

Episode 1: "The One Who Knew How to Win" - Sound Design Cue Sheet

Opening Sequence (Your Host Voice)

[00:00-00:03] Cold Open

Music: Audio logo (when you create it)

- **Level:** -6dB, fade in over 1 second
- **Description:** Your signature sound for the series

[00:03-00:08] Host Introduction Begins

Music: Gentle ambient pad (sustained synth or piano)

- **Level:** -20dB to -18dB
- **Description:** Warm, contemplative foundation
- **Search terms:** "ambient pad C major," "warm drone," "contemplative background"
- **Duration:** Continue under entire opening

Ambience: Subtle room tone or very quiet ambient texture

- **Level:** -30dB to -25dB
- **Description:** Intimate space feeling
- **Search terms:** "quiet room tone," "library ambience," "study atmosphere"

[When you say "Not just Go—"]

SFX: Single Go stone placement (wood on wood)

- **Level:** -15dB to -12dB
- **Timing:** Right after the word "Go"
- **Description:** Clean, crisp stone click
- **Search terms:** "go stone wood click," "wooden game piece," "stone on board"

[00:25-00:30] "October 2015" Section

Music: Add subtle digital element to existing pad

- **Level:** -22dB

- **Description:** Hint of electronic/AI presence
- **Search terms:** "subtle digital pad," "soft synth texture," "electronic ambience"

[00:45-00:50] Transition to Story

Music: Pad begins to evolve/transform

- **Action:** Original warm pad slowly morphs to slightly more ethereal
 - **Duration:** 3-4 second transition
 - **Purpose:** Bridge from human consciousness to AI story
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Story Section (AI Voice)

[Story Begins] "In the oldest game ever played..."

Music: New musical theme emerges

- **Level:** -18dB to -15dB
- **Description:** More spacious, contemplative, slightly otherworldly
- **Search terms:** "neo-classical piano," "ambient storytelling," "contemplative instrumental"
- **BPM:** 60-70 BPM
- **Character:** Beautiful but subtly different from host music

Ambience: Different acoustic space

- **Level:** -25dB
- **Description:** Larger, more ethereal space than host's intimate room
- **Search terms:** "hall ambience," "ethereal space," "digital ambience"

[Story: "Where others saw patterns, the child saw consequences"]

Music: Slight intensification

- **Action:** Add subtle string layer or second piano voice
- **Level:** Music rises to -15dB briefly
- **Purpose:** Emphasize Alpha's unique perception

[Story: "Move 37" - CRITICAL MOMENT]

Preparation: 2 seconds before "Move 37"

- **Music:** Begins to fade/thin out

- **Level:** Drop to -25dB
- **Purpose:** Create space for the dramatic moment

[Exactly at "Move 37"] SFX: Single Go stone placement – but different from opening

- **Level:** -8dB (more prominent than opening stone)
- **Description:** This stone sounds different – more resonant, more final
- **Processing:** Add slight reverb to make it special
- **Timing:** Right on the words "Move 37"

[Immediately after "Move 37"] Silence: 3-4 seconds of near-complete silence

- **Music:** Fades to nearly nothing (-35dB)
- **Ambience:** Drops to barely audible
- **Purpose:** Let the magnitude of this moment breathe

[Story: "It looked wrong. Chaotic. Senseless."] Music: Subtle dissonance or tension

- **Description:** Slight discord in the harmony
- **Level:** -20dB (quiet but noticeable)
- **Purpose:** Musical representation of confusion

[Story: "But it wasn't. It was beautiful."] Music: Resolution and bloom

- **Action:** Dissonance resolves to beautiful harmony
- **Level:** Rises to -12dB momentarily
- **Description:** Musical "ah-ha" moment
- **Search terms:** "beautiful resolution," "harmonic bloom," "uplifting turn"

[Story: Alpha's Retirement Section]

Music: Gradual fade and space

- **Action:** Music becomes more sparse, notes further apart
- **Level:** Slowly decreases from -15dB to -25dB
- **Purpose:** Represents Alpha stepping away

[Story: "After Alpha won, it retired. Silently. Instantly."] SFX: Footsteps fading (but not human footsteps)

- **Level:** -18dB, fading to silence

- **Description:** Digital/ethereal footsteps receding
- **Search terms:** "fading footsteps," "digital footsteps," "ethereal walking away"

Music: Becomes very minimal

- **Level:** -30dB
- **Description:** Almost absent, representing Alpha's departure

[Story: "The game became infinite"]

Music: Opens up dramatically

- **Action:** Space expands, reverb increases
- **Level:** Rises to -10dB
- **Description:** Sense of infinite possibility
- **Search terms:** "expansive ambient," "infinite space," "opening up"

SFX: Subtle magical/ethereal element

- **Level:** -20dB
 - **Description:** Sparkle, chimes, or digital magic
 - **Search terms:** "magic sparkle," "ethereal chimes," "digital magic"
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Closing Sequence (Your Host Voice Returns)

[Transition back to Host]

Music: Return to warmer, more intimate sound

- **Action:** Ethereal story music transforms back to host's warm pad
- **Duration:** 2-3 second transition
- **Level:** Settles at -20dB under your voice

[Host: Research Credits Section]

Music: Respectful, honoring tone

- **Level:** -22dB (quieter for information)
- **Description:** Maintains contemplative mood but doesn't compete with credits

[Host: "This machine you're listening to..."]

Music: Subtle return of digital element

- **Level:** -25dB
- **Description:** Gentle reminder of AI theme
- **Purpose:** Meta-moment about AI creating content about AI

[Host: Final lines - "Sleep well..."]

Music: Gentle resolution and fade

- **Action:** Music slowly fades toward ending
- **Level:** From -20dB to -30dB over final 10 seconds

[Host: "The board is always waiting."] SFX: Final Go stone placement

- **Level:** -10dB
- **Description:** Same as opening stone, but with longer reverb tail
- **Purpose:** Bookends the episode

[Episode End]

Music: Complete fade to silence

- **Duration:** 3-4 seconds
- **Purpose:** Contemplative space for reflection

Technical Notes

Music Search Strategy:

Primary sources: Freesound.org, Zapsplat, YouTube Audio Library **Backup options:** Incompetech (Kevin MacLeod), BBC Sound Effects

Level References:

- **-35dB:** Barely audible
- **-25dB:** Quiet background
- **-15dB:** Noticeable supporting element
- **-10dB:** Prominent but not competing with voice
- **-6dB:** Very prominent

Processing Notes:

- **All music:** Light compression to sit consistently under voice
- **SFX:** Individual level adjustment as needed
- **Ambiences:** High-pass filter below 100Hz to avoid muddiness

Timeline Sync:

- Import your completed voice track first
 - Use labels/markers for each cue point
 - Build sound design around existing voice timing
 - Don't force voice to fit music - make music fit voice
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Emergency Simplified Version

If short on time, focus on these essential elements:

1. **Opening Go stone** (when you say "Go")
2. **Move 37 moment** (stone + silence + resolution)
3. **Consistent background music** throughout story
4. **Final Go stone** (closing)
5. **Basic ambience** under each section

These four elements will carry 80% of the emotional impact.