

Short Stories by Mihir Modak

I wrote these short stories during my time at Rubika Supinogame. Each one of them is created with a different theme in mind and for one I specifically declared the constraints within which I made it.

I hope you enjoy them!

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Some Really Bad Sweepstakes

The town fair had finally begun. Lights of all colors were spread everywhere, giving life to many of the shops and various rides available to the immense crowd attending it. Families were eating at small shops, children complaining and yet others just having a look around.

At one place in the fair though, the atmosphere was very tense and different from the friendly cheerfulness at other places. This was where the sweepstakes were being conducted. There were many people anxiously waiting for the numbers to be called out, hoping that they would be in their favor, and if not, they would find it enough reason to throw all sorts of curses and accusations at the drawer. One of these people was Dan Redfield.

Dan was really excited. He had been single for far too long and here was finally a chance to get the girls interested in him, or so he thought. He was just a humble middle-aged man with a normal job which let him live decently enough.

There were only three more numbers left on his sheet and no one had yet announced a completion. This meant that he still had the chance. When the third number got called out, Dan was very excited to see things going his way. He only had two numbers left, just two more and he would win that beautiful stack of \$5 million.

Only, it wouldn't be this time, for the first prize at least. That would be because a guy had already announced completion when his third last number had been cleared. The next number, even though his second last, someone announced a row completion. He had almost given up when he heard the latest number, for it was his last one.

Yes! He would be winning the prize after all, even though it was the second prize it was still better than nothing. He immediately got overexcited, he had done something and gotten what he could normally never have in his life. He could now make everything better and live life the way he wanted to.

Almost immediately, the whole atrium went loud, with everyone complaining about their loss. The announcer had to finally quiet everyone down by shouting into the microphone.

Somehow, soon, everyone was getting back to their seats. The 1st prize was called and the winner happily came and received it, also receiving glares all the other competitors, including Dan. Next, it was his turn. He couldn't wait, as the second prize was also the surprise prize and varied a lot for each of the sweepstakes.

Walking up the stage, he was thinking of all the various things he could now do, how he wouldn't have to listen to his stupid neighbors anymore, how he would buy a great new house and car, humble but much better than his current situation. All these thoughts faded into nothingness however, when he saw his prize being revealed.

His prize, the second prize, was a thoroughbred walnut brown horse.

He couldn't believe it, his prize, a stupid horse? What would he do with this? All his amazing dreams had vanished into thin air!

But, he couldn't embarrass himself in front of the crowd, so he grudgingly put on a face and received the prize, and for some reason, still got the glares from the audience. He didn't

understand, but thought that it probably didn't matter. The fair ended soon after that, as this was the last event of the day.

A bit later, he went home. The horse was delivered to him a while later. He was not a farmer or anything related to the sort, but he did have a small field. So, he put the horse there, had a bath and fell on his bed. The horse was useless for him. He did not know how to take care of it, nor use it properly, basically, he had not really won anything with this. Then, he remembered the races that some of his friends spoke of.

He took it one day for the races, got a rider, but in the first race itself, it tripped and lost the race, not only not securing a place, but coming in last.

This made him even more frustrated. He had to clean it and feed it every day and find someone to take care of it when he wasn't at home. This was making his life a living hell.

One day, while coming back from work, he was stopped by a strange man. The man introduced himself and said he wished to buy Dan's horse. Dan was surprised. Here was someone who was willing to take the burden off his back. But why?

The man was ready to explain, he had seen that Dan had been disappointed and distressed because of the horse. He himself loved horses and had a barn where he took care of raised them. What's more, the man offered \$2.5 million! Less, but still half of what the first prize would have gotten him. Seeing this as a way to vent out his pent up frustration he jumped the gun and sold the horse.

Dan was happy now, he had quite a bit of money. He got himself a good car and found himself living a slightly better life.

However, after a few months, he met the same man while going to the mall to buy his month's supply of items. The man was dressed in expensive clothes and wore a similarly expensive looking watch. Dan asked him how he had got them and was told that the man had used the horse in the races, which had got him a lot of money.

This really shocked Dan, how could the man do this? This wasn't supposed to be possible! He had himself taken the horse to the races and found that it wasn't race worthy. So, how?

He didn't wish to see the man anymore and so left in a hurry. By the time he reached home however, he had realized that there was something wrong in the way he had done things. He understood that he had made a mistake. He decided to think it through step by step.

