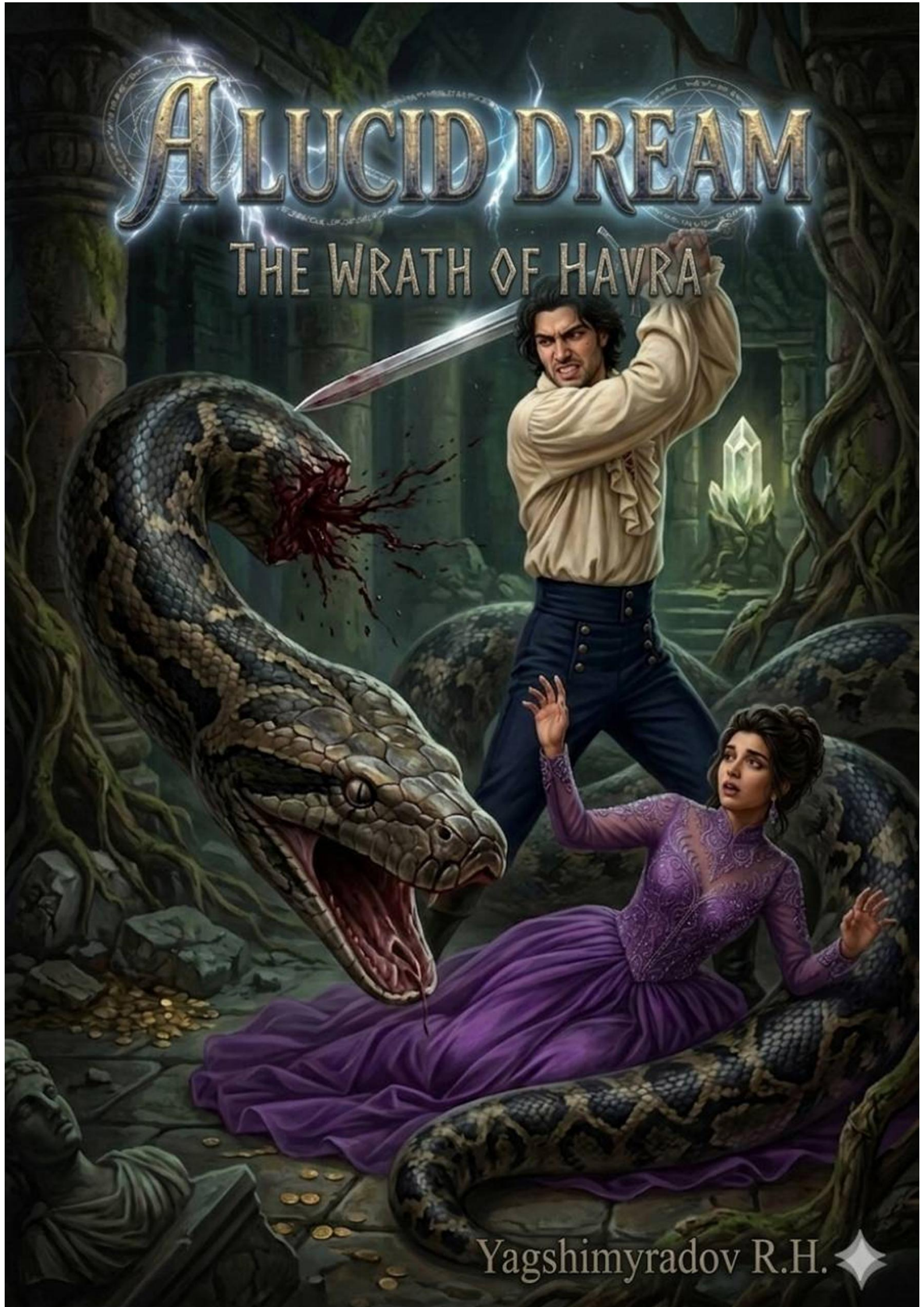


A LUCID DREAM

THE WRATH OF HAVRA



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A Lucid Dream. The Wrath of Havra

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After the protagonist, Ruslan, had defeated evil, it seemed that all his trials were behind him—until he began to have a very strange dream. In the dream, he would see a beautiful young woman and talk with her pleasantly, but then, suddenly, he would begin to strangle her. Every time this happened, Ruslan would wake up in a cold sweat. He could not understand who this mysterious woman was, appearing in his dreams almost every night, or why he felt compelled to kill her. It was an inexplicable phenomenon that no one could explain but Ruslan himself. Yet, the answers could only be found in the trials that lay ahead of him.

