bibliography that lists all references and sources consulted during the translation process.

Dedication

I dedicate this milestone to my family, who have been my constant source of strength and encouragement. Your patience has carried me through moments of doubt, and your faith in me has reminded me of my own potential. Every challenge I faced became lighter because you stood by my side. Your words, your love, and your example have shaped the person I am becoming. For all of this, I thank you with all my heart.

To my friends, I am grateful for your support, your honesty, and your unwavering presence throughout this journey. You inspired me to believe in myself even when the path felt unclear. Your laughter helped me stay grounded, and your advice helped me stay focused. Each of you has contributed to this achievement in a meaningful way. As I prepare to graduate, I carry your encouragement with deep appreciation.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the individuals whose support made this project possible. I extend my appreciation to my advisor, whose guidance and expertise were essential throughout every stage of this work. His thoughtful feedback greatly contributed to refining the accuracy, coherence, and overall quality of the final outcome. I am truly grateful for their patience as I navigated challenges and sought deeper understanding. Their dedication to my progress has been invaluable.

I also wish to extend my appreciation to my instructor, whose knowledge and professionalism guided my progress from the beginning. I am grateful for the clear explanations and practical strategies that helped me improve the consistency of the translated text. His instruction provided me with the essential tools needed to approach complex passages effectively and thoughtfully. I value the support he offered, which motivated me to remain committed and disciplined throughout the process. His contribution played a significant role in the successful completion of this translation.

Furthermore, I want to express my deepest appreciation to the author of the book, whose masterpiece has been both an inspiration and a privilege to engage with. I am truly honored to have received the opportunity to translate his work to English. This experience has deepened my understanding of the text and strengthened my respect for the author's creative vision. His writing enriched my academic journey and challenged me to grow as a translator. For these reasons, I extend my sincere gratitude and admiration.

Abstract

The story unfolds in the mystical continent of Alghorn, where only three magicians exist: Adam Migfield and his sons, Leinad and Amir. Each of them wields a unique type of magic, distinguished by color, with Adam commanding the green arts, Leinad the blue, and Amir the feared violet. These magicians live in the village of Twingfir, unaware of how their powers will shape the fate of the continent. Their abilities are not only rare but essential to

the balance between light and darkness across Alghorn. As tension grows, their individual strengths become both a blessing and a burden. The bond between them is tested as ancient forces awaken.

The book begins with the tragic tale of Ania, a Cremantic whose powers made her a target of the Oceanic beings. Tortured relentlessly, she ultimately took her own life, leaving behind a mystery that some believed to be mere legend. Her story, however, becomes a crucial thread that later reveals the immense cruelty of the Oceanics. As the plot advances, Ania's fate resurfaces with greater significance, exposing hidden conflicts and long-buried truths. Her suffering sets the tone for the looming danger that threatens the entire continent. This early chapter establishes the dark past that will haunt many characters throughout the narrative.

As the journey progresses, new creatures and allies appear along the road to Beskan. Among them is Bec, a powerful sorceress who seeks vengeance for the brutal death of her two sisters at the hands of the Supreme Witch Alana. This witch, allied with the Oceanics, orchestrates horrific acts, including the sacrifice of innocent lives to malevolent sea beings. Bec's grief transforms into determination, pushing her to seek aid from the Poets of Twingfir. In time, a strong bond forms between her and the magicians, shaping an alliance built on trust and shared purpose. Her presence adds emotional depth and fierce resolve to the growing resistance.

The Grens, benevolent giants, also play an essential role in the struggle against the dark forces. These towering beings possess the ability to reveal prophetic dreams to chosen individuals, including Amir, King Apriaf, and a human named Valery. The dreams they share are intricately connected, unveiling cosmic secrets and proving that many worlds exist beyond their own. As these visions unfold, the characters begin to understand the broader scope of the conflict. Their discoveries become key to confronting the rising evil. The Grens' wisdom guides the heroes toward unity and awareness of their larger destiny.

Meanwhile, the Cinocefalos, Oceanics, and Alana work together with a single, sinister objective: awakening a malevolent creature capable of bringing a new era of chaos and darkness. As the threat intensifies, the three magicians join forces with the Éniars, Cremánticos, Bec, and the kingdom of Prelen, ruled by Apriaf. United, they attempt to stand against the powerful Karf Empire and its allies. Their journey becomes a desperate race against time, filled with battles, sacrifices, and revelations. In the end, the heroes must rely on courage, magic, and the bonds they have forged to prevent the destruction of their world. The fate of Alghorn rests in the hands of those willing to resist the coming darkness.

First Chapter

1.1 Antecedents

Translating books plays a vital role in sharing knowledge across cultures, and therefore it helps readers access stories and ideas that would otherwise remain unknown. Theo Stamper, the author of *Los Poetas de Twingfir, Camino a Beskan*, is a contemporary fantasy writer known for creating vivid worlds and complex magical systems. This novel consists of approximately 246 pages and is published by Bitácora del Escritor in 2023. Additionally, a related edition of the book, also titled *Los Poetas de Twingfir, La Balada de los Poetas*, contains 269 pages and is released independently in 2024, offering readers another accessible version of the story. Moreover, the book presents an engaging narrative filled with magic, adventure, and emotional depth, which makes it highly appealing to both young and adult readers. Ultimately, the purpose of the book is to illustrate the power of unity, courage, and personal growth as the characters journey toward Beskan.

1.2 Justification

This project is necessary because *Los Poetas de Twingfir* is a literary work that explores themes of magic, imagination, and creativity that deserve to reach a broader audience. Currently, the book is available only in Spanish, which limits its readership and international impact. By translating it into English, new readers will gain access to the cultural and creative value contained in the original text. Furthermore, the translation helps preserve and promote Spanish-language fantasy literature in global literary spaces. The project also responds to the growing demand for multilingual works that reflect diverse voices and genres. Additionally, translating this book creates opportunities for further academic discussion, comparative analysis, and literary appreciation. Ultimately, the project is needed to expand the visibility and accessibility of a unique magical narrative beyond its original linguistic borders.

This translation is important for me as a student of translation at the Universidad Latina de Panamá because it allows me to apply the knowledge and techniques I have learned throughout my career. It represents a culminating academic challenge that demonstrates my ability to work with complex literary texts. Additionally, the project strengthens my critical thinking, linguistic analysis, and decision-making skills. It also gives me practical experience that will be essential for my professional future. Completing this translation supports my personal growth, academic development, and readiness to graduate.

Los Poetas de Twingfir's translation will benefit a variety of readers and communities. English-speaking readers who enjoy fantasy and magical themes will gain access to a story they may not have otherwise encountered. Students and professors of literature and translation may also use the text for academic study and classroom discussions. Researchers interested in comparative literature will benefit from having both versions available for analysis. Additionally, the author and publisher will gain greater visibility and potential readership beyond Spanish-speaking countries. Libraries, cultural institutions, and literary organizations may also include the translated text in their collections. Overall, the translation opens the door for many audiences to explore and appreciate this magical narrative.

The translated text is meant to successfully convey the magical atmosphere, narrative voice, and thematic depth of the original book. It should preserve the author's style while making the story accessible and engaging for English-speaking readers. Another goal is to ensure that cultural elements remain understandable without losing their authenticity. The translation also aims to promote appreciation for Spanish-language fantasy literature in a global context. Additionally, it seeks to create a bridge between cultures by presenting shared human experiences through the lens of magic. The final achievement of the translation is to provide a faithful, readable, and meaningful version of the text that resonates with a diverse audience and fulfills academic and literary standards.

1.3 General Objective

To translate from Spanish to English the pages 93 to 167 from the book Los Poetas de Twingfir written by Theö Stamper.

1.4 Specific Objectives

1. To implement eight translation techniques from the source language of the book *Los Poetas de Twingfir* written by Theö Stamper into the target language, in this case is English.
2. To identify the challenges faced in this final project process so they may serve to potential readers of this thesis as foundations of what to expect and how make of this journey a problem solving one.
3. To demonstrate effective use of the mechanics of writing in the target language (the book that is being translated): punctuation, capitalization, coherence and unity.
4. To analyze the structure of the target language so the syntax and pragmatics of both languages are identified and properly translated.
5. To interpret the cultural and sociological aspects that may determine the translation of the source text in order to be aware one cultural and sociological elements of the source and target languages.
6. To provide some conclusions and recommendations so our translation research experience may enrich future generations of translators in Panama.

1.5 Methodology

Translation is important because it allows people who speak different languages to communicate and understand each other. It helps share knowledge, ideas, and information across cultures and countries. In addition, translation promotes cultural exchange by making literature, history, and traditions accessible to a wider audience. It also supports international business and trade by helping companies communicate with clients and partners worldwide. Furthermore, translation helps preserve cultural heritage by allowing texts and stories to be

understood in different languages. It is essential in fields such as medicine, law, and education where accurate communication is critical. Moreover, translation helps reduce language barriers and encourages cooperation between nations. For these reasons, translation plays a key role in connecting people and spreading knowledge in a globalized world.

Translation techniques are the procedures used by translators to transfer meaning from a source language to a target language. They help translators solve linguistic and cultural problems that appear during the translation process. According to Molina and Hurtado Albir, translation techniques are tools used to analyze and classify how equivalence between the original text and the translated text is achieved. These techniques usually operate at smaller units of the text, such as words, phrases, or sentences. Common translation techniques include borrowing, calque, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. Translators choose different techniques depending on the context, grammar, and cultural aspects of the languages involved. Therefore, translation techniques are essential because they help produce accurate, natural, and meaningful translations.

1. Research Design

This study follows a qualitative translation analysis approach, focusing on the identification and interpretation of translation techniques in selected excerpts. According to , translation analysis can be understood as a process that examines the relationship between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) without necessarily making evaluative judgments (Hewson, 2011, pp. 3–6). Therefore, this research adopts a descriptive and analytical framework, aiming to explain how meaning is transferred through specific techniques.

The methodology is also grounded in the idea that translation studies require a structured and systematic model to ensure coherence and validity in the analysis of texts (Molchan, 2016, p. 268). This is particularly relevant even in small-scale studies, as it allows the researcher to identify consistent patterns in translation choices.

2. Methodological Model

This research is based on the model proposed by Lance Hewson (2011) and adapted by Molchan (2016), which provides a structured framework for translation analysis. The model consists of several stages, but for the purpose of this study, it has been simplified into four main steps:

2.1 Preliminary Analysis

This stage includes identifying:

- The source text and target text
- The context of the translation
- Relevant linguistic or stylistic features

According to Molchan (2016, p. 275), this stage involves gathering essential information about both texts, including structure and general characteristics.

2.2 Definition of Analytical Framework

At this stage, the researcher determines what aspects will be analyzed. In this study, the focus is on translation techniques, specifically:

- Addition
- Equivalence
- Reduction
- Calque

Molchan emphasizes that the researcher must define a “critical framework” based on relevant textual features (2016, p. 277), selecting the elements that are most significant for the study.

2.3 Micro-level Analysis

This is the core stage of the methodology. It involves:

- Comparing specific segments of the ST and TT
- Identifying the translation technique used
- Explaining the translator’s choices

According to Levý, this step requires a detailed comparison between the original and the translation to identify meaningful deviations (Levý, 1998, p. 204, cited in Molchan, 2016). These deviations help reveal the translator’s interpretative decisions. Molchan (2016, p. 280) also states that this stage should focus on:

- Meaning transfer
- Stylistic features
- Linguistic changes

Macro-level Interpretation

In this final stage, the researcher:

- Synthesizes findings from the micro-analysis.
- Identifies patterns in the use of techniques and evaluates their effect on meaning and readability.

This corresponds to what Molchan describes as the integration of results into general conclusions (2016, p. 281). The goal is not only to describe isolated cases but to understand how translation strategies function overall.

3. Analytical Procedure (Applied to Your Examples) The

analysis in this research follows these steps:

- 3.1 Selection of examples from the source text and their translations
- 3.2 Identification of the translation technique used
- 3.3 Explanation of how meaning is transferred
- 3.4 Justification based on translation theory

For example:

In Addition, the analysis focuses on how extra information clarifies meaning

In Equivalence, the focus is on functional meaning rather than literal form

In Reduction, attention is given to omitted elements and their impact

In Calque, the structure and literal transfer are examined

This aligns with the idea that translation analysis should focus on relevant phenomena rather than all linguistic elements, to avoid dispersion and maintain coherence (Molchan, 2016, p. 279).

4. Justification of the Methodology

This methodology is appropriate because:

It allows a systematic comparison between ST and TT

It focuses on specific translation techniques, making the analysis clear and structured

It follows a recognized academic model in translation studies

Furthermore, Molchan (2016) argues that a structured model is essential to ensure that translation analysis produces valid and consistent conclusions, especially when identifying patterns in translation behavior (p. 268).

Conclusion of Methodology Section

This methodology provides a clear and structured framework for analyzing translation techniques. By combining theoretical foundations with practical analysis, it allows the researcher to systematically examine how meaning is transferred from the source text to the target text through different translation strategies.

Second Chapter Translation

2.1 Translated Text

<p>Página 93</p> <p>LA PERVERSIDAD DEL MAR</p>	<p>Page 93</p> <p>THE WICKEDNESS OF THE SEA</p>
<p>Página 95</p> <p>VIII</p> <p>Con el sonido del furioso mar, Valery se despertó a orillas de una playa sucia, totalmente desorientada. La arena se colaba por su ropa y le hacía querer adentrarse en el mar para quitarla de su cuerpo, pero el temor la frenaba. El mar era tratado por todos como un enemigo contaminador. No eran simples temores como el ardor que provocaba la sal en ella, ni era la oscuridad de las aguas que juntas ocultaban lo que vivía en sus adentros, pero que en sus manos era tan clara como el agua que tanto hacía falta para tomar. Tomar el agua del mar no solo suponía un reto por la simple razón de que su contenido más que hidratar produce lo contrario, sino también los mitos de que en él se esconden microscópicas criaturas que podrían incrustarse en tu cerebro y convertirte en uno de ellos: un oceánico.</p> <p>La noche anterior, Valery descansaba en el pasto, miraba las estrellas y se preguntaba qué había más allá. En este mundo se desconocía demasiado sobre el universo y el planeta que habitaban, y poca información veraz se tenía de los dioses, pero todos vivían con el temor de que algún día algo</p>	<p>Page 95</p> <p>VIII</p> <p>Valery woke up completely disoriented on the shores of a beach, disturbed by the sound of the raging sea. Sand seeped through her clothes and made her want to go into the sea to wash it off her body, but fear held her back. The sea was considered by all to be a polluting adversary. These were not common fears like the stinging sensation caused by the salt, nor was it the darkness of the waters that together hid what lived within its depths, even though in her hands it was as transparent as the water so badly needed for drinking. Drinking seawater was challenging not only because its content was dehydrating, but also because of myths that microscopic creatures could embed themselves in your brain and turn you into a terrifying being like these beasts of the sea (the oceanics).</p> <p>The night before, Valery rested on the grass, gazed at the stars and wondered what lay beyond. There was a lot of mystery surrounding the universe and the planet they inhabited in this world; while accurate information about the gods was scarce, everyone feared that someday something</p>

<p>superior a ellos los destrozaría. Y no se equivocaban.</p> <p>Valery apretaba fuerte sus ojos, y con sus dedos presionaba sus párpados cerrados para replicar aquella imagen cósmica y galáctica que produce la oscuridad cuando encierras tus ojos detrás de ese pedazo de piel. Imaginaba a su diminuto cuerpo en el vasto universo, tomando las estrellas en sus manos porque, en su inocencia, el tamaño de las</p>	<p>greater than them would ruin them. And they were right.</p> <p>Valery kept her eyes closed, pressing her eyelids tightly shut to recreate that cosmic and galactic representation that darkness creates when you hide your sight behind that thin piece of skin. She imagined her tiny body gravitating in the vast universe, taking the huge spheres of gas in her hands thanks to that in her innocence, the size of the bright</p>
<p>Página 96</p> <p>estrellas era el mismo que el que veían sus ojos desde la tierra en la que se acostaba. Hacer este juego le tomó algo de tiempo hasta que se rindió ante el sueño. Los muros del reino Auxis protegían a la pequeña. Dormir fuera de su casa no resultaba en un peligro y quizás solo pasaría mucho frío, hasta pescar un resfriado.</p> <p>La muchachita soñó y su sueño fue muy irreal, más de lo normal veía, en una oscuridad absoluta, cabezas gigantes petrificadas que gesticulaban bien cada frase que salían de sus sólidas bocas. La saludaron por su nombre y le enseñaron lo que ella tanto anhelaba cuando el sueño la atrapó. Flotaba en el universo, observaba todo desde muy lejos y pensaba en lo hermoso que era el cielo desde su planeta, porque estando en el espacio el brillo es nulo. Las estrellas no alumbraban, las estrellas eran inmensas rocas y en su mayoría, objetos imperfectamente</p>	<p>Page 96</p> <p>stars were the same as what their eyes saw from the earth on which she lay. Playing this little game took her some time until she finally gave in to sleep. The walls of the Auxis kingdom acted as a protective shield for the little girl, so sleeping away from home did not represent a danger, and maybe she'd just be cold enough to catch a chill.</p> <p>The young girl dreamed, and her dream was stranger than usual. She saw, in total darkness, huge petrified heads that articulated every phrase perfectly as it came from their stone mouths. They received her by name and showed her what she longed for when the dream enveloped her. She was in the cosmos, looking at everything from a great distance and reflecting on how beautiful the sky looked from his world, since in space glare is nonexistent. The stars gave off no light; they were immense rocks, mostly misshapen circles—nothing extraordinary, not even the three moons orbiting her planet.</p>

circulares; nada extraordinario, ni siquiera las tres lunas que orbitaban el planeta.

— Anhelabas tanto estar aquí y ahora que lo estás prefieres apreciarlo desde lo lejos — dijo una de las cabezas, como si pudiera leer la mente de la niña.

—Todo es oscuro aquí. La oscuridad me da miedo —respondió.

—La oscuridad no es lo que te asusta, sino lo que se esconde en ella. La oscuridad fuera del cuerpo es solo eso, falta de luz.

—¿Por qué me dices esto?

—Porque nosotros vivimos en ella y no nos ha cambiado ni representamos un peligro para ti. Te quejas de la oscuridad porque le temes, pero donde vives la oscuridad habita en las personas. Entonces, ¿es mala la oscuridad o se aprovechan todos de ella?

Valery tenía solo quince años. Era una niña un tanto inocente que solo pensaba en jugar y responder preguntas simples, y que estos seres desconocidos le hablaran sobre temas tan profundos la hacía divagar, buscando un sentido a lo que decían e intentando comprender si se trataba solo de un sueño.

—¿Quiénes son ustedes?

—Solíamos ser nobles guerreros, los benevolentes, ahora somos *grens*.

“You wanted so much to be here that, now that you have achieved it, you want to see it from a distance,” said one of the heads, as if reading her thoughts.

“Here everything is dark. Darkness frightens me,” she replied.

“It’s not the darkness that causes you fear, but what is hidden in it. The lack of light outside of the body is just that, nothing else.”

“Why are you telling me this?”

“Because we dwell in it and we have not been changed by it, nor do we pose a danger to you. You think darkness is evil, but what you don’t know is that, in your world people possess that which you are so afraid of. So, is darkness bad or are others taking advantage of it?”

Valery was a fifteen-years-old girl. She was a somewhat naive who cared only about playing and answering simple questions, and the fact that these strange creatures were discussing such profound issues led her to try to find meaning in their words and wondering: whether all this was just a dream or merely her mind wandering.

“Who are you?”

“We once were noble warriors—benevolent ones. Now we are *grens*.”

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Page 97

“But it is a dream, you don’t really exist.
Giants are evil, they are murderers.”

—Pero yo estoy soñando, ustedes en realidad no existen. Los gigantes son malos, son asesinos.

—Somos tan reales como tú, pero fuimos petrificados y solo se pueden encontrar nuestros restos como grandes rocas con rostros humanos. Nosotros también estamos soñando. Tienes que ayudarnos a despertar.

—Sé que solo es un sueño. Ustedes no existen —insistía Valery.

—Negar nuestra existencia no nos hará desaparecer. Búscanos, estamos en Agamonk, conocida ahora como La Ciudadela, entre las ruinas las montañas del suroeste. Eres la segunda persona con la que nos comunicamos. No vayas sola y por lo que más quieras, alejate del mar.

—Díganme con quién se comunicaron para no dudar más. Necesito estar segura de que esto no es un simple sueño.

—Amir Migfield, de Twingfir. Nos veremos pronto, Valery Orn.

¿Cómo fue entonces que la muchacha despertó en la playa? ¿Cómo nadie la vio salir por las grandes puertas del reino? Valery miraba las olas del mar, apreciaba su belleza, aunque sabía lo peligroso que era. Y a diferencia de sus muchos otros sueños, recordaba todo de este. Fue muy surreal, pero la certeza era casi palpable. Antes de arrepentirse de lo que haría regresó a su hogar, hizo una maleta con ropa, alimento y pequeñas navajas con las que entrenaba; también guardó medicinas. Era muy temprano en la mañana, la mayoría aún dormía por lo que se sentía fuera de peligro recorriendo el bosque hacia Twingfir con la luz del sol a tope.

“We are as real as you, but we turned to stone, and our remains can only be found as a enormous rocks with human features. We are also in a dream. You must help us to wake up.”

“I know, I am dreaming. You don’t exist,” Valery kept insisting.

“Denying our existence will not make us disappear. Look for us in Agamonk, which is now known as The Citadel, it is among the ruins of the southwestern mountains. We have communicated with someone else before you. Don’t go alone and for the love of God... Don’t go near the sea.”

“Tell me who you communicated with, so I don’t hesitate any longer. I need to check that all this is nothing more than a dream.

“Amir Migfield, from Twingfir (the village of wizards.) See you soon, Valery Orn.”

Questions assailed everyone: How had that girl woken up on the beach? How was it possible that no one had intercepted her as she left through the vast gates of the kingdom? Valery gazed at the waves; their dangerous beauty did not go unnoticed. The difference in this dream was its absolute certainty—it was surreal, but real. Before she could hesitate, she returned home. She quickly packed clothes, food, medicine, and her small training knives. Since it was very early and most people were still asleep, she felt safe crossing the forest to Twingfir in broad daylight.

Se escapó por uno de los muros en los que crecían las plantas. Escaló y a mitad de camino, una de las mujeres inmortales le empezó a hablar. Era Jilia, hija de Olev, el líder cremántico de Auxis.

—Debiste avisar a alguien al menos. — Nadie me dejaría ir. Avísales tú cuando me haya ido.

—¿Qué te ha llevado a emprender este viaje?

—Tuve un sueño muy vivido —dijo, sosteniéndose de diferentes tallos porque no soportaban su peso por mucho tiempo—. Gigantes benevolentes me dijeron dónde ir.

She managed to escape through one of the walls where vegetation proliferated. As she ascended, one of the immortal women addressed her. It was Jilia, daughter of Olev and renowned cremantic leader of Auxis.

“You should have warned someone at least.” “No one would have let me go. Tell them once I’ve left.”

“What is your motive for embarking on this journey?”

“A vivid dream,” she replied, holding onto different stems, since they could not bear her weight for long. “Benevolent giants told me exactly where to go.”

—Ellos eran seres mágicos y mira el destino que les tocó. Tú eres una simple humana, ¿crees que tu destino será distinto?

—Los cremánticos como tú se pasean por los bosques como si nada. ¿Por qué debo temer?

—Los que pasean en el bosque buscan la muerte. Nadie que quiera vivir atravesaría aquel sitio maldito sin una excusa razonable.

Valery, decidida aún, siguió trepando el muro hasta caer al otro lado, lastimándose uno de sus tobillos. Solo habían transcurrido unos minutos de haber emprendido la travesía y ya se hallaba indefensa ante los peligros del bosque. Pero su coraje se debía a que siempre buscaba respuestas de lo que hay más allá y ahora que sabía que no se

“They were magical, and look at the tragic end that befell them. You’re a mere mortal, why do you think you’ll escape that fate?”

“Cremantics like you stroll through the forest as if nothing could touch them. Why should I be afraid?”

“Anyone who wanders through the forest is inviting death. Anyone who values life would not dare cross this place without an irrefutable reason.”

Valery, still determined, kept climbing the wall until she dropped to the other side, injuring one of her ankles. Only a few minutes had passed since she had begun her journey, and already she found herself defenseless against the dangers of the forest. But her courage came from always chasing the answers that lay beyond. Now that she

equivocaba, arriesgaba su vida con tal de obtener respuestas grandes a preguntas sencillas.

Ella en el fondo no quería escapar solo para saber si su sueño fue real, porque incluso la cremántica le confirmó que los gigantes benevolentes eran reales, pero ¿qué son los grens? ¿Eran en realidad lo que decían ser? Valery buscaba una aventura con la cual sentirse parte del mundo, porque en ese mundo vivir con el miedo constante de ser devorado, asesinado o torturado no se le podía llamar <<vivir>>. La supervivencia era una batalla constante en los seres inferiores, y ella como humana sabía que la muerte la alcanzaría más rápido, por lo que decidió salir. No quería morir sin un propósito, sin dejar huellas.

La jovencita no sabía quién era Amir, pero el apellido Migfield era imposible no reconocerlo; sabía que era un mago. Por la manera en que Adam crio a sus hijos, los magos no eran temidos por los auxisianos. Se hablaba bien de ellos y de las ayudas que habían proporcionado a los más necesitados, aunque ellos requirieran de ayuda también. Pero en este punto de la historia, la aldea de Twingfir aún no había sido atacada. Valery escogió el peor día de todos para visitar al pueblo vecino.

Comenzó el recorrido trastabillando. Tuvo que tajar con su pequeña navaja un pedazo de rama lo suficientemente gruesa para sostenerse al andar. Caminar en aquella ruta

knew she had not been mistaken, she was ready to risk her life to obtain great answers to simple questions.

Deep down, she didn't want to escape merely to confirm whether her dream had been real, for even the cremantic had assured her that the benevolent giants existed. But what were the grens? Were they truly what they claimed to be? Valery sought an adventure that would make her feel part of the world, because in a world where living meant constant fear of being devoured, murdered, or tortured, that could hardly be called living. Survival was a ceaseless battle for the lesser beings, and she, as a human, knew death would come for her sooner. That was why she chose to hit the road. She refused to die without leaving a trace.

Although the girl had never met Amir, the last name Migfield was enough to identify him as a magician. Thanks to the way Adam raised his sons, the Auxisians were not afraid of mages; on the contrary, they talked about the wizards' kindness and recognized the help they provided to the disadvantaged, despite their own difficulties. However, Twingfir was about to change, as the attack had not yet occurred. Valery, unwittingly, had chosen the least opportune day to go to the neighboring village.

Her journey began with a clumsy start. She had to cut a thick enough branch with his small knife to use as a support while walking. The trail heading southwest from

al suroeste de su hogar podría tomarle el día entero, así que precisaba acelerar sus pasos,

her home could easily consume the whole day, making it essential to pick up her speed;

aunque su tobillo herido se hinchara hasta evitarle moverse con velocidad.

A horas de empezada su andanza se encontró con el cuerpo del cinocéfalo sin cabeza y bajo un charco de su propia sangre. Ahí se encontraban algunos duendes de piel verde—oscura, delgados, enanos y con largas extremidades, que comían de la carne del muerto desde la herida que había provocado Leinad con su espada.

Ella intentó ser sigilosa, pero las grandes orejas de los duendes les daba un excelente sentido auditivo. Valery no era tonta. Ella caminó desde su salida del reino con las dos navajas en sus manos, quizás pequeñas pero muy filosas. El único problema era que los duendes eran muy rápidos y ella a duras penas podía caminar.

La niña soltó su bastón improvisado y mostró el brillo de sus cuchillos muy bien afilados. Estos eran de hojas curvas y mangos de hueso de *frorin*, un olmánaro parecido a un búfalo. Dos de ellos se pusieron por delante y solo uno caminaba a sus espaldas. La acechaban de cerca y la niña no mostró debilidad ni soltó tan siquiera una lágrima.

Y a pesar de ser una niña que solo pensaba en jugar, nunca faltó a sus clases de defensa. Los humanos tenían que esforzarse el doble,

therefore, her injured ankle soon began to swell, significantly slowing down her fast pace.

Hours into her trek, she came across the headless body of a cynocephalus (a man with dog face) lying in a pool of its own blood. Furthermore, there were some dark green-skinned goblins—thin, dwarfish, and with long limbs—who were feeding on the carcass through the wound inflicted by Leinad's sword.

She tried to be stealthy, but the goblins' keen sense of hearing, courtesy of their prominent ears, thwarted any attempt at stealth. Valery wasn't foolish. She'd been walking since leaving the kingdom with two small but very sharp knives in her hands. The only problem was the goblins were incredibly fast, and she could barely walk.

The girl dropped her stick and revealed the glint of her razor-sharp knives. Her blades were curved, and her handles were made from the bone of a *frorin* (an olmánaro resembling a buffalo). Two figures moved ahead, and other kept to her rear. They stalked her closely, yet the girl remained stoic, refusing to show fear or shed a single tear.

Despite being a girl who mostly thought of playing, her commitment to defense training was unwavering. Humans had to work twice

por eso entrenaban desde muy pequeños y nunca dejaban de hacerlo.

Valery no era la mejor de su clase, pero sabía qué hacer en circunstancias como estas. Ella giró con su pie bueno cual bailarina y apuntó a sus piernas a los que estaban delante de ella. Solo uno fue impactado, pero eso fue suficiente. Los otros dos se alejaron un poco, dándole a Valery la oportunidad de tomar al duende herido y uno a uno empezó a cortar sus dedos, provocando un chillido demasiado agudo, imposible de soportar cuando los oídos están muy bien desarrollados, y se paralizaron ante el ruido que rompía sus tímpanos.

