

Lily Jamerson

Wake Up: Part 1

*“Ahhh!” I yell as my limbs shake in lifting my shield to block a potential nasty blow to the head. I shove the man back and swing my sword, making perfect contact with his knee. He collapses, gripping his knee cap in agony. Another comes yelling from behind, allowing me to catch the slightest flash of light reflecting off his sword and I duck. The man misses me and I kick the side of his leg, bending it outwards. He wails, holding his thigh as he falls to his side. A third runs straight at me throwing daggers in pairs. I dodged the first few, but when I turn back to center, a knife flies directly towards my face and makes contact with my right cheek as I turn away. Something pierces my lower left abdomen and I stagger back as the sharp pain begins to overwhelm my legs. I look down at the dagger sticking out of my body and see it begin to drip with blood.*

*The man’s movement captures my attention as he pulls more from his belt. I lift my shield and hide behind it as the daggers clash against it. One runs along my shin and I fall to one knee. Gritting my teeth, I struggle, pulling the blade from my abdomen with a shaky hand, but finally yank it free with a yell. I lower my shield and throw it back at him. He turns away, and I manage to get close enough to drive my sword into his side. He gaps in shock with wide eyes for a moment as blood begins to leak from his mouth, reeking of metal. I pull my blade free and he falls to the ground.*

*I hold the wound on my abdomen, still feeling the depth of the sharp pain, and move away from the battle field towards a hill. I need to find Evelyne. We were separated for maybe*

*fifteen minutes and that made me nervous. She can fight, but we should have made our way back to one another by now. But considering my delay, there's a chance she's hurt and needs my help.*

*Once I reach the top of the hill, all I can see is a crowded field of bodies, alive and dead. The fact so many men, weapons and horses were all moving made it tremendously more difficult to locate her. I remember her wearing a yellow and silver cape on her back, similar to the rest of our men who wear yellow and black capes; though hers differs because it shimmers. I should at least be able to spot that. I look across the field for her cape. I turn to the left side, behind me, and to the right. I don't see her. Panic begins to rise as I keep searching the crowd, unable to find her.*

*Then I hear a desperate call. I turn back to my left to search once more and hear my name again.*

*"Henry!" I see her. She's being held from behind with a curved blade pressing into her throat, preventing her from moving. I have to get to her.*

*I sprint down the hill as fast as I possibly can, ignoring the pain in my abdomen and shin and keep pushing my speed. The man pulls the blade along her neck and her eyes wince as she screams. That's when I realize...I won't make it. I can't get to her in time.*

*"NO!" I yell. I run across the field, frantically trying to reach her, but once I'm only a few meters away, he pulls the knife completely across her neck.*

*All the sound around me drowns out suddenly, and I'm left with the sight of her collapsing to the ground, staring at me with her hazel eyes. My legs go still in disbelief as she chokes on her blood and it spills from her lips and neck. All I can do is watch her attempt to*

*breathe. Her limbs and torso begin to jerk, until it finally goes still...and her gaze moves past me.*

*I feel as though I can't breathe. My breath becomes short and quick as I try to find air. Tears burn my eyes as they blur my vision of her body. I try to understand why I was late. Why I couldn't make it. If I had looked harder, or if I hadn't left her side in the first place, she could still be here. She would still be here. I could have protected her.*

*"AHHH!" I drive my sword into the ground. I hate myself. I should never have left her alone to defend herself, regardless if she would have been angry with me for saying so. She needed the help and because I wasn't looking out for her, it cost her life.*

*The man begins cleaning the blood off his long curved blade on his leg. I glare up at him. It was his fault. He did this. I charge at him with my sword ready to pierce his flesh, but he deflects it with one hand and strikes my face with the handle of his blade. I stumble back and wipe my lip with my wrist.*

*"What's the matter boy?" he calls, raising his arms. "Did I kill your whore?" My mouth becomes tight with rage when he refers to Evelyne this way. I drop my shield and hold my sword with both hands before charging at him again, determined to see him die. I aim for his head, focusing on the exact spot I will hit. My sword is an inch away, when he moves it aside and stabs the blade he used to kill Evelyne into my chest.*

I bolt upright yelling. Panting, I grip my chest feeling for the blade and look down once I notice it's not there. A loud noise of flapping fills the air. I look up in a panic to find the source

of the sound and see a flock of birds flying out from the trees. Heat suddenly runs along my left arm and I jump back at the sight of a huge flame close by.