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Рахат Ягшимырадов

A Lucid Dream. The Wrath of Havra

The Beautiful Stranger

A lot of time had passed since Ruslan had regained his sight. Rimma had married Ibrahim, but despite that, Ruslan was happy. On that fateful day, he had not only begun to see again, but had also found the most precious person in his life — his mother, Maya, who gave him the strength to keep going.

Days went by one after another. Ruslan grew older and wiser, while Maya, on the contrary, aged and weakened. Her eyesight was fading, getting worse with each passing day. Old age is no joy. It pained Ruslan to watch his mother gradually lose her vision, but there was nothing he could do. Nature was taking its course, and all that was left was to accept it.

After regaining his vision, Ruslan began having strange dreams. In one of them, he met a girl he didn't know. She was so beautiful that his heart ached with wonder. Her image captivated him, awakening feelings he couldn't explain. The dream repeated every night, and Ruslan became more and more attached to the mysterious beauty.



But one night, something changed. In the same dream, filled with tenderness and awe, he suddenly began to strangle her. Waking up drenched in cold sweat, he couldn't believe what he had done. The dream returned the next few nights, but it never went any further. Each time, the moment his hands touched her neck, he would wake up in fear and panic.



Who was she? Why did he want to kill her? These questions haunted him. He thought about her day and night — her image wouldn't leave him, even when he was awake.

One day, lost in thought, Ruslan didn't notice when he bumped into some passersby. It was only when he heard their voices that he came back to his senses:

“Excuse me! Please, forgive me!”

But to his amazement, the people he had bumped into also began apologizing. Ruslan looked closely at their faces... Their features seemed familiar! His heart started racing. Rimma. Ibrahim. They didn't recognize him! They just kept walking. Ruslan froze, then gathered his courage and called out:

“Rimma?”

The couple stopped and turned around. It really was them. Confusion showed in their eyes.

“You don't recognize me?” Ruslan smiled. **“It's me — Ruslan!”**

The woman squinted at him, furrowing her brow as if trying to recall something long forgotten. Then her eyes suddenly widened and she gasped:

“Ruslan! How could I not recognize you!”

They started talking, and Rimma and Ibrahim invited him to their home nearby. Ruslan gladly accepted the invitation. Over a cup of tea, the conversation continued.

“It's so cozy here. Have you lived here long?” Ruslan asked.



“Yes, this is Ibrahim’s house. We moved in after the wedding,” Rimma replied. **“And how about you? How is Aunt Maya?”**

“She’s well, thank you,” Ruslan nodded. **“Guys, have I really changed that much that you didn’t recognize me right away?”**

Rimma and Ibrahim exchanged glances and hesitated.

“No, no, not at all,” Rimma quickly said, **“it’s just that we... we have problems with our vision.”**

“What do you mean?” Ruslan frowned. **“Your eyesight’s gotten worse?”**

Ibrahim sighed heavily.

“We’re going blind, Ruslan.”

“What?” His heart clenched. **“But you’re still young! I don’t remember either of you having vision problems!”**

“We don’t understand it ourselves,” Rimma shook her head. **“It all happened so suddenly...”**

A chill ran down Ruslan’s spine. His face turned pale. He suddenly felt nauseous and, making an excuse about urgent matters, quickly left.

Back at home, he locked himself in his room. His thoughts were racing, tangling into a terrifying suspicion. His mother, Rimma, Ibrahim... they were all losing their sight. And he... he had regained his. And that had happened after the three of them had made a wish on that fateful day. Coincidence? Ruslan swallowed hard. No, there were no coincidences like that. Could his gift of sight be a curse for those he loved?

The pounding of blood in his temples, ragged breathing, sticky fear. He couldn't think about anything else.

His mother's voice brought him back to reality:



“Ruslan, dinner’s ready!”

“Coming, Mom,” he replied, forcing himself to leave the room.