Valery pudo dejar las cosas así, pero cuando le dieron la espalda los dos que quedaban, pisando el cuello del duende herido para que no huyera, lanzó sus dos navajas directo a sus cabezas, traspasando el cráneo de ambos. Al duende en el suelo le pisó el cuello hasta que dejó de respirar. Y en voz baja, acostada por el agotamiento junto al cuerpo del duende y el cinocéfalo, susurró:

as hard, so they trained from a very young age and never stopped.

Valery wasn't the best in her class, but she knew what to do in circumstances like these. She spun on her good foot like a dancer and aimed for the legs of the goblins in front of her. Only one was hit, but that was enough. The other two backed away slightly, giving Valery a chance to grab the injured goblin. One by one, she began to sever its fingers, causing an agonizing, high-pitched shriek. The sound was unbearable for ears with such excellent hearing, and they froze at the noise that pierced their eardrums.

Instead of leaving things as they were, Valery seized the moment when the last two turned away, and stepped on the neck of one of the wounded goblins to make sure he couldn't escape. She threw her two daggers, instantly embedding them in their skulls. She then strangled the goblin lying on the ground with her foot until he stopped breathing. Overwhelmed by exhaustion, she lay down next to the corpses of the goblin and the cynocephalus and whispered:

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—Ya extraño jugar con mis amigas.
Faltaba poco para que la noche predominara, así que apresuró sus pasos. Cruzar el muro de Twingfir no era muy fácil para ella, así que tuvo mucha precaución esquivando ciertas trampas hasta que

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“I already miss playing with my friends.”
Her steps quickened in response to the urgency of the approaching night. The Twingfir wall was an obstacle demanding respect; so, she navigated avoiding its traps with intense caution until she reached the

alcanzó el camino por la entrada principal, que por lo general permanecía abierta hasta que cayera la noche.

Entró como si perteneciera allí y todos la miraban con extrañeza, no solo por ser una desconocida, sino por las manchas de sangre en sus botas y su blusa. La recibió Lia, preguntándole qué hacía una niña tan pequeña, sola y ensangrentada por los peligrosos bosques. Ella fue al grano y preguntó por Amir. Lia le señaló en dirección al muchacho. Este se encontraba un poco lejos de ella, y parecía estar dormido de pie. Lo vio elevarse (muy serenamente) unos centímetros del suelo y gritar sin emitir algún ruido, o al menos eso parecía, pues su boca abierta y las venas en su cuello y frente sobresalían. Ante esa primera impresión, la muchacha sintió un escalofrío por todo su cuerpo, y de pronto una sombra los cubrió. La roca de fuego impactó justo donde Lia y Valery habían conversado, aplastándolas.

Valery despertó al borde de la playa, otra vez, pero esta vez el mar mojaba sus pies y la ropa que vestía seguía ensangrentada por el ataque a los duendes. Su corto cabello (marrón-rojizo) seguía ondulado, pero olía a ceniza y a la sal del mar. ¿Soñaba? Y si fue así, ¿por qué la sangre? ¿Por qué la parte baja de su pantalón estaba quemada? Aquello le hizo entender que todo el recorrido, la pelea con los duendes y la llegada a Twingfir, no había sido un sueño.

Sentada a la orilla, viendo el mar mojar sus botas, notó que del agua sobresalía la cabeza de un tipo que solo se mostraba hasta sus

main gate, which mercifully remained ajar against the coming darkness.

She entered as though the place had always been hers. Everyone stared at her in confusion—not on her strange presence, but by the blood that marked her boots and blouse. Lia greeted her with concern, asking what a child so small was doing alone and bloodied in the perilous forest. The girl wasted no words. She asked for Amir. Lia pointed toward the boy. He stood far off, appearing almost asleep. Then, he moved: a slow, unnatural levitation a few inches above the ground. He screamed—silently, or so it seemed, since his mouth was open and the veins on his neck and forehead bulged. At that first impression, a shiver ran down the girl’s entire body. Suddenly, a shadow enveloped them. The fire rock impacted precisely where Lia and Valery had been talking, crushing them instantly.

Valery awoke at the edge of the shore—again, the sea wet her feet, and the clothes that clung to her body were still stained crimson from the brutal goblin encounter. Her short, wavy, reddish-brown hair reeked of ash mixed with sharp sea salt. A dream? If so, why the blood? Why were the lower parts of her pants burned? Then she understood—the journey, the fight against the globins, and the arrival at Twingfir—it had all been real.

Seated on the edge of the shore, as the waves licked her boots, she caught sight of a man’s head rising from the sea—only his eyes was

<p>ojos, lo que la hizo levantarse rápidamente. Sus cuchillos no estaban, la bolsa con su ropa y medicina tampoco. Corrió a toda velocidad, dándose cuenta de que su tobillo ya no le dolía. Un enorme tentáculo abrazó los árboles hasta derribarlos con el afán de hacerle difícil la carrera a la niña, pero ella fue más ágil. Logró escapar y no miró hacia atrás por más que sintió que la perseguían, y lo único que dejó a su espalda</p>	<p>visible; so, Valery scrambled to her feet. Her knives were gone; her medical kit and spare clothes, vanished. She sprinted, noticing that the throbbing pain in her ankle was gone. Behind her, a colossal tentacle ripped through the forest, crushing trees to create a devastating barrier, but her agility won out. She managed to escape and didn't look back, no matter how much she felt she was being pursued. The only things she left behind</p>
<p>Página 101</p> <p>fueron sus pisadas, su aliento y sus preguntas. En ese momento solo quería sentirse segura. Pudo ser presa de aquel monstruo oceánico si hubiese tardado más en despertar, pero parecía que los dioses se apiadaron de ella, o tal vez de su misión dependían.</p>	<p>Page 101</p> <p>were her desperate footprints, ragged breaths, and mounting confusion. All she wanted right then was a sense of safety. A few seconds more, and that ocean monster could have made her its prey. Maybe the gods had spared her—or maybe they still needed her to complete her mission.</p>
<p>Página 103</p> <p>ATAQUE DEL CIELO</p>	<p>Page 103</p> <p>SKY ATTACK</p>

<p>Página 105</p> <p>IX</p> <p>Desde Gárida se pudo ver la enorme roca romper las nubes en su caída y el fuego que la abrasaba pintaba el cielo de naranja. Y a la velocidad a la que viajaba no permitió a todos verla, solo Adam, Milos y Andi pudieron presenciar tal evento, que parecía un ataque desde fuera del planeta.</p>	<p>Page 105</p> <p>IX</p> <p>From Gárida, a massive rock could be seen tearing through the clouds, flames wrapping around it as it turned the sky into shades of orange. Its speed, however, was paralyzing; only Adam, Milos, and Andi managed to fully register the event, which seemed like an attack hurled from the void of space.</p>
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Adam no dudó en correr desenfrenadamente hacia los caballos y sellarlos de nuevo con otra de las cartas amaras para evitar fatiga en ellos, y Milos les había puesto sus respectivas sillas. Llamó con desesperación a los muchachos porque, aunque estaba apurado por salir, no podía dejarlos regresar por su cuenta. En su carrera, Kert los acompañó y a Milos no le quedó más que ver a sus invitados partir, con ganas de hacer algo más que quedarse parado sin siquiera poder despedirse como corresponde. Kert se elevó lo más alto que pudo para avisar si el ataque había sido en Twingfir, pero aún se encontraban muy lejos como para saberlo.

—Debiste quedarte con Milos, Kert. —
Sabe cuidarse. Además, son ustedes los que han sido atacados.

—¡No bajen el ritmo, no se queden atrás! —
ordenó Adam.

Pol y Andi intentaban seguirle el ritmo, pero era imposible. Oscurecía y el temor los empezaba a invadir, sumado al miedo de pensar que el ataque había sido en sus hogares. Después de un par de horas de recorrido, Kert bajó veloz a advertirles que no estaban solos. De hecho, había demasiados cinocéfalos con antorchas, recitando oraciones a los vitjars, cantando elogios en una lengua oscura, en lo

Adam didn't hesitate—he sprinted wildly toward the horses, sealing them once more with one of the Amaras cards to keep them from tiring, while Milos fitted their saddles. Milos had already secured the saddles. He called out desperately for the boys, for although he was eager to leave, he couldn't let them return on their own. Kert raced alongside them, and Milos could only watch as his guests rode away, wishing he could do more than just stand there, unable even to bid them a proper farewell. Kert soared as high as he could, trying to see if the strike had landed in Twingfir, but they remained distressingly out of range to know for sure.

“You should've stayed with Milos, Kert.”
“He can handle himself. It's you who've been ambushed.”

“Keep up! Don't fall behind!” Adam ordered.

Pol and Andi struggled to keep pace; however, it was impossible. Night was falling, and the fear for what might have happened to their homes gnawed at them inside. After hours of relentless travel, Kert swooped down sharply. They were not alone. A horde of cynocephali advanced with torches in hand, muttering prayers to the Vitjars, their songs of praise echoing through the gloom in a dark language, it was

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que parecía ser una procesión. Delante de ellos y a sus espaldas los protegían los blemms, monstruos aberrantes sin cabeza,

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like a grim procession. Around them, they were protected by blemmyes—grotesque, headless creatures with eyes set in their

pero con ojos en sus hombros y una boca enorme con filosos dientes en su pecho. Sus cerebros eran diminutos, pero les alcanzaba para seguir órdenes y actuar instintivamente para reproducirse o alimentarse.

—Kert, necesito atravesar el bosque hasta mi casa.

—Son demasiados, vas a poner en riesgo a los niños.

—No somos niños, podemos pelear — refunfuñó Pol.

—No has visto lo que estas criaturas hacen para alimentarse o simplemente para torturar a sus enemigos. Y la magia no servirá para atacarlos. Conté al menos a veinte cinocéfalos y ocho blemms. ¿Qué haremos, Adam?

—No sabemos a dónde se dirigen. Si pasan cerca de Twingfir entre los bosques de Minadir, podríamos ir detrás de ellos a una distancia considerablemente separada, pero eso podría tomar su tiempo, y no tengo tiempo.

La luz del cielo se apagaba cada vez más y traía consigo una tormentosa noche. Seguir la ruta y desafiar a los cinocéfalos era peligroso, tanto como quedarse a oscuras en el bosque, enemigo de todo aquel que lo pisara.

—Kert, ¿puedes llevarlos?

—Señor, no puede enfrentarlos usted solo — dijo Andi.

—El niño tiene razón, Adam. No te dejaré solo aquí.

No pienso enfrentarlos —insistió—, puedo rodearlos por la pendiente que lleva a

shoulders and a big mouth with sharp teeth on his chest. Their minds were mere pinpricks, yet sufficient to obey commands and to move by the raw dictates of hunger and reproduction.

“Kert, I must cross the forest and reach my home.”

“There are too many. You would endanger the children.”

“We are not children — we can fight back,” Pol grumbled.

“You have not witnessed how these things feed or how they relish torturing their prey. Magic won’t harm them. I counted at least twenty cynocephali and eight blemmys. What should we do, Adam?”

“We don’t know their destination. If they head past Twingfir through the Minadir forest, we might shadow them at a wide distance — but that will cost time, and time is something I cannot spare.”

The daylight was rapidly fading, heralding a stormy night. To continue on the current path meant challenging the Cynocephali, a danger equal to being stranded in the darkening, hostile forest (the enemy of all who set foot in it).

“Kert, get them out of here!”

“Sir, you can’t take them on by yourself,” Andi protested.

“He’s right, Adam. I’m not leaving you.” “I won’t confront them,” he said firmly. “I can go around through the slope that leads to Minadir. If I’m careful, they won’t see me

Minadir. Intentaré que no me vean bajar la colina y luego retomaré el camino

descend the hill, and I'll rejoin the road ahead of them. But you must reach them

adelantándome a ellos. Pero necesito que al menos tú llegues más rápido. Busca a mis hijos y diles que pronto llegaré.

Kert aceptó, cargó a cada uno de los muchachos en sus brazos y se elevó muy alto en el aire, dejando a dos de los caballos seguir sus rumbos. En las alturas, los tres podían ver las antorchas y la caminata de aquellas criaturas. Cada cinocéfalo caminaba al menos a dos metros de distancia de los otros, haciendo dos perfectas y calculadas filas, los blemms no eran difíciles de distinguir a lo lejos.

first. Find my sons and tell them I'll arrive soon."

Kert agreed, lifted both boys into his arms, and soared high into the air, letting two of the horses continue on their own. From above, the three observed the glow of torches and the measured march of the creatures. Each cynocephalus walked at least two meters apart from the others, forming two precise, measured lines, and the blemmyes were easy to spot even from afar.

Se escuchaban balbuceos de lo que parecía ser un rito andante, y lo que sea llamaban o intentaba rendir ofrenda no debía ser nada bueno. Dos de ellos llevaban en el centro de todo un altar con un cofre que ocultaba algo que aparentaba ser importante para ellos. Hacía mucho que estos monstruos no se dejaban ver y de la noche a la mañana se paseaban libremente como si fueran dueños de los bosques, como si el bosque les temiera.

Adam cabalgó directo a ellos e hizo lo que prometió no hacer. El mago podía escuchar los cantos y rezos también, hasta que a unos cincuenta metros de distancia se silenciaron. Solo se escuchaba el galope del caballo y la respiración de su jinete, que se dirigía de brazos abiertos a una posible muerte. En una curva que rodeaba una montaña se veía la luz del fuego que usaban como parte del rito

Mutterings could be heard, they echoed like a ritual in motion, and whatever they were invoking or offering to, it was certainly nothing good. Two of them carried, at the center of it all, an altar bearing a chest that seemed to hold something of great value to them. It had been ages since these monsters had shown themselves, and now, all of a sudden, they roamed as though they ruled the forest—as though the forest itself bowed to their presence.

Adam rode straight toward them and did what he had sworn not to do. The mage could hear the chanting and prayers too—until, about fifty meters away, it stopped. Only the steady gallop and the rasp of his breathing filled the night, a lone rider charging into death's embrace. Rounding a mountain curve, he saw the glow of fire—ritual flames serving also as lanterns in the

y como lámparas en la noche. Los cinocéfalos le esperaban mirando hacia él y los blemms, casi del tamaño de los gigantes, reposaban sus rodillas y sus manos en el suelo, como si le rindieran honor. El líder, Vic, se mostraba pulcro en cuanto a vestimenta, pero su rostro espeluznante con grandes cicatrices que atravesaban su hocico y sus ojos no hacían juego con lo que llevaba puesto; una estola sacerdotal caía por sus hombros con runas ancestrales de color dorado que Adam no pudo descifrar, y que brillaban tanto como el fuego en sus antorchas.

—Mago, por fin te dejas ver —saludó Vic con una reverencia.

—¿Hacia dónde se dirigen?

—Con todo respeto, mago, eso no es de tu incumbencia.

—Entonces abran camino, tengo que pasar.

—Eso depende, mago. Queremos hablar sobre una alianza. ¿Nos dejarías entrar a tu hogar? —dijo calmadamente, pero con hostilidad; Adam lo tomó como mofa.

—No necesitan ir allá. Hablemos aquí y luego me dejan pasar.

—No somos tontos, sabemos que no somos bienvenidos.

—Díganme de qué alianza hablan. ¿Qué necesitan de mí?

—Necesitamos tu magia. Eres hijo de los vitjars, tu oscuridad les pertenece a nuestros dioses. Pero sabemos que estás apurado y

night. The cynocephalus faced him, waiting, while the blemmyes, enormous and hulking like giants, knelt with hands and knees pressed to the ground, as if bowing in reverence. The leader, Vic, was impeccably dressed, but his appearance starkly contradicted his attire; enormous scars slashed across his snout and eyes, creating a truly gruesome face. Over his shoulders draped a sacerdotal stole adorned with golden, ancient runes that Adam could not figure it out, shimmering brightly like the flames of their torches.

“Wizard, you finally show yourself,” Vic greeted with a bow.

“What is your destination?”

“With all deference, Mage, that detail is not your business.”

“Then move aside. I have to get through.”

“It depends, Mage. We want to discuss an alliance. Will you allow us into your home?” His voice was calm, but with hostility, it made the invitation feel like a deliberate taunt to Adam.

“You don’t need to go there. We talk here, and then you grant me passage.”

“We are not naïve. We understand we are not welcome.”

“Tell me what this alliance entails. What do you need from me?”

“We need your magic. You are a son of the Vitjars; your inherent darkness belongs to our deities. However, we see you are in a hurry, and

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mostramos nuestra comprensión dejándote seguir tu camino, luego hablaremos.

Los cinocéfalos abrieron paso para dejar ir a Adam, pero este no sabía el porqué del comportamiento *noble* de aquellos anormales. Así que les preguntó:

—¿Me van a dejar pasar como si nada? ¿Qué tramaman?

—No matamos por matar, solo para defendernos o para comer, Y tú no nos has atacado y, para tu fortuna, no tenemos hambre.

Adam no mostró temor y hasta pasó con calma por el espacio que le hicieron. Su caballo relinchaba por el miedo a pesar de que estaba bajo el encantamiento de las cartas, y los cinocéfalos simplemente lo veían pasar con sus miradas horribles y con sonrisas tenebrosas. Él logró conectar mirada con algunos, incluso con uno de los blemms, que por primera vez veía de tan cerca. Sus ojos no parpadeaban y sus grandes bocas sin labios alargaban una fea sonrisa hasta el punto de enseñar sus filosos dientes. El fuego bailaba con el viento y las túnicas se pegaban a los delgados cuerpos de los hombres con cara de perro; los blemms permanecían desnudos.

Una vez logró traspasar el camino, ordenó a su caballo correr lo más rápido posible, con el corazón a mil. Aunque mostró valentía ante ellos, Adam pensaba en la probabilidad de que ellos escucharan sus latidos

we are showing our mercy by letting you continue your journey. We will conclude our business another time.”

The Cynocephalus parted, granting Adam passage; nevertheless, he was baffled by the unnatural *nobility* of the grotesque beings. As a result, he asked them:

“You’re really just going to let me by? What game are you plotting?”

“We don’t commit murder; we act only to protect or to feed,” they stated. “You remain unmolested, and to your benefit, our bellies are full.”

Adam showed no fear and even passed calmly through the space they made for him. His horse neighed slightly with terror, even under the cards’ enchantment. The Cynocephalus watched him go by, their monstrous eyes glinting, their twisted smiles glowing in the firelight. Adam locked eyes with several, and even with a Blemmyes—a creature he was seeing at such close range for the first time. They didn’t blink; Its lipless grin stretched unnaturally, baring jagged teeth. Flames flickered in the wind, and the robes clung to the gaunt bodies of the dog-headed men; while the Blemmyes remained starkly exposed.

Once he crossed the path, Adam commanded his horse to gallop as fast as possible, his heart pounding wildly. Though he had shown courage before them, he was terrified they might have heard his trembling heartbeat or smelled his fear. But he had gotten through without fighting and

temblosos y olieran su miedo. Pero había logrado pasar sin la necesidad de pelear y

sin tener que desviarse alargando el camino hacia su casa, que, como había pensado, había sido atacada.

Desde el cielo se acercó Kert, asustando al mago.

—Pensé que estarían en Twingfir ya. ¡¿Qué hacen aquí?!

—Lo siento, Adam, estos niños son muy persuasivos. Hiciste lo contrario a lo que nos prometiste. Lo vimos todo y si ellos se atrevían a encararte, estábamos preparados para sorprenderlos.

—Te lo agradezco, pero si atacaron mi hogar debe haber muchos necesitando ayuda. ¡Debieron pensar en eso!

Adam estaba enojado porque ellos no habían cumplido con su promesa, pero él tampoco cumplió con la suya, así que no era mucho lo que podía reclamar. Además, su enojo era signo del miedo que tenía

without taking the long detour, saving precious time on the route home, which, as he feared, had been attacked.

Kert dropped out of the sky, startled the mage.

“I expected you to be in Twingfir! What are you doing back here?!”

“My fault, Adam. The boys were very convincing,” Kert admitted. “You broke your promise. We watched the whole thing, and if they had chosen to attack, we were prepared to intervene.”

“Thanks, but if my home’s under attack, there are people who need help! That’s what you should’ve thought of!”

Adam’s fury stemmed from their broken oath, though his own promise-breaking meant he couldn’t push the complaint too hard. Furthermore, his anger was simply a desperate shield for the terror that gripped him,

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de tan solo pensar en que algo le había pasado a sus hijos y a los aldeanos. No sabía el horror que le esperaba.

El camino a casa parecía más largo que cuando había salido a Gárida con los muchachos, y el viaje le pareció más tedioso, aunque su caballo ahora tenía una silla cómoda.

Era imposible no pensar en su difunta esposa y en cómo no estuvo ahí cuando Sina la mató y la convirtió en su cena. Las lágrimas de enojo le entorpecían la vista e

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fearing the fate of his two sons and the townsfolk. He had no idea what horrors awaited him.

The ride home felt agonizingly drawn out, longer than the entire trip to Garida, the passage of time made torporific even by a newly comfortable saddle.

It was really hard not to think about his dead wife—how he hadn't been there when Sina killed her and turned her into his meal. Tears of anger blurred his vision, and he tried to

intentaba limpiarla con la capa que a en sus hombros y que volaba lejos de su espalda. Ahora, en su ausencia, nuevamente pensaba en el peligro que corrían sus hijos y no podía dejar de culparse sin saber siquiera si estaban muertos.

Por fin llegaron luego de unas horas. El escenario era difícil de ver y sus hijos difíciles de encontrar. Andi corrió a casa de sus abuelos y Pol a la de sus padres. Los dos lloraban desconsolados. Los tres gritaban el nombre de sus familiares con la esperanza de recibir una respuesta, aunque fuera un auxilio. Nadie respondió. Ni cerca del lago, ni en el centro del pueblo.

—Quizás huyeron tras el ataque —dijo Kert.

Justo en ese momento vio a Adam encontrar los cuerpos bien acomodados de sus seres queridos. El ékatron no pudo evitar sentir vergüenza, así que optó por consolarlos sin palabras.

Adam sostuvo su bastón con sus dos manos, lo golpeó contra el suelo y una luz muy fuerte empezó a recrear lo que había pasado. Era como si su bastón le susurrara el conjuro que precisaba en cada momento, como si tuviera conciencia. Antes de que el hechizo recreara el momento en que la roca caía, les habló a los muchachos.

—Lo que verán será muy fuerte. Si sus familiares murieron, lo verán todo. Por favor, evítenlo. Miren hasta donde sus corazones les permitan, guarden en sus mentes la preciosa imagen de los suyos.

wipe them away with the cape that rested on his shoulders and flew behind him. Now, without his presence, his thoughts returned to his children and the danger surrounding them. He couldn't stop blaming himself, not even knowing whether they were still alive.

Hours later, they finally arrived. The scene was difficult to process, and Adam's sons were missing. Andi ran to his grandparents' house and Pol to his parents'. Both boys immediately broke into distraught sobs. All three men yelled their relatives' names, pleading for an answer, a sign of life. Silence was their only reply. The lake was quiet, and the town center was empty.

“Maybe they fled during the attack,” Kert offered.

In that moment, Kert watched Adam discover the carefully arranged bodies of his love ones. The ékatron couldn't help but feel awkwardness, simply moving to console them with his presence.

Adam seized his staff, struck the ground, and a blinding light erupted, beginning to conjure a replay of the past. The staff seemed to possess a will, a guiding intelligence that subtly whispered the necessary incantation. Before the spell projected the moment the rock fell, Adam turned to address the boys.

“The vision ahead will be intense. If your relatives perished, you will see their final moments. Avoid it if you can. Gaze only as long as your spirits allows, and instead, hold

La luz reflejaba a todos como si fueran humo negro que contrastaba con el fuerte brillo que irradiaba aquel conjuro. Adam manipulaba muy bien el bastón, como si conociera todo sobre el poder que alberga en el rígido pedazo de madera mágica. En el conjuro vieron a Leinad llegar con Bec y también al duende esconderse entre

onto the precious memories of those you cherish.

The light reflected on everyone, turning their shapes into silhouettes of black smoke against the dazzling brilliance of the spell. Adam manipulated the staff expertly, as if he possessed an innate knowledge of the power held within the stiff piece of enchanted wood. Within the vision, they saw Leinad arrive with Bec, the elf dart into

los arbustos. Fueron testigos del beso entre el joven mago y la hechicera, y también del trance en el que estaba Amir, Observaron la llegada de la misteriosa Valery, que fue aplastada junto a Lia por la bola de fuego. Después de ver a sus amigos, conocidos y familiares prendidos en fuego, siguieron los pasos de los sobrevivientes. Escucharon la discusión entre Clara y Leinad, y por supuesto, lo que planeaban los éniars en su indirecta alianza con los magos. Vieron también al duende robar la voz de un anciano que de pronto dejó de seguir sufriendo las quemaduras, y suplicar que lo matara para no vieron simultáneamente un aura púrpura viajar desde el viejo hasta Amir. Por último, escucharon la conversación de Yüghe con los muchachos, hasta que llegaron algunos soldados de Auxis que se llevaron a todos a su reino. Una calma invadía al preocupado Adam, que seguía sin creer lo que estaba pasando. Ya no sufría la agonía de pensar que sus hijos habían muerto, pero sí sufría la pérdida de Pol y Andi, y la de todo el pueblo.

the brush. They were shown the kiss between the young mage and the sorceress, and the deep trance afflicting Amir. They observed the arrival of the mysterious Valery, who was crushed alongside Lia by the fireball. After the gruesome scene of friends and family being burned, their vision shifted to follow the survivors. They overheard the heated exchange between Clara and Leinad, and subsequently, the nature of the Eniar's conspiracy for an indirect pact with the mages. They simultaneously saw two key events: the goblin stealing the voice of an elderly man—who stopped his pained pleas for death—and a corresponding purple aura flowing from the victim to Amir. The final segment showed the conversation between Yüghe and the boys, ending when Auxis soldiers arrived to transport everyone to their kingdom. A profound calm settled over the worried Adam, who still struggled to believe the events. The agony of fearing his sons were dead was gone, replaced by the grief for the loss of Pol and Andi, and the entire village.

<p>—Esa niña vino buscando a tu hijo menor dijo Kert.</p> <p>—Y se notaba desesperada.</p> <p>—Adam, me despido. Mis condolencias, mis hermanos. Yo sé lo que es perder a alguien cercano y sé lo que se siente querer vengarse.</p> <p>—¿De quién vamos a vengarnos si no sabemos quién lo hizo?</p> <p>—Adam, este planeta es pequeño. Las respuestas llegarán.</p> <p>Kert se unió al vuelo del humo y se excusó diciendo que tenía que informar a <i>los suyos</i> sobre aquellos acontecimientos. Su presencia ya no era necesaria, pues no había enemigo del que tuviera que defender a sus nuevos amigos.</p> <p>Adam, Pol y Andi no tenían dónde dormir, ni siquiera querían descansar. La ira les recorría en cada parte de su cuerpo sin tener con quién descargarla. Sin decir una palabra, Adam tomó su bastón y caminó junto a su caballo hacia el reino de Auxis, mientras que los muchachos lo siguieron cabizbajos, solamente con sus armas y un dolor que no tocaba fondo.</p>	<p>“The girl was searching for your younger son,” Kert informed him. “And she was clearly desperate.”</p> <p>“Adam, I bid you farewell. Accept my sincere condolences, my brothers. I know the pain of loss and I understand the powerful urge to seek vengeance.”</p> <p>“How can we get revenge when we don’t even know the perpetrator?”</p> <p>“Adam, this world is small. The truth will find you.”</p> <p>Kert merged with the dissipating magical smoke, stating he had to relay these grave events to <i>his own kin</i>. His protective presence was over; there was no immediate enemy from whom he needed to shield his new comrades.</p> <p>Adam, Pol, and Andi had nowhere to sleep, nor the will to close their eyes. Fury consumed them entirely, seeking no target. In silence, Adam took up his staff and began the long walk toward the Kingdom of Auxis, leading his horse. While the boys trailed after him, downcast, armed only with their weapons and a deep, consuming pain.</p>
<p>Página 111</p> <p>DECLARACIÓN DE GUERRA</p>	<p>Page 111</p> <p>WAR DECLARATION</p>
<p>Página 113</p> <p>X</p>	<p>Page 113</p> <p>X</p>

Estaba el rey Apriaf sentado en su trono, contemplando la tortura impuesta a un traidor: un viejo en buena forma que mantenía una relación con una mujer del reino Auxis.

La tortura, muy inusual, constaba de un que la cabeza de un adulto, en cuyo fondo era derramado un néctar y que posteriormente infestaban de hormigas carnívoras de todo tamaño. El señor colgaba de sus pies, que permanecían juntos por las ataduras en sus tobillos, rodillas y muslos, para dificultarle la posibilidad de escapar de su destino atroz. La máquina que colgaba su cuerpo empezó a girar sus cadenas, descendiendo al pequeñísimo mar de insectos que no esperaban nada, pero que al sentir lo que sea empezarían a mordisquear. Y así fue. El traidor se sacudía como gusano. Sus manos atadas a su espalda desnuda se abrían y cerraban temblorosamente. No se escuchaban gritos de dolor mientras estaba sumergido.

El silencio del pueblo, que presenciaba el tormentoso destino de aquel pobre señor enamorado, angustiaba más que cualquier bullicio poderoso estruendo; se miraban entre sí y algunos tapaban los ojos de sus hijos. Los guardias golpeaban a todo aquel que se negara a mirar que le sucedía al desafortunado. Todos, por obligación y con posibilidades de penalización, tenían que ver las torturas que se daban en el campo a los traidores. Y aquel silencio que predominaba dejó

King Apriaf presided from his throne, gazing down at the punishment of a traitor—a healthy, older man convicted of consorting with a woman from the Auxis Kingdom.