“Whoa, Henry!” I turn towards the voice frantically. “Hey, it’s just me,” he raises his hands standing a few feet away. Once I can make out his curly brown hair and freckled face, I realize it’s just my friend James. I hear an owl hoot and look around at the tall trees that surround us. Beyond those trees is the night sky lit with billions of stars. A crackling sound brings me back to the ground, and I realize the huge flame I feared so much is actually the camp fire we set up earlier that night. There isn’t a war going on. There aren’t any battle cries or the scent of blood. It was all in my head.

I exhale in relief and drop my face in my hand. I hear twigs and leaves crunch as he walks over to me.

“Are you alright?” he asks, placing a warm hand on my shoulder. I shake my head. “Did you have another vision?” I want to say no, but I honestly can’t tell a dream and a vision apart these days. I had so many of them. I lift my head and find him kneeling next to me.

“It was so real,” I say into the fire. “I can still see everything.” Something moves on the other side of the fire then. I look over the flames...and I see her. “Evelyne.” She pushes herself up from the ground and rubs her eyes.

“What’s the problem now?” she asks annoyed. Normally, her tone would have irritated me, but right now it doesn’t. Instead, I’m so happy to hear her voice. So happy to see her wake up in one piece and not struggling to breathe.

“Henry,” James tries to get my attention, but I ignore him. The only thing that’s important now is her. I stand up and rush over to her. She puts a hand out.

“Whoa, whoa!” I don’t stop though. I take her in my arms and hug her tight, burying my face into her neck. “What are you doing?! Henry, get off me!” She feels stiff against me, but I don’t care. I know we don’t get along; to be completely honest, we could barely stand each other, but after waking up, I have all these memories of us together. Intimate, happy, loving, even sad moments we shared. A dream couldn’t leave things like these behind once it ended, especially when these moments weren’t revealed in the dream. It’s only after I wake up I recall these other memories. It feels real. It must have been real. It just hasn’t come to pass yet.

It would come to pass.

I hold her tighter at the thought of this actually being a vision of the future. In the past, I haven’t been successful in altering the outcome of what is meant to happen, only the path that leads to that outcome. I would be helpless in trying to save her.

I am helpless.

“Henry?” James sounds concerned. I sigh sorrowfully.

“I lost you.”

Wake Up: Part 2

*I flip through letters that clutter my desk, separating the ones I already read to the left, from the ones I have yet to read to the right. I take a new letter from the right pile and try reading the script, but the candle light dims. I fold the letter down and look past it to see the candle stick standing about a quarter of an inch high, drowning in its own hot wax. I stand, with the letter in hand, to grab another that's already lit and standing tall from the other side of the tent. I hold the flame close to the letter and its light reveals its contents.*

*In reading, I find that the request I send two weeks ago for an alliance between the People of Priotho and us, the Thabia Empire, upon our King's request, has been accepted. I smile widely at the good news. I had sent out three others to different possible alliances, however, they all declined. At least with the Priotho, we stand a better chance at defeating the Gluadors.*

*Something warm wraps around my torso and squeezes suddenly. I look behind and see Evelyne with her long brown hair covering her shoulders as she presses her cheek on my back to hug me. I set the candle on the small side table I had taken it from and hug her arms.*

*"You're up early," I comment. "The sun hasn't even risen."*

*"It's nearly dawn. It will be soon." She reaches for my cheek and kisses it. "I don't remember you coming to bed last night," she says, walking to sit in the chair that's placed next to the side table.*