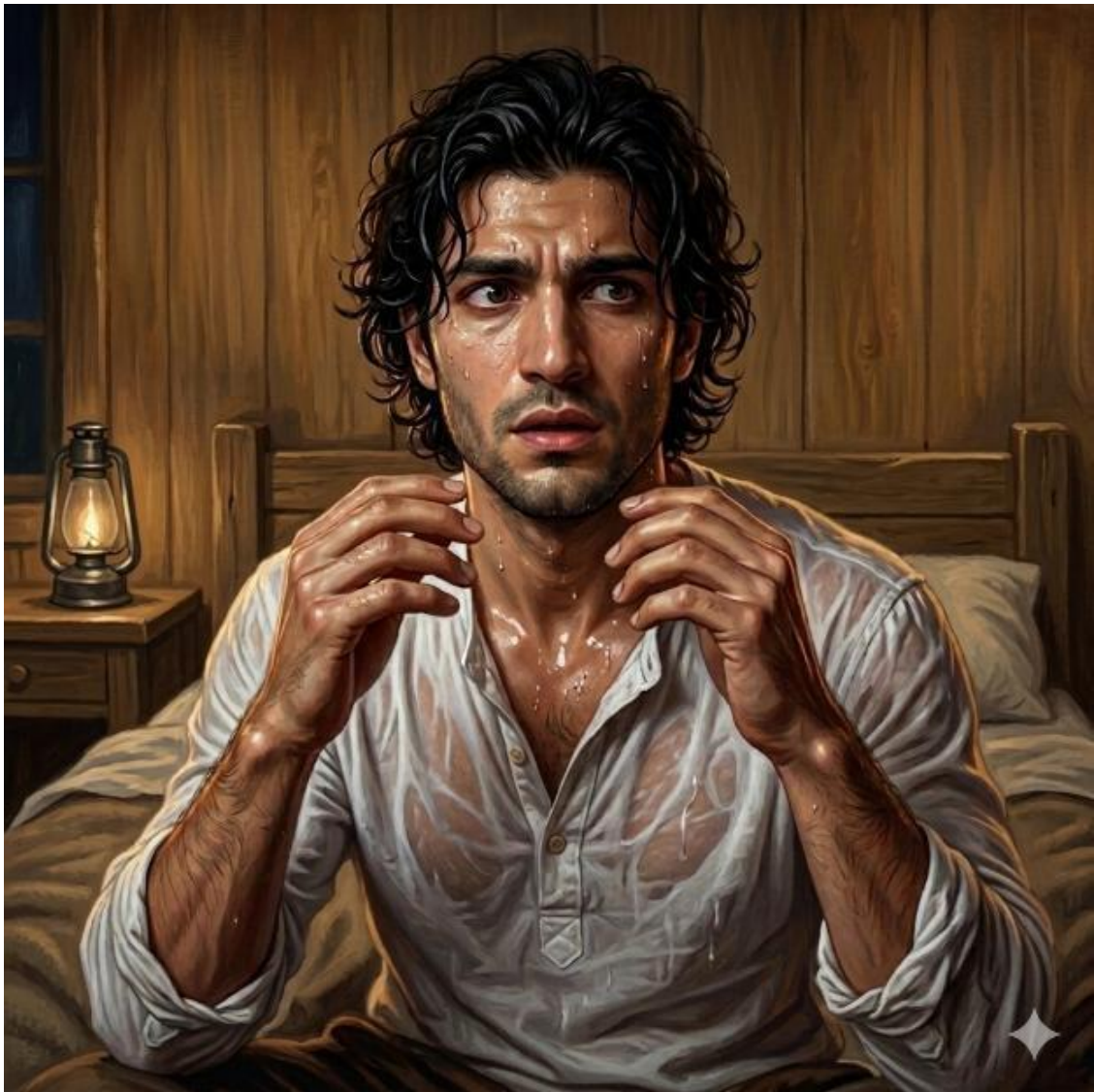
At dinner, Ruslan watched Maya closely. He felt that she was getting weaker with each passing day. His heart ached, but he tried to hide it, not wanting to worry her. Despite having no appetite, he forced himself to finish his meal.



After dinner, they went outside to get some fresh air. The conversation naturally turned to the past, the hardships they had endured, and the dreams they still hoped to fulfill.

When they returned to the house, Ruslan tucked his mother into bed. He, however, couldn't fall asleep for a long time. Thoughts came and went like images in a kaleidoscope. He tossed and turned until, finally, he sank into a restless, uneasy sleep...

And again, the same dream haunted him. In terror, he woke up, drenched in cold sweat. His heart raced so fast it felt like it would tear his chest apart. He could hardly breathe, as if the air was suffocating him.