The punishment was most unusual. A hollow mold shaped like a man's head was filled with a sweet nectar, soon swarmed by carnivorous ants of every size. The man was suspended by his feet, which were bound tightly at the ankles, knees, and thighs to prevent any chance of escape from his gruesome fate. Slowly, the device holding him began to turn its chains, lowering him toward the crawling mass of insects, which, though motionless at first, began to bite the moment they sensed something. Contact was made. The traitor's body squirmed like a worm. His bound hands, visible against his bare back, opened and closed in a terrified spasm. Yet not a single sound of agony was heard while he hung submerged.

The silence of the townspeople, who watched the tormented fate of the poor man in love, was more harrowing than any loud uproar. They looked at each other; some quickly covered their children's eyes. Guards were hitting anyone who tried to look away from the unfortunate event. It was mandatory for everyone, under threat of harsh penalties, to view the punishments inflicted upon traitors in the square. That prevailing silence ensured that all anyone could hear

Escuchar solo las cadenas y pequeños gemidos de desesperación. Nada más.

El rey Apriaf levantó levemente su mano derecha y con su dedo índice ordenó que lo subieran. Algunos insectos eran tan grandes que devoraron gran parte de su piel. Uno en particular seguía mordiendo su nariz hasta casi arrancarla. Su rostro estaba manchado de sangre y era fácil ver las heridas en su cuero cabelludo por sus canas, que también se pintaron de rojo. Fue entonces que pudo gritar, porque el viejo sabía el peligro que implicaba el abrir la boca debajo de semejante hueco en la tierra. Esta tortura culminó con una segunda sumergida, cuando Apriaf (que nunca bajó su mano derecha) señaló esta vez que la tortura continuara. Esta vez fue más corta. Soltaron todas sus ataduras y acostado en el suelo golpeaba sus orejas intentando sacar los bichos que se metieron por los orificios de su cabeza; incluso hasta sus ojos se vieron afectados. Lloraba y suplicaba a los soldados que lo mataran para terminar con la pesadilla, pero ellos lo empujaban con sus botas para alejarlo y evitar mancharse de su traicionera sangre. El rey seguía sentado sin mostrarse sorprendido y a sus espaldas se acercó Danteh, su mano derecha, para consultar el destino final del traidor. — Morirá, ¿cierto? Dijo el sirviente con su afeminada voz.

—No, Danteh. Sáquenlo de aquí. El mensaje a mi pueblo fue enviado.

La respuesta del rey era inesperada e indeseada porque todos preferían ver morir

were the grinding of the chains and small, despairing groans. Nothing else.

King Apriaf lifted his right hand just enough for his finger to gesture the order. The insects were enormous—some had eaten away chunks of his skin. One stubborn creature clung to his nose, tearing at it until it nearly came off. Blood masked his face; his white hair turned crimson, revealing the raw wounds on his scalp that were easy to see through his gray hair, now stained red. It was then that he managed to scream, for the old man knew the danger of opening one's mouth beneath such a pit in the ground. The torment resumed with a second plunge, when Apriaf—who had never lowered his right hand—signaled once more for it to continue. It was briefer, yet crueler. They released his bindings, and lying on the ground, he struck at his ears, trying to drive out the bugs that had crawled into the holes in his head; even his eyes had been affected. He cried and begged the soldiers to kill him, to end it all, but they only pushed him away with their boots, careful not to be tainted by his treacherous blood. The king watched in silence, unfazed. Behind him, Danteh—his trusted right hand—approached to ask what should be done with the traitor.

“He’s going to die, isn’t he?” Asked the servant in his delicate voice.

“No, Danteh. Take him away. The message has already been delivered.”

The king’s answer struck everyone as cruelly unexpected and unwelcome, for

al hombre para que acabaran con su agonía,
aunque las probabilidades de que la víctima

everyone preferred to see the man die and
end his agony, even though the chances of

muriera después del ataque de las hormigas eran altas. Algunos pensaban que el rey estaba siendo compasivo con el traidor, pero una ejecución breve sería la primera opción de cualquiera, porque sentir que algo diminuto se pasea dentro de tu cabeza puede resultar en una pesadilla interminable de sufrimiento.

El viejo caminaba un poco desorientado porque uno de sus ojos estaba completamente inservible, pero su manera de deambular se debía a que buscaba un arma para terminar con su vida, y lo logró. Tomó la espada de un soldado que le daba la espalda y con la misma

surviving the ant attack were minimal. Some whispered that the king was merciful to the traitor, yet mercy would have been a quick death — not this lingering horror. The thought of something small crawling within one's skull was enough to birth an endless torment beyond imagination.

The old man staggered as he walked, one of his eyes completely useless. But his stumbling came not from weakness, rather from searching for a weapon to end his life—and he found it. He seized the sword of a soldier standing with his back to him and

se cortó el cuello. Tendido en el suelo, con la sangre brotando de su gran herida, aún se podían ver algunos insectos saliendo de su nariz, sus oídos y con un poco de dificultad, de sus ojos.

—Danteh, quería mantenerlo con vida para enviarlo a Auxis. Que corten su cabeza y la lleven a ese miserable reino y adviértanles que estamos en guerra. Ese inútil pudo haber dado información sobre el imperio y nuestros propósitos. Y esta vez hagan el trabajo como se los pido, no a medias como acaba de pasar.

—Como ordene, su majestad-respondió.
Danteh bajó las escaleras, tomó la espada con la que el hombre se mató y se la devolvió al soldado mientras acercaba su rostro al de él para intimidarlo.

slit his own throat. As he fell, blood spilled fast from the gaping wound, and insects crept from his nose, his ears, and, with dreadful effort, from his eyes.

“Danteh, I meant to keep him alive and ship him to Auxis. Chop off his head, send it to that miserable kingdom, and let them know we’re officially at war. That idiot might have spilled secrets about the empire and our goals. Now, get this job done properly, not botched like the one we just saw!”

“As you command, Your Majesty,” came the reply.

Danteh went down the stairs, picked up the sword the man had killed himself with, and handed it back to the soldier while leaning close to his face to intimidate him.

—Quítate el casco —ordenó. —

Señor, lo siento. No lo vi acercarse.

Mientras el soldado se excusaba, Danteh repetía en un tono muy bajo que se quitara el casco. Lo repitió unas seis veces.

—¡Que te quites el casco! Explotó de ira y fue él mismo quien tuvo que quitar la armadura del desdichado soldado. Cuando te doy una orden, ¡tú la cumples! Y espero que esté claro. ¿O acaso quieres que enviemos tu cabeza junto a la de él? ¿Quieres que te torture como a él?

Danteh volvió a quitarle la espada y en un solo movimiento mutiló la cabeza del viejo muerto, la levantó y chorreando la sangre, la aproximó al recluta hasta embarrar su uniforme. El muchacho intentaba no llorar, pero poco le faltaba. Pensaba que ese sería su destino también, y muy lejos de sentirse seguro, se arrodilló y suplicó que se le perdonara la vida. Juró que no volvería a pasar y que daría su vida por el imperio, y Danteh, la mano derecha del rey, le ordenó levantarse.

—¿Cómo saber si no suplicarás ante la inminente muerte contra el enemigo? Lo único que logras con estas súplicas es que desconfíe de oportunidad, así el pueblo tu lealtad al Rey Apriaf. Pero te daré una oportunidad, así el pueblo podrá ver de una vez por todas la nobleza del rey.

“Take off your helmet,” he ordered.

“Sir, my apologies. I never saw him move,”

While the soldier made his excuses, Danteh kept whispering for him to remove the helmet. He repeated it about six times.

“I SAID, TAKE THE HELMET OFF!” His fury erupted, yanking the armor from the wretched soldier himself. “When I give an instruction, you carry it out! Is that understood? —Or shall we send your head as a partner to his? Do you want me to torture you like him?”

Danteh snatched the sword once more and, with a swift, brutal stroke, severed the old man’s head. He hoisted the dripping trophy and thrust it toward the recruit, the gushing blood splattering his uniform. The boy fought back tears, barely holding himself together. Convinced this was his own coming end, he dropped to his knees, desperate for mercy. He swore an oath, promising never to falter again and vowing his life to the empire. Danteh, the King’s Hand, commanded him to rise.

“How can I trust you won’t beg when confronted by death on the battlefield? All this pleading does is breed suspicion of your allegiance to King Apriaf. Yet, I will grant you one chance. Let the people witness the King’s nobility once for all.

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Todos montaron sus caballos para trasladarse al reino enemigo y enviar el	Everyone mounted their horses, heading for the enemy realm to convey Apriaf's final

último mensaje que Apriaf necesitaba transmitir. El campo donde usualmente se realizaban las ejecuciones, entrenamientos hasta fiestas, se veía bañado en sangre, y aquellos charcos rojos hacían que el verde del jardín contrastara, de manera que tal monstruosidad hacía suspirar a Apriaf, hasta esbozar una sonrisa.

El rey los vio marchar y se levantó del trono. Su dificultad para caminar demostraba que muy pronto no tendría posibilidades de caminar por sí solo, pero él seguía intentando disimular el grado de enfermedad que presentaba. La muerte del rey Apriaf levantaría las ambiciones más grandes de los reinos vecinos y quizás, reinos de continentes cercanos. Él era el rey de Preen, rey de todos los reyes, la cabeza del imperio Karf. Nada se hacía sin su previo aviso.

Solo había una persona que le robaba el sueño a Apriaf: Alana. Y no en el buen sentido, porque el comportamiento y las frases sin escrúpulos de la bruja preocupaban no solo al rey, sino a los demás gobernantes y, por supuesto, a los pueblerinos.

Apriaf nació humano, pero fue poseído por *Los Sombrios*, que son parásitos, hilos oscuros tan largos que les permitía tomar la forma de una sombra humana. Estos escaparon de Péndulo, dando algo de poder oscuro a los que poseían, y les permitía mantener las características y consciencia del hombre que eran antes de ser poseído; al difunto Adrion le pasó igual. Pero estas entidades, aunque si otorgaban poder, se convertían en un riesgo para todo aquel que

ultimatum that he needed to transmit. The familiar parade was a ground place for drills, training and even celebrations, and killings—was awash in blood. The red pools against the garden's green were a ghastly sight, one that only made Apriaf sigh with pleasure and offer a faint smile.

The king watched them depart and rose from his throne. His gait was slow, uncertain—each step proof that his strength was fading. Yet he continued to hide the extent of his sickness with the pride of a ruler who knew that his death was guaranteed to spark a power grab by all neighboring continents. He was the King of Preen, King of all Kings, head of the Karf Empire. Nothing was done without his consent.

Apriaf's peace was disturbed by a single person: Alana. This wasn't a pleasant fixation; the witch's reckless behavior and unscrupulous words were a growing concern that worried the king, his fellow governors, and the common villagers alike.

Apriaf had been born human, but he was possessed by the Shadowed Ones—parasites, dark threads so long they could take the form of a human silhouette. Fleeing from Pendulum, these beings imparted a shadowy power to their hosts, allowing them to keep their old personalities and awareness—just as they had with the deceased Adrion. But this immense power came with a terrible price: the entities sickened those they inhabited. Mitrios's

los retuviera en su interior; los enfermaban. A Mitrios, su parásito le destrozó la voz; a Apriaf le desteñía su oscura cabellera y le robaba más energía que al resto; Adrion envejeció con mayor rapidez; los dos débiles que antes de ser posesos. Ninguno de ellos conocía la identidad de lo que lo poseía, aunque seguían siendo muy fuertes, aparentaban ser más real de aquello que los poseía, solo sabían que no pertenecían a su mundo, el de los vivos. Y aquel poder, esa sensación de ser inmortal —aunque no lo eran— les hacía apegarse a sus parásitos y es que, ¿qué sería de un rey sin poder? ¿Qué sería de aquellos simples mortales sin eso que los llevó al puesto que ahora conquistan?

parasite destroyed his ability to speak clearly; Apriaf's was sapping his strength and causing his hair to prematurely lighten; Adrion suffered from rapid aging. Despite their residual strength, the first two now presented as weaker than they had been prepossession. Not one of the hosts knew what these parasites truly were, only that they were alien to the world of the living. Still, that dark power, that sensation of being untouchable—even though they were mortal—made them dependent on their internal tormentors. For what could a king be without his power? What fate awaited these once-simple mortals without the entity that had driven their rise to conquest?

Pero Alana era diferente. Era la primera mística en gobernar uno de los grandes reinos del imperio. Ninguno de ellos nació para gobernar, aunque contaban con el poder necesario para conquistar cualquier nación. Infundieron el terror, hicieron historia e inspiraron a cuentacuentos para hablar sobre los temerosos reyes, de linaje puro de los primeros hombres que existieron en la faz de Trier; menos Mitrios, que fue escogido por Apriaf por sus hazañas sanguinarias como cuando fue soldado, todo esto tras la muerte del rey Egut, antiguo rey de Khandria.

Quitándose sus botas color vino, su corona y sus guantes negros, el rey descansó. Cayó en un sueño cósmico, en esos en los que viven los grens. En él se veía totalmente ensangrentado, como si un balde de pintura

Alana, however, was an anomaly. She was the first mystic ever to rule one of the empire's grand realms.. While none of the rulers had a birthright to the throne, they all wielded the power to seize any country. They sowed terror, carved their names into history, and became the muses of storytellers who whispered tales of the dreadful kings, heirs of the pure bloodline of the first men to walk Trier— a exception of Mitrios, who was chosen by Apriaf for his bloody exploits when he was a mere soldier, all this happened before the death of King Egut, the former King of Khandria.

The king finally stripped away his winehued boots, his crown, and his black gauntlets, settling down for rest. He fell into a cosmic dream, one of those dreams where petrified giants live. There, he saw himself

roja se le hubiese arrojado desde las alturas, para que luego el espacio en el que habitaban las estrellas se convirtiera en un cuarto de unos diez metros cuadrados. Él se veía bañado en sangre, pero la sangre que llenaba aquella habitación estelar era la que provenía de sus muñecas y cuello, que tenían un corte que dejaba escapar su vida, aunque tapase las heridas y brotaba como si fuera infinita.

—Tú no estás enfermo —dijo una contundente voz.

—¿Estoy muriendo? ¿Quién se atrevió a herirme?

—Temes tanto a la muerte, oh rey, que no te has dado cuenta de que estás soñando. Te crees tan superior que crees que nadie se atreverá a tocarte. Y repito, te crees enfermo.

—Explícame entonces, ¿por qué siento que me desmorono?

—Porque algo te posee. Porque mientras tú vives, aquello se alimenta de ti y cuando mueras, «eso» nacerá. Y así pasará con todo aquel que haya dado permiso a estos parásitos de habitar en sus cuerpos.

Apriaf seguía luchando por tapar las grietas por donde se escapaba su sangre. El cuarto en el que se veía atrapado se llenaba, y era imposible para él y para cualquiera nadar en ese líquido espeso. De un momento a otro, aguantando la respiración, abrió los ojos. Se encontraba flotando en el espacio, muy cerca del planeta Trier. Este

drenched in blood, as though a bucket of crimson paint had been poured over him from the heavens. The space once filled with stars had turned into a room no larger than ten meters across. He was soaked in blood, yet the liquid flooding that stellar chamber flowed from his own wrists, and neck bled profusely, and the blood filling the starroom seemed to escape his body in an endless, violent torrent.

“You are not ill,” said a commanding voice...

“Am I dying? Who has dared to harm me?”

“You’re so afraid of death, oh king, that you can’t even see you’re dreaming. You think yourself untouchable, beyond reach. And still, you insist—you are sick.”

“Then explain, why do I feel myself unraveling?”

“Because something has taken hold of you. Because while you breathe, it feeds; and when you perish, it shall be born. The same fate awaits all who have welcomed these parasites into their flesh.”

Apriaf struggled to seal the wounds through which his blood flowed. The chamber was filling fast, thick crimson rising around him. No one could swim in such a suffocating tide. Then, with lungs burning, he forced his eyes open—and found himself adrift in the void, the planet Trier glimmering close before him. This

planeta pinta sus cielos de mora en los crepúsculos y de lila en los amaneceres debido a la estela de polvo mágico que flota alrededor de su atmósfera, es la responsable de que estos y otros seres posean tal fortaleza y poderes sinigual. Y el rey lo veía maravillado; también vislumbró el continente y la gran parte de tierras que gobernaba. La habitación había desaparecido y su herida igual, pero seguía bañado en sangre. Pronto se dio cuenta que no necesitaba contener el aire.

—Mi reino —susurró.

—Tú crees que esa tierra es tuya, la gente cree lo mismo. Pero los místicos poco a poco están descubriendo que no eres más que un tonto sentado en un trono de oro. Para tu desgracia, los primeros en darse cuenta son los oscuros, tus supuestos aliados.

—¿De qué hablas? Nadie puede quitarme lo que he edificado.

—Nadie quiere tu trono, nadie sensato. De hecho, a los oscuros que ya descubrieron la verdad, lo único que les interesa es su dios. Y pasarán sobre cualquier rey con tal de devolverle a su dios lo que le pertenece.

—¿Para qué quiere un dios un reino?!

—¿Para qué lo quieres tú si morirás? Cuando llegue el momento, deberás ceder tu trono. No dudes, en ese momento sabrás que es lo que tienes que hacer por el bien de todos. Notarás la señal. —¿A quién le debo ceder mi trono?

world stains its skies with mulberry hues at twilight and soft lilac at dawn, the gift of the magical dust that drifts through its atmosphere. It is that dust which grants such creatures their strength and powers beyond compare. The king looked on in wonder, beholding the continent and the vast dominion beneath him. The chamber was gone—and so was his wound—yet his body remained bathed in blood. In that moment, he realized he could breathe normally.

“My kingdom,” he murmured.

“You believe that land belongs to you. The people believe it as well. Yet the mystics have begun to uncover the truth—that you are but a fool upon a gilded throne. And, to your misfortune, the first to see this are the dark ones—those you call your allies.”

“What nonsense is this? No one can take from me what I have forged.”

“No one covets your throne, no one in their right mind. The dark ones who have seen the truth care only for their god. They will trample any king who dares stand between their master and what rightfully belongs to him.”

“What use do gods have for a realm?” “And what use do you have for it, knowing death awaits you? When the time comes, you must relinquish your throne. Do not waver—then you shall know what must be done for the sake of all. You will see the sign.”

—“To whom must I give my throne?”

The greys fell silent, offering no reply to the king’s desperate pleas. Then the vision

Los gres guardaron silencio mientras el rey suplicaba más información, y la discusión se rompió cuando Apriaf sintió punzadas en su

<p>pecho y de pronto dejó de flotar. Caía a tanta velocidad que atravesó la atmósfera hasta prenderse en fuego. Gritaba despavorido, viéndose caer sobre el pueblo de Twingfir y de golpe despertó en su cama. Su esposa, la reina Calie, lo sacudía fuerte por los hombros porque mientras dormía gritaba con igual intensidad.</p> <p>El rey revisó sus manos y se levantó para cerciorarse de no estar empapado en su sangre. Miraba todo a su alrededor como si estuviera loco y le tomó unos segundos darse cuenta de que se sentía un poco más sano. Su esposa lo notó también por la manera tan rápida de desplazarse por toda la habitación. Su palidez ya no predominaba y</p>	<p>fractured—Apriaf felt twinges in his chest, and the weight of his body returned. He plummeted at such speed that he tore through the atmosphere, bursting into flames. He screamed in terror, watching himself fall over the city of Twingfir—then awoke abruptly in his bed. Then, suddenly, he awoke. Queen Calie was shaking him violently; he had been screaming in his sleep.</p> <p>Apriaf stared at his trembling hands, then rose to check that they were not coated in blood. His eyes darted across the chamber in panic. Only after a moment did he realize he felt lighter, renewed. His wife noticed it too—he moved swiftly, with newfound vitality. The pale hue of his face had vanished, and his physical appearance also change,</p>
<p>Página 119</p> <p>parecía cuarenta años menor que antes, pues también había recuperado el color natural de su cabello; negro con líneas de cana. Su rostro ya no intimidaba con la furia de hacía unos días. Volvió a ser como su esposa lo recordaba, un hombre relativamente bueno, de armas tomar y buen porte.</p> <p>—¿Cuánto tiempo pasó desde que me dormí?</p> <p>—Llevabas dos días enteros dormido. Pensé que habías muerto.</p> <p>—¿Dije algo extraño? ¿Notaste algo raro?</p> <p>—Baluceos, nada coherente. Pero gritabas mucho. Sufrías.</p>	<p>Page 119</p> <p>he looked four decades younger; his hair once again black with threads of silver. And his face no longer carried the wrath that once made him terrifying. He was again as his wife remembered him: a relatively good man, strong-willed, and of noble bearing.</p> <p>“How long have I been in this dream state?”</p> <p>—“Two days straight. I feared you were gone.”</p> <p>—“Did I say anything... strange? Did you notice something unusual?”</p> <p>—“Only murmurs, illogical things. But you yelled a lot, You were in pain.”</p>

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Un bullicio se escuchaba afuera del palacio y la tierra se estremecía.

Un soldado tocó la puerta con desesperación, ignorando todo el respeto que se le debe tener al descanso o privacidad del rey y la reina; ella abrió.

—Una roca cayó a lo lejos, posiblemente en Minadir.

—¿Lo viste? ¿Estás seguro?-preguntó Apriaf, histérico.

—Lo vimos caer, parecía una bola de fuego. ¿No sintió el temblor? Su majestad, fue un ataque del cielo o del mar.

Era evidente el temor que irradiaba el rey. Sostuvo su cabeza y cerró los ojos intentando hablar con los grens, pero fue inútil. Él se preguntaba cómo es que su sueño había resultado en una catástrofe real y qué significado tenía el sueño tan lúcido en el que se vio atrapado durante casi cuarenta y ocho horas. Su esposa lo miraba y el soldado también, preocupados por el delirio en el que se encontraba su líder. Pero Apriaf no le ordenó salir a investigar, por el contrario, les sugirió a todos que se guardaran en sus casas y que los soldados de turno protegieran con sus vidas las entradas.

Para entrar al reino se debía cruzar un puente de madera y cemento que dejaba ver en el fondo un precipicio. Las aguas ya no corrían ahí debajo del puente, que solía conectar con un profundo lago, espacio desértico conocido ahora cómo Tohmer. No era de extrañarse que hasta el más valiente te mira pasar sobre él, o simplemente

Outside, the palace trembled with noise, and the earth quaked.

A soldier burst in, knocking on the royal door with frantic urgency, ignoring all decorum due to the king and queen's rest. She opened it herself...

“A stone fell from the sky, far off—perhaps near Minadir.”

“You saw it? You're sure?” Apriaf's voice shook.

“We all saw it fall, Your Majesty. A blazing sphere of fire. The earth trembled. It came from the heavens—or from the sea.”

Terror flickered in the king's eyes. He clutched his head, trying to summon the grens, but no voice came. He wondered how his dream could have manifested as a real disaster, and what was the meaning of the vivid dream in which he found himself trapped, and that had held him captive for nearly two days of slumber. His wife and the soldier exchanged uneasy glances, both worried about their king's rambling state. But Apriaf didn't order an investigation; instead, he commanded that everyone stay indoors, and that the soldiers on watch guard the palace gates with their lives.

Entry to the realm required traversing a wood-and-cement bridge suspended over a sheer drop. The waters no longer ran there, beneath the bridge that used to connect to a deep lake—it was recognized as the desert pit now called Tohmer. There was no surprise that even the boldest hearts faltered there, some crossing as fast as they could—to escape the dread it inspired, fearful of

quisiera cruzar lo más rápido posible para asegurarse de estar fuera del peligro, pues lo

<p>poco que se podía contemplar se resumía en esqueletos perdiéndose en la negrura de aquel abismo.</p>	<p>what stared back from the darkness below— pale skeletons swallowed by the void.</p>
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—¿Dónde está Danteh?

—Nunca regresaron, mi rey—respondió su esposa.

—No puede ser. ¿Nadie salió a buscarlos?

—Estabas dormido y sin Danteh, ¿a quién recurrimos?

—Calie, no olvides que eres reina. En mi ausencia, tú mandas.

Luego de dicho eso, el mismo Apriaf se sorprendió de lo que recién había salido de su boca. Su esposa, con mayor razón, pensó que se había vuelto loco, que aquel que despertó no era su rey. Pero asintió con su cabeza y ordenó al soldado a salir.

—Algo está pasando, algo muy malo. ¿No crees que haberle declarado la guerra a Auxis fue un error?

—Hace dos días, antes de acostarme en esta cama, estaba seguro de que era lo mejor, estaba convencido de que era necesario. Hoy no sé ni qué pensar. Parece raro, pero no sé qué hacer. La ira desapareció y en su lugar se ha postrado una angustia, un deseo nato de resolver un acertijo en mi mente, del cual no sé la respuesta a esperar. En mi sensatez temo realizar un primer mandato.

—Sabes que yo sigo tus órdenes y tu gente igual.

Seguían sus órdenes porque le temían, porque no querían ser uno más en la lista de

“Where is Danteh?”

“They haven’t come back, my king,” his wife answered.

“Impossible. No search party was sent?”

“You were sleeping, and without Danteh, who holds authority?”

“Calie, remember your station. You are the Queen. In my absence, you rule.”

The words that left Apriaf’s mouth stunned even himself. His wife was convinced he’d lost his mind—that the man before her wasn’t her husband, the King. She quietly nodded and dismissed the guard.

“Something is wrong, profoundly wrong. Do you believe declaring war on Auxis was a blunder?”

“Two nights ago, when I retired, I was utterly sure it was the right, necessary course of action. Today, I’m utterly lost. It seems absurd, but I feel paralyzed. The fury has been replaced by a deep anxiety, a primal urge to crack a mental code, yet I have no idea what solution I’m seeking. In this state of clear-headedness, I am too sensible to issue a first decree.”

“You know I obey you, and your people are no different.”

They followed him because they feared him—in view of the fact that, none of them

desafortunados que sufrieran las torturas más ingeniosas y macabras ideadas por el rey y su mano derecha. Lo que sí era cierto, es que harían lo que fuera que el rey mandase.

Apriaf había entrado en razón gracias al sueño que tuvo en el que solo almas puras o gente con un propósito especial podían pasearse, por lo que el sombrero que lo poseía ignoraba lo que vivió el rey allá donde viven los grens, y por un momento pareció que el parásito había muerto.

Habiendo ordenado que se quedaran encerrados, dio por perdida la vida de aquellos que junto a Danteh cumplían una orden estricta. El rey se volvió a acostar con la esperanza de caer nuevamente en el sueño que durante el tiempo le torturó (y curó a la vez) intentó acomodar las preguntas en su cabeza por si lograba dormirse pero tampoco sirvió en vista de que sus esfuerzos no eran suficiente se

wanted to become the next victim of the king's twisted imagination and his right hand. One thing, however, was certain: they would do whatever the king commanded.

Apriaf had come to his senses after the dream—one that only the pure of heart or those chosen for a higher purpose could walk through. The shadow that had claimed him remained unaware of what the king had witnessed among the Grens, and for a fleeting instant, it seemed the parasite within him had perished.

After ordering everyone to remain inside, Apriaf accepted the loss of those who, along with Danteh, had been sent on a strict mission. He lay back on his bed, longing to return to the dream that had both cursed and cured him. He tried to organize the flood of questions that stayed in his mind, hoping sleep would take him again—but it didn't. Also, realizing that his efforts were in vain, he

<p>Página 121</p> <p>preparó para buscar respuestas en el sitio en el que cayó la roca, sin saber con qué se toparía.</p> <p>—Recuerda, mi reina. En mi ausencia, tú mandas. —Pero, por favor, regresa.</p> <p>Las puertas se abrieron, la poca luz del sol que quedaba hacia brillar aún más sus armaduras y con un grito de guerra salieron</p>	<p>Page 121</p> <p>got ready to seek answers at the site where the fiery rock had fallen, unaware of the truth that awaited him.</p> <p>“Remember, my queen. In my absence, you are in charge.”</p> <p>“Just promise you’ll return.”</p> <p>The gates swung open. The dimming sunlight made their armor shine even brighter, and with a battle cry, they surged</p>
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<p>por las inmensas puertas, cruzando el vertiginoso puente. Y desenvainando sus espadas como si lucharan contra el viento, galoparon a gran velocidad.</p>	<p>through the immense gates and across the dizzying bridge. With swords drawn, slicing the air as if against an invisible foe, they rode at a terrifying pace.</p>
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<p>Página 123</p> <p>RESCATE</p>	<p>Page 123</p> <p>RESCUE</p>
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XI

En la oscuridad, terminado el cuento de Yüghe sobre su verdadera identidad, se escucharon caballos y soldados. Se acercaba la ayuda, pero no la que los jóvenes magos querían. A su padre le faltaba aún un largo recorrido y un peligroso encuentro con los cinocéfalos. La que mostró sincera alegría fue Bec, que se levantó del suelo al ver las llamativas banderas de color rojo y amarillo de la caballería del reino Auxis, quienes luego de presenciar a lo lejos el ataque no dudaron en ayudar a los twingfirianos, gesto de bondad y preocupación.

Auxis era el reino más cercano a Twingfir y por eso (y por las dudas que tuvo Apriaf de salir) fueron los primeros en llegar. Cuando los sobrevivientes subieron a las carrozas, Leinad pensó en dejar pistas de su paradero a su padre, pero lo frenó la vergüenza al pensar que se decepcionaría por no cuidar de todos como se lo había encomendado. Con sus manos expulsaba pequeñas bolas de fuego de color azul, el color de su magia, permitiendo ver a los soldados de Auxis (humanos y cremánticos) lo que había entre

XI

In the blackness, just as Yüghe concluded his story revealing his identity, the sound of pounding hooves and soldiers broke the quiet. Aid was near, yet it wasn't the relief the young mages hoped for. Their father was still far away, destined for a risky clash with the Cynocephalus. Bec greeted the approach with joy, she leaped to her feet at the sight of the vibrant red-and-yellow banners of the Auxis kingdom cavalry. Having observed the attack from a distance, they had ridden to help the Twingfirians—a surprising act of goodwill and concern.

