

KING ANDOVAR

ELAN WASABARA

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elan was a Senior IT consultant and technical writer for over two decades. He gained experience as a technical communicator by creating instruction manuals, how-to guides, journal articles, and other supporting documents to easily communicate complex and technical information with ease to Government Agencies, the public sector, and Fortune 500 companies. With a passion for creativity, he spends his time writing short stories, finding inspiration in powerful quotes, and immersing himself in history. Growing up in New York City, he gained a profound insight into the obstacles one faces when striving for achievement. Elan acknowledges that he shares these challenging moments with so many, and through the adventurous eyes of someone who dares to dream, he wants to share these moments with everyone else.



“

Sometimes the
friendships
that end up
saving us are
the ones we never
saw coming.”

- *Elan Wasabara*



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I have to start by thanking my wife, Pamela, for being there to pick me up when I stumbled, dusting me off, and reassuring me that everything would be alright. Your unwavering support at every turn has been my greatest strength. And a special thank you for bringing our dog, Guapo, to sit by my feet to keep me company and keep an eye on me, something my loyal companion has done for thirteen years.

Thank you, Pamela and Guapo, for being there. Together, we made a great team.



K I N G A N D O V A R



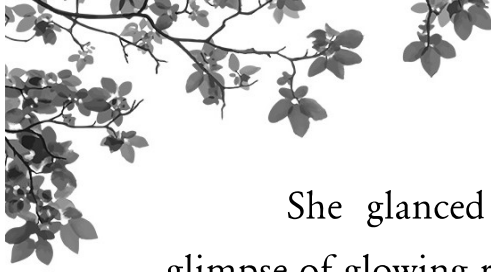


I AM KING

Kayla found herself standing alone in a dark, misty forest. The trees loomed tall and menacing, their branches reaching out like gnarled fingers. A chill ran down her spine as an eerie silence enveloped her. The dense fog wrapped around her like a shroud, muffling any distant sounds

Suddenly, a low growl echoed through the trees. Kayla's heart began to race. She spun around, trying to locate the source of the sound, but the mist obscured her vision. The darkness seemed to press in closer, the silence more oppressive.

The growl grew louder, closer. Kayla started to run, her feet pounding against the damp earth. Branches whipped at her face as she darted between the trees. The ground was uneven, roots and rocks threatening to trip her with every step. She could feel the forest closing in, the trees bending towards her, as if they too were trying to capture her.



She glanced back over her shoulder and caught a glimpse of glowing red eyes pursuing her through the fog. The creature was gaining on her, its growls turning into a guttural roar. Panic surged through her veins, her breath coming in ragged gasps. The air around her felt thick and heavy, making it harder to move, as if the forest itself was trying to trap her.

Just as she felt hot breath on the back of her neck, Kayla jolted awake with a scream.

“Ah!”

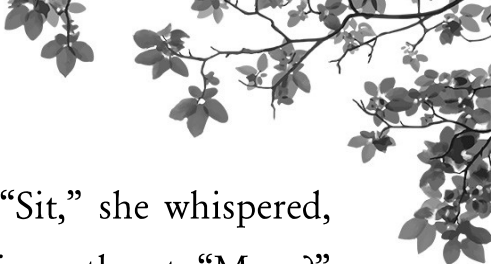
Looking around, she found herself drenched in sweat and tangled in her blankets. She sat up in her bed and stared into the eerie darkness of her closet, her heart pounding with fear.

Was it a growl she heard, or was it just another nightmare?

The small girl moved to the edge of her bed and wrapped herself in her blanket from head to toe, seeking comfort and safety. She then cautiously placed her feet on the ground and quietly walked to her mother’s room. Although she wanted to wake her up, she sat in a chair by her mother’s bed and watched her sleep; her fear and vulnerability were visible.

Alina stirred from her sleep, her eyes immediately drawn to her daughter’s distressed figure. She gently removed the blanket that concealed Kayla’s face, revealing her innocent features. ‘It’s the growl again. Alina whispered, the one from the closet, her voice filled with concern. Kayla, her eyes swelling with tears, nodded in confirmation.

