

In the crucible of creation, where thought and matter bend to will, only Eliar possessed the craft to forge the Jewels of Might. Upon his heavy crown, he set the trinity: the Jewel of Knowledge, a sapphire that held all that was and all that could be; the Jewel of Power, a ruby that burned with the fire of command; and the Jewel of Hope, an emerald that shimmered with the light of every dawn.

Yet his own foresight became his torment. The Jewel of Knowledge showed him the terrible futures born from the Jewel of Power, and he knew it must be unmade. To extinguish such a fire required a sacrifice of equal measure; with a heart fractured by sorrow, he shattered the emerald of Hope to annihilate the ruby of Power.

He was left with only Knowledge. A cold, perfect sapphire on his brow. But without Hope to temper vision, and without Power to enact change, his wisdom became a curse. He saw every cruelty, every loss, every tear shed across the ages, and was left adrift in a sea of helpless knowing. His strength waned, not of the body, but of the spirit. He remained in his mighty fortress, a king of sorrows, a guardian to a treasure he could no longer bear.

It was then that a grasping king, whose ambition was a fire that consumed all it touched, marched upon Eliar's gates. He found no resistance. The master of the fortress, once a being of immense stature, was a figure stooped by the weight of what he knew. Eliar was taken in chains, his own fortress now his prison.

The king did not want a swift end. He coveted the sapphire on Eliar's brow, but it would not be taken. It was bound to the mind of its creator. So, the king sought to break the mind. Deep beneath the fortress, in caverns where the sun was not even a memory, Eliar was chained. There, the king began his cruel work. He used the Jewel against its master, forcing visions upon him—plagues he could not halt, wars he could not prevent, the suffering of innocents he was doomed to only witness. For days that bled into weeks, he was tormented not by blade or fire, but by the ceaseless, agonizing clarity of his own sight.

Under this relentless assault, Eliar's mind began to fray. The threads of his reason, stretched taut for so long, finally snapped. His sanity unraveled into whispers and vacant stares. And as the vessel for the Jewel broke, so too did the Jewel itself. The light within the sapphire dimmed, its crystalline structure clouded over, and its deep blue bled away into a fragile, translucent grey.

The king, watching with fury, saw his prize dissolving with its keeper's mind. Robbed of his conquest, he chose annihilation. He ordered the execution of the babbling husk

that was once Eliar. As the blade fell, the Jewel of Knowledge did not shatter; it simply turned to dust, its light extinguished at the precise moment Eliar's last coherent thought vanished into the abyss.

The world, robbed of a greatness it never knew, grew colder. The king, in his bitter victory, tore down the fortress, determined to erase every stone, every memory. Yet he could not silence the echo of what was done. It was a whisper in the fabric of the world—the ghost of a choice made, the shadow of a wisdom lost forever. And that whisper, a testament to the man the king could never understand, was a haunting he could never escape.