*"I had some work to catch up on. With the battles we've been fighting, I haven't had the time."*

*“Any good news at least?”*

*“Yes actually.” I lift the letter and continue reading. “The King of Priotho has agreed to help us fight and end this war. Reinforcements are already on their way as we speak. They are sending food, weapons, men, horses, medical supplies, everything.” She sighs in relief.*

*“Thank goodness one accepted. We’ve been running short for the past few weeks, especially with no one else willing to fight the aggression the Gluadors have been displaying. At least with the Priotho and their numbers, we’ll finally have more than enough to defeat them.”*

*“Precisely,” I smile in agreement.*

*“This is such wonderful news, Henry.” She stands and kisses me. “You should tell the King. He would want to hear about this,” she says, straightening the collar on my shirt.*

*“He would,” I say, pulling her closer.*

*“Sir.” I turn to see a guard standing by the entrance of the tent.*

*“Ah, Liam. Arriving at the right time as always.”*

*“A messenger has just arrived with a letter.” He sticks out his hand to reveal a folded letter. “I was told it was urgent, sir.” My smile fades as I hear the anxiety in his voice. I let go of Evelyne and take the letter.*

*“Thank you.” He gives a small bow and leaves. I turn towards Evelyne as I open it and begin to read its contents. However, the farther along my eyes go, the more I find I wish I hadn’t opened it. I sit in the chair at my desk as I finish and sigh heavily.*

*“What?” Evelyne asks urgently. Shaking my head, I say,*

*"We're outnumbered 50 to 1. The Gluadors have raised in their numbers." She gasps.*

*"How could they have done that in such a short amount of time? It's only been two weeks."*

*"I don't know. Maybe they took another city or another kingdom. They've done that before."*

*"Well," she looks away as she tries to think. "Our ally can help us. They have just about the same amount of men. They're army is four times as great as ours. It has to have been a few days for that letter to arrive. They could be close."*

*"So could the Gluadors. This letter says they were planning on attacking in 3 days and it was dated 2 days ago." Evelyne runs her hand through her bangs and takes a breath.*

*"We have to tell the others in command about this as soon as possible. We have to tell the King. I have to tell my men." She begins applying her armor over her tan trousers and white shirt.*

*"No," I say. She pauses and looks to me in disbelief.*

*"No?"*

*"I'll inform the King and those in command. I don't want you fighting in this one." She shakes her head and continues applying her armor. "I'm serious!"*

*"Henry, we've been over this," she ties the straps behind her knees to secure the armor. "You know I can fight and I'm good at it. And, you know I am a lieutenant. I may not have as much power as you, but I do have my own men to look out for. I can't abandon them."*

*“Evelyne, they out number us 50 to 1! We are on a flat field with one hill. There aren’t very many places to take cover here.”*

*“I understand that. However, since that is the case, we’re going to need every able soldier we can get. And my shield is what I use to take cover. Now stop arguing and alert the men.” She applies her chest plate.*

*“Evely—”*

*Suddenly, a loud and deep horn sounds. We both freeze in hearing it. I rush outside to see all the soldiers begin to stand from sitting on the dirt ground in between the maroon tents, searching for the enemy. The others in command, including Evelyne, even the King, make their way outside their tents. When I search in the direction the men are all looking towards, I spot dark figures in the distance begin to peak over the hill. I can’t tell how many there are of them, but from what I can see, I already know we don’t stand a chance without the help of our new ally. The Gluadors army spreads from east to west between the trees that outline the green field.*

*A loud roar comes from the distance and their speed picks up. They found our camp and are running towards us now. Our men begin shouting and scrambling, even shoving, to get past each other for their weapons and armor at the sight of the Gluadors. Something runs into me from the side, and I fall hard to the ground, hitting my cheek on a small rock.*