Sensing her daughter’s fear, Alina gently grasped her hand and led her to a small table. She lit a candle, casting a



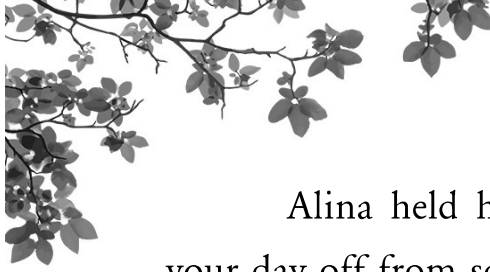
warm and protective glow in the room. “Sit,” she whispered, her eyes scanning the room as if anticipating a threat. “Mom?” Kayla’s voice quivered, but her mother’s silent command urged her to stay quiet, instilling a sense of security in the young girl.

Alina stood up and walked over to her dresser, where she picked up an old wooden box. Then, she placed the box on a small table and looked over her young daughter’s head. “You will not take my little girl,” she whispered.

She opened the wooden box, and Kayla immediately recognized most of the items inside, which contained scented oils, spiritual twigs, plants, roots, and herbs. However, there were also some enigmatic items, including an ancient brown leather manuscript, a canvas blood-stained pouch full of mysterious dirt, a half-smoked cigar emitting an otherworldly scent, and a small white book wrapped in blood-stained cloth with an image of a panda bear. Kayla was never told what these items were, adding to the intrigue and mystery.

Kayla’s mother lit candles and rubbed scented oil on her daughter’s arms and face. She then took a small white book from a wooden box and read some unintelligible words. After that, she waved the spirit twigs over Kayla’s shoulders and repeated the exact words again. “You will not take my little girl.”

The small girl interrupted her and asked, “Mom! Is this evil?” Her mother began to laugh and replied, “No, princess. The Andovar family comes from a long line of spiritual people. I am just protecting you from your bad dreams. That is all.”




Alina held her daughter's hand. "Kayla, tomorrow is your day off from school, and we are going to see your Uncle Kendrin," Kayla dropped her head in disappointment, but Alina continued, "He is family and loves you very much. Without his help, I couldn't afford to send you to that fancy private school you go to or buy you clothes or school supplies. I work two jobs to make ends meet."

Kayla expressed her concerns, "Mom! He sits outside in that unusual chair all day! And the scars!" However, Alina responded sympathetically. "You may feel uncomfortable, but he is still your uncle. He sits in that big wooden chair outside his cabin because it makes him feel comfortable, and the scars you see are a testament to the life he led. It would be really nice of you to come with me and show him the respect he deserves," Alina said calmly. Kayla slowly nodded and replied, "Yes, Mom," her voice barely heard above a whisper.

She holds her young daughter's beautiful face. "He is the sweetest, nicest, kindest man you will ever know. I promise you!" She then looks over her daughter's head and says, "The bad dreams are gone now. They won't be back tonight."

Alina rubs Kayla's face and kisses her on the forehead. "You are an Andovar. We will never fear evil, and I will never let it take my princess away." She takes her daughter's hand and walks her back to her bedroom. She then tucks her daughter into her bed, kisses her, and steps to her closet to draw a line across the doorway with her scented oil. "Good night, princess."




The following day, the bustling streets of New York were filled with noise. Sanitation workers banged trash cans into their garbage trucks, traffic horns blared, police sirens sounded in the distance, and people shouted greetings at each other loudly enough for the entire neighborhood to hear.

Alina entered her daughter's bedroom and woke her up. "Good morning, princess. It's time to get up and get ready. Brush your teeth and change your clothes. I'd left breakfast on the table. And please be quick; we have a long journey ahead of us."

They both enjoyed driving for over three hours to see Kendrin. They would leave the big city and admire the beautiful tree lines and the fresh air during their trip. Upon arriving at a cabin, they find Kendrin sitting in an old majestic wooden chair with his head down as if sleeping. Kayla is worried and asks, "Is he dead?" but Kendrin lifts his head and pulls back his long hair, revealing the scars on his face.

"Princess, you're here!" Kendrin said, and Kayla immediately grabbed her mother's hand and hid behind her. Alina was annoyed with her brother and asked, "Why are you always sleeping outside in the woods like Paul Bunyan when you have a bed in your cabin? Aren't you afraid of being attacked by wild animals?" Kendrin pointed at a small hill. "He would never let that happen to me."