Auxis was Twingfir's nearest neighbor, which is why they were the first to respond (and why Apriaf had his doubts). As the refugees boarded the wagons, Leinad instinctively wanted to leave a trail for his father, but was held back by the fear of his father's disappointment: of proving unworthy of the duty to protect those he'd been charged with. With his hands summoned small spheres of blue fire, the hue of his innate magic, illuminating the path ahead for the Auxis soldiers (a mixed

<p>los árboles. Parte del bosque que tuvieron que recorrer era de árboles con troncos curvos, que se enrollaban entre sí como gruesas enredaderas. La superficie de su madera estaba siempre mohosa y húmeda, por más fuerte que el sol iluminara. Así que este se convirtió en el escondite de muchos animales salvajes y criaturas feroces. Por fortuna no vieron más que zorros, lechuzas, y uno o dos indefensos duendes.</p>	<p>force of humans and Cremantics). Part of the forest they had to traverse was filled with trees that had curving trunks, that coiled around each other like massive ropes. Furthermore, The wood's surface was perpetually wet and mossy, even under the strongest sun, making it a perfect sanctuary for wild beasts and dangerous creatures. Fortunately, they encountered only foxes, owls, and two harmless goblins.</p>
<p>Página 126</p> <p>Amir seguía dormido y parecía tener pesadillas, preocupando a sus acompañantes. Cuando el sueño se apodera de sus mentes, la imaginación cuenta historias sin sentido en muchas ocasiones. En algunas otras, revive lo sucedido en sus pasados con tanta precisión o a veces alterando algunas cosas y omitiendo otras. Y en el caso de Amir, Valery y Apriaf, le hablaban seres antiguos para guiarles a una misión de la que no conocían nada. Lo que en la oscuridad de la mente se convierte en imágenes mientras duermen, no era más que un mensaje del más allá, un mensaje de un submundo que buscaba comunicarse con ellos.</p> <p>Amir tenía una fuerte conexión con los grens y, al parecer, con el dios que vive bajo el mar, el que los oceánicos intentaban despertar. Valery en cambio seguía buscando una explicación coherente a lo sucedido y aunque parecía algo insignificante, se preguntaba por qué se encontraba más cerca del agua aquella segunda vez que despertó en la playa. La acompañaba el miedo al pensar que, si</p>	<p>Page 126</p> <p>Amir remained asleep and seemed to be having nightmares, worrying his companions. When sleep takes hold of their minds, imagination often tells nonsensical stories. In other instances, it revives past events with great precision, or sometimes alters and omits certain details. But in the case of Amir, Valery, and Apriaf, their minds were being contacted by ancient entities, guiding them toward an unknown destiny. The images surfacing in their sleeping minds were nothing less than a spiritual communication, a message from an underworld seeking to communicate with them.</p> <p>Amir possessed a connection unlike any other—a mysterious and powerful bond with the Grens, and, it seemed, with the god said to dwell beneath the restless sea—the one the seafolk tried to awaken. Valery; however, her mind sought coherence amid chaos, reason amid myth. It might have seemed like a small detail, but she couldn't stop wondering why she'd woken up closer to the water the second time she opened her</p>

volvía a pasar, despertaría flotando en las terribles aguas, siendo arrastrada por la corriente y luego sumergida a las profundidades por aquel animal que arrasó con los árboles desde tan larga distancia. La inmensidad de aquel ser podía fácilmente destruir una ciudad entera, por lo que se puede entender que el intento de homicidio hacia la pequeña era un acto de protección sobre su territorio. No había que ser un sabio antiguo para reconocer que aquella criatura no pertenecía a la superficie del mar, sino a lo más hondo y desconocido del planeta.

Valery no regresó a su hogar después de lo suscitado. Ella no se rindió ante el ataque que posiblemente la llevó a una muerte o en su defecto, a una teletransportación que la trasladó al inicio de todo: al mar. Aún no sabía a qué se debía ese nuevo despertar. Lo que sabía con mucha seguridad era que necesitaba encontrar al más joven de los magos. Sin importarle los peligros del bosque en la noche, corrió sin descansar y, como hizo desde la playa, sin mirar atrás. Al parecer, las carreras que iniciaba la jovencita estaban destinadas a perseguir las tragedias. Primero la roca que la aplastó y ahora el encuentro entre los

eyes on the beach. The thought terrified her: if it happened once more, she might wake floating in those dreadful waters, pulled by the current and dragged into the depths by the beast that had torn down trees from such a distance. The sheer magnitude of that being could easily annihilate an entire city; thus, its attempt on her life might have been nothing more than a defense of its own territory. It didn't take an ancient scholar to see that the thing came not from the sea's surface, but from the dark and secret depths of the planet.

After what happened, Valery never went back home. She refused to yield to the attack that had nearly cost her life—or perhaps had transported her back to the beginning of everything: the sea. The reason for her awakening remained a mystery, yet one truth burned within her—she had to find the youngest of the magicians. She ran through the forest despite the danger at night, without stopping, and as before, as she did from the beach, without looking back. It seemed every race she began was doomed to chase misfortune. It means, first the stone that crushed her, and now the clash between the

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del reino Auxis, que rescataron a los sobrevivientes, y sus ahora enemigos, los del reino Prelen.

Las antorchas y lámparas de los soldados de ambos bandos, las armaduras y sus espadas predominaban en la oscura noche. Se encontraron cara a cara a mitad de camino y

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Auxis kingdom—rescuers of the survivors—and their newfound enemies, the warriors of Prelen.

The dark night was lit only by the torches and lamps of the opposing armies, whose armor and drawn swords gleamed menacingly. They converged and met in the

Valery presenciaba todo desde los arbustos. Un corto silencio dejaba escuchar la brisa que sacudía el fuego sin apagarlo, hasta que el rey Apriaf decidió romper la tensión.

—Banderas enemigas, soldados enemigos.
¿Qué sucedió? Si se me permite saber.

Parecía que al rey le costaba referirse a ellos como adversarios, y en su intento dejó a sus enemigos sospechar que algo no andaba igual, además de su apariencia vigorosa. Su temple al hablar con seguridad y sin miedo parecía haber desaparecido. Y como los auxisianos no cuentan con un rey, sino con un líder cremántico (que no se encontraba con ellos en ese momento), los soldados empezaron a mostrar temor por la presencia de los que recientemente les habían declarado la guerra. Pensaron que tenían sus últimas horas contadas. Fueron los pocos cremánticos que los acompañaban, de temor nulo, los que tuvieron que dar un paso al frente para opacar la debilidad de sus guerreros humanos. Pero el rey Apriaf ignoraba cualquiera de sus gestos.

—Mi aldea fue atacada —dijo Leinad bajando de la carroza—. Todos murieron, menos nosotros cinco. Vamos camino a Auxis. Esperamos que eso no sea un problema para usted, su majestad.

—¿Por qué hablas tú por ellos? ¿Quién eres?

—Leinad Migfield.

middle, with Valery observing secretly from the scrub. A short silence was broken only by the breeze rustling the firelight before King Apriaf finally spoke to ease the tension:

“Enemy flags, enemy soldiers. What has happened? If I may be allowed to know.”

The king found it impossible to name them his enemies, and in doing so, he let his enemies suspect that something was not quite right, besides his unusually vigorous appearance. The confidence and fearlessness in his voice were gone. Since the Auxisians had no king, only a cremantic leader who wasn't present at the time, their soldiers began to tremble before those who had only recently declared war on them. They thought their final hours had come. Only the few cremantics who accompanied them, unafraid and resolute, stepped forward to conceal the frailty of their human warriors. King Apriaf, however, paid no attention to any of their gestures.

“My village was attacked,” declared Leinad as he dismounted the carriage. “All were killed but not the five of us. We're on our way to Auxis. We trust this presents no issue for you, Your Majesty.”

“Why are you the spokesman? State your name.”

“Leinad Migfield.”

Cuando Valery escuchó su nombre completo supo que estaba en el lugar indicado, pero en el momento menos

Hearing his name confirmed to Valery that she was where she needed to be—yet at the

<p>oportuno. De igual manera salió de su escondite, asustando a todos hasta casi blandir sus espadas.</p> <p>—¡Mago, necesito hablar con Amir! —Eso no será posible, está dormido. ¿Quién eres tú?</p>	<p>worst possible moment. Nevertheless, she broke cover, causing a shock that nearly resulted in drawn blades.</p> <p>“Mage, I must speak with Amir!” “That is impossible; he is currently asleep. Who are you?”</p>
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—Desperté en la playa. Soñé con unos gigantes llamados grens y me hablaron de tu hermano —contaba desesperada—. Sé que parece una locura, pero me hablaron sobre Amir y fui a buscarlo, pero cayó esta enorme roca sobre mí y volví a despertar en la playa. No sé si estoy muerta, no sé qué pasó. Pero tengo que hablar con tu hermano.

Todos la miraban como si estuviera loca. Era una niña. Fácilmente pudo haber sido solo un sueño o invenciones de una mocosa que no tenía nada que hacer, o peor, una distracción. El único que la entendía era Apriaf, que coincidía con la niña en cuanto a los sueños y los grens.

—Está mintiendo —dijo un soldado de Praelen.

—O es una estrategia del enemigo —contestó uno de Auxis.

—¡Silencio! —gritó Apriaf, calmando el bullicio—. Yo también tuve un sueño como ese. Yo era esa roca cayendo sobre tu pueblo, Leinad Migfield.

“I woke up on the beach. I dreamt of some giants called Grens, and they spoke to me about your brother,” she recounted frantically. “I know it sounds insane, but they mentioned Amir, so I went to look for him. Then this enormous rock fell on me. Next thing I knew, I was back on the beach. I don’t know if I’m dead... I don’t know what’s happening. But I need to talk to your brother.”

She was a child, and everyone looked at her as if she’d lost her mind. It could have easily been just a dream—or the imagination of a girl with too much time on her hands. Worse yet, maybe a trick.. The only one who understood her was Apriaf, who shared the girl’s experience with the dreams and the Grens.

“She’s lying,” a Praelen soldier accused. “It’s an enemy trick,” an Auxis soldier argued.

“Zip your mouth!” Apriaf shouted, cutting through the noise. “I had the same dream. I was the rock that fell on your village, Leinad Migfield.”

“So you are to blame?”

—¿Entonces usted fue el responsable? —
No, no entiendes. Yo soñaba, y en mi sueño
caí sobre tu gente.

—Pero despertó, y no pudo volver a soñar —
agregó Valery.

—Correcto. Necesito hablar contigo, niña.

¿Qué más viste?

—No me parece el momento propicio, rey —
dijo Leinad.

Justo dichas esas palabras, los árboles empezaron a moverse, sus troncos se retorcían y emitían sonidos tenebrosos, y el terreno en el que estaban hablando empezó a respirar. Se movía como si debajo hubiese agua, haciendo tambalear a todos, como si el bosque se cansara de sentirse pisoteada por estos seres y sus caballos. Valery se trepó sin permiso a la carroza en la que viajaban los rescatados.

—Tenemos que irnos, rey Apriaf —reclamó
Leinad.

—Prométeme que hablaremos, niña.

Valery asintió y el rey ordenó la retirada. Detrás de los soldados del reino Praeln cabalgaban los de Auxis hasta que el rey y sus soldados se desviaron hacia su izquierda, al norte, en camino a su palacio. Era muy difícil estabilizarse ante la amenaza de lo que se encontraba debajo de la tierra y que provocaba ese leve sismo, pero lograron escapar y llegar a salvo al reino. Los cremánticos esperaban en la

“No, you misunderstand. I was dreaming, and in my dream, I fell on your people.”

“But then you woke up, and you couldn’t dream again,” added Valery.

“Yeah. I need to speak with you, girl. What else did you see?”

“I don’t think this is the right time, my king,” said Leinad.

No sooner were those words uttered than the surrounding trees began to stir, their trunks contorting and letting out dreadful noises. The very ground they stood on started to ‘breathe.’ It rippled as if water were trapped beneath the surface, making everyone sway—the forest seemingly weary of being trod upon by these people and their horses. Valery scrambled uninvited into the carriage holding the survivors.

“King Apriaf, we must leave now,” Leinad urged.

“Promise me we’ll speak, child.”

Valery nodded, and the king gave the signal to withdraw. The soldiers of Praeln led the way, with those of Auxis following close behind, until the king and his men broke off toward the north, bound for the palace. Maintaining balance was a struggle due to the unsettling tremor caused by the subterranean menace, but they successfully fled and reached the kingdom. At the gates, the charismatic leaders waited

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puerta junto a los padres de Valery, que desde que escapó la ansiaban volver a verla,

con la esperanza de que estuviera sana y salva.

Los bailes, las fiestas y el entretenimiento habían cesado desde que ella había huido de casa y en vez de regañarla, la abrazaron entre los dos y lloraron dándole pequeños besos en su cabeza. Le rogaron que no volviera a hacerlo, pero la niña, ahora más que nunca, se encontraba metida en un embrollo en el que reyes, magos y dioses estaban implicados; nadie quedaba fuera de lo que sucedía en el pequeño planeta.

Leinad miraba a su hermano y no contaba con que esos sueños cósmicos podían durar días. Lo acostaron en una cabaña que los pueblerinos tenían preparada para este tipo de ayuda, y Valery se metió también a esperar que se despertara. Ni el ruido, ni el estremecimiento de la tierra, ni el bullicio de los soldados, ni los caballos relinchando despertaron al jovencito. Su hermano mayor se quedó con él también y no demoró mucho en preguntar a la niña lo que le había pasado.

—Dices que la roca cayó sobre ti.

—Y que soñaste con gigantes —añadió Bec.

—Yo pensaba que todo era un simple sueño, pero ellos me hablaban sobre la oscuridad y mencionaron un lugar que se llama Agamonk o La Ciudadela, que es donde se encuentran ellos petrificados. Cuando mencionaron a Amir Migfield, entendí que no era un sueño nada más. Me dijeron que tenemos que ir allá, sin un porqué. Solo mencionaron que debemos despertarlos. — La Ciudadela queda cerca del reino de los éniars—expuso Clara.

alongside with Valery’s parents, who had desperately longed to see her since her escape, hoping she was safe and sound.

All celebrations and merriment had stopped the moment she fled their home, but rather than anger, she was met with a tearful embrace from both parents, who rained gentle kisses upon her head. They begged her not to do it again, but the girl was already trapped—caught in a mess that now kings, sorcerers, and gods were involved; literally no one on the little planet remained unaffected.

Leinad kept vigil over his brother, failing to realize that these supernatural dreams might endure for days. They laid the boy in a small hut the villagers used for helping. Valery joined them to wait for him to wake. The boy slept soundly—untouched by the clamor, the tremors, the soldiers’ noise, or the horses’ frantic cries. Nothing could wake the young man. His older brother stayed by his side and quickly turned to the girl to demand an explanation about what had happened to her.

“So the rock fell on you,”

“And you dreamt of
giants,” Bec interjected.

“I genuinely believed it was just a simple dream, but the giants spoke of The Darkness and named a location: Agamonk, or The Citadel, where their petrified forms lie. When they named Amir Migfield, I realized it was serious. They insisted we must go there, yet offered no reason. They simply said we need to awaken them.”

—Dijeron que sus cuerpos permanecen ahí, pero que viven en los sueños. Si tan solo me hubiesen explicado qué hacer al llegar allá. No sé si a Amir le habrán brindado más información.

—¿Y qué tiene que ver Amir en todo esto?

—Mencionaron que se habían comunicado con él, que fue el primero al que visitaron mientras dormía.

Amir no había hablado con nadie sobre su sueño y Leinad se preguntaba por qué. Ellos eran muy unidos, así que supuso que su hermanito lo había tomado como un sueño común y corriente.

“The Citadel is situated close to the Eniars’ domain,” Clara pointed out.

“They explained that while their bodies are there, their consciousness lives on in dreams. I wish they had clarified the steps we need to take upon arrival. Perhaps Amir received clearer instructions.”

“But what role does Amir play in all this?”

“They revealed he was their first point of contact—the one they initially visited in his sleep.”

Amir had kept his dream as a secret, leaving Leinad puzzled. Since the two brothers were inseparable, Leinad could only assume his younger brother had treated the whole experience as a regular, forgettable dream.

Y entre dudas y sustos, todos los que vivían en el reino miraban a Yüghe, y como ellos no sabían sobre su identidad lo veían como un asqueroso duende. A pesar de eso, se notaba inofensivo y los cremánticos no dudaron en preguntar el porqué de su presencia en el rescate.

—Permitame presentarme dijo el duende. Mi nombre es Yüghe Dimán. Provengo de la galaxia Igeda, específicamente de este planeta llamado Y'ntrath. Soy un viajero y me apoderé de este diminuto cuerpo sin saber el desagrado que provoca en ustedes.

—Detente ahí —interrumpió Olev, el líder del reino.

—¿Dije algo que le ofenda?

—Las mentiras son una ofensa. Y si no me está mintiendo, significa que usted es una de

Amidst fear and confusion, everyone in the kingdom stared at Yüghe. Lacking any knowledge of his identity, they simply saw a vile globin. Yet, he struck them as nonthreatening, prompting the powerful leaders to inquire about his role in the recent rescue.

“Allow me to introduce myself,” began the globin. “I am Yüghe Dimán. I originate from the Igeda galaxy, from a planet called Y'ntrath. I am a traveler and took possession of this minuscule body, completely ignorant of the dislike it causes you all.”

“Cut that out,” Olev, the realm’s chieftain, cut in.

“Have I caused offense?”

“Lies are offensive. But if you speak the truth, then you are a creation of Priclath, the

las creaciones de Priclath, la diosa guerrera. Espero que sean sinceras sus palabras. Con el nombre de los dioses y las cosas que crearon no se juega.

A Yüghe le costaba creer que el líder Olev supiera tal información, cuando en su planeta son pocos los que creían en ella. Ellos juraban haberse creado a sí mismos y esa era la única cosa que profesaban. El viajero era un prófugo en el lugar donde vivía por hablar sobre dioses, cuando, durante milenios, los dioses no habían hecho acto de presencia ni en su planeta, ni en los de las galaxias vecinas. Yüghe era el único, hasta el momento, que lograba viajar mediante planos astrales, no solo en su territorio, sino también a planos que son ajenos a su mundo. Las puertas que conectan con estos planos son llamados Canales de Foirhan, al menos en Y'ntrath así se les conoce.

—Está usted en lo correcto. Yo no miento, no tengo razones.

—¿Y qué hace aquí?

—Fui rescatado en el pueblo de los magos.

—No me refiero al reino, sino al planeta.

En efecto, Yüghe no se permitía mentir. Era un hombre honesto allá en su tierra, y también ahora siendo extranjero. Y como a la gente del reino le encanta conocer historias, se sentaron a escuchar atentos, rodeándolo mientras contaba las maravillosas aventuras criminales en las que se vio atrapado por hacer uso de su palabra e intentar abrir los

Warrior Goddess. I hope your words are sincere. You do not play games with the names of the gods or their creations.”

Yüghe found it hard to believe that the leader Olev knew such things, since on his own planet few even believed in her. They claimed to have created themselves, and that was the only truth they worshiped. The traveler had become a fugitive in his homeland for speaking of gods—when, for millennia, no god had shown presence on his planet or in any of the neighboring galaxies. Yüghe was unique, the only one currently capable of moving through astral projections, not only within his territory but also across dimensions completely foreign to him. These inter-dimensional passages are known as the Canales de Foirhan on Y'ntrath.

“You are absolutely right. I do not lie; there is no need.”

“So, what is your purpose here?”

“I was saved in the mages’ village.” “I don’t mean the kingdom; I mean the planet.”

Yüghe truly spoke the truth. That’s it, He was an honest soul in his own land, and he hadn’t changed now that he was outside. And since the kingdom’s folk had a keen appetite for tales, they settled in to listen, surrounding him as he spun yarns that recounted the marvelous criminal adventures, he was caught up in for daring to speak his mind

ojos de aquellos vanagloriosos intelectuales, que envenenaron la mente de los suyos desmintiendo la existencia de los dioses.

Por otro lado, Bec se dio un tiempo para hablar con Leinad, porque ahora que se sentían seguros podían empezar a cuestionarse sobre las cosas que pasaron antes de la catástrofe. Ella no quería saber el significado del beso que se dieron, porque el simple hecho de conectarse de esa manera era prueba fehaciente de que el amor los había tocado. Así que, apenada, tomó su mano esperando que él no se tomara a mal que ella se preocupara por algo tan simple, teniendo a Amir en un estado de sueño profundo y habiendo visto a todo su pueblo perecer.

—Me gustas mucho, Bec —dijo el muchacho antes que ella.

—Era justo lo que iba a decirte. Además de agradecerte por salvarnos. Eres un buen líder.

—No. No lo tomes a mal, pero de no haber pensado solo en mí habría visto el peligro antes de que tocara el suelo y muchos se habrían salvado. ¿Qué explicación le daré a mi padre?

—Si supiéramos todo lo que pasará, yo no tendría esta herida en mi brazo por la mordida de ese monstruo. Era imposible anticipar el ataque. No te culpes.

—Ni siquiera yo vi la roca, y eso que cayó sobre mí—dijo Valery, que escuchaba con incomodidad las declaraciones de amor y la desdicha de Leinad.

trying to enlighten the conceited intellectuals who had misled their society by rejecting all possibilities of the existence of gods.

On the other hand, Bec took some time to talk to Leinad. Now, they feeling secure enough for the first time, they began to process the events leading up to the disaster. The meaning of their kiss was obvious to her—that connection was undeniable proof of their shared feelings—so she didn't need clarification. Blushing, she reached for his hand, worried that her preoccupation with romance might seem trivial while Amir was in a deep sleep and their entire village had perished.

“I like you a lot, Bec,” the young man blurted out before she could speak.

“That's exactly what I was going to say. And to thank you for saving us. You're a good leader.”

“No. Don't misunderstand me, but if I hadn't been thinking only of myself, I would have seen the danger before, and many would have been saved. How will I explain this to my father?”

“If we knew everything that was going to happen, I wouldn't have this wound on my arm from that monster's bite. It was impossible to anticipate the attack. Don't blame yourself.”

“I didn't even see the rock, and it's the one that hit me,” said Valery, irritated by Leinad's misery and the awkward romantic talk.

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Mientras tanto, Yüghe seguía contando todo tipo de historias, desviando por momentos la pregunta que le había hecho Olev. Yüghe no mentía, pero aquella no era la única razón por la que había viajado desde estrellas lejanas. Él era conocido por visitar planetas de inteligencia primitiva, pero en el que ahora estaba era el único en todo el universo que poseía magia de una manera tan abundante e indiscreta. Los otros planetas eran más espirituales, basaban sus creencias puras en los dioses y vivían religiosamente a sus voluntades, y la raza que predominaba era la humana. Por lo que, en resumen, este era un planeta diferente, atractivo, aunque muy peligroso a su vez. Él

Meanwhile, Yüghe continued spinning all kinds of tales, momentarily sidestepping the question Olev had asked. Yüghe was truthful, but that wasn't the sole purpose of his journey from remote galaxies. He specialized in visiting worlds with low intelligence, but this one was unique: it was the only world in the entire universe that possessed magic in such an abundant and indiscreet way. Other worlds were spiritual, devotedly following their gods, and religiously adhering to their will, and planetary civilizations were largely human. Ultimately, this planet was distinct—captivating, yet inherently risky

mismo experimentó lo que se siente estar cerca de la muerte cuando el cinocéfalo intentó arrancar sus extremidades.

La fogata casi se apagaba en lo que Yüghe hablaba, hasta que se quitó su sombrero de nuevo y confesó que esperaba que un planeta con tanta magia tuviera comunicación con los dioses. Si podía comunicarse con uno que le llevara un mensaje a Priclath —también creadora de los cremánticos—, podría apelar en la corte de su planeta para evitar que lo mataran. Nadie se mostró sorprendido y él esperaba, aunque sea, un bostezo de terror o siquiera de aburrimiento, pero era difícil sorprenderlos, contando con especímenes tan complejos como los cremánticos entre ellos, como los gigantes, los duendes y las brujas. Así que procedió a explicar:

himself had experienced what it felt like to be close to death when the Cynocephalus tried to tear his limbs apart.

The last embers of fire in the campfire were burning as Yüghe resumed his story. He took off his hat and admitted his true motivation: he was seeking a planet rich in magic hoping to find a direct line to the gods. If he could reach a god who would carry a message to Priclath the Cremantics Goddess, he might appeal in his home planet's court and avoid execution. No one looked surprised. He had hoped for at least some sign of terror or even boredom, but it was tough to startle this group, considering they included such complex specimens as the Cremantics, giants, globins, and witches in the crowd, it seemed impossible to faze them. So, he continued to explain:

—Lo que posee este cuerpo es mi alma. Me toma pocos minutos la posesión mas no el viaje, y mi cuerpo real permanece en mi planeta, escondido en cuevas antiguas que solo yo y unos pocos de mi religión conocemos. Allá soy conocido como el *profeta* y en los mundos a los que he visitado, como *viajero del tiempo*.

Él era todo un entusiasta, tanto que no se cansaba de contar una y otra vez su historia y las adversidades por las que había pasado. Yüghe necesitaba de ayuda para poder trasladar su cuerpo físico (y el de algunos compañeros que seguían escondidos en su planeta) a través de los canales astrales y así viajar por completo sin necesidad de poseer el cuerpo de cualquier otro desafortunado ser. Si los militares encontraban su cuerpo mientras estaba en trance, sería aniquilado al instante y eso traería consigo la desgracia de no poder salir del cuerpo que ahora poseía, y si el cuerpo del duende llegase a morir, él igual. Por eso era muy importante llevar su cuerpo también al mundo mágico. Pero instalarse a largo plazo no estaba entre sus planes, ya que debía volver para ayudar a sus hermanos en la fe, llevando una prueba de que los dioses seguían entre ellos por más ausentes que parezcan. Pero era una misión compleja, más cuando el planeta al que decidió ir se levantaba en guerra, incluso arrastrándolo a la batalla también.

Horas le tomó por fin callarse o que lo callaran, porque de ser por él hubiese seguido hasta el amanecer. Como a todos, se le ofreció una

“What inhabits this body is my soul. “Taking possession is quick, but the journey isn’t. My actual body is safe on my home world, secreted away in old caves known only to my religious sect and me. Back home, I am known as “The Prophet”, and in the worlds I’ve encountered, I’m called a Time Traveler.”

He was a man of boundless enthusiasm. He, couldn’t stop repeating over and over his incredible tale of hardship. Yüghe urgently required assistance to transport his true physical form (along with his companions’ hidden bodies) across the astral planes. Only then could he travel fully without having to hijack another unfortunate living being body. Discovery by the military while his true body lay in a trance would mean instant death, eternally stranding his soul in the goblin host. Moreover, if the goblin body perished, so would he. This made moving his original body to the magical world paramount. Still, he didn’t intend to stay long; he had to return with tangible evidence that the gods still existed to help his religious followers, even if they seemed absent. The mission was complicated, made far worse by the fact that his chosen destination planet was erupting in conflict, pulling him into its war too...

It took a considerable amount of time before he finally quieted down, or was forced to. If left alone, he’d have talked all night. Everyone was given a

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<p>cama y un poco de alimento, muy limitado. Leinad durmió junto a su hermano y su nuevo amor; Valery-con temor junto a Yüghe y Clara. Afuera de sus tiendas cuatro soldados los escoltaban.</p>	<p>sparse meal and a place to rest. Leinad settled down next to Amir and his new love interest; Valery, uneasy, shared space with Yüghe and Clara. Four sentries guarded them outside.</p>
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XII

Adam apenas podía levantar las piernas para caminar. Andi y Pol ya se habían rendido y el único caballo que les quedaba se veía enfermo, pues todo lo que hacía era debido a la magia. Una vez liberado del encanto cayó al suelo del cansancio. Los muchachos casi se desmayaban de hambre y sed, y Adam se encontraba en la misma situación.

Conjurar para hacer brotar agua de su bastón sin la energía necesaria era inútil, más porque hacía poco había usado el conjuro Luxiamin, con el que vieron todo lo que había pasado. Es más, el agua de su magia no era potable, concentraba mucha energía oscura y además de no hacerle bien a su cuerpo, canalizando mucha magia, podría ser hasta letal.

Al mirar atrás, el mago se dio cuenta de que era imposible llegar al lugar en el que se

XII

Adam could scarcely lift his legs to take another step. Andi and Pol had completely collapsed, and their sole horse looked severely ill; it had been moving only through the use of magic. As soon as the spell broke, the animal sank to the ground, spent. The young men were on the verge of passing out from thirst and starvation, and Adam was no better off.

Trying to summon water from his staff was futile due to his low energy reserves, particularly after casting the powerful Luxiamin spell to observe the recent events. Furthermore, the water his magic produced wasn't potable. It held a dangerous concentration of dark energy, and channeling such potent magic into his body could not only harm him but might easily prove fatal.

When the mage glanced back, realizing that reaching his children, or even The Lake,

encontraban sus hijos, incluso a El Lago. Intentaron ir a saciar su sed (pues había caminos hacia El Lago que llevaban también a Auxis), y no pudieron por la debilidad. Demasiada energía gastada en su uso del bastón hacía que su cristal brillara menos. El Mago Verde podía ver cómo poco a poco se apagaban las luces de las estrellas y las lunas, pero eran sus ojos que se entrecerraban. Vio a los jóvenes caer estrepitosamente como sacos de tubérculos, y antes de desvanecerse también, lanzó un rayo de luz dorada al cielo.

El abrir y cerrar de ojos de Adam al despertar le dejaba ver el resplandeciente sol alumbrar las praderas. Las mariposas volaban

was beyond their capability. They had attempted to head toward the water (since routes to The Lake connected with Auxis), but weakness overcame them. His staff's crystal barely glimmered from the sheer amount of energy he had expended. The Green Mage perceived how the stars and moons dimming, though it was only his eyes squinted. He saw the boys crash sharply to the ground like deadweights, and in the moment before he passed out as well, he fired a final golden ray skyward.