*“Ahh,” I grunt. But the man who pushed me looks past me toward a sword and rushes back up, desperately trying to reach it. I get up and dodge anyone else who may ram into me, and go back inside my tent for my sword and shield. There wouldn’t be enough time to apply my armor because they were nearly here.*

*“Evelyne,” I catch her arm before she can leave. “Please.”*

*“You’re worried about me when you’re the one who has blood on their face?” I wipe my cheek and she smiles as she attaches her sword to her hip. “We only have to hold them off until the Priotho’s army arrive. Then we’ll be fine.” She leans in and kisses me tenderly.*

*I nod. She has always been so strong. Never showing fear.*

*“Alright.” I hug her tight. “Just stay close.”*

Wake Up: Part 3

“Henry,” James says. “Henry.” He takes hold of my shoulders and gives them a small squeeze. “Let go.” I can feel Evelyne’s pulse from her neck onto my cheek pick up its pace the longer I hold on. I wasn’t trying to scare her. Maybe I should let go.

“Henry,” she spoke. “Let go. Now.” I open my watery eyes and cover them with my hand as I pull away. I don’t want her to wonder about what I saw. It would frighten her.

“I’m sorry. Just a bad dream.” I wipe my eyes and stand up. James does the same, looking at me and Evelyne, as if trying to figure out what is going on. “I uh...” Trying to find words, I just gaze down at her. She really is in one piece. Her long brown hair is pulled back from her face, and her hazel eyes are still so full of life, even though they were glaring at me. There was nothing wrong with her. “I’m sorry. I’ll go.” I turn away and head for where I had been sleeping. I grab my cloak and pull it over my shoulders as I head for the trees.

“Hold on a minute. Wait,” James calls. I ignore him and keep walking as I tie the strings together in the front. I just need to get away. For a little bit at least. This is definitely the greatest vision I have ever experienced, and it is too much for me to handle at the moment.

“Henry!” I hear James’ pace picking up behind me. “Hey,” he puts a hand on my right shoulder once he catches up. “You can’t leave. We have a quest, remember? We need to get you to the King. You are very valuable in helping us end these battles our enemy keeps inflicting on us and everyone else they try conquering.”

“I know that James,” I shrug his hand off. “I’m not leaving. I just need some air.”

“Well, we are outside,” he lifts his hands to the forest trees and I glare at him. He drops them, “Sorry. Just trying to lighten the mood.”

“I’m not in the mood for your jokes, James,” I say bitterly, picking up my pace. “I need to be alone.”

“Now, hold on,” he matches my stride. “Henry, stop.” He grabs my arm and forces me to stop walking. “You and I both know you don’t do well alone when you’ve just seen a vision. Especially one as great as this.” I glare at him.

“You don’t even know what I saw. How could you possibly know it was a great vision?”

“Did you forget how you woke up? How you reacted when you saw Evelyne? You’ve never reacted like that before.”

“You just want to hear so you can record it in that journal of yours. Don’t you have to keep a record of all the visions I have while you’re with me to show the King?” He shakes his head.

“Yes, but—”

“Then no. This isn’t something that’s relevant to the King or the Kingdoms.” I turn to keep walking, but he grips my arm again and pulls me back.

“Henry, it’s not about that. I’m your friend. Whatever just happened seems to be serious. And to involve Evelyne.” I look away, irritated with myself for being so ridiculous only moments ago. I should have concealed it better, or at least been in more control of my emotions. “I know you don’t want to keep it in. Just tell me what you saw. It’ll help.”

I look down at the dirt and twigs that lay beneath my feet, trying to decide if I should tell him. I don't want to tell Evelyne. Knowing how you're going to die is not something anyone really wants to know. If I tell James, he will have to share the burden of keeping it a secret from her. I couldn't determine if he could do that.

"Henry," he says. I look into his dark brown eyes and see concern filling them. "Tell me. Please." I sigh.

"If I tell you, you can't tell Evelyne." He shakes his head.

"Of course."

"I mean it. This concerns her more than it does me. Do you swear not to tell, no matter what?" He takes a moment it seems to contemplate the meaning and severity of my request. But he does finally nod in agreement.