Kayla looked up the hill and whispered to her mother, showing her what seemed to be a weird, scary-looking dog with half an ear missing. She pulled on her mother's shirt and




pleaded with her. “Mom, there goes that strange dog again with half his ear gone. Let’s get out of here! PLEASE!”

Alina walks up to the cabin and says, “How about you get a haircut?” Kendrin began to analyze the length of his hair when she shoved him aside and entered the front door. “Oh my god! If I lived in this pigsty, I would sleep in the forest also. Kayla, come here!” Kayla runs towards the front door, and Kendrin tries to touch her. But Kayla cringes, ducks, squirms by him to avoid any contact with her uncle, and runs into the house.

“Whoa!” exclaimed the little girl. Alina turned to her daughter and instructed her to change her clothes upstairs, informing her that they had work to do. Kayla protested, but Alina firmly held her daughter’s shoulders and looked at her with determination. “Kayla, he is your uncle and my brother. He has always been there for us and needs our help. So go to your room and change. And we’re spending the night.” Kayla grumbled as she stomped to the guest room and slammed the door shut. Hours later, Alina and Kayla finished cleaning the house and started preparing dinner.

“Where is your uncle?” Alina asked. Kayla appeared surprised and replied, “He came inside the house, chopped some raw meat, and put it in a large bowl. After that, he went up the hill to feed his dog. Look!” Kayla pointed out of the window. “Who feeds their dog raw meat like that, Mom? Is that... roadkill?” Kendrin suddenly looked over to the window Kayla was peering through, causing her to hide quickly. “Mom!



I think he saw me,” Kayla said. Her mother grew frustrated and replied, “That’s enough! Get up!”

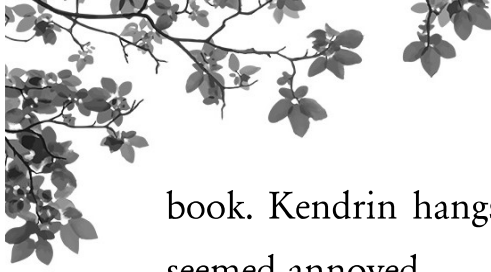
The door suddenly bursts open, revealing Kendrin standing in the doorway. He is breathing heavily, likely from the uphill walk. Blood is dripping from his hands, and there is a stain of raw meat on his face and shirt. Kayla lets out a loud shriek and hides behind her mother in fear.

“STOP!” Alina shouted. “Don’t you *DARE* come into this house looking like an ax murderer? We’ve spent hours cleaning this place! Go wash up outside!” Kendrin objected. “But…” Alina pointed at the water hose outside the cabin and yelled. “NOW!” Kendrin threw up his blood-stained hands in the air in surrender. “Geez, sis! All right!” And walks outside to wash up.

Later that evening, dinner at the table was a quiet affair. No one had anything to say, and the atmosphere was tense. Kendrin took a small piece of bread, tossed it at Kayla, and smiled mischievously. Kayla looked at her uncle, sucked her teeth, and rolled her eyes in annoyance.

Still agitated by her brother’s behavior, Alina pinched his arm and scolded him for playing at the dinner table. Kendrin rubbed his arm and smiled, “You are just like mom.” Alina got up from her chair to hug her big brother, “I miss her too, big brother.”

The phone rings, and Kendrin stands up to answer it. He sits on the sofa for a quiet conversation and glances at his sister, Alina. She joins him on the couch while Kayla gets her coloring



book. Kendrin hangs up the phone and gazes at his sister. He seemed annoyed.

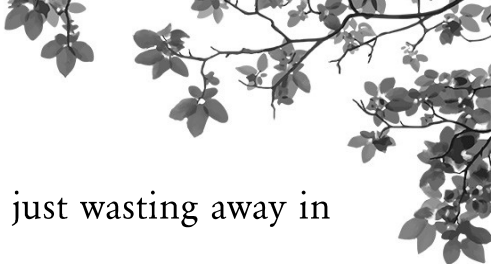
“That was Charmaine from the diner. She wants me to come over to pick up a free piece of apple pie. How did she get my number?” Alina tucks Kendrin’s long hair behind his ear and runs her fingers over the scars on his face. “It’s been over two years since you lost Perla. Don’t you think it’s time?”