He got up and went out onto the balcony. After a while, calming down, Ruslan tried to reason — this dream, which had been chasing him relentlessly, wasn't random. But who was this stranger? Why was she haunting his dreams, and why did he want to kill her? What did it all mean? Was it some kind of premonition? Unable to find any answers, Ruslan became more and more tangled in his thoughts but came to the conclusion that it was somehow connected to the strange troubles his friends and mother were facing. A feeling of inexplicable guilt gripped him, but he firmly decided to solve the mysteries life had presented to him. Now he knew where to start. He had to find the girl from his dreams.



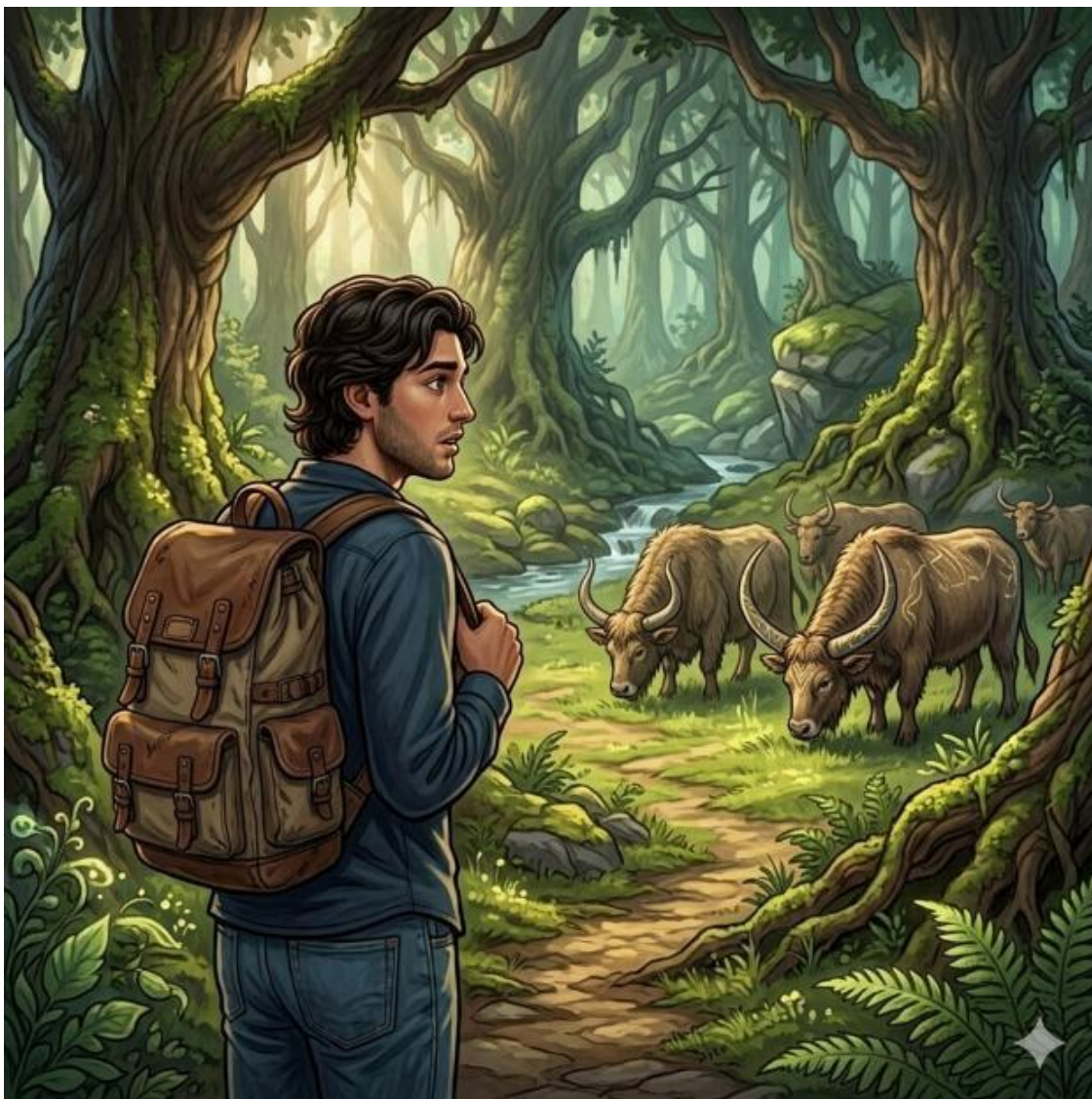
After making that decision, he actually felt a little lighter. To avoid upsetting his mother, he told her that he was going away with friends for a few days. Maya didn't object. She wanted Ruslan to get away for a while, so she packed him everything he might need for the journey. Early the next morning, Maya saw him to the door and said:

“Son, I recently found this ring in the closet. It belonged to your father. It's made of silver. Your father always believed this ring brought good luck. You're going away for a while, so wear it. I hope it brings you luck.”