Opening his eyes, Adam saw the bright, dazzling sun cast light across the grasslands. Butterflies fluttered

alrededor de las flores que luchaban contra todo pronóstico contra la escasez. Los pocos animales que deleitaban (a hombres y mujeres) con su presencia, eran pobres creaciones que solo se habían alejado de la tierra donde vivían, en las llanuras del imperio.

El cansado mago levantó su torso, un poco desorientado. Sabía que estaba en Auxis, pero no cómo llegó. Hacia él se acercaba Pol a toda carrera para confirmarle que sus hijos estaban a salvo, y Adam se volvió a acostar por el agotamiento, pero no durmió. Visualizaba en su mente todo lo que el conjuro le había permitido ver y acostado en la hierba, agradecía al destino que sus hijos estuvieran vivos. Él no quería sentirse como una carga para los del reino y prometió irse

among the flowers, which struggled against all odds in the barren landscape. The few animals present (which brought cheer to the people) were weak creatures that had simply strayed from their home on the imperial plains.

Slightly confused, the worn-out wizard sat up. He knew he was in Auxis but had no memory of the journey. Pol quickly rushed over to assure him that his boys were safe. The news brought such exhaustion that Adam immediately lay back down, though he remained awake. He ran through the images the spell had shown him and, resting in the field, felt immense gratitude for his sons' survival. Determined not to burden the locals, he promised himself he'd leave as

una vez restaurara lo poco que podía salvarse del terreno en Twingfir, que hasta el momento era solo un cementerio.

Una niña se le acercó y le ofreció una bebida conocida como *Liubera*, que le daba energía a los afligidos. Adam esperaba con ansias, tomando el jugo, que sus hijos y demás sobrevivientes despertaran. Y para su sorpresa, la primera en salir de la cabaña fue Valery, que se estiraba y bostezaba en la soleada mañana. El mago no solo recordó que era la que buscaba a su hijo, sino también que la vio morir aplastada por la gigantesca roca. Con celo y dudas la confrontó frente a todos los pueblerinos.

—¡Yo te vi morir! ¿Quién eres y por qué buscas a mi hijo.

—Señor Migfield, disculpe dijo la niña, arrodillándose con pavor.

Los gritos hicieron salir al resto. Amir seguía dormido.

—Papá, ¿qué sucede?

—¿Por qué ella está aquí si yo la vi morir?!

—Papá, lo sé . Ella misma nos lo contó. Tranquilízate.

Adam miraba a todos, que lo rodeaban por si intentaba actuar en contra de la niña; ella seguía arrodillada y con su cara tocando la tierra seca. Los padres de Valery desconocían de esa información, y sus lágrimas brotaron sin saber lo que significaba eso que el mago vociferaba; y por segundos dudaron si esa era su Valery, su niña.

soon as he could restore what little remained of Twingfir—a place that was, for now, just a graveyard.

A girl offered him a drink called *Liubera* to revitalize the afflicted. Adam quickly gulped down the juice, anxious for his sons and the others to wake. The first to emerge was Valery, stretching and yawning into the bright morning. The mage recalled instantly that she was not only the person searching for his son but also the one he had witnessed killed by the massive rock. Driven by protective instincts and deep confusion, he challenged her before the assembled villagers.

“I saw you die! Identify yourself and explain why you seek my son!”

“Mr. Migfield, sorry,” the girl pleaded, dropping to her knees in terror. His shouts brought everyone else outside. Amir was still asleep.

“Father, what’s happening?”

“Why is she here when I saw her perish!”

“Dad, we know. She already explained it to us. Just relax.”

Adam glared at the crowd surrounding him, ready to intervene should he move against the girl, who was still bowed with her face near the dirt. Valery’s parents were hearing this for the first time, and they began to weep, utterly confused by the mage’s outburst. For a terrifying instant, they even doubted if this was truly their Valery, their child.

En un tronco de un viejo árbol caído, donde los cremánticos y extranjeros recitaban sus testimonios, estaba Adam sentado con un millón de preguntas en su cabeza. Adam escuchaba atentamente lo mismo que Valery le contó el día anterior a Apriaf, cuando de la carpa salió Amir. Descaminado e ignorando la reunión, corrió hacia el borde del acantilado, a espaldas de su padre, sus amigos y hermano. Estaba a punto de cometer el mismo acto que Ania, levantando una polvareda con cada paso y dejando solo sus huellas marcadas en la tierra.

Cuando Adam miró hacia atrás —por el asombro de la gente que estaba frente a él— persiguió a su hijo para evitar una tragedia más en la lista de pesadillas que lo rodeaban. Con su bastón intentó usar el viento para atraer a Amir de vuelta, pero el mar lo atrapó primero; y el mar era más fuerte. Era imposible que las olas del mar subieran tan alto, era imposible que se debiera a un evento natural. Perplejos ante el suceso, nadie se movió. Las lágrimas de Adam simplemente brotaban de sus ojos y, recostado en el borde de la montaña, veía el cuerpo de su hijo ser arrastrado al fondo del mar, estirando su mano sin poder hacer nada, sin rozar los dedos de su pequeño por última vez.

La ira lo dominó, la oscuridad que durante tanto tiempo había ocultado para no caer ante la voluntad de su diosa salió a flote. Y con un grito de furia levantó su bastón haciendo brillar el cristal verde que le

Sitting on a fallen tree trunk, where the Cremantics and outsiders recited their testimonies, Adam was consumed by endless questions. He was intently listening to the same story Valery had told Apriaf the day before when Amir stumbled out of the tent. Astray and oblivious to the gathering, he ran straight toward the edge of the cliff, his back to his father, his friends, and his brother. He was about to repeat Ania's actions, raising a cloud of dust with every stride, leaving only his footprints impressed upon the earth.

The shocked gasps of the onlookers forced Adam to turn around. He chased after his son, desperate to prevent one more tragedy from being added to his list of nightmares. He tried to use his staff to conjure wind magic and pull Amir back, but the sea snatched him first. It was impossible for the sea waves to rise so high; it was impossible for it to be due to a natural event. Stunned by the event, everyone was paralyzed. Adam could only lie at the mountain's brink, tears flowing freely, watching his son's form dragged under the sea, his hand extended in a futile gesture, never connecting with his child's touch one last time.

Fury consumed him; the darkness he'd long suppressed to deny his goddess's will erupted. With a shout of sheer anger, he lifted his staff, and the green crystal intensified its magical light. What kind of father allows his child to be taken this way? Who would just stand there? Not Adam. He

otorgaba más magia. ¿Qué padre dejaría ir a su hijo de esa manera? ¿Quién se quedaría

de brazos cruzados? Adam no. Tomó impulso y se lanzó al temible mar, pensando en rescatar a su hijo más que en pelear.

Leinad gritaba de angustia de tan solo pensar que podía perder a las personas más importantes en su vida en un mismo día, a manos del mismo enemigo. Pero fue retenido por los soldados y por Bec, que no dudaba en que se lanzaría si lo soltaban.

Adam combatía con el segundo elemento que mejor dominaba (el aire), encerrándose a sí mismo una burbuja que le permitía respirar bajo el agua y que lo ayudaba a viajar más rápido hacia su hijo. La burbuja era traspasada por punzadas de agua, que provocaban heridas

took a running start and plunged into the terrifying sea, prioritizing saving his son over fighting.

Leinad's anguished cries echoed, dreading the loss of the most cherished people in his life in a single day, by the hands of the same foe. But he was restrained by the soldiers and by Bec, who was sure he would jump if they let go.

Adam battled using the second element he commanded (air), trapping himself inside a sphere that granted him underwater breath and accelerated his pursuit toward his son. The protective bubble was penetrated by piercing spikes of water, inflicting injuries

En los brazos y piernas del mago. Mientras más se sumergía, más difícil era seguir el rastro de Amir, que posiblemente se estaba ahogando.

Las medusas titilaban en un hermoso destello entre colores turquesa y rosado, pero eran letales aquellos corrientazos eléctricos. Adam zigzagueaba entre ellas a toda velocidad, con temor de quedar paralizado por el veneno en sus agujones, pero con la confianza de saber lo que hacía. Su concentración era tal que no vio con claridad a los monstruos que le rodeaban en su descenso al fondo interminable del mar, únicamente notó largas colas de reptiles inmensos, ojos brillantes y colmillos filosos. La oscuridad no solo se notaba ante la falta de luz, sino que aun en la negrura

on the mage's arms and legs. The deeper he dove, the tougher it was to track Amir, who was probably drowning.

Jellyfish twinkled with a gorgeous turquoise and pink glow, but their electric shock was deadly. Adam zigzagged through them, afraid the venom from their stings would paralyze him, yet confident in his abilities. His concentration was absolute, causing him to dimly register the monsters around him in the bottomless deep of the sea: he only saw massive reptile tails, glowing eyes, and sharp fangs. The darkness was not only noticeable due to the lack of light, but even in the blackness he could sense threatening glances. Despite also being a creation of the Vitjars, he clearly had no right to be there.

podía percibir miradas amenazantes. A pesar de ser creación de los vitjars también, él no era bienvenido.

Alcanzándolo, estiró su bastón, creando una corriente de aire entre él y su hijo hasta que por fin logró sostener su brazo. Pero el mar seguía arrastrando al jovencito que le rogaba a su padre que lo soltara.

—Tienes que soltarme, papá.

—No dejaré que te lleven. —

Yo me lancé, yo lo decidí.

Anonadado por la respuesta de su hijo, Adam lo jaló contra su voluntad, dislocando su tobillo y logrando su cometido. El muchacho golpeaba a su padre para que lo soltara y gritaba de dolor y tristeza, y con la misma corriente que había creado, emergieron hasta la orilla de la playa, en donde se veía un sinnúmero de árboles destrozados, avalando la historia que recién le había contado Valery.

Inmóvil, Amir se quejaba por el fuerte dolor y en su intento por curarlo, Adam no podía lograr que se quedara quieto. Reaccionó ante la actitud del pequeño, que no dejaba de decir que su lugar era en el fondo del mar, que un ser poderoso lo obligaba a tomar esa decisión.

—¡Basta! ¿Quieres regresar al mar? ¿Quieres que te suelte una próxima vez? Entonces dame una buena razón para hacerlo, no huyas como si eso resolviera un problema del que ni siquiera me has hablado —gritaba Adam.

Closing the distance, he thrust out his staff, generating a powerful airstream between them, until he at last secured his grip on his son's arm. Still, the ocean persisted in pulling the young man away, who pleaded with his father to let him go. "You have to let me go, Dad."

"I refuse to let them take you." "I went for it; this was my choice."

Stunned by his son's defiance, Adam forcibly hauled him in, wrenching his ankle but succeeding in the rescue. The young man struck his father to be let go and cried out with pain and sadness. Using the same magical current, they emerged onto the shoreline, where a multitude of shattered trees stood, validating the account Valery had recently given.

Frozen by the agony, Amir groaned, and Adam, trying desperately to heal him, could not get him to stay still. He reacted to the boy's behavior, who kept insisting that his rightful place was on the ocean depth, and that a powerful being was forcing him to make that choice.

"Enough! Do you truly want to go back to the sea? Do you want me to let you go next time? Then give me one good reason, don't flee as though it will fix a problem you haven't even told me about!" Adam yelled.

—Estoy cansado de este dolor que siento. No solo de las quemaduras de nuestra gente a las que les arrebaté el suplicio, sino de la agonía, la incertidumbre, el miedo y la tristeza. Además, van a destruir todo, papá. Comenzaron con esa roca, luego será peor: el hundimiento de todo Alhorn, matanzas a mano de los oscuros y sus dioses. Pero si me llevan a mí, les perdonarán la vida a ustedes al menos. Solo tenemos que unirnos a su causa; somos de los oscuros, somos de los vitjars. Nunca nos dejarán en paz.

—Escúchame, Amir. Te están mintiendo.

—Prometieron crear caos.

—Lo sé, en eso no mintieron. Pero no tienes que sacrificarte. Te manipulan porque necesitan tu poder. Te están mintiendo. Así que déjame curarte, vayamos a un lugar más seguro y explícame todo lo que te dijeron.

Calmados los dos, se levantaron de la arena para regresar al reino, mientras Leinad se acercaba corriendo para abrazarlos. Era increíble ver cómo seguían vivos después de haberse enfrentado al mar. Y fueron recibidos en Auxis con fuertes aplausos y reverencias. Incluso siendo seres oscuros, los cremánticos y los humanos elogiaban con cantos sus grandes hazañas. Como si se hubiesen preparado por meses cantaban a todo pulmón:

Magos indestructibles, luz entre los oscuros, enfrentaron los mares y nos mantienen seguros.

“I am sick by this pain. Not only the scorches of our folk, whose ordeal I relieved, but the distress, the doubt, the terror, and the sadness. Besides, Dad, they will annihilate everything. The rock was just the start; the next stage will be worse: the total submersion of Alhorn, widespread slaughter at the hands of the dark ones and their gods. But if they take me, they will at least spare your lives. We simply must align with their purpose; we are part of the dark ones, we are Vitjars. They will never grant us peace.”

“Listen to me, Amir. They are liars.”

“They promised massive destruction.”

“I know, they weren’t lying about that. But you don’t have to be a martyr. They are manipulating you because they need your power. They keep on lying to yo. So let me heal you, let’s find safety, and tell me everything they said.”

Once they had calmed down, both stood up from the sand and started back toward the kingdom, while Leinad ran to meet them with open arms. It was unbelievable they had survived battling the sea. They were greeted in Auxis with hearty applause and reverent bows. Despite their identity as Dark Beings, the Cremantics and humans praised their great feats with songs. As if rehearsed for months, they vociferously sang along:

Indestructible mages, light among the dark, you faced the raging seas and keep danger far from our ark.”

Magos indestructibles, enciendan sus bastones para que ya no vuelvan los ladrones.

Indestructible mages, raise your glowing wands, so thieves may vanish far beyond the bonds.

Poetas insuperables, esperanza de un mañana

gracias a ustedes el sol vemos por la ventana.

Poetas insuperables, cambien tinta por espada

que luchamos contra monstruos, no contra hadas.

Entre tantos versos y alegorías, Amir se mostraba avergonzado. Además, su pie derecho no solo estaba dislocado, sino que presentaba una herida como si una garra fuese lo que lo arrastró. Pero su padre se

Unbeatable poets, bringers of sun, thanks to your verses, the morning's begun.

Unbeatable poets, trade quills for the blade, we fight against beasts, not fairies afraid.

Between so many verses and allegories, Amir felt deeply embarrassed. His right foot was not just dislocated, but bore a definite wound, as if a vicious claw had inflicted it during the dragging. His father

dedicó a sanarlo, no solo de las heridas de las que brotaban sangre, sino también en su interior, porque su espíritu sufría aún más por aquel conjuro maldito con el que absorbió la vida de los moribundos de su aldea. En esto recibió ayuda de la magia de Leinad, puesto que era capaz de inmiscuirse en la psique de las personas. Con ayuda de su padre iba poco a poco mejorando sus habilidades.

El pueblo cantaba sobre las hazañas de los magos, pero no sabían que él había estado a punto de entregarse al enemigo para que absorbieran sus poderes para sus artimañas. Sin la valentía y firmeza de su padre, ya estaría posiblemente en El Péndulo y sus secuestradores poseyendo su poder violeta, y varios pasos más adelante.

committed to healing him, addressing both the open physical wounds and his soul, which was deeply distressed by the cursed magic used to drain life from his dying villagers. In this, he received magical help from Leinad, who was able to intrude into people's psyches. With his father's aid, his skills were steadily growing.

The crowd lauded the mages' heroism, unaware that Amir had been on the brink of offering himself to the enemy, allowing them to seize his power for their tricks. Lacking his father's sheer will and resolve, he'd probably already be captive in The Pendulum, his violet power in the hands of his captors, giving them a significant advantage.

<p>Por órdenes de Olev, el terreno abierto desde donde se lanzaron Ania y Amir, ya no sería un lugar en el que los cremánticos y los humanos rezarían o disfrutarían de un hermoso atardecer. Para asegurarse de ello, mandó a sus soldados a construir un muro alto para evitar una tercera tragedia, incluso ayudaría también a evitar recibir visitas inesperadas de los oceánicos que, aunque solo podían estar poco tiempo fuera del mar, podían fácilmente escalar hasta llegar a la cima. Pero, aunque podían no se atrevieron, no con Olev ahí.</p> <p>Y fue así que el muro alto tataría la majestuosa acción del sol al ocultarse y al salir. Por lo tanto, las historias venideras no serían lo mismo sin la enorme estrella de fuego y las lunas como testigos.</p>	<p>By Olev’s command, the open ground from which Ania and Amir had jumped would no longer be a place where the Cremantics and humans prayed or enjoyed a beautiful sunset. To secure the area, he commanded his soldiers to erect a towering wall to prevent a third incident, which would also deter surprise attacks from the Oceanics. Though these creatures were short-lived out of water, they could easily climb to the top. But even though they could, they dared not, not with Olev present.</p> <p>And so, the high wall would block the sun’s majestic act of setting and rising. Consequently, future stories would not be the same without the massive fire star and the moons as witnesses.</p>
<p>Página 143</p> <p>ALIANZA SANGRIENTA</p>	<p>Page 143</p> <p>BLOOD PACT</p>
<p>Página 145</p> <p>XIII</p> <p>La frígida marea sacudía las aguas con mucha fuerza. Alana, la terrorífica bruja suprema, que ahora presumía su conquista y su incontrolable poder, se quitó sus lujosos zapatos y se metió en el mar hasta sus rodillas. Alrededor de ella el agua era serena y apacible, como si reconociera la tenebrosidad en ella.</p>	<p>Page 145</p> <p>XIII</p> <p>The freezing tide violently churned the water. Alana, the terrifying Supreme Sorceress, basking in her recent conquest and unchecked power, slipped off her elegant shoes and waded into the ocean up to her knees. The water around her was calm and still, as if recognizing the darkness within her.</p>

Con una calma intranquila, y cambiando el tono azulado del mar a un lóbrego rojo sangre, salieron de las profundidades tres criaturas de pieles pegajosas y labios gruesos, con cara humana y sus ojos de color celestes en su totalidad; parecían invadidos por cataratas. Las pieles de estos seres variaban entre blancos, negros, verdes y grises; todos con escamas tan imperceptibles que, a su salida del agua, hacían brillar finamente su piel. Los de esta raza eran horribles en su mayoría. Las subrazas eran variadas e incontables, pero estos que salieron eran *hódrokas*, con igual cantidad de extremidades que los humanos, escamas finas y rostros anormales. Pero los *hídremas* no tenían piernas, sino cola con aletas, y en algunos casos tenazas en vez de manos; a las hembras se les denomina *amadirias*. Y de los que menos se habla es de los *híbrikas*, que muchas veces se les puede confundir por un humano común. Hay que prestar especial atención a su comportamiento y a la resequedad de sus pieles, casi sin escamas, para identificarlos.

Bajo las axilas de estos oceánicos *hódrokas* podían percibirse unas cortas aletas, y en sus cuellos las branquias con sus opérculos tapando el feo órgano respiratorio. Todos medían casi dos metros y estaban

With a strange tranquility, and causing the sea's sapphire tone to shift to a gloomy crimson, three beings surfaced from the deep. They featured slimy skin, thick lips, human-like faces, and eyes completely overtaken by a pale blue color, giving them a cataract-like look. The color of their skin ranged from white, black, green, and gray; they were covered in scales so tiny that as they left the water, they gave their skin a delicate, fine sheen. Most members of this species were grotesque. Their sub-races were varied and countless, but the specimens encountered were *Hódrokas*-four-limbed like humans, yet covered in fine scales and sporting abnormal faces. The *Hídremas*, however, had no legs, but rather they propelled themselves with a finned tail and sometimes had pincers instead of hands; the females of this group are referred to as *Amadirias*. The least discussed, the *Híbrikas*, are often visually indistinguishable from humans. Key to identifying them are their peculiar behavior and their dry, almost scaleless skin.

Short fins could be perceived under the armpits of these oceanic *Hódrokas*, and in their necks, gills with their opercula covering the unsightly respiratory organ. All of them were nearly two meters tall and they

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cubiertos con un manto gris con capucha que se ponían únicamente cuando salían del mar, como si se avergonzaran de su propia apariencia.

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wore a hooded gray cloak, that they donned only when emerging from the sea, as if they were ashamed of their own appearance.

El líder se acercó a la reina y vio detrás de ella a pueblerinos que avistaban el encuentro entre estas dos especies. El muelle Arl se encontraba detrás de los altos muros del reino Jukrol. Aquellos humanos que la siguieron no fueron por voluntad propia. Ellos obedecieron, aunque no querían ir, porque cuestionarla o llevarle la contraria resultaría en la muerte de igual manera. Y, además, Alana les había prometido una recompensa. Estaban una señora de edad avanzada acompañada de su nieto que jamás se había separado de ella; un señor con su hija de unos veinticinco años, y dos soldados con sus armaduras de oro y plata y capa morada.

No era necesaria la noche ni ir tan profundo como para notar la oscuridad del mar. No importaba la intensidad de la luz del sol, porque en el vasto mar nunca amanece, nunca hay rumbos seguros estando sumergido. Su oscuridad no se debía a la ausencia de la luz, sino a los siniestros que la habitaban.

Dorivian, el oceánico, guardaba debajo de su manto sus largos tentáculos que se escondían detrás de sus brazos, estiró uno y tomó al niño bruscamente lanzándolo a mar abierto donde el infante, sin saber nadar y con la marea brava, se hundió poco a poco sin posibilidad de pedir ayuda. Luego, el intenso frío le dificultaría moverse y más al fondo la falta de aire le haría dejar de luchar, mirando la luz del sol perderse en la penumbra de las aguas, y una vez muriera se convertiría en alimento para los horribles animales que nadarían desesperados en busca de un pedazo de carne. Tal vez esto no

The leader approached the queen, and behind her, he saw townspeople observing the encounter between these two species. Arl Pier stood against the backdrop of the Jukrol kingdom's formidable walls. The humans who had followed her were not volunteers. They obeyed, though unwillingly, because defiance or contradiction meant certain death. Furthermore, Alana had promised them a reward. Among them were an old woman and her devoted grandson, a man accompanied by his adult daughter (in her mid-twenties), and two soldiers in their gold and silver armor, and purple cloaks.

The darkness of the sea was evident even in the light and near the surface. Regardless of the sun's intensity, the vast sea was perpetually sunless; there are never safe directions while submerged. This wasn't a darkness born of light's absence, but of the sinister beings that inhabited it.

Dorivian, the oceanic being, kept his lengthy tentacles hidden beneath his mantle, secreted behind his arms. He extended one abruptly, snatching the child and flinging him into the open sea. The infant, unable to swim and battered by the rough tide, slowly sank, unable to cry for help. Then the sheer cold would paralyze his limbs, and deeper still, the lack of oxygen would extinguish his fight, watching the sunlight fade into the water's dimness. And once he dead, his corpse would then be a meal for the awful creatures that would thrash desperately, seeking sustenance. Perhaps that would not

<p>sería lo que pasaría al final, quizás solo era parte de un sacrificio, que no es un final más hermoso o menos cruel.</p> <p>La abuela del pequeño gritó y corrió hacia el mar en busca de su nieto, aun sabiendo que era imposible salvarlo. Uno de los oceánicos que acompañaba a Dorivian se sumergió y podía vérselo nadar muy rápido debajo del agua hasta alcanzar a la señora en un salto, mordiéndole su cuello y arrastrándola al fondo para devorarla también.</p>	<p>be his ultimate fate; maybe it was merely part of a sacrifice—a final end no less beautiful or less cruel.</p> <p>The boy's grandmother cried out and ran toward the sea after her grandson, knowing it was a futile effort. One of the Oceanics with Dorivian dove down; they watched him swim with unnatural speed underwater. It leaped at the woman, biting her throat and dragging her to the bottom to eat her too.</p>
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—Esa vieja no cuenta como sacrificio — aclaró Dorivian—. No me gusta estar en deuda con nadie.

—Entiendo. Ya te di al niño, cumple con tu parte.

—Reina, ya te robaron una llave, ¿entiendes mis dudas y la razón por la que mi amo no quería que te diera la información?

—Encontraré aquella que me robaron y buscaré la otra, solo dame la dirección.

—Una se encuentra en Gárida y es custodiada por un coleccionista. Te diré dónde está la última si me haces un favor.

Alana organizó esa reunión esperando crear una alianza para cuando se desatara la guerra. Encontrar las llaves no era su prioridad, no en ese momento, pero lo intentaría al menos con tal de tenerlos de su lado. Y, para su fortuna, el favor que le pedía

“That elder does not qualify as a sacrifice,” Dorivian specified. “I prefer not to owe anyone anything.”

“I get it. I’ve given you the child; now deliver on your promise.”

“Your Majesty, since one key has been stolen, do you comprehend my doubts, and the reason my master didn’t want me to give you the information?”

“I shall retrieve the stolen key and pursue the final one. You need only provide the coordinates.”

“One resides in Gárida, under the protection of a collector. I will only disclose the final location if you grant me a favor.”

Alana had arranged this meeting hoping to forge an alliance for when the war inevitably broke out. The keys were secondary at the moment, but she would try, if only to ensure their loyalty. To her great advantage, the favor Dorivian requested

<p>Dorivian no era tan difícil de realizar; solo tenía que darle con vida al hijo más pequeño del mago: Amir.</p> <p>—La última llave está escondida en Praelen. El acero con el que se forjó el glorioso asiento de Apriaf, hijo de Günhur, se mezcla con el formidable carbono de las tierras de Quelsat, uno de los elementos con el que la llave fue hecha. Una vez destruyas el trono la encontrarás. Sabes que las llaves no pueden ser destruidas ni con el arma más potente.</p> <p>Ella, incluso los testigos y soldados, se preguntaban cómo había obtenido tal información porque ni siquiera Alana, siendo la esposa de Adrion, sabía sobre el escondite de esa llave. Pero la reina no dijo más. Salió del mar con un trato que ella catalogó como fácil, pero no sabía que Adam se había atrevido a enfrentar al furioso océano y no solo eso, sino que le ganó. Se jugó la vida intentando salvar a su hijo y lo haría las veces que fueran necesarias, aunque su vida dependiera de ello. Por supuesto que Alana entendía su interés en Amir, pero ella solo quería derramar sangre; necesitaba a los oceánicos para sus malévolos planes. Una furia incontrolable se escondía en sus adentros, en su malévola mente, recorriendo su sangre hasta casi hervir; ira que se escondía detrás de aquella sonrisa hipócrita que la caracterizaba y que la hacía aún más tenebrosa.</p>	<p>was a simple one: she only had to deliver the wizard’s youngest son, Amir, alive.</p> <p>“The last key is hidden in Praelen. The steel of the glorious throne of Apriaf, son of Günhur, is alloyed with the formidable carbon from the lands of Quelsat, an essential component of the key itself. Once you destroy the throne, you will find it. You know the keys cannot be destroyed, not even by the most powerful weapon.”</p> <p>She and everyone else—witnesses, soldiers—wondered how she had obtained such information, for not even Alana, Adrion’s wife, knew where that key was hidden. But the queen remained silent. She emerged from the sea with what she considered an easy bargain, unaware that Adam had dared to face the furious ocean—and not only that, but had defeated it. He had risked everything to save his son, and he would do it over and over, no matter the cost, even if it meant losing his own life. Of course, Alana understood its interest in Amir, but her true desire was to spill blood; she needed the Oceanics for her wicked plans. An uncontrollable fury lived within her—burning through her veins, masked by that deceitful smile that made her presence all the more terrifying.</p>
<p>Página 148</p> <p>Dorivian, además de decirle dónde buscar las llaves, le entregó una bolsa de la que</p>	<p>Page 148</p> <p>Dorivian not only revealed where the keys could be found but also handed her a pouch</p>

escurría agua y que sonaba como si estuviera repleta de monedas de oro. Él y el único compañero que se quedó, se perdieron bajo el agua y como si las nubes vieran lo sucedido, se dispersaron también dejando al sol volver a alumbrar, y entonces el mar ya no era rojo sino azul, como es habitual. Y es que aquellos días en los que los oceánicos no dominaban las aguas, una manera fácil de detectarlos era el cambio del color en el mar. Los híbrikas, a diferencia de los hódrokas, pintaban las aguas de morado y los hídremas de negro. Pero era el propio mar el que avisaba—a pescadores y piratas; estúpidos o valientes— de la presencia de estos asesinos, era el propio mar y no los oceánicos los que hacían esto, pues no les convenía ser detectados, no cuando son depredadores. El sacrificio del niño era una prueba para Alana, porque ellos necesitaban saber qué tan en serio se tomaría su tarea de entregarle al amo de los mares las tres llaves que seguían siendo la única salida de Thuren ante el encierro. La abuela del pequeño fue solo alimento para aquel oceánico que después de comérsela nunca regresó.

Este tipo de oceánicos (y la mayoría) no podían soportar las condiciones de vida fuera del agua. No eran anfibios, pero contaban con treinta minutos (dependiendo del clima) para pasearse por las tierras, y la búsqueda de las llaves les tomaría días y mucha energía en caso tal de tener que defenderse de algún otro individuo que se cruzara en su camino.

—Esta es su recompensa. Es oro ancestral, no lo necesito —dijo Alana, lanzando la bolsa a los únicos dos que quedaron con

dripping with water, which sounded as if filled with gold coins. He and his lone companion disappeared beneath the water's surface, and as though the heavens themselves had witnessed their descent, the clouds scattered, allowing the sun to shine once more. The sea was no longer red but blue again, as usual. In those times, when the oceanics had not yet claimed dominion over the waters, the color of the sea was a telltale sign of their presence. The Hybrikas, unlike the Hódrokas, tinted the waters purple, while the Hídremas turned them black. Yet it was not the oceanics who announced themselves (for the later had no interest in being detected, not when they were the predators) it was the sea, warning sailors and pirates alike, whether reckless or brave. The sacrifice of the child was a test for Alana, a test of her devotion to the task of delivering the three keys to the Lord of the Seas—the only hope Thuren had left for escape. The grandmother became nothing more than food; the oceanic that devoured her never came back.