Kendrin looked at a photograph of his late wife on his desk, and Alina smiled. “Perla was the most wonderful woman I have ever met. But I am sure that even she would want you to move on.” Kendrin abruptly got up from his seat and began to pace the room.

“I am not ready for this!” But Alina held her brother’s shoulders to stop him from pacing. “Sure you are! Look at you! You’re tall, rugged, and handsome. Charmaine knows you’re a good man with a big heart! And she is definitely into you.”

He began pacing the room once more, and Alina became frustrated. “Kendrin, stop! Charmaine is a beautiful woman! Every man in this town is after her. I don’t understand why she picked you over these other guys. And if you don’t call her back, so help me GOD, I will go down to that diner myself, pick up the apple pie, and shove it down your throat.”

Kendrin looked at her, puzzled. “Why do you bully me?” Alina gave him a light slap on the face and forcefully puckered his lips with her hand. “Because I love you, big brother. And it would be better if you just moved on. Kendrin,



I'm worried about you, and I feel you are just wasting away in this place."

Kayla was grabbing her crayons when she overheard a conversation and giggled. Kendrin walked up to her and looked at her coloring book. He noticed that his little niece had colored her horse, which was a male stallion, in pink.

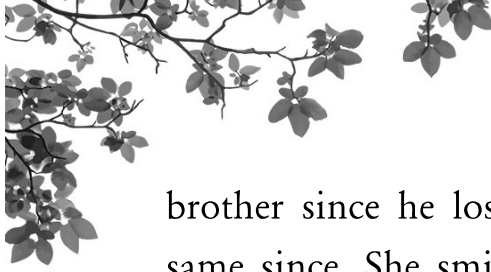
He then picked up a black and red crayon and added long fake eyelashes and red lipstick to her pink horse. Kayla got excited and jumped from her seat to show her mother. Alina shouted at Kendrin, "Seriously, Kendrin?" But Kendrin didn't seem to care and threw his right hand in the air as he left the cabin.

The little girl hears a whistle and rushes to the window. "Look, mom! Uncle Kendrin is petting and whispering to that weird-looking dog—the one from the hill." Alina is sitting in a chair and calls her daughter over. Kayla, come here. There is something I need to tell you."

Kayla hears her mother's serious tone and walks up to her. "Kayla, what you call a dog, is your uncle's best friend. His name is Lobo." Kayla thinks for a moment and asks, "Lobo?" She then places her hand over her mouth and gasps. "Wolf? That's a Wolf. GET OUT! HOW COOL IS THAT?"

She then runs back to the window to spy on her uncle. "He is walking into the forest with his friend... Lobo. Why?" Alina stepped outside the cabin with her daughter and stared at her brother as he disappeared into the tree with his companion.

"Your uncle has a lot on his mind. Now go upstairs and get your stuff ready. We have a long trip back to the city and leave in the morning." Alina has been worried about her

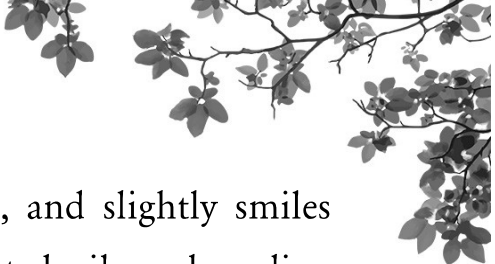


brother since he lost his wife, Perla. He has never been the same since. She smiles compassionately, takes a deep breath, and returns to the cabin to begin packing.

Kendrin returned at sunset and sat outside in his old, majestic wooden chair. Alina stepped outside, sat beside him, and held his hand. “Kendrin. I have something to tell you.” Kendrin smiles. “ I already know. Her aura, her energy. It’s unstable. Her spirit is broken.” Alina was surprised.” How did you know?” He smiled at her. “Little sis. I knew the minute she stepped out of the car. How long. The nightmares. How long has Kayla been having them.” He asked.

