

FORETOLD

Lizard Crimson

Yin slams the door behind us. It's a sturdy timber, but thanks to our wolfkin hearing we can still hear every thunderous movement of the stampeding wyrms outside.

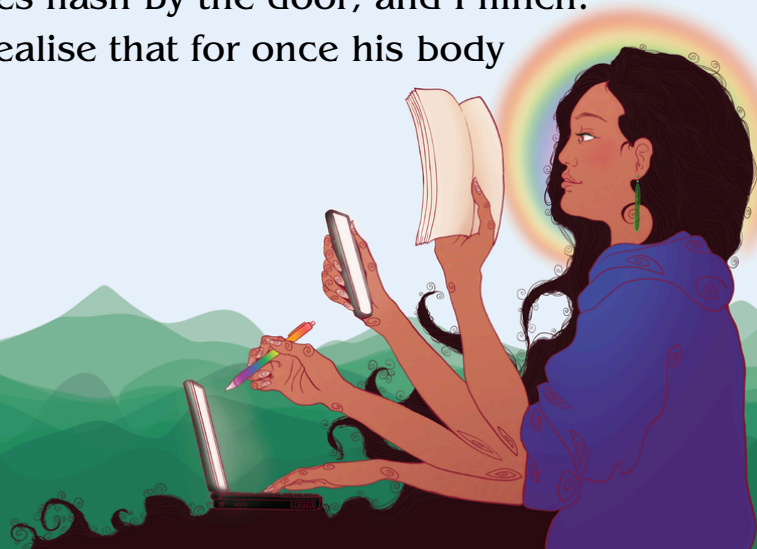
Oh Frog, that sounded like a wall. Oh Frog, we're going to die here.

I slide down the wall and curl up on the stone floor, heart racing. My twin seems to have pulled us into a random little Potions storeroom. The wall opposite my panic corner is adorned with wooden shelves stuffed precariously with all kinds of jars and witchy knick-knacks.

My roommate could probably walk me through every one of those jars and why nothing terrible would happen if the vibrations from the wurm stampede rattled a few hundred of the shelf and all the ingredients mixed into a horrifying concoction of doom that would kill us both far more effectively than the beasts outside this tiny chamber, in fact it'd probably just kill me and leave Yin so he can bring darkness upon the world like in the prophecy except without me to stop him it'll just get worse and worse until all the land falls to his reign of terror, and wait no that's not how prophecies work, you're being paranoid again Yang shut up.

I push my ears flat against my head until I can almost convince myself the pounding is just my own heartbeat, steadily pumping to keep me alive. I breathe in. Out. Slower. Again. I open my eyes and try to remember how much scarier this would be if I couldn't see in the dark.

But nobody can see in people. Yin's eyes flash by the door, and I flinch. With a quiet huff he turns away, and I realise that for once his body is still.



I've managed to avoid being alone with my predestined mortal enemy all year, which I think is especially impressive given the fact that our school is a gigantic castle in the wop-wops where the sheer number of insane life-threatening magical emergencies would be really funny if none of them were insane life-threatening magical emergencies. Like, the wyrms? Probably just somebody's homework that got loose and is now terrorising the school. Regular Tuesdays in this place are shaving years off my life.

But I've been forced into enough group projects with him to know that Grimm Yin doesn't sit still, like how Grimm Yang doesn't calm down, so maybe this is where he finally snaps and decides it's time to take on his full destiny as embodiment of all evil before he even gets out of high school.

Or maybe this is where he pulls his knees to his chest and rests his head on them, ears down and tail limp, the picture of despondence if villains could be sad. Can villains be sad? Are they villains, if they feel the same emotions as everyone else?

Should I have spent less time avoiding my twin?

The wyrms are still wreaking havoc out there, but somehow the quiet in this storeroom is louder. I wish he'd say something. I thought Grimm Yin was a motormouth, too.

"Hi," I whisper to the shelves of jars. For a second, they don't respond, which naturally ratchets up my heart rate by fifty. Then there's a quiet mutter from the door.

"Hey." He's still facing his knees, but his ears have flicked up.



“What do you think of it?” It’s too much too fast, but he’s here right now and suddenly I have to know and honestly my filter’s never been any good.

“Of what?” Yin looks up slowly.

“Of... you know, our destiny. The prophecy. Our deeds that have long been foretold?” He sighs heavily, thumping his head back down like he’s disappointed somehow.

“What?”

“Oh, I dunno, Yang, maybe I just don’t wanna think about how I’m doomed to be some crazy force of evil seeking only darkness and destruction,” he snaps at the shelf.

“I mean, I don’t feel like I’m good enough for it yet, either, but-”

“Good enough?” Yin growls. “*Good enough?*” He towers over me with teeth bared, somehow trembling all over despite the earlier melancholy. “All you have to *be* is good, while I live in *terror* of the day I lose everything that makes me a good person! Maybe I won’t even know it. Maybe I’ll hurt everyone I love. Maybe you *will* fail, and there’s nobody left to stop me.” He shudders, leaning against the door like it’s the only thing that can keep him together.

He’s like me. Oh Frog, he’s just like me and I never even considered he might not want to bring about the end of all things. I got in my own head again and got scared like usual and just called him a villain because that was easier and oh Frog he hates me now but it’s all wrong it’s all wrong *it’s completely wrong I ruined it all.*

The wyrms thunder by.



"I've always hated the prophecy," I choke out. "I guess I just thought that if *you* were this awful villain who couldn't be stopped by anyone else then I'd just hope fate would make me be strong enough when I had to be, but now we're here and I really didn't think you were anything else but that really makes me a bad person actually and I've always suspected I wouldn't be enough somehow, but *this*-"

His embrace is firm. I stare past him in shock.

"You're a mess, twinsie."

"I - wha - " I can feel the rumble of Yin's laughter.

"So am I." I doubt I'd have heard it if I had a sapien's range, but I'd definitely have felt the rumbling increase to shaking. His claws are digging in a bit - I suspect mine are too - but I don't want to let go, even if the person I'm clinging to could be my greatest enemy.

Right now he's just my twin, so I finally let in the thought that's been slipping in and out of the corners of my mind since I was old enough to comprehend destiny.

I doubt Yin would hear this if he had a sapien's range.

"What if we just said no to the prophecy?"

Even the wyrms have gone silent.