“Thank you so much, Mom. It's beautiful,” said Ruslan, and after a hug, he said goodbye.



So, with his mother's blessing, Ruslan set off on his journey. He didn't know where to go, but something inside him guided him. He walked through the forest near their home. The long road tired him, and he decided to rest and have a snack. As he looked for a quiet spot, he thought he heard someone shouting. He followed the sound and saw... cows. It was them mooing.



Ruslan thought that if there were cows in the forest, there must be a village nearby, so he walked down the path. Soon, he spotted the village and felt relieved.

On the road, he met a shepherd. His name was Oktam. Oktam was of medium height, with black eyes, and very thin. After greeting each other, they started talking. Oktam asked where Ruslan was headed and why. Ruslan didn't want anyone to know his intentions, so he decided not to tell the truth:

“I'm looking for a beautiful girl.”

“A girl!?” Oktam exclaimed in surprise. **“What kind of girl? What's her name and why do you need her?”** he bombarded Ruslan with questions.

“Well, it might sound ridiculous, but I don't even know her name,” Ruslan replied.

“So you're looking for a girl you don't even know!?! Yeah, that does sound a bit strange,” Oktam said in surprise.



“It’s just that recently I saw this girl at a celebration. Then she started appearing in my dreams, and when I woke up, I realized that my life has no meaning without her. So now I’m looking for her all over the world,” Ruslan lied.

Ruslan’s story surprised Oktam a bit, but after getting to know him better, Oktam felt sympathy for him. Oktam offered his help and even invited Ruslan to stay at his house until he found the mysterious girl. Oktam left the cows in the forest, led Ruslan to his home, and introduced him to his parents. Oktam was the only child in his family, so his parents were very fond of him. They didn’t object to Ruslan staying with them.



That evening, during dinner, they talked more, and this brought them closer. Oktam promised Ruslan he would help him with the search. After dinner, Oktam's mother made a bed for Ruslan next to her son. Ruslan was so exhausted that as soon as his head hit the pillow, he fell asleep...

Duzhda and Duzhdam

The next morning, Oktam woke Ruslan. They had breakfast and then left the house to take a walk around the village. Ruslan observed the buildings with interest, but he was particularly drawn to a house at the edge of the village. It was a large, beautiful house with a tall fence. Inside the grounds, exotic trees and flowers grew, birds sang, and fountains bubbled.



“What a beautiful house, whose is it?” Ruslan asked.

“That’s the house of the richest man in our village,” Oktam replied. **“They say he’s got money to burn. But despite his wealth, he’s very unhappy.”**

“What kind of problems could a man like that have?” Ruslan wondered.

“The most valuable thing this man has are his daughters from three wives. He didn’t have a male heir, and deciding he needed a son, he married for the fourth time. And so, his new wife gave birth to twin sons — Duzhd and Duzhdam. They lived in paradise until one unfortunate night. One night, while everyone was asleep, his sons woke up and started attacking people, devouring everything in their path. Only when they were full did they fall asleep, like they were dead, and slept for three days without waking. But once they awoke,

everything repeated itself. This went on for an entire year, and no one knew what was happening to them. Their father promised a reward to anyone who could cure his sons. Many people tried to help, but no one succeeded.”

Oktam fell silent, lost in thought.

Ruslan couldn't stay indifferent.

“I want to try to heal them,” he said eagerly. The risk, the uncertainty, drew him in.

“Are you out of your mind? This is very dangerous!” Oktam exclaimed. **“Every time they wake up, not only do they devour food, but also people. Although their father hides it with his wealth, the entire village knows that it's them behind the disappearances.”**

“Is that true?” Ruslan's eyes widened.

“Yes, I myself became a victim of these monsters,” Oktam said, his voice trembling with anger.