She gave Kendrin a helpless look. “Almost two weeks. She is getting the same nightmares you were getting at her age.” Kendrin nodded disapprovingly and sighed. “She’s been chosen and is completely unaware of what’s coming. It’s not fair. She is just an innocent child. I need to find a way to protect her.” He clenched his fist, looked aimlessly into the distance, and muttered. “Not my little girl! Not her!”

Alina announced dinner was ready, and Kendrin didn’t respond. He stayed outside looking at the stars when Lobo, sensing something was wrong, ran down the hill and sat beside him. Kendrin gets on one knee, places his forehead against Lobo’s head, and whispers, “It seems we have a new heir. And she is not ready. I don’t know what to do.” Kendrin and Lobo were joined at the forehead in deep thought when suddenly he put his head up and made eye contact with Lobo. “Of course!” He says.



He gets up, walks into the cabin, and slightly smiles at Alina. “Have you been doing the scented oils and reading from Mom’s white book?” Alina nods in response. “Just like Mama showed us,” she says. Kendrin looks at Lobo through his window. “Then, read her my memoirs,” he says. Alina is surprised. “Kendrin, you sealed that in wax with Grandpa’s ring and wrapped it in that bloody Panda cloth. Do you want me to open it? I haven’t read it.” Kendrin nods. “I know! No one has. Not even Perla.”

He smiled at her and extended his arms. “Besides, she needs to know how *hot* and awesome her uncle is.” Alina giggled. “You mean, how awesome he still is. Not sure about the hot part.” Kendrin gave her an exaggerated gasp. “What? Look at me! I am built like a gladiator.” He then flexed, and Alina rolled her eyes and pushed him aside. “Hey! Wait! I’m serious. Unwrap the Panda cloth and break the seal on my book. Please read it to her. She needs to know.” Alina nodded in agreement.

Alina had prepared dinner that evening. Kendrin, hoping to get Kayla’s attention, slurped his soup loudly during the meal. The louder he slurped, the more Kayla ignored him. “Kendrin, really? Slurping now? Did you call Charmaine from the diner?” Alina asked, but Kendrin grinned and continued to focus on Kayla. He raised his voice and slurped even louder. Then, he replied sarcastically, “What? Who? Do you mean Apple Pie Charmaine? S-L-U-R-P!”

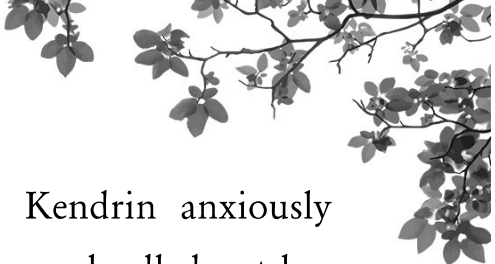


Kayla covered her mouth and began giggling at the loud slurping sound her uncle was making. Alina reprimanded her daughter. “Don’t encourage him!” But when she turned toward her brother, he gave Kayla a loving stare and a smile. Finally! He made her laugh, he thought. Alina realized that all he ever wanted was to connect with his niece somehow. She merely dropped her head and said nothing.

Alina and Kayla packed their belongings the next day to return to the big city. When Alina entered Kendrin’s room, she noticed that his bed had yet to be slept in. She went outside to look for him and heard a slight snoring behind her. Kendrin had slept in his old majestic wooden chair in front of the cabin all night, as he always did. “Kendrin?” Alina called out to him. He immediately sat up in his chair and said, “I was NOT snoring! You’re lying!”

Kayla ran past him and headed straight for the car. He tried to get her attention, but she was already seated inside. Alina wanted to apologize to him for her daughter’s behavior, but he quickly changed the subject. Still focused on Kayla, he gave his sister a checklist.

“I’ve checked your tire pressure, oil, and gas level. I also poured extra windshield wiper liquid to clean your windows. And make sure to wear your seatbelt at all times.” Before he could say anything else, Alina placed her hand over his mouth. “Shhh! Don’t worry, big brother. We’ll be fine.” She hugged him and walked away.

