

# KYIVAN AVATARS

## ACT 1:

Ka-boom.

“My head, it hurts...” he cried.

12 year old Artem lay on the hard, cold floor, sweating.

“**Where** am I?”

No one answered.

He looked around, struggled to his feet and took a shaky step forward grabbing a white column with a black screen.

“**Who** am I?”

Then it hit him like a sabre between the eyes.

“I am the grandson of Volodymyr.

Ruler of Kyivan Rus”, he remembered.

“My ancestors are the family of Kyi – leader of Polyany.

Nephew of Schek, Kvoryv and Lybid.

Founders of Kyiv in 489 AD -- the ancient capital city of Kyivan Rus”.

“But **where** am I?”

Artem shook his head and blinked.

It was dark, with no fire to guide his path.

“Hey!” exclaimed a voice.

Artem stood still, his eyes focusing slowly.

There stood a kid.

“Who are **you?**” asked Artem.

“My name is Luke. And you are in Canada’s Museum of Space and Aviation.”

“Davay. How can you understand me? I don’t speak your language...” said Artem.

“Simple. With my trusty universal translator I understand 400,000 languages,” replied Luke.

Whoosh, bang, bang, bang, whoosh.....

“Duck,” yells Luke. “They are firing...the Storm Troopers. They want to capture us...”

“Why?” yells Artem dodging flying streaks of light.

“I am the son of Anakin Skywalker - the Jedi warrior. And they want to kill Jedi warriors who seek freedom for our people.”

The boys ran through the Museum, past sketches and paintings of weird creatures, around glass cases containing mini sculptures of what looked like animals, and hid in a space with statues dressed in robes.

“Shhhh and don’t move,” whispered Luke. “Be invisible...”.

The clattering rang against the bare floor, getting louder, louder and louder.

Suddenly, they appeared.

Storm Troopers. They were dressed from head to toe in white. Masks covered their faces and weapons held firm in their hands.

“How did I get into this mess,” thought Artem, not moving and barely breathing.

The Storm Troopers circled around their hiding space.

It was the longest two minutes of Artem’s young life.

And just as quickly as they came, they left.

“I need to get home. Now!” Artem exclaimed.

“How?” quizzed Luke.

Suddenly, the clatter of feet came back.

“I have an idea”, cried Artem running toward the white column with a screen.

“Luke, grab my belt and don’t let go”.

“Follow me – then jump – on three,” yelled Artem.

“One, two, three!”

They dove headfirst into the black screen on the white column.

And disappeared.

## **ACT 2:**

“Pryvit”.

“Why does my head hurt so much?” asks Luke.

“You broke the barrier. The one between the Avatar world and the real world. It gets easier the more you practice,” said Artem.

“Avatar?” Luke said, eyebrows raised.

“Yes. I am a Kyivan Avatar. I live in my on-line world throughout the generations,” replied Artem. “You understand 400,000 languages. I travel through time.”

“So how did you end up on the floor in the Star Wars exhibition in Canada?” enquired Luke.

“I was chasing a kidnapper who took my 8 year old sister Slava because she wore a valuable amulet belonging to my ancestor Lybid. The thief fell and then disappeared. I followed him and broke the barrier,” explained Artem.

“I need to find Slava and that amulet. The entire city of Kyiv is looking is searching.”

“The amulet is gold and has eagles and stags carved on it to protect people from evil. Slava was wearing it for the first time. We need to find her and the amulet before tomorrow’s celebration in the Kyivan Rus’ Court of Volodymyr.”

Luke looked hard at Artem. They were similar. Each wore tunics, with belts and sandals on their feet. Luke had a metal cuff around his wrist; Artem wore a leather wristband. Their hair was shaggy. And they were both determined in their own way.

“I need to go home too,” said Luke quietly.

“Until you can go back home safely, you don’t have a choice. You are now part of this world. And I need to find my sister and that amulet. Will you help?” Artem asked seriously.

Luke thought long and hard.

“On one condition - get home once we find her and the amulet,” declared Luke.

“Deal”, replied Artem and shook hands.

The boys stood up on a grassy, tall bank overlooking the majestic river.

“This is the Dnipro River. In 489 A.D., my ancestors – three brothers and their sister founded the City of Kyiv across this great river”, explained Artem.

“We need to move fast. The thief ran over that hill toward the City. Let’s go find him!”

## **ACT 3:**

The boys ran as fast as they could toward the tallest building in the City.

Suddenly, a figure appeared on a horse riding toward them.

The imposing rider wore metal armour, carried weapons and a shield with a crest of three points – the Tryzub.

“Ruslan!” exclaimed Artem. “My favourite Lytsar! He rescued me when I was small and fell into the Dnipro River. Plus he’s the strongest and smartest knight in the whole of Kyivan Rus’!”

Luke stood still. Except for his heavy metal helmet and chain metal and spear, Ruslan could pass for a Jedi warrior.