He continued doing this every day he came back from work, sitting at the table with a cup of coffee.

It happened after a week, he finally realized what had gone wrong. He had not thought of raising the horse, or training it or even taking the appropriate advice from a horse trainer.

If he had kept his cool and thought of all the possible things he could have done with this horse, he just might've made things go his way. But, it was a bit too late now and things had indeed gone bad.

No wonder, he thought to himself, the stars made all the more sense now.

However, he would not let this get him down. Thus, Dan decided to use his remaining money to buy another horse, albeit a less expensive one but this time, sure that he would be twice as careful. Time to put this second chance to good use.

Clandestine Cleanup

The fire continues to crackle in the distance. The remains of the wood lie on the barren path, creaking under each footstep taken by the man.

There isn't much left after the bombing. Remains and rubble lie about the much trodden path. The sky is dark, filled with smoke and ash and all that can be seen is covered in either black or red.

His mission is to look for leftovers and finish them off. He walks past the ruins of a burning building which seems like it may fall any instant. The man sees the house in the distance. It is dark but still the only structure that isn't burning in the area.

He approaches the house, an assassin, extremely quiet and subtle and scans the area for any signs of life. He hears some sort of clicking and is about to make a move when a strong wind blows, preventing him from hearing any further.

Once it has died out, he takes out his weapon and slowly moves into position near the entrance. The clicking is louder now, it seems like a clock or repetitive mechanism of some sort. Could it be a bomb? No, he must be wary, and not make haste, for one small mistake could cost him his life.

Suddenly, the clicking stops, alerting him. After waiting for any further sounds or movement, he decides to take a look.

The assassin slowly walks up the stairs, spiteful of the fact that they are old and gets even more annoyed when he finds that the door is just the same, but then of course it would be; this house is supposed to have been abandoned for the past 3 years.

He tries the door knob. It is locked. Strange, it should just be the same way he had left it the last time he checked. He takes out his tools and works on the lock, very soon picking it. He slowly opens the door, waiting in tension as it creaks open, unknowing of what waits for him on the other side.

Soon, it has opened completely. He dares a peek inside. No movement, good, for now. He quietly enters the room, doubly careful to ensure that he makes as little noise as possible. The entrance hall is deserted, remains of broken glass and pots lie scattered around. Signs of a battle, surely. He closes the door behind him, so as to not alert any other enemies in the area. He moves in and as the sounds of the fires outside die out, the place becomes eerily quiet.

The stairs in front lead upstairs while there are two doors, one at the end of the hall and another near the stairs. He decides to clear out the places at ground level first.

Always remove the one at the corner first, as that one can be the most dangerous. He remembers the phrase that has been continuously repeated to him since the time he first became an assassin. Knowing this, he approaches the farthest door, at the end of the hall.

Equipping the silencer attached hand gun, he careful opens the door, surprised to find that this has been re-attached, all patched up. The door makes no noise as he enters. A single person is sitting at the edge of a window. A .44 is in his hand, the enemy symbol on his shirt.

This is all the assassin needs to know, he swiftly takes aim and shoots, the man falls before he can open his mouth completely.

Room cleared and scanned, he moves on to the next door, the one near the stairs.

He observes that this one too, has the new door. He ignores it for the moment and quietly pushes it open. There are two in this room. One is sitting on the sofa, reading some sort of blue – print. The other is talking on his cell phone. Not good. He cannot allow the enemy to be alerted.

He waits, almost completely closing the door, hoping that the soldiers in the room haven't noticed.

Soon, the noise inside stops completely. Have they noticed? It doesn't matter. The job must be done. He enters the room, fast as a viper and quickly takes out both with a single shot to the head for each.

Suddenly, the clicking sound starts again. This makes him further tense and makes the sense of urgency grow even more.

Realizing that he must finish up fast, he hurries up the stairs to the 1st floor and stands ready outside the door, which, coincidentally, is again patched up. No doubt there is a reason for this and the clicking. He searches his memory and thanks the lord he remembered in time and did not enter the room in a hurry. It's a wire trap, three of one, he has already triggered two, and if he had entered the third door, he would have been blown to bits.