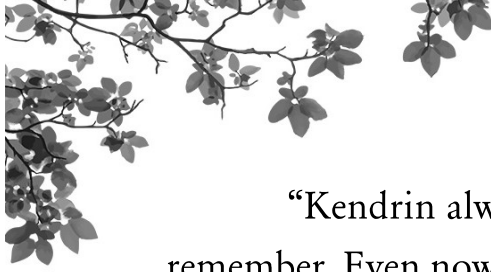


As she headed towards her car, Kendrin anxiously brushed his long hair back with his fingers and yelled out her name. “Alina! My Memoirs.” Alina nodded, got into the car, and drove away. She looked into her rearview mirror and saw Lobo sitting beside him. “You are truly a king, big brother.” She whispered as she held her daughter’s hand and watched her brother and his best friend, Lobo, disappear in the distance.

That night, when they arrived back in the big city, Kaylas asked her mother a question during dinner. “Mom? Why is Uncle Kendrin so weird?” Alina smiled. “He’s not sweetie. He has a loose screw. That’s all.” Alina and Kayla gave each other a blank stare and began laughing. “Ok! Ok! Sometimes, there is no one home!”

They both burst out laughing again, and Alina began to wipe her tears from all the laughter. “Oh my god! The stories that I can tell you about him!” Kayla stopped giggling and looked at her mom. “Tell me! I want to know. Like, why are you two so close?”

Alina was taken aback when her daughter, Kayla, asked about her uncle for the first time. Realizing the moment’s importance, she spoke to Kayla about Kendrin before putting her to bed. “Your uncle hasn’t been the same since we lost Mom and Perla. He has been living in this imaginary world since then. You know! The whole *I am the king* thing. He isolated himself and lived in this dangerous, secluded place in the woods. I’m worried about him.” Alina sighed and paused for a moment.



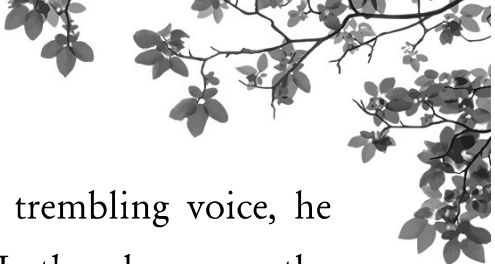
“Kendrin always put the family first for as long as I can remember. Even now. I vividly recall him as a little boy, wearing a black hoodie, heading out into those dangerous streets. He was always sweaty and dirty when he came home, but we never lacked anything. He was just a nine-year-old boy who never had a chance to be a child, Princess.”

Alina shows Kayla a newspaper clipping from a wooden box she kept on her dresser. The headline reads, “THE AVENUE BOYS STRIKE AGAIN!” Kayla looks at it with curiosity. She notices the picture looks like the large painting on the wall of the abandoned building they saw when they visited their old friends in the neighborhood. “The artwork is beautiful, right Kayla?”

Kayla suddenly stood up and gasped in surprise. “I always thought the stories about them were just made up, all lies!” Alina grinned in response and said, “Nope, they’re all real! They were legends!” She pointed at one of the boys in the newspaper clipping. He was wearing a hooded sweatshirt and a bandana to conceal his identity. “This is him. The other boy was his best friend, Michael Brown.”

Alina began to laugh when she noticed her daughter staring at her with her mouth wide open in amazement. “Here, let me help you with that.” She gently closed her daughter’s mouth and kissed her forehead. “Time to go to bed.”

A night later, Kayla has another nightmare. Alina rushed into the room to hold her daughter and walked her to the dining room. She called Kendrin and explained what had just happened, and there was a moment of silence on the



phone. “Kendrin?” She asked. And in a trembling voice, he said only three words. “Break the seal.” He then hangs up the phone. “Kendrin?” But there was no response—just a dial tone.

Alina opened the wooden box, took out the manuscript wrapped in a bloodstained cloth, and caressed the wax seal on the leather-bound book. “Your uncle asked me to read this to you if you had another nightmare.” Not knowing the mysteries of what happened to the brother when he disappeared, Alina’s hands became sweaty from anxiety.

“Ready?” she nervously asked her daughter. The little girl nodded. Alina removed the bloody Panda cloth, broke the seal, and opened the book to the first page. She smiled and showed her daughter a sketch of two boys in hooded sweatshirts on the first page. “Let’s begin,” she said.