"I swear." I take a breath and begin telling him what I saw in my vision. From the night in the tent, to the battle on the field, to the moment she died...and the moment I died. Once I finish, there is a moment of silence between us. His eyebrows are arched down around squinted eyes.

"James?" He runs his hand through the curls on his head and raises his eyebrows some.

"This is...a lot," he says. "Do you know when this is supposed to happen?"

"No. I never know until the moment nears. That's normally when I'll relive the vision more and more until it actually happens." I pause as I realize how young we both looked in the vision. "But...we didn't look much older than we do now." I run my hand through my hair and grip it frustrated. This is supposed to happen soon.

“Do you think you can change anything to prevent your and Evelyne’s death?”

“I don’t think so,” I shake my head. “I’ve never been successful in changing them in the past.” He goes silent again, possibly thinking of a solution. “I know. It’s helpless,” I drop my hand, accepting defeat.

“No,” James says firmly to my sudden surprise. “No. It’s not. You only think it’s not possible because it’s never been done before. You’ve only been receiving visions for five years now. That’s not enough time to determine if these visions are permanent.”

“James, these visions show me the future. And so far, everything that I’ve seen has come to pass.”

“I don’t believe that. It could just be showing you a possible future. Time is always changing with the actions we make. How could this vision know the definite future when it hasn’t even been decided yet?” I can’t understand how he’s so sure about this after I just said everything I’ve seen has come to pass. “I don’t think this vision is as definite as you believe it to be. I think this vision is a warning.” I shake my head at him.

“You don’t understand,” I say.

He comes forward and grabs my shoulders firmly. “We can fix this. And we will.”

“Did you not hear me, James?”

“Henry, I’m not going to let my friends die in such a horrible way so soon. If you don’t believe it can be done, then I will believe for you until you can.” The left corner of my lips curves a little. I don’t believe what he’s saying, but in seeing his determination to succeed, I can

feel hope rising inside me slightly. “You and Evelyne are not going anywhere.” I nod in agreement with his proposal.

“Alright.”

Wake Up: Part 4

A few days have passed since I saw how Evelyne would die. I have been avoiding any interaction with her ever since the incident. I don't want to frighten her any more than I already have. However, she has been trying to interact with me. She must be curious of what I saw, and she must know it has something to do with her. She wouldn't be looking my way from her horse now if that wasn't the case. I can feel her stare burning my back, but I keep my eyes straight ahead, focusing on the crowd of trees we are bound to enter for cover before the sun goes down.

"Henry." I look to my right where James is riding next to me on his horse.

"Huh?"

"I'm going to ride ahead to make sure the woods are safe before we go set up camp for the night. And if there is any source of water for the horses. We're running low on it. I'll be right back." Before he can ride off, I grab his arm and lean in towards him.

"You're going to leave me with her?" I whisper. He smiles a little.

"Only for a few minutes. 5 minutes at most. Why? What's the problem?"

"You know what the problem is. She keeps trying to talk to me. She knows something is wrong and that it involves her. She's staring at me right now." He turns his head slightly to look behind me. "Don't look!" He snaps his head right back to me.

"Sorry. I just wanted to see if she really was. And she is by the way. Very much so." I let go of his arm and face forward. "Henry, just act normal. If you do, she won't stare so much and her curiosity will fade. You'll be fine."

“But—”

“I’ll be right back! Watch each other’s backs!” He calls back loudly for Evelyne to hear before riding off to the woods.

“Thanks James,” I say under my breath.

Five minutes have already passed and James is still not back. Maybe I should go check on him to make sure everything is okay. But if I do that, I may not find him before dark. The sun was already casting its orange and peach hue across the sky. Who knows how deep he went into those woods. I’m sure Evelyne would be alright. I didn’t see anything around here in my vision or other memories about us. She should be fine—.