“I had a beloved girl when all this started. We loved each other deeply and soon married. One night we went to bed, and in the morning I woke up alone. My wife had disappeared, and I searched the entire village for her but couldn't find her. I was desperate, asking everyone, but all I got were sympathetic looks from the villagers. Weeks passed, but I couldn't find her. And with each day, it grew worse. Over the year, several people disappeared, and now everyone is afraid to even go outside.”

Oktam fell silent, and Ruslan stayed quiet with him, feeling the pain Oktam had endured.

“Do you understand how terrifying all this is?” Oktam asked.

“I understand. And I haven't forgotten about my ‘goddess,’” Ruslan replied with a smirk.

“You haven't forgotten, huh?” Oktam nodded. **“I feel like you're ready to risk it. But know that this is really dangerous.”**

Ruslan didn't hesitate:

“I feel that I can change this situation. I have to try.”

Despite all the warnings, Oktam couldn't convince Ruslan to back down and agreed to help him. They headed to Alihan's house — the rich man who was about to play an important role in their fate.

When they arrived, Alihan greeted them warmly. He was a healthy man with thick hair and a beard, with some gray at his temples. He was happy to see those willing to help. They discussed their plan of action, and Ruslan asked to see the twins.

Alihan kept his sons in a deep well — more than ten meters deep. He had created conditions for the children to live there, away from people, since they were dangerous. Even their father feared them. The twins lay still, as if dead. Ruslan climbed down to take a closer look at them.



“How much food can they eat at once?” Ruslan asked.

“A lot,” Alihan replied, shrugging. **“They start eating as soon as they wake up and keep going until they’re full. Then they fall asleep.”**

“How long can they sleep? When are they supposed to wake up?” Ruslan asked.

“I can’t say for sure. Sometimes three days, sometimes more. But they should wake up tomorrow or the day after. That’s why we’re preparing food in advance.”

Ruslan thought for a moment and said:

“I’d like to observe them. Maybe I’ll be able to figure out the cause of their affliction and help them. But I want you to stay out of our way and only help if necessary. I’ll take on this task, but on my terms.”



Alihan didn't object and agreed. Ruslan asked them to prepare ropes and reduce the amount of food for the twins by half. They went home to prepare for the next day.

“I think you're wrong about the twins. We'll see what tomorrow brings,” Ruslan said.

“Why do you think that?” Oktam asked.

“You saw where Alihan keeps them. They're unlikely to be able to get out of there,” Ruslan replied.

“You think he told us the whole truth? He wouldn't tell us that his sons devour people. Nearly every month, someone goes missing from our village. Maybe Alihan himself kidnaps poor villagers to feed his monsters. He can fool anyone, but not me,” Oktam said.

The next day, closer to evening, they arrived at Alihan's house and began their investigation. Alihan instructed his men to leave them alone so that no one would interfere. After they were alone with the twins, Oktam asked:

“What are you planning to do next? Feed the monsters like they do? Believe me, it won't help. They've been fed like this for over a year, and there's no result. Do you see what's happening?”

“We will feed them, but differently,” said Ruslan. **“Half of the food will be dropped down, and the other half will be hung on a rope, about three meters high. Let's see how hungry they are, and if they can reach the food.”**

“Are you out of your mind? If you really wanted to die, you could just go down there, wake them up, and invite them to dinner,” exclaimed Oktam.

“What do you mean?” asked Ruslan, confused.

“I mean, if they don't get enough food, they will eat you, and then me,” said Oktam, beginning to panic.

“Why do you think they will eat me first and not you?” Ruslan asked with a smirk.

“Because if they ask for more, I'll have to drop you down. But I think they'll still want more, and they'll eat me too,” said Oktam.

“Do you really think you'll be able to throw me to them to be eaten?” Ruslan continued to laugh.

“Of course! You made the mess, now you clean it up,” Oktam replied indignantly.

“Quiet, they seem to be waking up!” said Ruslan, alarmed.

They quickly prepared everything without waiting for the twins to fully wake up. After a while, the brothers started devouring the food that had been dropped down. Ruslan and Oktam stood quietly, observing.

When the food quickly ran out, the twins began jumping up, trying to reach the food hanging from the rope. But no matter how hard they tried, they couldn't reach it. The walls of the well were smooth and slippery, making it impossible for them to climb. Finally, the twins started thinking. One of them placed the other on his shoulders, and together they managed to reach the food. But even with this portion, they quickly finished it. The brothers were dissatisfied with their meal. They circled around, cursing, and eventually fell asleep.