This type of oceanic creature (and most of the race) were incapable of tolerating terrestrial living conditions. They were not true amphibians, granting them a maximum of thirty minutes (climate dependent) to move about on land. The search for the keys would require days and expend much-needed energy, particularly if they had to engage in conflict with any individuals who crossed their path.

“This is your reward. It is ancestral gold; I have no need for it,” Alana declared, throwing the bag at the two survivors. “You

<p>vida. Ya vieron suficiente. De pie, y regresen a su hogar.</p> <p>Los que sobrevivieron y atestiguaron la cruda maldad de la reina y sus ahora aliados, tomaron la bolsa con el oro más puro, que fue precisamente creada hacía siglos por algún arcaico dios. Pero ahora estaba manchado de la sangre de un infante y una anciana que no pudo hacer más que dar su vida como alimento para no sufrir sola la pérdida de su pequeño nieto. Dentro de la bolsa no había solo oro, había pequeños metales que formaban figuras de criaturas que nunca habían</p>	<p>have seen enough. Get up and return to your home.”</p> <p>The ones who witnessed the raw cruelty of the Queen and her new allies took the bag of pure gold, which had been created centuries ago by some archaic god. Yet, the reward was now tainted with the blood of a child and an old woman who could do nothing more than offer herself as food rather than enduring the solitary grief of her grandson’s death. The bag held more than just gold; it contained tiny metal figurines shaped like creatures that had never been</p>
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visto. Parecía antiguo también y debajo de ellas un escrito en el idioma de los magos sobresalía. Aquellas estatuillas eran artesanía oceánica. Lo soltaron porque ver aquello les producía asco y enojo. Tener en sus manos algo que representaba lo que eran sus enemigos, por minúsculo que pareciera, les hacía sentir repudio. Así que volvieron a guardarlas en la bolsa.

El adulto metió aquello en el bolsillo de su pantalón y miró su hija, aprovechando la distancia a la que se hallaban de la reina y de los soldados que jamás pensaron que intentarían huir. La carrera del padre y su hija fue un completo éxito únicamente porque Alana ordenó a los soldados no perseguirlos, por el contrario, asesinó a ambos por haber sido tan descuidados. Con su cetro en el aire conjuró y al instante

seen. It looked ancient as well, and beneath them an inscription in the wizards' language stood out. Those statuettes were oceanic crafts. Holding in their hands something that symbolized their enemies—even something so small—filled them with revulsion. So, they tossed the figurines back into the bag.

The man slipped the object into his pocket and glanced at his daughter, seizing the moment while they were far enough from the queen and her guards, who never suspected they would try to escape. The father and daughter's flight was a complete success only because Alana ordered the soldiers not to chase them. Instead, she executed both (the negligent pair). With her scepter raised high, she cast a spell,

<p>llegaron dos lupiadoks y los marcó en sus cráneos con una sola palabra: <i>matar</i>.</p> <p>El largo y peligroso trayecto que recorrían los prófugos los llevaría a Tremania, muy cerca de Auxis, el refugio de los que se rebelaban ante el imperio. En el aire podía sentirse el pestilente perfume de las aves que, con la orden de asesinar a los prófugos, usaban sus lenguas para producir un sonido como un chasquido o un chirrido. Nada en esta ave era hermoso, nada podía rescatarse de ellas, ni un silbido como el de las golondrinas. Volaban muy alto y el señor con su hija nunca se detuvieron, solo cuando ella tropezó con algo que se escondía bajo las hojas secas de aquellos árboles que crecían con formas horribles; era el cuerpo de uno de los soldados de Apriaf. Casi llegaban a su destino, pero al mismo tiempo los alcanzaban las aves carroñeras y su única ventaja eran los árboles del bosque que entorpecía la visibilidad de aquellos asquerosos pájaros.</p> <p>En la intersección que dividía el camino que lleva a Auxis y la que lleva a Twingfir, se encontraba Danteh. Llevaba días perdido en el bosque, el cual ya había causado un efecto negativo en él; parecía maniático. Por el pelo sostenía la cabeza putrefacta del señor que habían torturado en Praelen, aun los bichos se alimentaban de ella. Danteh dejaba ver una marca (una especie de tatuaje) de lealtad a su rey en la parte superior izquierda de su pecho, y gritaba como loco:</p>	<p>summoning two <i>lupiadoks</i> and branding their skulls with a single word: kill.</p> <p>The long and perilous journey of the fugitives would lead them to Tremania, not far from Auxis—the refuge of those who had risen against the empire. The air was thick with the nauseating scent of birds sent to hunt them down, their tongues producing an eerie click or shrill cry. There was nothing beautiful about those creatures, nothing redeemable—not even a whistle like that of swallows. They soared high above, while the man and his daughter pressed forward without rest, stopping only when she tripped over something concealed beneath the dead leaves twisted into horrific shapes of the grotesque trees—a soldier of Apriaf, lifeless. They were close to their destination, yet the carrion birds were closing in, their only advantage being the forest’s thick trees that blurred the disgusting birds’ sight.</p> <p>At the crossroads dividing the path to Auxis and the one to Twingfir stood Danteh. He had wandered the forest for days, which had already had a negative effect on him; he acted as maniac. Clutching the decaying head of the man tortured in Praelen by its hair, he stood trembling, insects still feeding on the flesh. On the upper left side of Danteh’s chest, the mark of loyalty to his king—a kind of tattoo—was visible, and he screamed like a lunatic:</p>
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—*Urgthult midavin il'thian murkaq.* —
Repetía como si algo lo poseyera.

—Ayúdanos, unas aves gigantes nos van a matar —dijo el señor.

—¿Cómo llego al mar? —preguntó Danteh, histérico. Su psique estaba siendo atacada por el bosque, pero algún veneno o hechizo lo hacía transmutar—. ¿Cómo llego al maldito mar, viejo estúpido?!

El maniático golpeaba su cabeza con el pomo de su espada y daba cortos giros como si el camino frente a él se le hiciera invisible, como si el señor fuese lo único que sus ojos podían ver; ojos que habían perdido su color verde natural, decolorándose en un gris sombrío como el de los oceánicos.

Y el cuestionamiento que se hizo la bruja sobre la información que manejaba el oceánico referente a la llave en el trono, fue algo que los prófugos pudieron clarificar. No había duda de que Danteh tenía una especie de vínculo con los hombres del mar, siendo el primer sospechoso de la divulgación de datos que, aunque todos desconocían tal información —incluyendo a Apriaf, eso convertía al maniático en un traidor. Y bastó escucharlo hablar la lengua oculta de los oceánicos para llegar a esa conclusión a la brevedad.

Nunca fue un hombre en el que te podías fiar, y el único que no lo veía era el rey. Entonces esto fue lo que sucedió: Danteh mató a sus propios hombres cuando, por órdenes de Apriaf, fueron a declararle la

“*Urgthult midavin il'thian murkaq.*” He repeated, as though possessed by some unseen force.

“Help us! Giant birds are going to kill us!” the man cried.

“How do I reach the sea?” Danteh shouted, his voice trembling with hysteria. The forest was twisting his mind, and some venom—or perhaps a curse—was forcing him to transmute. “Tell me how to get to the ddam sea, you old fool!”

The maniac beat his skull with the pommel of his sword, turning in frantic circles, as if the path ahead had vanished from his sight—only the man before him remained visible. His eyes, once a vivid green, had turned pale and lifeless—ashen gray, like those of the oceanic race.

The witch’s question regarding the oceanic’s knowledge of the key within the throne was now something the fugitives could clarify. There was no doubt Danteh shared some kind of bond with the men of the sea. He was the prime suspect behind the leak of information that none but a few knew—not even Apriaf. That alone marked him as a traitor. The moment they heard him utter the hidden tongue of the oceanics, the truth became undeniable.

He had never been a man to trust, though the king was blind to that truth. This is what happened: Danteh killed his own men when, under Apriaf’s orders, they marched to declare war on Auxis. Drawn to the sea, he reached out to Dorivian and revealed the secret of the key—knowledge he possessed

guerra a Auxis. Dirigiéndose al mar, se comunicó con Dorivian y le contó sobre la

<p>llave, información que manejaba por un escrito que dejó Adrion en sus manos antes de su muerte, dándole esperanzas de que algún día se convertiría en rey de todo el imperio. Adrion ni siquiera se lo confió a Alana, ni la nota ni el imperio. Lo que sea que hayan hecho Los Sanadores por órdenes de Adrion, los obligaba a esconder dichas llaves en lugares menos sospechables.</p> <p>Danteh seguía dando cortos giros y por momentos ignoraba al señor y a su hija. Y cuando volvía a conectar sus miradas, arrugaba su rostro en señal de odio y desprecio. Ahora el señor no sabía a qué temerle más, si a los lupiadoks o al fiel sirviente del rey de todo el</p>	<p>through a written message left to him by Adrion before his death, giving him false hope that he would one day rule the empire. Adrion hadn't trusted Alana with it—not the note, nor the empire itself. Whatever the Healers had done under Adrion's command, it required them to hide those keys in the least suspicious places.</p> <p>Danteh continued spinning, lost in his madness, sometimes oblivious to the man and his daughter. When his gaze did meet theirs, his face twisted with hatred and contempt. The man no longer knew what to fear more: the lupiadoks, or the king's loyal servant</p>
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imperio sosteniendo la cabeza de un viejo torturado, y que hablaba un idioma prohibido y ancestral.

Danteh parecía haber perdido todo, hasta su cordura, menos su pantalón y su espada. Los intimidaba como si fuera a herirlos y reía cuando se echaba hacia atrás. Luego de tres intentos por esquivarlo, el padre ordenó a su hija correr, pero esta vez Danteh sí blandiría su espada para intentar matar al señor. El viejo, que se llamaba Igur, logró escapar del filo de la espada y tomarla por su mango, arrojando las manos de Danteh con las suyas y, en la pelea por el arma, aterrizaron las apestosas aves que caminaban lentamente, produciendo aquel sonido un poco más fuerte.

holding a tortured old man's severed head while speaking a forbidden, ancient tongue.

Danteh seemed to have lost everything — even his sanity — except for his pants and his sword. He intimidated them as if he were about to strike, laughing whenever he leaned back. After dodging him three times, the father ordered his daughter to run, but this time Danteh truly swung his blade, intent on killing the old man. Igur, as he was called, narrowly avoided the edge and seized the weapon by its hilt, folding Danteh's hands beneath his own. As they wrestled for control, the stench-ridden birds descended, shuffling slowly and making their unnerving sound, now louder than before.

Un firme codazo tumbó a Igur, y se arrastró en el suelo intentando recuperar el aire perdido. Su hija miraba a lo lejos cómo Danteh alzaba con una sola mano su espada, la cual luego cayó al suelo cuando una flecha dio contra ella. Se acercaban tres éniars y entre ellos estaba Hiulin. Con sus armaduras, negras pero brillantes, daban por entendido que su aparición se trataba de algo de suma urgencia. Sus caballos lograron alcanzar al señor Igur, que estaba a punto de ser ejecutado, y la espada de Danteh era ahora pisada por las aves infernales. La falta de cordura de Danteh era tal que no huyó de ellas, sino que repetía una y otra vez las frases en aquella lengua oscura. Una de las aves lo tomó por la cabeza y otra por su brazo derecho, las dos jalaban a la vez arrancando la parte del cuerpo que sostenían. Fue una fiesta de sangre y vísceras para los lupiadoks, que además de la mugre que los envolvía, se ensuciaban de las tripas del pobre loco. Matar era su orden, no únicamente a los que recién se habían escapado. Así que una vez terminada la masacre de Danteh pretendían acercarse a los éniars, que con sus espadas y sin la ayuda de Hiulin lograron decapitarlas de un solo golpe. Entonces notaron hilos delgados saliendo del cuerpo de las aves y de Danteh, como si él las hubiese contaminado de sus parásitos. Estaba tan lleno de oscuridad que no soportó tanto; hechizado por los oceánicos, por los sombríos, por el bosque y por el difunto Adrion.

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A sharp dig knocked Igur over, where he crawled, gasping for the air he had lost. From the distance, his daughter beheld Danteh lifting his sword high with one hand-until an arrow found its mark, sending the blade clattering to the earth. Three Éniars were approaching, Hiulin among them. Their black, glimmering armor announced the urgency of their arrival. Their horses reached Lord Igur just before Danteh could strike him down, and the infernal birds had already pinned Danteh's fallen sword beneath their feet. Danteh's madness was such that he didn't flee from them; instead, he repeated the same phrases over and over in that dark language. One bird seized his head, another his right arm; both pulled at once, tearing away the pieces they held. It became a feast of blood and entrails for the lupiadoks, who, already covered in filth, were soon smeared with the guts of the poor madman. Their objective was eradication, extending beyond the recently escaped individuals. After the massacre of Danteh was complete, they intended to approach the eniars, who, using their swords and without Hiulin's help, managed to decapitate them with a single strike. Then, fine threads were observed emerging from the bodies of both the birds and Danteh, implying he had afflicted them with his own parasites. He had become a vessel of such profound darkness that the strain was unbearable, a captive to the spell of the oceanic beings, the somber entities, the deep woods, and the spirit of the dead Adrion.

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unY Hiulin vio los hilos parasitarios enterrarse en la tierra y los ignoró, y tendió su mano al señor. Igur se arrodillaba y su hija igual, suplicando por sus vidas y agradeciendo a la misma vez por haberles salvado de la muerte. La hermosa luchadora, líder de los seres celestiales más imponentes, bajó de su caballo para ayudar a los fugitivos a levantarse porque, para ellos, al único que se le debía rendir tributo y honra estando de rodillas era a Fed, uno de los olkjars.

Hacía siglos que no se desataba una guerra, por lo que muy pocas personas sabían que los curiosos cambios de color en las armaduras de los éniars dependían de la ocasión en la que se mostraban ante el resto de los habitantes. La armadura negra contaba con unos escritos en alto relieve justo en el centro del pecho, y en sus hombreras podía verse el escudo dorado de su reino. Y sus armas, incluso sus espadas, tomaban el mismo color de sus atuendos; sus armas eran modificables en cuanto a color y tamaño si ellos así lo requerían. Era una magia que solo ellos dominaban. Un tanto peculiar eran sus cascos que cubrían sus cabezas por completo, pero dejaban ver a la perfección sus rostros, y a la luz del sol podía notarse que había una especie de cristal que los protegía de cualquier objeto que amenazara sus hermosas caras. Absolutamente todo blindado y esculpido con los materiales más fuertes existentes en el planeta.

—¿Hacia dónde se dirigen? —preguntó Hiulin.

Hiulin watched as the parasitic threads dug into the soil and chose to ignore them, extending his hand toward the lord. Igur knelt, and so did his daughter, begging for their lives while thanking her at the same time for saving them from death. The striking warrior, commander of the mightiest of the celestial host, dismounted to lift the fugitives, for to them the only one before whom one should kneel was Fed, one of the esteemed olkjars.

Centuries had passed without the stir of war, and thus few remembered that the shifting hues of an éniar's armor revealed the purpose of their appearance among mortals (it depended on the occasion in which they revealed themselves to the rest of the inhabitants). The black armor bore raised inscriptions across the chest, and on its shoulders gleamed the golden crest of their realm. Even their weapons—swords included—shifted to match the color of their gear, changing shade and size at their command. It was a magic only they mastered. Their helmets were strange things enclosing their heads completely yet leaving their faces perfectly visible. Under sunlight, one could see a kind of crystal shielding them from anything that might threaten their beautiful features. Every piece was reinforced and carved from the strongest materials known to the world.

“To what destination do you travel?” inquired Hiulin.

<p>—Auxis. Escapamos de la reina Alana — respondió la muchacha.</p> <p>—Hoy es su día de suerte entonces. Vengan conmigo.</p> <p>Hiulin llevaba a Rinel, la hija de Igur. Y el señor prefirió caminar mientras contaba la razón por la que decidieron darle la espalda a su reina. Él temblaba de miedo aún y Rinel no dejaba de mirar el suelo en su corto viaje a las puertas del reino cercano, desviando su mirada de los ojos de la éniar.</p> <p>No hizo falta que tocaran la puerta porque estaba abierta, y una vez llegaron las trompetas de los celestiales entonaron una hermosa melodía para nada ruidosa. Hiulin y sus soldados eran bienvenidos. Los soldados cremánticos que vigilaban desde las torres habían advertido sobre la llegada de estos extranjeros, y fue por eso que la</p>	<p>“Auxis. We fled from Queen Alana,” the young woman replied.</p> <p>“This is your lucky day, then. Come with me.”</p> <p>Hiulin was carrying Rinel (the daughter of Igur) on the horse. The man chose to proceed on foot, using the opportunity to explain their reasons for abandoning their sovereign. He was still trembling with fear, while Rinel kept her eyes fixed on the ground during their short journey to the gates of the nearby kingdom, avoiding the eniars gaze.</p> <p>No request for entry was necessary; the gate stood ajar. As soon as they arrived, the trumpets of the Celestials sounded, they sang a melody-sweet, not noisy at all. Signaling that Hiulin and her escort were expected and welcomed. The Cremantic soldiers, who were keeping watch from the towers, had warned of the foreigners’ arrival, which is why the</p>
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puerta se abrió rápidamente cuando supieron que se trataba de los éniars. Olev, Adam y Leinad esperaban en la puerta, y Hiulin fue la primera en hablar.

—*Huöjilag*, mago —saludó en el idioma de Adam.

—¿A qué debemos su presencia? —preguntó Olev.

—No es mi intención incomodarles y antes de darles mis razones de venir, quisiera saber qué sucedió en Twingfir. Si puedo, claro. Ni Kert ni Bilor supieron decirme mucho.

gate opened quickly once they realized it was the eniars. Olev, Adam, and Leinad were waiting at the entrance, and Hiulin initiated the conversation.

“*Huöjilag*, wizard,” he greeted in Adam’s language.

“What brings you here?” asked Olev.

“I mean no disturbance. But before I explain my purpose, I’d like to know what happened in Twingfir—if you’ll allow it. Kert and Bilor told me very little.”

Adam les dio la espalda para regresar al ayuntamiento, pero fue detenido por Hiulin cuando empezó a hablarle sobre respeto y consideración.

—¿Consideración? ¿Dónde estaba su consideración cuando empezó la escasez y durante todos estos años? Hemos dependido de las lluvias para beber buena agua, dependimos de Thuren cuando hizo brotar agua en El Lago y únicamente porque necesita que lo saquemos de Beskan.

—¿Olvidaste que salvamos a Clara y que ese bastón que sostienes fue enviado como una señal de paz entre nosotros?

—Te agradecí en su momento por lo de Clara. Ahora vienes a reprocharme sobre el bastón. Es todo tuyo—dijo e intentó dárselo extendiéndolo hacia ella.

—¡Adam! Antes que vuelvas a faltarme al respeto, te recuerdo que tú y yo no somos iguales. Tus dioses son los que atentan contra nosotros. Reconozco que, aunque corre oscuridad por tu sangre, no eres como ellos. No te di esa arma para tirártelo en cara, porque si yo desconfiara de ti jamás la hubiese creado, jamás hubiese sembrado aquellas semillas en nuestro reino ni las hubiese regado para que dieran fruto aquellos majestuosos árboles, y de ser necesario las haría desaparecer con tal de que no te hagas más fuerte. El poder que dominas con ella puede destruirnos a todos. Como líder, me responsabilizo de lo que hagas con ella, pero acepto que no te lo di como un simple regalo. Estamos en guerra, y necesitamos de tu ayuda y la de tus hijos.

Adam turned away, heading back to the town hall, but Hiulin stopped him as she started lecturing him about respect and consideration.

“Consideration? Where was yours when the shortages began—during all these long years? We’ve relied on the rains for clean water. We depended on the rains for drinkable water. We relied on Thuren when he made water spring from the Lake, and only because he needs us to free him from Beskan.”

“Have you forgotten that we saved Clara, and that the staff you carry was offered as a gesture of peace between our people?”

“I thanked you for Clara when the time came. Now you’re here to accuse me over the staff. It’s yours—take it,” he replied, extending it toward her.

“Adam! Before you disrespect me again, remember that you and I are not the same. Your gods are the ones who threaten us. I acknowledge that, even with darkness coursing through your blood, you are not like them. I didn’t craft that weapon to fling it up in your face. If I had doubted you, I would never have created it, never planted those seeds in our realm nor nurtured them until those magnificent trees bore fruit—and I would erase them without hesitation if it meant keeping you from growing stronger. The power you command with it could destroy us all. As a leader, I take responsibility for whatever you do with it, but I accept that I didn’t give it to you as a simple gift. We are at war, and we need your help—and that of your children.”

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El mago sintió sinceras las palabras de la éniar, notando en su rostro algo de angustia y desespero. Le costaba tanto aceptar que ellos le ayudaran que los trataba con mucho resentimiento, pero al voltear su mirada a sus hijos y al pueblo de los cremánticos, supo que tenía que darse la oportunidad de creer. Adam puso su orgullo a un lado y respondió:

—Mi aldea fue atacada por no sé quién. Si la guerra de la que me hablas es en contra de los que causaron eso, entonces tienes mi atención.

Con esas últimas palabras, Olev se quitó del camino y abrió paso a los nuevos invitados que fueron recibidos con reverencias y admiración por los del pueblo. Los soldados que acompañaban a Hiulin sacaron alimentos y bebidas de una pequeña carroza que jalaba uno de sus caballos, además de armas y regalos como estatuillas en forma de niños, ancianos y uno que otro animal. La ayuda no era suficiente para llenar el estómago de todos, pero los niños y los ancianos fueron los primeros en recibir dicha bendición. Lo poco que sobró se repartió entre los soldados y los únicos que no probaron de aquellos manjares y delicias exóticas fueron los adultos que se conformaban con la comida de Auxis que,

The mage perceived the éniar's pronouncements to be genuine, recognizing a degree of distress and urgency reflected in her expression. It was so hard for him to accept their help that he treated them with great resentment, but turning his gaze toward his children and the people of the Cremantic village, he realized he must allow himself the vulnerability of trust. Adam then relinquished his reluctance and responded:

“An unknown force assaulted my settlement. If the conflict you propose is levied against those responsible for that destruction, then you have successfully gained my interest.”

With those final words, Olev stepped aside, making way for the new guests who were greeted with reverence and admiration by the villagers. The soldiers accompanying Hiulin unloaded food and drink from a small carriage pulled by one of their horses, in addition to weapons and gifts like statuettes shaped like children, elders, and a few animals. While the supplies were insufficient to fully feed every person, the children and the elders were the primary recipients of this timely benevolence. The scraps were divided among the soldiers; “The only ones who didn't taste those exotic treats and delicacies were the adults, who were content with the food from Auxis. Although it had little flavor, it managed to satisfy their hunger.”

aunque poco sabor tenía, lograba saciar su hambre.

—Este señor y su hija presenciaron el encuentro de un oceánico y Alana, vieron cómo sacrificaron a un indefenso niño y a su abuela por obtener información sobre unas llaves.

—Son las llaves que encierran a Thuren. Yo tengo una —dijo Adam.

—Ellos escucharon dónde están las otras dos. No se extrañen que Alana los busque para silenciarlos, aunque ya sea tarde. Además, nuestro dios, Fed, nos reveló que la razón por la que no quieren darle libertad a ese yatjar no se debe únicamente a la riqueza que les da a sus reinos, sino que es el único que puede enfrentarse a una de las criaturas que intentan despertar los cinocéfalos. No existe espada que corte su carne, solo enormes garras y filosas dentaduras podrían.

—¿Cómo se llama? —preguntó Leinad a la éniar.

“The man and his daughter witnessed the encounter between an Oceanic and Alana. They saw how a defenseless boy and his grandmother were sacrificed in exchange for information about a set of keys.”

“They’re the keys that keep Thuren imprisoned. I carry one,” Adam said. “They overheard the location of the other two. Don’t be surprised if Alana comes after them to silence them — though it may already be too late. Besides, our god Fed revealed something else: they refuse to free that yatjar not only because of the riches he brings to their kingdoms, but because he is the only one who can face one of the creatures the Cynocephali are trying to wake. No sword can slice through its flesh; only massive claws and sharpened fangs stand a chance.”

“What is it called?” Leinad asked the Éniar.

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—Venel, un kofjar.

—Una bestia infernal —dijo Bec.

Como era habitual en Auxis, todos y escuchaban lo que los líderes poderosos seres decían. Era una manera de mantenerlos informados sobre los peligros que se avecinaban y eso los mantendría atentos ante las amenazas que, de una u otra manera, se harían presente si no se detenía antes a los responsables de dicho evento.

Los yatjars como Thuren eran bestias de luz. Temibles seres que a pesar de sus aspectos

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“Venel, a kofjar.”

“A hellish beast,” Bec said.

As usual in Auxis, everyone listened intently to the words of their powerful leaders. It was how they stayed informed of the dangers looming ahead, how they remained vigilant against the threats that would inevitably surface if the masters of such calamities were not stopped in time.

Yatjars like Thuren were creatures of pure light —Intimidating to behold, yet no

no representaban un peligro para el mundo, sino que protegían con celo el planeta que Daamon creó para la convivencia y conservación de sus criaturas. Por otra parte, los kofjars eran todo lo contrario. Así como los vitjars salieron de lo más oscuro de la consciencia de Daamon, estas bestias infernales también. Sed de sangre y destrucción era lo que los motivaba. La muerte y masacre satisfacía sus enfermizos deseos, pero su fin era conquistar lo que una vez perteneció a Daamon El Singular. Algunos sabios cremánticos contaban que incluso los vitjars buscaban juntar fuerzas para matar a su creador, porque cuando fueron pensados y creados se desligaron del espíritu de este. Así que la desaparición o muerte de Daamon dejaba intacto lo que creó, los planetas, las galaxias, sus pensamientos de luz y criaturas oscuras.

Pero todo esto último eran rumores.

—¿Qué se sabe de Venel? —preguntó Adam.

—Los gigantes benevolentes y los humanos antiguos dejaron escrito en algunas piedras a las afueras de Agamonk que el cuerpo de este monstruo es gelatinoso —dijo Hiulin—, que en vez de una cabeza lo que predomina es un ojo gigante, que junto a ese hay otros dos ojos más pequeños a la altura de sus hombros. La masa de la que se compone su cuerpo es, en mayor medida, la carne descompuesta de todas aquellas personas muertas que terminan siendo alimento para él. Su cerebro se oculta dentro de ese gran ojo y no tiene un solo corazón, tiene tres. Y cada persona que se traga lo hace crecer.

danger to the world. Instead, they zealously protected the planet Daamon had crafted for the coexistence and preservation of his creations. Kofjars, in contrast, were born of the same darkness that spawned the Vitjars deep within Daamon's consciousness. Just as the Vitjars had emerged from the darkest corners of Daamon's consciousness, so had these infernal beasts. Death and slaughter thrilled their sickened minds, but their greater mission was to reclaim what had once been the domain of Daamon the Singular. Some Cremantic sages even claimed that the Vitjars sought to amass their strength to kill their creator, for upon being conceived and brought into existence, they had severed themselves from his spirit. Thus, Daamon's vanishing—or his death—would leave all he had forged intact: planets, galaxies, his luminous thoughts, and his dark creatures.

But all of that, in the end, was only rumor.

“What do we actually know about Venel?” Adam asked.

“The benevolent giants and the ancient humans carved messages into stones near Agamonk,” Hiulin replied. “They described the creature's body as gelatinous, with no head—only a massive central eye. Beside it are two smaller eyes positioned at shoulder height. The mass of its body is largely made from the decomposing flesh of all the people who die and end up becoming its food. Its brain lies hidden within that enormous eye, and within their chest beat not one, but three hearts. Each person they consume fuels their growth.”

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<p>—¿Los gigantes benevolentes, dijo? — preguntó Amir.</p>	<p>“Did you say benevolent giants?” Amir asked.</p>
<p>Página 156</p> <p>—Ellos murieron hace siglos. En una caverna de la ciudadela en Agamonk está detallado, este era el lugar donde los gigantes vivían y convivían con los humanos.</p> <p>Los éniars no sabían sobre los grens, que eran estos mismos gigantes de los que Hiulin hablaba. No sabían de su despertar, y que invadían el sueño de algunos habitantes de Alhorn. En un resumen muy breve, los muchachitos que habían experimentado aquellos sueños le contaron algunas de las cosas que revelaron los grens. Como Amir no había dicho tanto de lo que los oscuros le dijeron, procedió sin cautela.</p>	<p>Page 156</p> <p>“They had been dead for centuries. Deep within a cavern under the citadel of Agamonk, the tale is inscribed—this was once the dwelling where giants lived alongside humankind.</p> <p>The Éniars were unaware of the Grens, the very same giants Hiulin spoke of. They did not know of their awakening, nor of how they slipped into the dreams of certain Alhorn residents. In short, the little guys who had experienced those dreams shared some of the things the Grens had revealed. Because Amir had shared little of what the dark ones had told him, he moved forward with no sense of caution.”</p>
<p>Página 157</p> <p>EL DIOS Y LA BESTIA</p>	<p>Page 157</p> <p>THE GOD AND THE BEAST</p>

XIV

Amir se acomodó en el centro, cerca de la fogata, rodeado por un montón de gente que apenas conocía. Ya casi oscurecía. En el fondo, los cremánticos añadían dramatismo a la anécdota del joven, ejecutando con sus tambores y flautas un cántico sereno. Pero nada ni nadie podía robarles la atención del mago, que poniendo en práctica el léxico que su padre le inculcó para las cartas que algún día le tocaría escribir, contó no solo sus sueños, sino sus pesadillas.