“Hey.” I nearly jump at the sound of Evelyne’s voice being right next to me. I look to my left and find her in her beige cloak, her sword tied to her saddle, hair braided to one side, and the sun’s light shining in her hazel eyes, revealing every detail of her mountain-curved irises. I haven’t really looked at her today, or yesterday. Whenever she tried speaking to me, I’d keep my head down and come up with a task I had to complete and move away. Her appearance by my side is such a surprise it made me look directly at her.

“Evelyne,” I say wide eyed at her. This is horrible. Why can’t I just act natural around her?

“Henry,” she replies, arching an eyebrow down in noting my strange behavior. “Um, I know we don’t really get along, and you have been quite busy recently with all the extra tasks of

tending the horses ever since we picked them up from that small town, but I'd like to talk to you."

"Um," I say, looking straight ahead at the woods again.

"If that's alright with you," she finishes. I sigh. I don't know how I thought I could keep something this big from her. The past few days made it obvious something was wrong. But not only that, it was her future. But should someone know how they are going to die? Won't it make them go crazy? I know she would obsess over it. "Henry?" she repeats. I nod.

"What's on your mind?" She takes a breath before speaking again.

"Well, it all revolves around what happened a few nights ago... and how you've been acting towards me ever since." I don't know what to say. I just keep my eyes on the woods. We were nearly there. That's when James reappears, galloping out of the shadowy woods towards us. "Henry, did something happen to me? In your vision. Was I in it?" The question makes me pull on my reins to slow my horse to a stop, and she does the same. Her eyes focus so intently at the side on my face as she waits for my answer. I rest my left hand on my thigh and just stare out at the sunset again, avoiding her eyes. It is setting quite quickly. The orange and peach hues are darkening into pinks and purples now.

"Evelyne, I'd rather not talk about it. And I'm not supposed to anyway until we reach the castle and James tells the King." Something feels oddly similar suddenly. Like I had already lived this moment. I don't know what it is, but the feeling engulfs me entirely. I move my eyes around, looking for what is causing me to feel this way. Was it the sunset? James riding back out to us with his hand in the air, signaling that it was alright to set up camp? Or was it Evelynne being seated right next to me?

“If it has something to do with me, I have a right to know Henry,” she says. Her tone was a little anxious. I give a small kick to my horse’s thigh when I don’t respond, but before he can even take a step, she grabs my left hand and practically pleads for me to tell her. “Henry, you’ve been avoiding me this whole time. You need to tell me. Please! This silence scares me!” Her touch unlocks something deep in my mind. Another memory yet to happen. Or rather a memory happening right now. This is the first step on the path that leads to her death. To both of our deaths.

I jump in fright and yank my hand away quickly, hoping the memory will somehow alter and take her off that path. My abrupt movement makes my horse squeal as he jumps on his hind legs, throwing me off his back and takes off. I land on my side and instantly feel a sharp pain shoot across my ribs.

“Whoa!” Evelyne tries calming down her horse as she trots around. Once the sound of hooves stomping on the ground settles down, I hear Evelyne get off her horse and rush over to me. I begin lifting myself up, or at least leaning on my arm, but the movement makes the pain worse. Instead, I try my best to slowly lay back down on the ground, but the strength in my arm weakens a lot quicker than I anticipate and I fall back down. I wince and inhale sharply through gritted teeth.

“Henry!” Evelyne calls. She comes around to face me and kneels down. “Are you alright?” I shake my head. More galloping fills the air, and I just hope that it’s not my horse coming back to finish me off.

“What happened?” I hear James hop off his horse and run to us.

“We were just talking,” Evelyne says. “And then he jumped and his horse threw him off.” I open my eyes to find James’ boots crouching next to Evelyne. The image was becoming blurry though.

“Here Henry,” he says. “Let me look at you to see where it’s hurting.” Another sharp pain shoots up my side and I squeeze my eyes shut. Gentle hands turn me over to my back slowly but I groan in protest. “Easy, easy, easy,” he says. I hold my side as best I can without pressing on it, but they lift it along with my shirt. There’s a silence for a few seconds before James speaks. “We need to get him to the woods. Help me, Evelyne.”