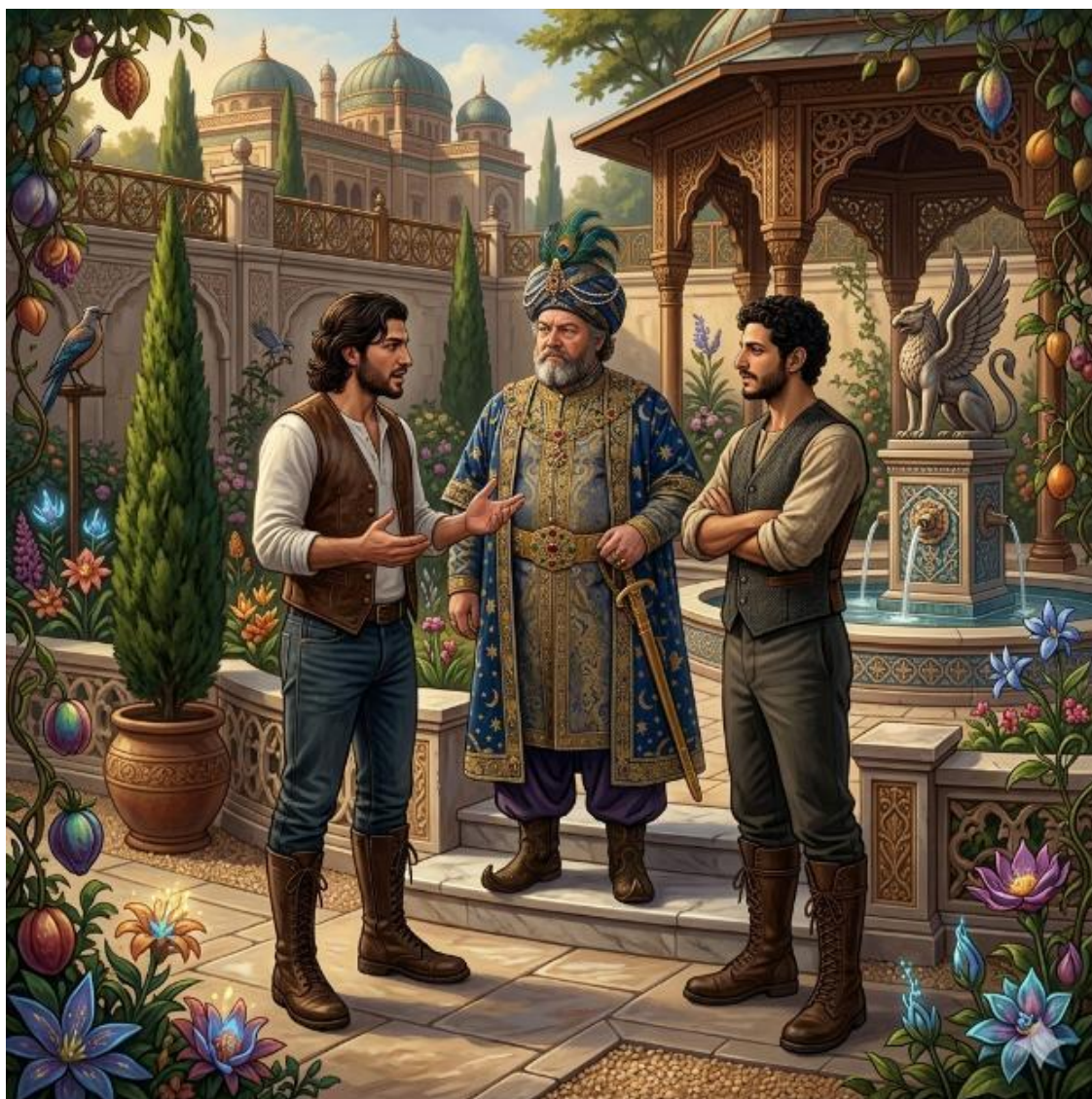


The next day, Ruslan told Alihan to prepare half the amount of food, as the twins might wake up much earlier if they weren't satisfied.

"I hired you to heal my sons, not to starve them!" Alihan protested.

"Please trust me, I know what I'm doing," replied Ruslan.

