

## 66 The Prophecy Is A Lie

I worked away at the easel, attempting to lose myself in it. It was helping, but each time I got in too deep, I was drawn back by the statement:

*The prophecy is a lie.* 1

A lump formed in my throat each time the words resonated in my mind. I paused when I was done and assessed my new painting. Today, I had chosen liquid painting, the art of capturing any liquid in a painting. The liquid I had chosen to paint came out better than I had anticipated—I was rusty, after all.

But the liquid wasn't water or juice spilled onto the floor. This liquid was of a peculiar kind, one that hardened the lump in my throat the longer I stared at it.

Light from an unknown source shone on the viscous neon-green liquid on the surface. Like in my nightmares, it looked alive on the paper as well. A large needle flashed in the periphery of my mind, and I got up abruptly. My heart was running laps in my chest, trying to escape my ribcage.

The prophecy is a lie.

How could it be a lie? The statement was unfathomable. It should have been utterly impossible for it to be the truth. Yet, a part of me hoped...

That I was not the cursed twin and it had been a total coincidence I had shifted into a Lycan on my eighteenth birthday. It would mean that I was not the ruin of the pack.

The statement had so many implications that wrapping my mind around it brought on a migraine.

Then my heart dropped again. What if the nightmare hadn't just been a distant memory—what if it had just been my imagination playing tricks on me?

I could still feel the prick of the needle as it was embedded in my side. The sting turned into an ebbing sensation as though I had just been injected. The ebbing grew more insistent, more impossible to ignore.

I touched my hand to my side, hoping that maybe the touch would make it go away. But it had the opposite effect. I jolted the moment my hand came in contact. I felt... pain.

My movements became hurried and feverish as I



My movements became hurried and feverish as I pulled up my blouse, my blood pumping so loudly I could hear the roaring in my ears. Without fabric over it, I pressed a finger to the area with trepidation. I swallowed thickly when, this time, I felt nothing. I moved my finger to another spot. Nothing.

My heart pounded as I pressed my trembling finger to another spot on my side. This time, the pain hit me like a shockwave, sharp and searing, bursting across my skin like fire. I gasped, my breath catching, and stumbled back, cradling the spot. I could hardly believe it, but there was no denying it. That same pain... the same cruel prick I'd felt in my nightmares.

My vision blurred as I tried to make sense of it. My mind fought against the memories—the sensation of a needle piercing my skin, the flood of that strange, venomous liquid. My skin burned where I'd pressed, throbbing like an open wound, yet there was no mark there. Nothing visible.

I forced myself to take a step, then another, toward the mirror in the corner of the room. My legs felt leaden, like they were made of stone. I didn't want to look, to confirm that what I feared was real. But I couldn't deny myself the truth any



I forced myself to take a step, then another, toward the mirror in the corner of the room. My legs felt leaden, like they were made of stone. I didn't want to look, to confirm that what I feared was real. But I couldn't deny myself the truth any longer.

When I reached the mirror, I turned sideways, keeping my face out of view, unwilling to look into my own eyes. I squeezed my eyes shut for a moment, steeling myself, and then I slowly peeled my blouse higher, exposing my side. My breath caught as I opened my eyes.

They were there.

Barely visible, but unmistakable—faint, tiny marks, dotted along my skin in a line. Needle pricks.

A chill swept over me, freezing me in place. My stomach twisted, bile rising in my throat. A mix of horror, confusion, and disbelief surged through me as I stared at them, unable to tear my gaze away. This wasn't a nightmare, wasn't some twisted memory I could brush off. This was real. The memory was real. The green viscous liquid that I painted had been real. The words the man in white has said had been truly said.

Suddenly it was too hard to breath. All of it fall on



Suddenly it was too hard to breath. All of it fall on me like rocks, I felt every prod, every prick and every callous word. The disgusted expression of all those that I could have given my life for. Every electrocution, every pour of ice could water. Every flash of memory brought with it a different type of pain.

*The prophecy is a lie*

If there was even a single doubt that the prophecy was a lie why had I been made to suffer so much? The family that I knew should have held on to any hope, any doubt that the prophecy was a lie. They should have not resigned me to that horrible fate. A fate that I was still dealing with it's aftermath. I always would.

Suddenly, my throat closed up, as if clamped by invisible hands, my lungs refusing to fill. My chest tightened unbearably, and I stumbled back, gripping onto the edge of the dresser to keep myself steady. The words hammered inside my skull, *The prophecy is a lie*. Over and over, they clanged like church bells, relentless, drowning out every rational thought. He has told me believing that I would not remember, believing that my mind would never be able to dredge it up. That meant that it had to be true or at least true to some extent. The conviction in his voice

Each echo of that phrase sent another wave of rage, betrayal, and grief tearing through me. My vision darkened around the edges as I struggled for air, my pulse racing faster, as if my heart were trying to outrun the truth. I couldn't breathe, couldn't think. It had been a lie. All this time, my suffering had been rooted in a lie. It had to have been.

A sharp, guttural sound tore from my throat—a mix of a sob and a scream—as the weight of it all crashed down on me. It wasn't just the memories of the cold needles, the endless pain, or the dark, clinical voices. It was the faces of those I'd trusted, those who had looked on with indifferent eyes, telling me that it was my fate, I was the curse. That I was doomed by a prophecy that now seemed so hollow, so utterly meaningless. There had been chance...

If they'd had even an ounce of doubt... If there had been any chance they could have saved me, even a sliver of hope, why hadn't they held on to it? Why had they thrown me to the wolves, letting me endure every sickening experiment, every violation, all in the name of what could have been a false prophecy?

A strangled cry escaped me, raw and desperate.

A strangled cry escaped me, raw and desperate. My legs gave way, and I sank to the floor, clutching my sides, as if trying to hold myself together. The words of that prophecy, the ones that had been branded into my life and my identity, mocked me now, reverberating through my mind in a painful, endless loop. I could feel my whole world crumbling, breaking down under the unbearable weight of this revelation.

Betrayal, resentment, and despair tangled within me, each emotion threatening to consume me whole. I felt it all the second time since that night five years ago. Tears pricked at my eyes, but I couldn't let them fall. I was too angry, too overwhelmed. My throat tightened further, my breaths coming in shallow, uneven gasps. It was as though my body itself was rebelling against this revelation, the truth or what could be the truth was too much to bear.

I pressed my hands against my temples, trying to stop the spinning, the relentless torrent of memories and words, the feeling of being torn apart from within. There was nowhere to hide from it, no escape from the crushing pain, the insistent echoes of *The prophecy is a lie*.

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I tried to fight the wave of despair, tried to push back the raw, jagged edges of emotions ripping through me. But the weight of it all—my past, the betrayal, the revelation of the lie—left me helpless. I was barely aware of my surroundings, of the darkness gathering at the edges of my vision.

Then, suddenly, a hand clamped over my mouth, startling me back into the present. The sharp smell of something chemical and cold hit my senses as a damp cloth was pressed firmly against my mouth and nose. My body froze as panic clawed its way up my throat.

"Missed me, Mutt?" a harsh voice whispered close to my ear, dripping with cruel amusement. Recognition hit me like ice, cutting through my fear. One of the twins. 3

A surge of terror coursed through me, and I instinctively sucked in a breath, the sharp tang of chloroform flooding my nose. My chest seized with panic as my vision swam, the edges going dark faster and faster.

In my last, desperate moment of consciousness, I fought to scream, one name echoing in my mind, as if he could somehow hear me. *Hades!*

And then, everything went black.