Wake Up: Part 5

Twigs breaking slowly fills my ears with sound. I open eyes to see dirt littered with dried brown leaves inches away from my face. Tree roots blur in and out of focus in the dark as my eyes push farther back across the ground to the trees. I turn my head to look up at the shimmering starry sky and instead find dying leaves hovering over me, casting their dark shadows down. The cracking of the twigs turn into popping in my right ear. I look over and find James crouching a few feet from my right by a small fire, intricately adding leaves and small twigs underneath the flame. Across our campsite, maybe 15 feet in front of him, is Evelyne. She stands by the horses, petting their faces as she secures each of their ropes tied to 3 different trees.

A sudden pain in my side makes me turn away to face the sky again, and I soon realize it's a little difficult to breathe in deeply. It feels as though something is squeezing me. I lift my head slightly to look down at my side, but instead find my cloak covering me from my chest down. I lift a heavy hand to move the cloak away and a beige cloth that is tightly wrapped around my torso is revealed with my shirt pushed open to the sides. I drop my head back down, remembering what had happened. Evelyne was trying to get me to talk and she grabbed my hand, and I realized in her action of taking hold of it, she was establishing the very first step that lead to her death.

“Hey,” I hear James’ voice. I glance over and see him looking over his shoulder before fully turning on his heels to face me. “You’re awake.” He settles himself down next to me. “You

had quite a fall back there. It caused you to break a couple ribs on your left side. How are you feeling?"

"Like I can't breathe," I manage to say. He nods slightly as he inspects my side, lifting the cloak and laying it back down on my chest.

"Yeah, well...I wanted to make sure when you woke up, you wouldn't feel too much pain. Wrapping the ribs tightly is supposed to help with that because there is less movement when you breathe."

"It still hurts—"

"But not as much," he finishes for me. I take a breath in to sigh but instantly regret it.

"Thanks," I say half-heartedly, wincing.

"You're welcome. Just try not to move too much," he smiles. "Now, what caused your horse to jump?" Before I can tell him, footsteps from behind him grow louder and I have no one else to guess but Evelyne. She peers at me from behind James.

"Henry," she sounds relieved. "Oh god, I was worried. We were worried." She comes around to my left side and kneels down. "What happened back there?" I'm frozen. I don't know what to say. What happened back there has to do with her...us. I can't tell her. I turn my head to my right to look at James for help but see his eyebrows raise upon reading my agitated face. Course. How can he help? He doesn't even know what I saw.

"I, uh," I glance at Evelyne, searching for something to say. "Um, I...uh—"

“Henry,” James says. I stop stammering and look at him. “Does this have anything to do with your vision?” My eyes widen in the disbelief that he actually brought the subject up.

“Because if it is, I think you should just tell her.”

“You swore,” I whisper to him bitterly. Before he can respond, Evelyne cuts in.

“What happened has something to do with what you saw?” I part my lips, but I can’t bring myself to speak. “How? You were awake.”

“Henry,” James puts a hand on my shoulder and I instantly want to move away from him, but clearly I can’t. Although, I can glare at him, so I do, daring him to tell her what I saw. What I felt in the vision. “Don’t, don’t look at me like that. Just tell her. You could alter the future.”

“I told you, it can’t be done.”

“Yeah, but you’ve also never had a vision that detailed before. You don’t know what can or can’t be done. So please, just tell her.” I tear my eyes from him, feeling betrayed, but the next face I see makes me wonder if he’s right. Evelyne looks nervous, possibly scared.

“Henry, I understand you were born with this amazing yet burdening gift to see what is meant to happen in the days to come. And, you’re trying to protect me. But please. I need to know. Especially if it has to do with my life, I want to make sure I live it right and can avoid, or at least be prepared for any trouble that may come my way.” I close my eyes and shake my head. I don’t want to tell her. But, I now realize she should know. Maybe it could better prepare her.