XIV

Amir settled down in the center, near the campfire, surrounded by a bunch of people he barely knew. Night was almost upon them. In the background, the *Cremánticos* heightened the young man's story with a tranquil hymn played on drums and flutes. But no nothing and no one could pull their attention from the magician, who, drawing on the elegant language his father had once drilled into him for the letters he would someday write, spoke of the visions that

<p>—¿Creen acaso que bajo la arena del mar hay más arena? ¿Creen que sobre este planeta solo hay estrellas y lunas? Pues hoy lo desmiento. Bajo la arena del mar descansa una criatura tan abismal que jamás terminaríamos de ver. Posiblemente, la tierra que pisamos es su lomo; quizás bajo este reino reposa su cabeza. Un grito no la espantaría, una espada no la cortaría y nuestros oídos no serían capaces de soportar ni su bostezo. Cuando él despierte, a nosotros nos tocará dormir. ¿De qué me servirá el poder si no puedo usarlo contra aquello? Y es que ni en mis sueños he podido terminar de verlo. Sus ojos escarlatas podrían fácilmente ser del tamaño de estrellas, pero el brillo que nos brindaría haría de nosotros polvo y un recuerdo que mancharía el cosmos y se dispersaría por el universo sin dejar rastros o pruebas de que existíamos.</p> <p>La gente se abrazaba, los niños lloraban y los guerreros celestiales, incluso su padre y su hermano, se notaban asustados. Fue entonces que empezó a contar lo que aquellos seres extraños le habían revelado.</p>	<p>haunted both his sleep and his waking hours.</p> <p>“Do you believe there is more sand beneath the sea’s sand? That this world knows nothing beyond stars and moons? Let me prove otherwise. Beneath the ocean floor lies a creature so immense that our eyes could never behold it in full. Perhaps the earth we walk is its back; perhaps its head slumbers beneath our realm. No scream could startle it, no sword could wound it, and our ears would shatter before enduring even its yawn. When it rises, it is we who will be forced into slumber. What value is my power if it cannot stand against something like that? Not even in my dreams have I managed to see its entirety. Its crimson eyes might rival the size of stars, and the light they shed would erase us—dust drifting through the cosmos, a memory smeared across the universe, leaving behind no sign that we ever lived.”</p> <p>The heavenly warriors, including their father and brother, were seen to be scared as people hugged, and children wept. It was then that he began to recount what those strange beings had revealed to him.”</p>
<p>Página 160</p> <p>Con lágrimas en sus ojos, sentado en una silla porque necesitaba descansar su pie dislocado, arrojaba pedacitos de madera a la fogata, y como hizo Bec la primera vez que se presentó en Twingfir, tomó el fuego y le dio forma contando:</p>	<p>Page 160</p> <p>Tears welled in his eyes. Sitting on a chair to rest his dislocated foot, he flicked small pieces of wood into the bonfire. And just as Bec had done the first time he arrived in Twingfir, he seized the flames and molded them, telling:</p>

—Su dios se llama Armon. Como dije antes, es abismal y descansa bajo el mar. Su despertar supondría la destrucción de este planeta y lo único que necesita es poder oscuro. Nuestro poder.

—¿Cómo sobreviviría si destruye el planeta al despertar?

—Hiulin, su majestad. La destrucción sería parcial, no completa. Pero su fin es mudarse a otro planeta donde pueda caminar como hacemos nosotros; un planeta enorme. Llevaría a los suyos, sus sirvientes, en un pequeño pedazo de tierra que pretenden conservar intacto para que los sobrevivientes no mueran en el viaje hacia ese otro planeta.

—Beskan —dijo Adam.

—Sí. Por eso necesitan las llaves para mantener a Thuren encerrado, es el único que puede hacer posible el viaje entre las estrellas y el vasto universo. Robar una de sus escamas de oro te daría el doble de vida y no solo eso, llegar a un planeta desierto no sería un problema si Thuren se mantiene sumiso ante el embrujo que lo apresa, dando frutos en las tierras infértiles. Como Armon es un dios no necesita de Thuren para trasladarse por el espacio, pero también por ser dios necesita a sus sirvientes para que hagan el trabajo que él no puede. Por eso no actúa por su cuenta, por eso Thuren es crucial.

“His god’s name is Armon. As I mentioned before, he’s an abyssal being who sleeps under the ocean. If he wakes, this planet will be destroyed. The only thing he needs is dark power. Our power.”

“How could he survive if waking up destroys the world?”

“Hiulin, Your Majesty—only a part of it would be destroyed, not all. His goal is to move to another world where he can walk freely as we do—an enormous world. He plans to take his own people, his servants, on a small chunk of land they intend to keep intact so the survivors won’t die on the way to that new planet.”

“Beskan,” Adam said.

“Yeah. That’s why they need the keys to keep Thuren locked away—he’s the only one capable of making travel between the stars and the vast universe possible. Taking one of his golden scales would double your lifespan, and more than that, even arriving at a barren planet wouldn’t matter if Thuren stays subdued under the spell that controls him, allowing lifeless soil to bear fruit. Since Armon is a god, he doesn’t need Thuren to move through space; but precisely because he is a god, he needs his servants to carry out the tasks he cannot. That’s why he doesn’t act alone. That’s why Thuren is essential.”

Olev hizo sonar su bastón contra el suelo, silenciando a Amir y a los músicos en el fondo. El líder cremántico estaba sentado

Olev struck his staff against the ground, silencing Amir and the musicians behind him. The cremantic leader was sitting

junto a Hiulin y Adam. Apoyó su cabeza en sus manos, que sostenían el pequeño bastón, como si estuviera cansado de oír aquella historia. Y se levantó.

El líder cremántico no era el más antiguo de todos, pero era el líder por ser el más fuerte de su raza y uno de los más fuertes en todo el planeta. En su trayectoria de vida había matado a múltiples enemigos por sí solo, y el ejército que había entrenado se mezclaba entre humanos y los de su clase, incluyendo a su esposa, Giwän y su hija,

between Hiulin and Adam. He rested his head in his hands, which held the small staff, as though he were tired of hearing that tale. Then he stood.

The cremantic leader wasn't the oldest of his people, but he was their leader because he was the strongest of his race—one of the strongest on the entire planet. In his lifetime, he had defeated countless foes on his own, and the army he had trained included humans and his own kin, among them his wife, Giwän, and his daughter.

Jilia. Él fue el encargado de aniquilar a los oceánicos que lastimaron a Ania en aquellos lejanos días, y fue una tarea que culminó por su cuenta. No temía a la muerte, lo único que quería era proteger lo que sus ancestros y su diosa le habían otorgado y detener a los que atentaban contra el mundo entero.

Antes de hablar, volvió a golpear la tierra con el bastón e hizo florecer una planta con sus hojas negras al igual que su flor, y a su alrededor dibujó un círculo y volvió a golpear la superficie por tercera vez. La planta ahora había crecido.

—Esta flor del color de su armadura morirá en unos minutos. En realidad, esta flor no tiene vida, aunque sus ojos puedan verla, aunque puedan palparla y arrancar uno a uno sus pétalos. Si esta tierra no estuviera maldita quizás tendría otro color, quizás moriría en unos años. ¿Qué es lo más importante? ¿Detener a la bruja? ¿Liberar a Thuren, el yatjar? ¿Aniquilar a los

Jilia. He was the one who wiped out the oceanics who harmed Ania in those distant days, a mission he carried out entirely on his own. Death meant nothing to him; all he sought was to safeguard what his ancestors and his goddess had entrusted to him, and to stand against those who threatened the world itself.

Before speaking, he struck the soil with his staff once more. A plant burst forth, its leaves and its lone flower pitch-black. He traced a circle around it and hit the ground a third time, stimulating the plant to grow taller.

“This flower, which matches your armor color, will fade away in a few minutes. Actually, this flower has no life, even if your eyes can see it, even if you can touch it and pluck its petals one by one. If this land were not cursed, perhaps it would have another color, perhaps it would die years from now. What matters most? Stopping the witch? Freeing Thuren, the yatjar? Destroying the

cinocéfalos, los oceánicos y a ese tal Venel? ¿Armon? ¿Por dónde empezamos? Esta planta, mi hija Jilia y mi esposa merecen vivir en un mundo pacífico; todos merecemos paz.

—Todo está ligado, señor —respondió Hiulin.

—Debemos liberar a Thuren primero —sugirió Adam.

—Les recomiendo discutir esto en privado —dijo Olev—. Como líder de este reino debo salvaguardar la calma y la paz de mi gente.

Amir quedó con palabras en la boca y, por razones que desconocía en ese momento, sintió ira al ser silenciado como si lo que dijera no tuviese importancia. Su respiración empezó a acelerarse hasta el punto de perder el control. Empezó con pequeños berrinches, como lanzar el agua pura que Hiulin había traído para intentar apagar la fogata que alumbraba la noche en el reino junto a la luz de la luna, llamando así la atención de todos.

—Ustedes no entienden. Nada puede detener a Armon porque está más despierto que nunca. Gastó su energía para crear a muchos de los oscuros en este planeta, aunque no a nosotros. Durmió con la esperanza de que se le devolviera el favor o que como agradecimiento se le trajera de vuelta.

Cynocephalus, the Oceanics, and that Venel? Armon? Where do we begin? This plant, my daughter Jilia, and my wife deserve to live in a peaceful world; we all deserve peace.”

“Everything is connected, sir,” Hiulin replied.

“We should release Thuren first,” Adam proposed.

“I advise you to speak of this privately,” Olev interjected. “As ruler of this kingdom, I must preserve the peace and serenity of my people.”

Amir swallowed his words/was left speechless and, for reasons he did not know at the time, he felt anger to be silenced, as if his words held no weight. His breath grew uneven, slipping beyond his control. His frustration surfaced in small fits—he flung the clear water Hiulin had brought, attempting to smother the bonfire that burned beside the moonlit night, instantly drawing every eye to him.

“You don’t understand. Nothing can stop Armon now; he is more awake than ever. He poured his strength into creating many of the dark ones on this world—though not us. He slept hoping the favor would be returned, or that gratitude would bring him back.”

Página 162

—Es la segunda vez que te siento más de su parte que de la nuestra, Amir, hijo de Adam. Aclara tus prioridades y a quién servirás

Page 162

“This is the second time you seem more loyal to them than to us, Amir, son of Adam. Decide where your loyalties lie and whom

porque te recuerdo que estás en mi reino. No permitiré otra traición como la que estuviste a punto de hacer.

—Lo digo porque nos buscarán—aclaró Amir con insistencia—, intentarán adquirir nuestro poder, no el de las hechiceras ni el de Alana. Nos necesitan para levantar a Armon. La traición de la que habla usted se trataba de un sacrificio en realidad, pero acepto que no pensé las cosas claramente. Si al menos me escucharan sabrían por dónde debemos empezar.

El jovencito fue uno de los que se reunió con los líderes. En la mesa redonda del ayuntamiento de Auxis, cada uno tomó un asiento. Los poetas, Bec, Hiulin, Yüghe y Olev. La mesa en el centro del ayuntamiento era de madera mágica. Con esta, Olev podía crear mapas utilizando principalmente arena de las playas, y fue de esta manera que se dibujó el continente para poder idear con mayor certidumbre el plan para detener a sus enemigos. Mientras Olev manipulaba la magia de la mesa, Adam se encargó de formar con fuego las tropas, y cómo y por dónde avanzarían.

—Liberar a Thuren primero es muy arriesgado, papá —dijo Amir—.

Tendríamos que cruzar el mar hasta llegar a Gala'nhur, que es donde está la montaña Beskan. Según el dios del mar, esta isla está ligada a él. Además, de ir allá, tendríamos que llevar a nuestros mejores soldados. Entonces, ¿quiénes protegerán estas tierras? Yo propongo que eliminemos las amenazas más cercanas en un terreno en el que

you intend to serve, for you stand in my kingdom. I will not tolerate another act of betrayal like the one you nearly carried out.”

“I’m saying this because they will come looking for us,” Amir insisted. “They will seek our power—not that of the witches or of Alana. They need us to awaken Armon. What you call betrayal was meant to be a sacrifice, though I admit my judgment was clouded. If you would only listen, you’d understand where we must begin.”

The young boy was among those who gathered with the leaders. Around the round table in Auxis’s council hall, each took their place: the poets, Bec, Hiulin, Yüghe, and Olev. The table itself, crafted from magical wood, allowed Olev to conjure maps using sand from the beaches. And in this way the continent took shape so they could devise a more certain plan to stop their enemies. While Olev manipulated the magic from the table, Adam used fire to shape the troops and determine how and where they would advance.

“Releasing Thuren first is too risky, Dad,” Amir said. “We’d have to sail across the sea to Gala'nhur, home of Mount Beskan. The sea god himself claims that island is bound to him. And if we go there, we’d need to take our best soldiers— then, leaving no one to defend these lands. I propose that we eliminate the closest threats on a ground where we can fight without worrying about being eaten by something below us.”

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<p>podamos pelear sin preocuparnos de que nos devore algo debajo de nosotros.</p> <p>—¿Pero si despiertan a Venel? Thuren es el único que puede detenerlo.</p> <p>—Sí, Leinad, también lo pensé. Pero podemos acabar con los cinocéfalos antes de que lo logren —respondió y bajó la mirada—, aunque probablemente ya sea tarde. Lo que quiero decir es que, con los cinocéfalos y Alana buscando las llaves, no nos queda de otra que pelear. Si nos lanzamos al mar, nos convertiríamos en cena y Alana se</p>	<p>“But what if Venel awakens? Only Thuren can stand against him.”</p> <p>“I know, Leinad. I’ve considered that. Yet we might still defeat the Cynocephalus before they succeed,” he murmured, and his eyes falling. “Although it may already be too late. What I mean is that with the Cynocephalus and Alana hunting for the keys, we’re left with no choice but to fight. If we take to the sea now, we’d be nothing but prey, and Alana</p>
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saldrá con la suya, destrozando todo cuanto pueda de estas tierras. Debemos al menos detenerla a ella.

Entre una sugerencia y otra llegaron a un punto medio, logrando idear un plan y dejando el resto a la voluntad de los dioses. Ellos sabían que posiblemente el resurgimiento de Venel era una distracción y no debían aventurarse a ir por Thuren. Todos los magos juntos en un bote camino a Beskan sonaba peligroso, porque todo lo que necesitaba Armon para despertar era algo de la magia oscura de los magos. La única tierra que no era peligrosa como los bosques de Minadir era la zona de la ciudadela de Agamonk, que quedaba muy cerca de Everiannil, hogar de los éniars. Y este sería el lugar donde esperarían a sus enemigos.

Al norte del continente Alghorn se encontraban los reinos del imperio y arriba de estos, a unos kilómetros, la península Edimen, hogar de los cinocéfalos y otras

will get away with it, tearing apart everything she can in these lands. We must at least stop her.”

After several suggestions back and forth, they reached a middle ground, managing to devise a plan and leaving the rest to the will of the gods. They suspected that Venel’s return was nothing more than a trick and knew they could not venture after Thuren. Sending all the mages together in a lone vessel toward Beskan would be reckless; Armon required only the faintest touch of their dark magic to awaken. The only land not as perilous as the forests of Minadir was the area near the citadel of Agamonk, close to Everiannil, homeland of the Éniars—and that would be the place where they would wait for their foes.

To the north of the Alghorn continent stretched the imperial kingdoms, and beyond them, only a few kilometers away, the Edimen Peninsula, dwelling place of the

<p>criaturas. Al sur, los bosques de Númal y Gárida. En el este estaba Tremania y el Reino Auxis, y más allá, la isla Gala'nhur, donde se encontraba la montaña más alta, Beskan; al oeste La Ciudadela, Quelsat y Everiannil. Y en el centro de todos estos, el humilde pueblo de Twingfir que se encontraba ahora en ruinas. Había otros continentes que los habitantes de Alhorn nunca habían pisado, pero los cremánticos lo llamaban <i>Olssor</i> y <i>Weinhär</i>, que se supone fueron los nombres que les dio Daamon y solo algunos ancianos inmortales, familiares de Olev y de la difunta Ania, habían visitado estas tierras siglos atrás. Y una isla a la que llamaban <i>La Zona Mística</i>, de la que tampoco se sabía mucho; todos habían quedado anonadados al ver estas desconocidas tierras dibujadas en la mesa. Siempre habían escuchado sobre <i>lo que hay más allá del mar</i>, pero verlo al menos en un conjuro fue impresionante. Solo el cremántico más antiguo de Auxis, llamado Töwenfi, había visitado La Zona Mística. Pero fue en días muy lejanos y en esos tiempos los oceánicos aún no dominaban los mares como en la actualidad.</p> <p>—Necesitamos separarnos. —Eso nunca es buena idea, Adam refutó el líder cremántico.</p>	<p>Cynocephalus and many other beings. To the south lay the forests of Númal and Gárida. To the east stretched Tremania and the Realm of Auxis, and farther still, the island of Gala'nhur, upon which rose the tallest peak, Mount Beskan. Westward lay the Citadel, Quelsat, and Everiannil. And at the heart of all these lands rested the modest village of Twingfir—now nothing but ruins. Beyond them existed continents the people of Alhorn had never walked, known to the cremántics as <i>Olssor</i> and <i>Weinhär</i>, said to be the names bestowed by Daamon himself. Only a handful of ageless elders—kin of Olev and the departed Ania—had seen those distant territories in ages long gone. There was also a solitary island, the so-called Mystic Zone, shrouded in mystery. The sight of these unknown lands sketched upon the table left everyone speechless. They had grown up with tales of “what lay past the sea,” but to behold it, even in a magical rendering, was awe-inspiring. Only Töwenfi, the eldest cremántic of Auxis, had once ventured into the Mystic Zone—back in a time when the oceanics had yet to command the seas as it nowadays.</p> <p>“We must divide our forces.” “That is never wise,” the cremantic leader replied.</p>
<p>Página 164</p> <p>—Olev, aunque Amir tiene razón, debemos conseguir las dos últimas llaves antes de que lo haga Alana. Si lo que le dijo ese oceánico es cierto, entonces tenemos asegurada la llave que guarda Milos. Faltaría la del trono de Apriaf. El único riesgo es que la demora en llegar a ambos sitios le da tiempo a los</p>	<p>Page 164</p> <p>“Olev, even if Amir is right, we must secure the last two keys before Alana does. If what that oceanic being said is true, Milos’s key is already as good as ours. The only one left is the one tied to Apriaf’s throne. The only risk is that the delay in reaching both places gives the cynocephali enough time to</p>

cinocéfalos de levantar a Venel. Yo los vi marchar y transportar una caja en dirección a los reinos del imperio. No sé qué llevaban ahí dentro, pero no podía ser nada bueno. Rezaban horribles cosas a esto, en un idioma que no conozco.

—Yo puedo ayudar —dijo Valery desde donde se escondía—. Le prometí al rey contarle todo lo que me sucedió y mi plática con los grens. Quizás pueda dárnosla voluntariamente.

Apriaf fue un hombre malvado desde que los sombríos lo poseyeron. Había matado por sí solo a muchas personas. Llegaba al punto de hacerlo por diversión, y el nuevo personaje que se presentó ante ellos parecía ser otra persona, como si el sombrío que lo subyugaba hubiese salido por fin de su cuerpo o se hubiese desvanecido entre los escombros de su conciencia o su alma.

El peligro en el que ahora se estaba metiendo la jovencita hizo a sus padres llorar con anticipo, pues la incertidumbre los acechaba porque no entendían el papel tan importante que jugaba su pequeña en aquellos preparativos para la guerra. La abrazaban con intensidad, aprovechando que aún podían hacerlo. Si fue escogida por los gigantes benevolentes para tal labor, entonces haría su voluntad. Iría acompañada por Bec, Amir, Leinad, Andi, Pol y con suerte algún otro aventurero se sumaría.

Adam quería asegurarse de que los aliados llegaran a Everiannil y por eso marcharía con ellos. Y también quiso viajar con prontitud para así ayudar con los

awaken Venel. I saw them marching away, carrying a crate toward the empire's kingdoms. Whatever they carried inside wasn't anything good. They chanted chilling prayers over it in a tongue I'd never heard."

"I can help," Valery said softly from where she hid. "I swore to the king I'd tell him everything—what happened to me and what the Grens revealed. Maybe she'll decide to hand the key over willingly."

Apriaf had been a bad man ever since the Shadowed took possession of him. He had killed many people on his own, sometimes even for sport. Yet the new figure who now stood before them seemed like someone entirely different, as if the Shadowed that had subdued him had finally left his body or dissolved into the rubble of his consciousness—or his soul.

The danger the young girl was about to face brought her parents to tears. Uncertainty hovered over them, for they still couldn't grasp the vital role their daughter played in the looming war. They held her as tightly as they could, cherishing every remaining moment. If the benevolent giants had chosen her, then she would carry out their will. She would travel with Bec, Amir, Leinad, Andi, Pol, and hopefully another adventurer would join them along the way.

Adam wanted to ensure their allies reached Everiannil, and so he would march with them. He also wanted to depart early to help Hiulin, Tirvein, and Olev with the

<p>preparativos a Hiulin, Tirvein y Olev. Entonces, terminada esa tarea, marcharía a Gárida por la última llave.</p> <p>La verdadera preocupación del mago era el silencio que su amigo coleccionista había guardado, porque le había contado sobre la llave que Bec le robó a Alana y que ahora tenía en su posesión; Adam le habló sobre Thuren... y Milos nunca mencionó que él también tenía</p>	<p>preparations. Once he finished that task, he would head to Gárida in search of the final key.</p> <p>What weighed most on the wizard's mind was the silence of his collector friend. Adam had already told him about the key Bec stole from Alana, now in their possession, and he had explained everything about Thuren... yet Milos never revealed that he, too, owned</p>
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una de esas llaves. No sabía si se lo había ocultado a propósito o si en la montaña de cosas que poseía había olvidado que existía tal llave.

Antes de separarse de sus hijos para cada quien cumplir su misión, Adam les obsequió las cartas amaras, un cristal verde a cada uno y les explicó cómo usar estos artefactos, y de dentro de su capa sacó un pequeño libro que guardaba el nombre de algunos conjuros, escritos por Ter. Fue ella la que le ayudó a sacar la magia a las cartas, y aunque ya de memoria se las sabía, Adam no quería deshacerse de una de las pocas cosas que contenían aún el legado de su esposa, pero ahora les pertenecía a sus hijos. Por último, les ordenó dejar la llave a la esposa de Olev, prohibiéndoles llevarla a la guerra, donde Alana podría robarla con facilidad.

Por otra parte, Hiulin y sus soldados, y Olev y sus guerreros, se prepararían para *La Gran Guerra* después de más de quinientos años. La poca paz que podía respirarse en el continente ahora se contaminaba con los preparativos. Las hogueras se encenderían

one of those keys. He couldn't tell whether she had hidden it intentionally or if, buried under the countless things she owned, she had simply forgotten the key even existed.

Before parting from his two children so each could set out on their mission, Adam gifted them the Amaras cards and a green crystal each. He taught them how to use these artifacts, and then pulled from his cloak a small book containing spells penned by Ter. She had been the one to help him awaken the cards' magic, and though Adam knew every spell by memory, he couldn't bring himself to discard one of the last remnants of his wife's legacy. Now, however, it belonged to his children. As a final order, he told them to leave the key with Olev's wife, forbidding them from taking it to war, where Alana could easily seize it.

Elsewhere, Hiulin and his soldiers and Olev with his warriors were preparing for the Great War—the first in more than five centuries. Whatever faint peace lingered in the continent was now fading under the weight of preparations. Fires would blaze as

<p>para quemar el metal hasta que con martillos les dieran forma y filo a ambos lados. Los carpinteros dejarían de confeccionar platos de madera y estatuillas de juguetes para los niños y pasarían a fabricar arcos, flechas y algunos carruajes de guerra.</p> <p>En Everiannil se tomaron cinco días para cortar las mejores maderas y metales para la elaboración de las armas y las trampas. El <i>seledes</i> era un árbol de tronco oscuro, el cual los antiguos utilizaban para la hechura (con fuego y magia) de sus arcos más potentes; eran inquebrantables. El <i>galu</i> era una madera áspera que era usada para la confección del mango de las espadas y cuchillas. Proporcionaba un agarre más fuerte y no maltrataba la mano de los guerreros, y era usada para hacer las monturas de caballos. El <i>roble</i> se utilizaba para las carrozas por su consistencia y facilidad en el manejo de estas. Y finalmente, el <i>hanes</i>, una madera tan fuerte y la que más magia contenía en su médula. Era la que permitía a los magos alcanzar un nivel de fuerza superior al de toda raza existente en el planeta Trier. Incluso los dioses temían la oscuridad que obtenían estos seres de preciosos ojos e incalculable fuerza. Los cetros que Alana y Olev poseían no</p>	<p>metal was heated, hammered, and sharpened on both sides. Carpenters would abandon their usual craft of wooden dishes and toy figurines, turning instead to the making of bows, arrows, and a handful of war carriages.</p> <p>In Everiannil, they spent five days cutting the finest wood and metal to craft their weapons and traps. <i>Seledes</i> wood, with its dark trunk, had long been used by the ancients—shaped through fire and magic—into their most formidable bows, renowned for being unbreakable. The rough-textured <i>galu</i> wood was ideal for crafting the handles of swords and knives, giving warriors a firm, comfortable grip. It was also used in the making of horse saddles. Oak served for the construction of carriages due to its reliability and ease of handling. And then there was <i>hanes</i>, the strongest of all woods and the one whose core held the greatest reservoir of magic. It granted mages the ability to surpass the strength of any race on the planet Trier. Even the gods feared the darkness wielded by these beings with radiant eyes and immeasurable power. The scepters held by Alana and Olev were not</p>
<p>Página 166</p> <p>fueron hechos de ninguno de estos árboles mágicos, simplemente eran un conductor de energía que les hacía aún más fácil concentrar su magia. Y en esto último Olev vacilaba, porque su magia consistía en absorber vidas, cosa que Los Sanadores aprendieron de los cremánticos. Pero el líder</p>	<p>Page 166</p> <p>crafted from any of those magical trees; they were simply channels of raw energy, tools that made it effortless for her to gather her magic. This last point troubled Olev, for his own power was bound to the taking of life—a craft the Healers had inherited from the cremantics. But the ruler of Auxis was no</p>

de Auxis no era una marioneta de su poder, sino que se limitaba a reprimirlo como su diosa Priclath les ordenó; aunque en la guerra las cosas podían cambiar.

Mientras los benévolos se preparaban para la guerra, los rivales ya tenían todo preparado. El reino Jukrol, gobernado por Alana, hizo alianza con Mitrios, rey de Khandria, que aceptó por diversión. No le importaban los propósitos de la reina, solo quería sentir el salpicar de la sangre enemiga en su rostro al blandir su espada y, de esa manera, por fin podría vengarse de los cremánticos por el rechazo de Jilia de convertirse en su esposa. Y como si fuera poco, convenció a los gigantes para que se unieran también; solo tuvo que mencionar que la pelea sería contra los éniars, seres que ellos detestaban. Apriaf recibió la invitación, pero se negó. Él sabía que, al darle la espalda a la bruja, ella no dudaría en traicionarle. Ellos no se habían enterado aún sobre el gran cambio del rey de Preen y la noticia no les caería muy bien, pues siendo Preen el reino más grande y el principal del imperio Karf, que pelearan en su contra era una gran desventaja.

Apriaf esperaba con ansias la llegada de Valery. No le importaba nada más que volver a comunicarse con los grens para que le ayudaran con las respuestas a sus dudas. Miles de ideas vagaban por su cabeza y descuidó incluso a su reina, hasta el punto en que dejó de compartir la misma cama con ella. Su lugar era el trono, su miedo era perderlo y sobre aquella silla autoritaria reposaba una de las llaves que se precisaban para la liberación del yatjar.

puppet of such a gift; he suppressed it faithfully, as commanded by the goddess Priclath... though war could unravel even the strongest vows.

While the benevolent factions readied themselves, their adversaries were already poised for conflict. Jukrol, under Alana's reign, had secured an alliance with Mitrios, king of Khandria—a man who agreed only for the fun. The queen's motives mattered little to him; he longed for the sting of battle, the spatter of blood, and the chance to avenge Jilia's refusal to become his bride. And as if this were not enough, he rallied the giants as well, merely by telling them the fight would be against the *éniars*, whom they loathed beyond measure. Apriaf, though invited, declined the offer. He understood well that denying the witch would earn him her treachery. Yet none among them had heard of the great turning of the king of Preen—news that, once revealed, would sit poorly with them, for Preen was the mightiest kingdom in the Karf Empire, and having such a power as an enemy spelled dire consequences.

Apriaf looked forward to the arrival of Valery. Nothing concerned him anymore except reconnecting with the *grens* and extracting from them the answers he longed for. His mind wandered through countless possibilities, he forgot even his queen, to the point of no longer sharing the same bed. His only place of comfort was the throne—yet it was also what he feared losing. And atop that commanding seat lay one of the keys needed to free the Yatjar.