Making sure that whole house is clear, he checks all suspect locations and finally finds the data that has been the sub – objective of the mission making sure to avoid the third door. He takes it, quickly steps out of the house, making sure to lock it behind him and leaves the scene, alerting the ally chopper that has been waiting for his report. Once the report has been submitted, he walks off into the fields nearby and as usual, disappears completely.

Temporary Bases

Some adventure this time :)

The room is lit under a dim light. Lush tapestry and artwork decorate its wall. A crude table and a few chairs are present in the centre of the room, quite overshadowed by the gallantry of its decor.

“Why do you keep looking at it?” Asks Matt Stalvey.

“Oh, I dunno, it just seems a bit out-of-place. I mean, who would find a symbolism of the Jousting Knights on a plinth here in Ostwinkton,” replies Roslyn Ates. She is staring at a stark painting of two knights clashing in a battle of Jousting, her long hair falling over her shoulders.

“Is that right? And who was it exactly that brought us here all the way?” he asks.

“Oh shut up already! I know that was a bad decision. But we can’t do anything about it now can we?” she replies.

“Rose, really now, we need to get a fix on Sylvan before things get of hand.” Matt replies. “He has already got a lead on of 2 days on us. Anymore, and we won’t be able to catch him; and then, we all know what happens,” he explains, taking a slice of bread from the fridge, the image of the dead man on the road still vivid in his memory. “I do Not want that happening again.”

“I know,” Rose replies. “I know, it’s just that the only clue we have on his whereabouts is this stupid picture of a seashell of some sort,” she continues, looking at the picture on the table.

“Hmm, on taking a second look, I’ve got to say, I’ve seen it somewhere before...” Matt says.

“Oh yeah, I remember Luke showing it to me a while ago when we’d gone to take care of that ‘Home Taping is Killing Music’ journey, getting all of those transport channels blocked,” he continues, now applying butter to the bread. “This thing has been coming back pretty lately, it’s as if the whole music industry is worried about it.”

“Yes... and what about it?” Rose asks, resting her chin on her hands.

“I’ll need to confirm it with him but if I’m not wrong, this is a creature that is known as the nautilus. No, I do not mean the one from the movies. Thing is, this species has survived for millions of years undergoing hardly any change. In essence, they haven’t evolved very much,” Matt explains, as he goes and sits in a chair in front of her, eating the bread.

“Okay, but how’s that going to help us?” asks a smug looking Rose.

“Well, do you remember this strange blueprint diagram of the Eiffel Tower?” he asks her, holding up the paper in his hands.

“Yes.”

“Now, remember the folding procedures you had told me about, wherein one can form a new picture by folding a paper with images or patterns that make seemingly no sense?”

“Of course. Are you suggesting that this piece of paper is meant to do the same?” Rose questions.

“Well, both yes and no,” he answers, leaning close to her. “Here, take a look at this,” he continues, as he folds the paper.

The paper folds into a square, having been folded 6 times in particular places. It shows what appears to be a path. There are distinctly strange markings that appear to create some sort of formation all over the paper. There is also the picture of a Nautilus with an arrow pointing upwards, next to it, marked ‘Height’.

“Wow, that is something,” remarks Rose, as she takes a closer look. “This is something I did not expect at all. Seriously, what is such a long underground pathway doing under the Eiffel Tower?”

“Here’s the good part,” Matt smiles as he answers her. “It’s like this, the Nautilus, is usually found at depths of around 300 meters, but the important point is that they rise up to around only 100 metres once a year, at night, to mate and lay eggs,” he explains. “Tell me now, what is the height at the roof of the Eiffel tower?” he questions her.

“300 meters!” Rose’s face is lit up as she realizes the true meaning of the picture that they’ve held for several weeks. “But then why did Allan give us this? Wouldn’t he have gone himself?” she asks.

“Yes, that is true, and you know what? I think the time when we received that single portrait of a poultry vendor, of all things, showcasing his goods to the ladies also meant something. But this is Allan we’re talking about, and cryptic clues are his favorite pastime. Now then, let’s go find Sylvan,” he replies, smiling.

They get up to leave, but before they can even open the door, bullets shatter the windows of the room. An explosion destroys the side of the room as Matt and Rose get down and start working their way to the door again, having been thrown off their feet.

There is bright light shining from the distance into their eyes. It’s as if the whole room has woken up. They’ve had just about enough though. Matt smashes the heads of two people as they enter the room. Rose then punches the lights out of another as they storm down the stairs.