Alihan wanted to refuse his services, but since his sons had already become like living dead, he understood that it couldn't go on like this, and decided to trust Ruslan.



Exhausted, Ruslan and Oktam headed home to rest. On the way, Oktam kept complaining:
"Are you out of your mind? Wasn't yesterday's show enough for you? Now you're cutting their food again? Whatever your plan is, I don't like it."

"Calm down, everything will be fine. Please, trust me," said Ruslan.

The entire way back, Ruslan reassured Oktam. Once home, they had a hearty breakfast and decided to rest for a while to regain their strength. They knew that their search for the girl couldn't stop because of new complications. But after searching every corner and not missing a single face, they still didn't find the mysterious girl.

The next day, after another fruitless search, Ruslan decided to return to the problem of the twins and continue his observations. At Alihan's house, preparing to feed the twins, Oktam suddenly caught a strange scent and started sniffing the air. Ruslan looked at his friend with surprise:

"What are you doing?"

"Don't you think it smells like something?" said Oktam.

"Yeah, it does," Ruslan replied with a serious expression, then smiled. **"It smells like food,"** he said, reaching toward the food prepared for the twins.

"No, it's just that the scent seems familiar, but I can't place where I've smelled it before.

Never mind. Because of your jokes, my appetite is acting up. Let's eat a little. Show me what they've prepared for them this time. I'd rather die with a full stomach," joked Oktam.

"You'll be fine. Here, eat, and I'll get everything ready," said Ruslan.

This time, Ruslan and Oktam dropped half the food down and hung the rest on a rope, much higher than before. But there was much less food than last time.

After a while, the twins woke up and, as usual, began devouring the food. Since there was significantly less food this time, they quickly finished it. Then they started trying to reach the food hanging on the rope. However, since the food was hung higher than before, even by climbing on top of each other, they couldn't reach it. They spun around, jumped, got angry, but nothing worked. They stopped, threw their heads back, and began opening their mouths. Their jaws opened so wide that something wriggled in their throats.

Ruslan and Oktam held their breath as they watched below. Suddenly, something leaped up toward the rope with the food. The helpless bodies of the twins fell to the ground. It was two snakes—large and terrifying, hissing and writhing around the food. One snake was white, the other black. They were more than ten meters long. They tore the ropes apart and reached the food.

Ruslan and Oktam were so frightened that they could barely hold themselves back from running away. The snakes didn't notice them and started arguing, snatching food from each other.

"This is my share; you've already eaten yours," said the black snake.

"No, this is mine! You've eaten enough," replied the white snake, pulling the remaining food toward herself.

Then the black snake lunged at the white one, and they began to fight. The battle was intense. Suddenly, the white snake threateningly said:

"Don't forget, I know your weak spot. If you drink water purified with silver, you'll die."

"Don't threaten me, I know your weak spot too. If you smell mint, you'll start suffocating, and you won't last long," replied the black snake.

After threatening each other, they seemed to tire of the argument and crawled back into the twins. It became clear that it wasn't the twins who were so voracious, but the reptiles inside them.



"Did you see that? Have you ever seen anything like this?" Oktam whispered, still in shock.

"No, but I suspected something wasn't right," said Ruslan.

"How could you have suspected that?" Oktam asked, not understanding.

"I have the ability to sense the energy emitted by people. When I saw them, I felt that the twins were terribly exhausted. I noticed a different energy in them, black. And that's when I realized someone was controlling them. That's why I took on this task," explained Ruslan.

After Ruslan and Oktam discovered how to destroy the snakes, they told Alihan about it. Alihan ordered a large amount of mint to be gathered and the water to be purified with silver. Fearing that the twins might wake up much earlier because they hadn't eaten enough the previous night, the guys decided to stay and finish the task before the snakes woke up.

By dawn, everything was ready. This time, Alihan himself helped, along with his men. They threw a lot of mint into the well. The smell quickly spread around. Suddenly, a white snake crawled out of one of the twins, began to slither and thrash about until it suffocated. In their joy, they started pouring silver-purified water onto the second twin to get rid of the black reptile. But the snake didn't even think about coming out.



Then Ruslan decided to go down and feed the second twin the water before the second snake woke up. They lowered him down with a rope. But as soon as Ruslan was about to pour the water into the twin's mouth, the head of the snake suddenly appeared from his mouth. Apparently, the black snake had sensed the mint and decided to crawl out before it was too late.

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