“Artem, come quickly,” exclaimed Ruslan grabbing the boy’s arm and lifting him up to take a seat on his horse.

Then the Lytsar looked down. “Who is this?” he bellowed.

“I am Luke Skywalker. Son of Anakin, the best Jedi Warrior in the world”, boasted Luke in his loudest voice.

“There is no time to waste. I think I found the thief and Slava,” Ruslan declared.

“You”, he pointed to Luke, “come with us,” and hoisted the boy onto his horse.

The trio then rode off determined to find Slava.

Galloping quickly through the southern gate to the walled City, they rode toward the foundation under construction for a new church – Saint Sophia.

“He’s hiding somewhere here. I swear I heard Slava’s voice”, declared Ruslan quickly dismounting his horse then helping the boys to the ground.

“I’ll check over there,” stated Artem, “with Luke.”

Ruslan strode to the back of the expansive construction while the boys moved cautiously to west side. They searched in every nook and cranny hoping to hear and see something.

Suddenly, a strange sound was heard – muffled voices.

Artem peered over a ridge of stone to get a better look when a huge man leapt up, grabbed the boy’s belt, lifted him by the back and threw him onto the ground, crumpled and bloodied.

Behind him, Slava shivered on the ground behind the foundation wall, amulet around her neck, hands bound together.

Luke gasped. Artem did not move.

The man charged Luke, brandishing a large sword.

He lunged at the boy who dodged the man quickly, and ran toward Artem.

“Artem,” he yelled, “Are you alive?”

The man turned and ran after Luke, catching the boy’s belt with his sword and cutting it off. The belt flew the air landing in the half-built foundation.

Luke turned. Without his belt, everything needed to survive was lost.

He turned to see Ruslan running toward the thief, sword in hand, shield held high, and ready to do battle.

Swoosh...

Down came the thief’s sword again, this time cutting the boy’s cheek.

Luke could feel the warm blood trickle down his skin.

Ruslan beared down on the thief and the battle began. Every clash of metal and every cry drew more Kyivans around the Lytsar and thief.

Luke knelt beside Artem.

And then the unthinkable happened.

The thief stripped the Lytsar of his sword. Barehanded, but quick witted, Ruslan bent down to grab a large rock, but slipped, fell backwards, hitting his head against the church foundation.

The thief saw his chance. Lifting the sword high and swearing allegiance to his Pagan Gods, he prepared to kill Ruslan.

Buzzzzzzzz.

Buzzzzzz. Buzzzzzz. Buzzzzzz.

Buzzzzzzzz.

An unfamiliar sound.

Buzzzzzzzz.

The thief looked up and straight into the eyes of a defiant Slava, holding a strange spear in her bound hands. It glowed.

“Put down your sword, thief” she said evenly. “Or I will test my light on you.”

“My light sabre!” cried Luke.

The thief looked at her and laughed while lifting his sword higher.

Buzzzzzzzz.

Buzzzzzzzzzz.

Swoosh, swoosh, and swoosh.

Buzzzzzzzz.

Whoosh.....

Slava threw the light.

It tumbled through the air, raced toward the thief, and hit him.

He collapsed and crumpled into a heap.

## **ACT IV:**

“This will be the best celebration ever!” exclaimed Slava clapping her hands in joy.



She stood with brother Artem and new friend Luke in the High Court of Volodymyr, the amulet safely around her neck.

Beside them stood the Lytsar, Ruslan, as music began to open the celebration.

The children's grandfather, Prince Volodymyr, presided over the feast celebrating the anniversary of a landmark trade agreement with Constantinople that opened the world to the Kyivan Rusians.

"I have to go home," Luke quietly said. "Your world has many parallels to mine. Like the Lystars, the geography, your clothes and battles between good and evil.

But I miss my family."

"I promised I would find a way to get you home", said Artem.

He looked at Slava.

The brother and sister guided Luke toward a large mosaic made of painted shards of glass and pottery built into a wide white column.

It showed three brothers and their sister – Zakhar and Kalyna's ancestors.

"It's beautiful," exclaimed Luke in awe of its size, colours and shape.

"It will take you home. Stare until it comes alive. When it starts to move, then jump into the mosaic."

"Remember, you are now a Kyivan Avatar – one of us. Never forget my friend," Artem said softly.

Luke stared into the mosaic.

It started to quiver, gradually shimmering and shaking.

"Until we see each other again," whispered Slava.

“One, two and three – JUMP!”

## **ACT V:**

Ka-boom, again.

Luke landed on his side beside R2-D2.

The droid looked down on him and noticed the scar on his cheek.

“Master, what happened?” he enquired.

“I travelled to a new world,” said Luke.

“What is that around your neck?” asked the droid.

Luke sat up and looked down on his chest.

There was the amulet Slava wore.

To protect good from evil.

“It’s a treasure from friends,” he replied and smiled.

“Let’s go.”