It doesn’t take them long, both having got their guns out. Enemies fall as if in praise to their skills as they gracefully dodge and pass through the intricate corridors of the mansion.

They escape the place in a span of 5 minutes, and are already en route to Paris when Matt gets a call on his phone. “Not now,” he says, as he starts the engines of the personal jet. Time seems to pass in blur for them as Matt and Rose have reached their destination in a couple of hours.

“There it is, our temporary base,” remarks Rose, nodding towards the Villa, with the same painting of two Knights having at each other while jousting promptly painted on its entrance gate.

“Not now, my dear,” says Matt. “We’ve got some work to do,” he finishes with a smile.

Dark Times

“Tis a great tale lad, but I’m a very tired man now and I need some sleep.” Says the old man, sitting slouched on a wooden stool, a crumbly staff in his hand.

“We can’t have that now can we? Please, tell me the story. I’ll even throw in a few extras.” Says Ffon.

“Oh very well.” The old man Mal replies. “But you better listen carefully, for I shall not repeat it again.” He continues, glaring into Ffon’s eyes.

Ffon only smiles in return.

Mal sighs and finally starts narrating the story.

Kian Ironelk had taken a wrong turn; a bad decision. He was now in cuffs along with the child that he had been protecting. Little Alfred was only 14 when he had been hunted for harbouring Dark Magic Traits. The High Council had regarded many like him to be extremely dangerous. But they were wrong, horribly wrong. It was Kian they needed to be worried about. Kian’s past was a dark one.

They had robbed him of his family; killed his mother in front of his eyes. He had tried to save his father by attacking the murderers, but he had failed. He had only been able to destroy the face of one them. The other 3 had escaped, leaving the mutilated bodies of his parents behind.

He had stood there, soaked in blood till his aunt came home. The shock in his eyes did not disappear for a long time; and when it had, he had been captured by the High Council. Now, he could not have a chance to avenge his family. He was on the verge of madness.

But the High Council wasn’t the problem, Kian knew there was some other organization behind this and he had no idea where they were.

The problem was that they were now after Alfred. Alfred who had done nothing. Alfred, who was someone he had found left for dead in the forest. He didn’t even have his clothes on when Kian found him. It was as if the world had given up on him.

When he woke up, he had told Alfred that he had been a minion, a slave. He had tried to escape and had been caught. But instead of being thrown into the cells, they had instead chosen to torture him, strip him of everything he owned, everything that made him the man he was and left him there. Left him to die, to rot; a Mage – Lancer in his stomach. Kian had saved him and brought him back to full health finding him facing a fate similar to the one life he had been fighting.

Now, Alfred had taken the Lancer as his weapon, choosing to use it defeat the very people that had destroyed his life. Meanwhile, Kian would use the great Hammer of Dawn, forged to perfection, to bring retribution to his enemies – the High Council and their all-important Warriors as well as this mysterious organization responsible for torturing Alfred. When the time was right, they ambushed the guards and made their escape.

The stories say that the both of them encountered an interesting young lady, who would go on to become the love of Kian’s life. They also go on to say that the together, the three of them

brought vast armies under their control and defeated the High Council. Others tell the tales of how they sneaked into the chambers of the Council and killed them in their sleep.

Still others speak of the way, the Hidden City of Sairfall suddenly collapsed upon itself. There had been rumors of the mysterious Assassin organization being dissolved at the time. But no one can tell which one is true and which one is false.

In the end, the truth will only come out if you actually meet these three strange people. Everyone knows that they happily got married and lived peacefully with Alfred who would go on to become a great man himself, but no one knows their current whereabouts, as they mysteriously disappeared some time ago.

Mal sighs again as he finally finishes narrating the story.

“Aren’t you missing a few details old man?” Ffon asks in a slow voice.

“But of course, no really knows what happened and also, I like to keep some stories for the right time.” He answers.

“Very well.” Ffon replies, a devilish smile on his face as he gets up and leaves the place.

Constraints –

Theme – A fantasy world in medieval times where warriors were highly important

Character – Minions

Conflict – Character has to guard against an unknown child against an unknown organization

Resolution – Happily gets married and lives peacefully

Item – Lancer and Hammer of Dawn (Finding other uses for existing weapons)