<p>El vitjar que intentaban despertar, el que vivía en las profundidades y creó mitos y leyendas sobre el terror que se le debía tener, el que por palabras de algunos testigos era de un tamaño abismal e inconcebible para todo entendimiento razonable, Armon, era lo que los oceánicos buscaban liberar. El kofjar, Venel, la bestia gelatinosa, era lo que los cinocéfalos intentaban revivir. Estos dos tenían la misión de devastar</p>	<p>The Vitjar they sought to awaken—the creature dwelling in the deep, the one that birthed myths and tales of the fear it demanded, whose size was said by witnesses to be immense beyond comprehension—Armon, was the being the oceanics wished to free. The Kofjar, Venel, the gelatinous beast, was the one the Cynocephalus intended to resurrect. Together, these two were meant to bring devastation upon</p>
<p>Página 167</p> <p>un mundo al que poco le faltaba por extinguirse. Humillar a las razas demoníacas manteniéndolas en exilio, condenaba al resto del mundo porque la furia acumulada por estos malvados era tal que no dudarían en acabar con todo lo que se les atravesara en el camino.</p> <p>El dios y la bestia dormían aún, y así debían permanecer por el bien del universo entero.</p>	<p>Page 167</p> <p>a world that was barely clinging to existence. Humiliating the demonic races and keeping them in exile doomed the rest of creation, for the wrath they had long carried would not hesitate to destroy anything that dared stand in their way.</p> <p>The god and the beast slumbered still—may they never wake, for the safety of all that exists.</p>

Analysis of the Translation Techniques

Translations Techniques Implemented

1. Translation Technique: **Literal**

It is also known as word-for-word translation, is a technique in which the translator transfers the source text (ST) into the target text (TT) by maintaining the same lexical items, grammatical structures, and word order as closely as possible. This technique is generally used when the source and target languages share strong structural and semantic similarities, allowing for a direct correspondence without distorting meaning. However, scholars agree that true literal translation is relatively rare, as most words do not have a single, fixed equivalent across languages and cultural contexts (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995; Newmark, 1988).

Example #1 Page 95

SL: La noche anterior, Valery descansaba en el pasto...

↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

TL: The night before, Valery rested on the grass...

Analysis: This example illustrates a clear case of literal translation, as each lexical unit in the source language has a direct and natural equivalent in the target language. The phrase “La noche anterior” is translated as “The night before”, preserving both meaning and syntactic order. Similarly, the verb “descansaba” is rendered as “rested”, maintaining tense and aspect appropriately in English. The prepositional phrase “en el pasto” becomes “on the grass”, which is both grammatically correct and idiomatic in the target language. Because Spanish and English share compatible narrative structures in this context, the literal technique works effectively without loss of meaning or stylistic distortion.

Example #2 Page 147

SL: La última llave está escondida en Preen.

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ TL:

The last key is hidden in Preen.

Analysis: In this case, literal translation is again successfully applied. The noun phrase “La última llave” corresponds directly to “The last key”, preserving determiners and adjective placement according to English syntax. The passive construction “está escondida” is translated as “is hidden”, maintaining both grammatical voice and semantic content. Additionally, the proper noun “Preen” is transferred almost identically as “Preen”, reflecting a minimal orthographic adaptation often used in literary translation to preserve the fictional or invented nature of place names. Overall, the sentence demonstrates how literal translation can be effective when semantic equivalence and grammatical compatibility exist between the two languages.

Translation Technique:

2. **Calque**

Definition: It is described as a literal translation of the components of a word or phrase. Preserving the structure of the original expression. Calques are common when both languages share similar syntactic or metaphorical patterns, allowing literal replication without sounding unnatural. According to the Academy Publication analysis of literal translation techniques, calques are effective when “both the structure and semantics can be mapped directly onto the target language without distortion”.

Example #1 Page 152

SL: Hiulin vio los hilos parasitarios enterrarse en la tierra...

TL: Hiulin watched as the parasitic threads dug into the soil...

Analysis: Borrowing and calque may become lexicalized (fixed) in the TL over time (Translation Procedures: The technical Component of the Translation Process, 2014, p. 11). In this case “hilos parasitarios” “the parasitic threads” the Spanish syntactic and semantic structure is maintained word-for-word in English. Both languages allow the same imagery and structure, the calque remains natural, making this a faithful and effective literal transfer.

Example #2 Page 132

SL: mientras que los muchachos lo siguieron cabizbajos

TL: While the boys trailed after him, downcast

Analysis: It utilizes the calque technique to bridge the semantic and structural gap between the Spanish term “cabizbajos” and its English counterpart “downcast.” The source term is a compound adjective formed by the words “cabeza” (head) and “bajo” (low), which literally describes a physical posture used to represent an emotional state of sadness or defeat. The English translation “downcast” functions as a calque of expression because it mirrors this exact internal logic, combining a directional prefix with a verb of position to achieve the same metaphorical result.

Translation Technique:

3. **Transposition**

Definition: It is a procedure that involves replacing one word class or grammatical structure with another without changing the meaning of the message. According to Vinay and Darbelnet (1995, p. 36), transposition consists of “replacing one word class by another without changing the meaning of the message”. This technique can be either obligatory, where the target language grammar demands the change, or optional, where the translator chooses it for stylistic reasons to make the text flow more naturally.

Example #1

SL: En ese momento solo quería sentirse segura.

TL: All she wanted right then was a sense of safety.

Analysis: The Spanish verbal phrase “sentirse segura” (verb + adjective) is transformed into the English noun phrase “a sense of safety” (noun + prepositional phrase). While the Spanish version focuses on the state of “feeling,” the English translation shifts the focus to the “concept” of safety. This change makes the sentence sound more idiomatic in English, providing a more literary and evocative tone than a literal translation like “wanted to feel safe.”

Example #2

SL: pero les alcanzaba para seguir órdenes y actuar instintivamente para reproducirse o alimentarse.

TL: Yet sufficient to obey commands and to move by the raw dictates of hunger and reproduction.

Analysis: Newmark (1988) describes transposition (often referred to as a “shift”) as a translation procedure involving a change in the grammar from SL to TL. This may include changes from the singular to the plural, a change when a specific SL structure does not exist in the TL, or a change of an SL verb to a TL noun (p. 85). Transposition is essential because a literal, word-for-word translation often results in a “translationese” style that feels clunky or unidiomatic to native speakers. The Spanish infinitive verbs “reproducirse o alimentarse” (to reproduce or to feed oneself) are transposed into the nouns “hunger and reproduction.” These shifts elevate the register of the text, moving from a description of actions in the Source Language to a description of abstract forces in the Target Language.

Translation Technique:

4. Modulation

Definition: It is described as a shift in cognitive categories or a change in the point of view. “A variation of the form of the message, obtained by a change in the point of view” (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995, p. 36). This technique is employed when a literal or even a transposed translation results in a statement that is grammatically correct but does not sound natural or idiomatic in the target language. It allows the translator to convey the same phenomenon through a different mental lens, such as using the “cause for effect” or the “part for the whole.”

Example #1

SL: Ahora, en su ausencia...

TL: Now, without his presence...

Analysis: This example utilizes a specific type of modulation known as the negated contrary or opposite perspective. While the Source Language (SL) uses the noun “ausencia” (absence), the Target Language (TL) shifts the focus to its opposite, “presence,” and negates it with the preposition “without.” Instead of a direct equivalent like “in his absence,” the translator chooses to highlight the lack of presence. This shift in perspective provides a different stylistic weight to the sentence, often used to emphasize the void left by a character more vividly.

Example #2

SL: parecía cuarenta años menor que antes...

TL: He looked four decades younger...

Analysis: In this instance, the modulation involves a change of unit or interval. The SL expresses the time span using the specific number of years (“cuarenta años”), whereas the TL shifts the perspective to a larger chronological unit (“four decades”). This change is often made to achieve a more dramatic or literary effect. In English, grouping years into decades can sound more sweeping and impressive than the literal count, shifting the reader’s focus from a simple calculation to a more significant period of time.

Translation Technique:

5. Addition

Definition: Often referred to as amplification or expansion, is a translation procedure where the translator introduces new linguistic elements or information in the Target Language (TL) that were not explicitly present in the Source Language (SL). Amplification involves “to introduce details that are not formulated in the ST: information, explicative paraphrasing” (Molina and Albir, 2002, p. 509). This technique is typically employed to bridge cultural gaps, clarify ambiguous concepts, or ensure that the target audience achieves the same level of comprehension as the original readers. Unlike mere wordiness, professional addition serves a functional purpose, such as compensating for a lack of specialized knowledge in the target culture or fulfilling the grammatical requirements of the target language.

Example #1

SL: ¿Cómo fue entonces que la muchacha despertó en la playa?

TL: Questions assailed everyone: How had that girl woken up on the beach?

Analysis: In this case, the translator adds new lexical material that is not explicitly present in the source text. The original sentence “¿Cómo fue entonces que la muchacha despertó en la playa?” is a direct question. However, in the target text, the clause “Questions assailed everyone:” is introduced, which does not appear in the source language. This represents an expansion of information to clarify context or intensify narrative effect. The core question (“How had that girl woken up on the beach?”) maintains the original meaning, but the added introductory phrase provides additional narrative framing. Since the translator inserts extra semantic content without changing the original perspective or conceptual viewpoint.

Example #2

SL: Imaginaba a su diminuto cuerpo en el vasto universo, tomando las estrellas en sus manos porque, en su inocencia, el tamaño de las estrellas era el mismo que el que veían sus ojos desde la tierra en la que se acostaba.

TL: She imagined her tiny body gravitating in the vast universe, taking the huge spheres of gas in her hands thanks to that in her innocence, the size of the bright stars were the same as what their eyes saw from the earth on which she lay.

Translation Technique:

Analysis: This example demonstrates a more complex use of addition, often called stylistic or descriptive amplification. The translator adds several elements—“gravitating,” “huge spheres of gas,” and “bright”—which are not present in the Spanish source text. Thus, the word “gravitating” adds a sense of physical motion and weightlessness to the scene. Then, the phrase “huge spheres of gas” serves as an explicative addition that contrasts the child’s innocent perspective with a scientific reality and it is also used to avoid repetition, heightening the poetic irony. To end up, the adjective “bright” emphasizes the visual quality of the stars.

6. Reduction / Omission

Definition: frequently referred to as reduction or deletion, is a translation strategy where certain elements of the Source Language (SL) are intentionally excluded from the Target Language (TL). Omission is often employed when “the meaning conveyed by a particular item or expression is not vital enough to the development of the text to justify distracting the reader with lengthy explanations” (Baker 2018, p. 42). This technique is not about losing essential information but rather about streamlining the text to avoid redundancy, maintain stylistic flow, or adhere to the grammatical and cultural norms of the target audience. In many cases, information is omitted because it is already implied by the context or because its inclusion would sound unnatural in the TL.

Example #1

SL: por eso entrenaban desde muy pequeños y nunca dejaban de hacerlo.

TL: so they trained from a very young age and never stopped.

Analysis: In this example — “por eso entrenaban desde muy pequeños y nunca dejaban de hacerlo” → “so they trained from a very young age and never stopped” — the phrase “de hacerlo” is omitted since English does not require explicit repetition for clarity. Munday (2016) notes that reduction helps maintain naturalness in the TL by eliminating redundancy that is acceptable in the SL but stylistically awkward in the TL. Thus, this translation demonstrates an effective application of reduction to produce a fluent and idiomatic English sentence.

Example #2

SL: Una niña se le acercó y le ofreció una bebida.

TL: A young girl offered him a drink.

Analysis: In this example, the translator utilizes the omission technique by removing the phrase “se le acercó” (approached him). The deletion of the physical movement is justified in English, the act of offering something to another person inherently implies that the giver has already approached the recipient, making the explicit mention of the movement redundant. By omitting this preparatory

Translation Technique:
action, the translator creates a more direct and fluid sentence that focuses on the core interaction rather than a mechanical, step-by-step report of the character's physical positioning.

7. **Equivalence**

Definition: Equivalence is a procedure that “reproduces the same situation as in the original, using completely different wording” (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958). This technique is typical for idioms, emotional expressions, or fixed cultural phrases whose literal translation would sound unnatural or lose pragmatic force. Furthermore, Equivalence is one of the best-known procedures described by Vinay & Darbelnet in their foundational work *Stylistique comparée du français et de l’anglais*, where they define it as the technique that “reproduces the same situation as the original by using an entirely different wording

Example #1 Page 96 SL:

hasta pescar un resfriado.

TL: enough to catch a chill/cold.

Analysis: In this instance, the translator employs equivalence by addressing the idiomatic use of the verb “pescar” (literally “to fish”). In Spanish, the collocation for acquiring an illness is often “pescar,” whereas in English, the natural idiomatic counterpart is “to catch.” If the translator had used literal translation (“until fishing a cold”), the meaning would be lost or sound bizarre to an English speaker. According to Vinay and Darbelnet, equivalence is “functional”; it seeks to provoke the same reaction in the TL reader as the SL reader. By choosing “catch,” the translator identifies the situational equivalent of how one “acquires” a cold in both cultures, despite the different metaphors (fishing vs. Catching) used in the lexicon.

Example #2 Page 153

SL: No te di esa arma para tirártelo en cara.

Translation Technique:

TL: I didn't craft that weapon to fling it up in your face.

Analysis: This translation avoids literalness and instead reproduces the communicative function. The English expression is not a literal copy but carries the same emotional intensity and interpersonal meaning, which its meaning is to reproach something to someone else. This follows the principle described by Baker (1992), who states that idiomatic meaning must be transferred "on the level of function rather than form." In this case, the TL phrase successfully mirrors the emotional intention of the SL, demonstrating a strong application of the equivalence technique.

8. **Borrowing**

Definition: consisting of the direct transfer of a source language (SL) word into the target language (TL) without modification. As defined by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995), borrowing is often used to overcome a "lacuna" (a lexical gap) where the target language lacks a corresponding term, or to introduce a specific "local color" and stylistic flavor to the translation. In many cases, these terms are italicized or placed in quotation marks to signify their foreign origin and to maintain the cultural integrity of the source text (Molina & Albir, 2002).

Example #1

SL: y también del trance en el que estaba Amir,

TL: the deep trance afflicting Amir.

Analysis: The term "trance" functions as a borrowing that originates from the Old French word *trance* (meaning a passage or departure), which was derived from the Latin *transire*. Although the word has become integrated into the Spanish and English lexicon, it is treated as a borrowing in this translation because the translator retains the Spanish nuance of a "critical moment" or a "state of suspension". According to Hatim and Munday (2004), borrowing is frequently used when a translator wants to retain the precise nuance of a psychological or spiritual state that might be diluted by a more common synonym. By keeping "trance" in the TL, the translator ensures that the reader perceives the exact state of mind described in the original Spanish text, preserving the internal consistency of the character's experience.

Example #2

Translation Technique:

SL: El galu era una madera áspera que era usada para la confección del mango de las espadas y cuchillas.

TL: The rough-textured galu wood was ideal for crafting the handles of swords and knives, giving warriors a firm, comfortable grip.

Analysis: This example demonstrates a classic use of borrowing to preserve cultural identity. The word “galu” belongs to the Guna dialect (an indigenous language of Panama and Colombia). In everyday Guna Yala usage, it refers to the white cane walls of a house, but in this literary context, it identifies a specific type of wood used for weaponry. There is no direct English equivalent for “galu” because it is a culture-specific item (a realium). Translating it as “cane” or “wood” would result in a loss of the specific cultural heritage associated with Guna craftsmanship.

Third Chapter

3.1 Challenges

Challenges	Solutions
Lack of equivalent terminology: Many of the magical concepts, spells, and invented creatures in the novel had no existing equivalent in English, which made it difficult to choose terms that preserved both the meaning and the imaginative tone of the original text.	Use of creative and context-based equivalence: When a magical term lacked an English counterpart, I analyzed its function in the story and crafted an English version that preserved both its meaning and its fantastical atmosphere, or kept the original Spanish word when it contributed to world-building.
Wordplay, double meanings, and rhythm: The text occasionally relied on puns, playful phrasing, and rhythmic patterns that were deeply tied to Spanish sound and structure, making them especially difficult to reproduce faithfully in English.	Recreation of stylistic devices: When dealing with wordplay or rhythmic structures, I prioritized reproducing the intended emotional or humorous effect rather than the literal form, crafting new English phrases that served the same narrative purpose.
Time constraints: The overall length of the novel, combined with the need to maintain internal consistency in names, magical terms, and narrative style, created significant time pressure and demanded disciplined organization throughout the project.	Implementation of a disciplined schedule: To manage time effectively, I set realistic daily and weekly goals that allowed me to progress steadily while still having enough space for revision, reflection, and quality control.

3.2 Conclusions

This translation project focuses on the English rendering of *Los Poetas de Twingfir*, a Spanish-language fantasy novel centered on magic, poetry, and an invented linguistic world. The main aim of the project was to produce an accurate, coherent, and stylistically faithful translation that preserves the narrative voice, maintains the internal logic of the magical universe, and remains accessible to an English-speaking readership. In doing so, the project also sought to demonstrate the translator's ability to analyze linguistic, stylistic, and cultural challenges and apply appropriate translation strategies to resolve them.

The methodological approach outlined in Chapter 2 emphasized an analytical and strategy-based process. The work relied on comparative linguistic analysis, genre-specific considerations for fantasy literature, and targeted translation techniques such as modulation, transposition, and adaptation. Particular attention was given to the invented language and idiomatic expressions within the novel, requiring compensation, creative equivalence, and careful semantic interpretation. These methods helped identify structural asymmetries between Spanish and English, clarify ambiguous syntax, and address cultural references that lacked direct equivalents. As a result, the methodology provided a flexible but systematic framework through which translation decisions could be justified and evaluated.

Overall, the translation can be considered successful in meeting the project's objectives. The final English version maintains the tone, rhythm, and imaginative essence of the original, while providing clarity and narrative fluidity in the target language. The project contributes an accessible English adaptation of a fantasy work that had not previously been translated, expanding its potential readership and offering an academically grounded example of translation practice. It also serves as a demonstration of the translator's competency in handling complex linguistic structures, invented terminology, and creative literary elements. In this sense, the project not only fulfills its academic purpose but also adds value to the study and practice of literary translation.

3.3 Recommendations

- **Planning and Time Management:** Students should create a strict and realistic schedule before starting their thesis on translating a book. The schedule should include time for reading, translating, revising, and editing the text. It is important to divide the work into small weekly goals so the process does not become overwhelming. A well-organized plan helps maintain consistency and prevents rushing near the deadline. Proper time management also allows students to focus on improving the quality of their translation.
- **Careful Selection of the Book:** Choosing the right book is one of the most important steps in a translation thesis. Students should select a book that matches their language level and academic interests. It is advisable to choose a text that is not extremely complex but still offers enough material for analysis. The book should also contain cultural or linguistic elements that can be discussed in the thesis. Taking enough time to evaluate different options will help ensure the project is manageable and meaningful.
- **Deep Reading and Understanding:** Reading the book several times before translating is highly recommended. The first reading should focus on understanding the general story and themes. During the following readings, students should pay attention to vocabulary, tone, style, and cultural references. This process helps them identify difficult sections and potential translation challenges. A deep understanding of the text will lead to a more accurate and natural translation.
- **Research and Use of Reliable Sources:** Students should support their translation with thorough research. Consulting dictionaries, academic articles, and translation studies can improve the accuracy of their work. It is also useful to analyze how professional translators handle similar texts. Taking notes about translation decisions can later help when writing the theoretical section of the thesis. Using reliable sources strengthens both the translation and the academic quality of the project.
- **Revision and Feedback:** After completing the first translation draft, students should dedicate time to revising their work carefully. Comparing the translation with the original text helps identify mistakes or inconsistencies. It is also beneficial to ask professors or classmates for feedback. External opinions can reveal problems that the translator might not notice. Multiple revisions will improve clarity, style, and overall quality of the final thesis.

3.4 Glossary

	S.T	Definición	T.T	Meaning
1	Aberrante	Aquello que se desvía de lo normal o aceptado, resultando extraño o anormal.	Grotesque	Refers to something bizarre, unnatural, or disturbingly ugly in a way that deviates from the norm.
2	Acechar	Observar o seguir a alguien o algo de manera sigilosa, generalmente con intención de ataque o captura.	Stalk / Track	To follow or observe someone or something stealthily, often with intent to capture or harm.
3	Aguijones	Órgano puntiagudo que poseen algunos animales para picar e inyectar veneno.	Sting	A sharp organ used by certain animals to pierce and inject venom.
4	Artimañas	Engaños o estrategias astutas utilizadas para lograr un objetivo.	Tricks	Clever or deceitful actions used to achieve a goal.
5	Balbuceo	Hablar de manera poco clara, titubeante o entrecortada.	Muttering	Refers to speaking in a low, unclear, or barely audible manner.
6	Benevolentes	Describe a una persona que actúa con bondad, buena intención y deseo de ayudar.	Benevolents	Describes someone who is kind and well-meaning, showing goodwill toward others.
7	Blemms	Criaturas míticas descritas como humanos sin cabeza, con el rostro en el pecho.	Blemmyes	Mythical creatures described as headless humans with faces located on their chest.
8	Cabalgar	Montar y desplazarse sobre un animal, generalmente un caballo.	Ride	To sit on and control the movement of an animal, typically a horse.

9	Cabizbajos	Describe a una persona triste, desanimada o con la cabeza inclinada por desánimo.	Crestfallen / downcast	Refers to feeling sad, disappointed, or dejected.
10	Capa	Una prenda larga y suelta que se lleva sobre los hombros para cubrir el cuerpo.	Cloak	A loose outer garment worn over clothes, typically fastened at the neck.
11	Carne de muerto	Cuerpo sin vida de un animal o restos de un cadáver en descomposición.	Carcass	Refers to the dead body of an animal, especially one that is decaying or prepared for food.
12	Cuentacuentos	Persona que narra cuentos o historias, generalmente de forma oral.	Storytellers	People who tell or narrate stories, especially in an engaging or traditional way.
13	Descaminado	Que se ha desviado del camino correcto, ya sea físicamente o moralmente.	Astray	Away from the correct path or direction; misguided.
14	Desdichado	Persona muy desgraciada, infeliz o que sufre grandes penas.	Wretched	Describes someone in a very unhappy or unfortunate condition.
15	Desenfrenadamente	De manera descontrolada, sin límites ni moderación.	Wildly	In an uncontrolled, excessive, or unrestrained manner.
16	Despavorido	Que siente un miedo muy intenso o pánico.	Terrified	Someone who struck with overwhelming shock, horror, or amazement.

17	Elogio	Expresión de aprobación o admiración hacia alguien o algo.	Praise	The expression of approval or admiration for someone or something.
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18	Embrollo	Situación confusa, complicada o difícil de resolver.	Mess	A state of disorder, untidiness, or dirtiness, often referring to a confusing, complex, or failed situation.
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19	Entrecerrar	Cerrar a medias o de forma incompleta los ojos, párpados, o aberturas como puertas y ventanas (entornar). Es una acción común para enfocar mejor la visión, reducir el paso de luz excesiva o adormecerse.	To squint	To partly close your eyes to see better or block bright light, often used when focusing on distant or tiny objects, or to express suspicion.
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20	Estatuillas	Figura de pequeño tamaño, generalmente tridimensional, elaborada de materiales como cerámica, madera, metal o piedra, y suele representar personas, animales o figuras abstractas.	Figurines / statuettes	A small, molded, or carved statue, typically representing a person, animal, or character used for decoration, display, or collecting.
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21	Estrepitoso	Que causa un ruido fuerte o estruendoso; también puede referirse a algo escandaloso o muy notable.	Sharply	In a sudden, intense, or abrupt manner; often producing a strong effect or sound.
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22	Exilio	Separación de una persona de la tierra en que vive, generalmente por motivos políticos.	Exile	The state of being barred from one's native country, typically for political or punitive reasons.
23	Fehaciente	Describe algo verdadero, fidedigno, auténtico o	Undeniable	Unable to be denied or disputed; clearly true or certain.

		indiscutible, que da fe o prueba de un hecho de manera indudable.		
24	Hocico	Parte alargada de la cara de algunos animales donde están la nariz y la boca.	Snout	The projecting nose and mouth of an animal.
25	Infestar	Invadir un lugar en gran número, especialmente animales o insectos.	Swarm	To move in large numbers or to be filled with a large number of organisms.
26	Lengua oscura	Language that is obscure, unclear, or difficult to understand.	Dark language	Language that is obscure, unclear, or difficult to understand.
27	Lóbrego	Lugar o ambiente oscuro, tenebroso, sombrío o lúgubre, a menudo asociado con el miedo, la tristeza o la melancolía.	Gloomy	A dark, poorly lit, or depressing atmosphere, often characterized by grey, overcast weather or a sad, pessimistic mood.
28	Mofa	Burla o acción de ridiculizar a alguien.	Taunt	A remark made in order to anger, wound, or provoke someone.

29	Mohosa	Cubierto de moho o musgo debido a la humedad o al paso del tiempo, lo que le da una apariencia deteriorada, vieja o descuidada.	Mossy	Cover with moss or mold. It describes food, objects, or materials left in damp conditions, often conveying a sense of decay or poor storage.
30	Opérculos	Estructuras anatómicas que funcionan como una tapa o cubierta que protege una abertura en	Opercula	Corneous or calcareous anatomical structures attached to the foot of many

		el cuerpo de ciertos organismos.		sea snails and some terrestrial gastropods.
31	Penumbra	Zona de sombra parcial donde la luz está presente pero reducida.	Dimness	Refers to a condition of reduced brightness or faint light. It describes environments where illumination is weak or partially obscured, producing a shadowy or lowlight atmosphere.
32	Presa	Ser vivo que es cazado y consumido por otro, conocido como depredador.	Prey	Refers to organisms that are hunted and consumed by predators.

33	Procesión	Desplazamiento organizado de personas que caminan juntas siguiendo una ruta determinada, generalmente con fines religiosos, ceremoniales o culturales.	Procession	An organized, formal, or ceremonial forward movement of people or vehicles, often in a line, commonly seen in parades, funerals, or religious events.
34	Punzadas	Sensaciones breves y agudas de dolor que se perciben como pinchazos en alguna parte del cuerpo.	Twinges	A sudden, sharp, and usually brief, stab of physical pain or an emotional pang, such as guilt or regret.
35	Recorrido	Trayecto o camino que una persona, vehículo o animal sigue para desplazarse de un lugar a otro.	Journey	The process of traveling from one place to another, typically covering a long distance or

				duration, often by land, air, or sea.
36	Refunfuñar	Quejarse o murmurar con descontento, generalmente en voz baja.	Grumble	Complaining in a low, sullen, or discontented manner, often about minor issues.
37	Rígido	Describe algo que es duro, inflexible o difícil de doblar o mover.	Stiff	Describes objects, materials, or body parts that are rigid, inflexible, or difficult to bend.
38	Sellar	Cerrar o asegurar algo de manera que no pueda abrirse fácilmente o que nada pueda entrar o salir.	Seal	To close, fasten, or coat something securely to prevent leaks, access, or contamination.

39	Silla de montar	Asiento diseñado para colocarse sobre el lomo de un caballo u otro animal de monta.	Saddle	A girthed, padded seat designed for a rider to sit on an animal's back—commonly a horse—or on a vehicle like a bicycle.
40	Sin escrúpulos	Persona que carece de principios morales o éticos, actuando sin frenos ni conciencia para lograr sus objetivos, incluso perjudicando a otros	Unscrupulous	A person or behavior that is dishonest, immoral, and lacks principles or conscience, often violating rules or ethics for personal gain.
41	Subyugar	Someter o dominar completamente a una persona o grupo mediante la fuerza, la autoridad o la presión, hasta lograr que	Subdue	To bring someone or something under control, often by force or authority, until resistance is overcome.

		obedezcan o pierdan su resistencia.		
42	Suplicio	Situación de gran sufrimiento físico o emocional que una persona debe soportar.	Ordeal	A very painful or difficult experience that tests a person's endurance, patience, or strength.
43	Tedioso	En este contexto, algo que implica una tarea pesada, trabajosa o fastidiosa que requiere mucho esfuerzo, tiempo y atención, resultando agotador mentalmente.	Torporific	Refers to something that causes torpor or dullness, making a person feel sleepy, sluggish, or mentally inactive.

44	Tenazas	Apéndices prensiles articulados, situados en las patas de ciertos artrópodos (cangrejos, alacranes), formados por dos piezas móviles que sirven para capturar presas, defenderse o manipular objetos.	Pincers	The claw-like appendage on an insect or crustacean that allows it to grab things, particularly food.
45	Titilaban	Se refiere a la acción que realizan los cuerpos luminosos cuando resplandecen con un leve temblor.	Twinkle	To shine with a flickering or sparkling light, often used to describe stars or small lights that appear to blink.
46	Tramar	Preparar con astucia un engaño o trampa.	Plotting	Refers to secretly making plans, often with the intention of doing something dishonest, harmful, or deceptive.
47	Trance	Estado de conciencia alterado, situado entre el sueño y la vigilia, caracterizado por una disminución de la actividad sensorial, absorción mental profunda, hipnosis o inmovilidad.	Trance	A mental state in which a person becomes highly focused or partially unaware of their surroundings, often associated with hypnosis or deep concentration.
48	Transmutar	Acción de cambiar, convertir o transformar radicalmente una cosa o persona en otra distinta.	Transmute	To change something into a different form, nature, or substance.

49	Trastabillar	Tropezar o perder momentáneamente el equilibrio al caminar, lo que provoca un movimiento inseguro o vacilante.	Stumble	To nearly fall by tripping or missing a step.
50	Zigzaguear	Moverse siguiendo una trayectoria con cambios bruscos y alternados de dirección, formando una línea quebrada.	Zigzag	A series of short lines inclined at angles in alternate directions; a line or course having sharp turns of this kind; concrete something characterized by such lines or turns.

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Annexes



THEÖ STAMPER

LOS POETAS DE
TWINGEIR

El camino a Beskan

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Desde hace 40 años, el lejano pueblo de Twingfir está siendo asolado por una terrible sequía. Según una enigmática hechicera, esta es provocada por el aprisionamiento de una bestia en la cima de la montaña Beskan, situada en una distante isla. Adam Migfield y sus dos hijos, Leinad y Amir, son los únicos magos que quedan en las místicas tierras de Twingfir, y tendrán que dejar a un lado su labor como poetas para desmentir o confirmar la veracidad de dicha información.

Pero cruzar los mares sería una locura, pues los oceánicos, una raza de seres celosos y malévolos, no permiten a ninguna criatura pasearse sobre sus aguas. Y, como si fuese poco, la bruja suprema de uno de los reinos del Imperio Karf intenta llevar a cabo planes que afectarán a todo el planeta.

¿Podrán los Poetas de Twingfir detener cada uno de los desastres que están por venir?



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