“You tell her,” I tell James. And he does. He tells her about the battle we fight against our enemy, how grand and intense the battle is, how we get separated, how I don’t get to her in time, how she dies, and how I die.

Once James finishes, I open my eyes to look at Evelyne, and her expression nearly breaks me. Her eyes have become wide and red underneath her raising eyebrows. Her nose is flared some and her mouth droops slightly in the corners. Her body appears to be trembling.

“Evelyne?” I reach my hand up to touch hers, but she snaps out of her paralyzed state and moves back.

“Whoa, Evelyne,” James raises a hand, ensuring her everything is okay. She swallows hard, holding her neck and looks down at me.

“Is that true? What he told me? That’s how I die?” I give a painful sigh.

“That’s what I saw.” She exhales and tears begin to fall from her glassy eyes.

“How could you keep this from me?” My heart breaks.

“I just didn’t wanted to frighten—”

“That was not something for you to decide!” Her voice raises. “You should have told me from the beginning!”

“I-I’m sorry,” my voice cracks.

“Evelyne,” James cuts in. “Calm down.”

“No! You have no right to tell me that,” she points at him. “You knew this whole time too, and you didn’t even tell me! You should have if he was so unwilling to!”

“It’s not that simple,” he says.

“I don’t care!” She yells, and we both flinch. For a few moments, there is nothing filling the silence except for the crickets and little critters that move about at night.

She shakes her head and wipes her eyes as more tears fall, unable to look at either of us. Probably me more than James. She breathes a shaky breath.

“I can’t do this.” She gets up quickly as if trying to get away.

“Wait!” I push myself up as much as I can to try and reach her before she can run off, but pain shoots up my ribs, intensifying as it branches outward. “Ah!” I instantly go to cover my side with my hand.

“Whoa, Henry!” James jumps. “Lay back down. You’re going to make your wound worse.” He eases me back down, but all I can do is watch from my left side as she takes off into the trees.

“Evelyne! Come back!” My ribs protest from the amount of air I take in to yell and I wince from it, balling my hands into fists. “Gah!”

“Henry, stop.”

“No! This is exactly why I didn’t want to tell her in the first place.”

“She’s just in shock from the news. She just needs time to settle down and think. I’ll go talk to her. You just lay down and don’t move. We can’t go anywhere until you can ride anyway. So please, stay still.” Not waiting for my response, he runs after her. Leaving me alone. Feeling as though I had already lost her.

Wake Up: Part 6

The sun is high in the sky, beaming down through the trees, sending rays of light in different directions. I turn as much as I can away from the light shining in my eyes without hurting myself, but that only leaves my head with the ability to move, doesn't help much. Heat is engulfing my body. I wipe sweat from my forehead and pull the thin blanket that covers me halfway down my torso. I shut my eyes and turn to face my right side this time, but that doesn't help either.

Twigs crunching appear in the distance and become louder as they near. I open my eyes to see if it's James coming to sit by me like he has been for the past few days around this time of day, but it isn't him. It's Evelyne. She carries a small black pot convenient for traveling long distances, with a rag hanging out of the side. I inhale deeply at the sight of her coming my way but I feel something move and pain stabs at my side. I turn away from her as I wince, not wanting her to see me in pain. Then something cold touches my forehead, dabbing its way down to my neck and back up. I turn my head to face her and our eyes meet. But after a few silent seconds, she pulls the rag away and looks down as she dunks it into the pot and wrings it out.

I close my eyes and turn to face the sky, upset she's doing this to me. I wish she would talk to me, or even to James. Ever since he brought her back that one night, she's been keeping to herself, tending to the horses, fetching water and whatever else she does to stay busy to avoid

any conversation regarding what happened or what will happen. The only times she interacts with James and I is whenever James asks for help in rewrapping my ribs.

She places a warm hand on my face, as if checking for a fever. I look to her, hoping to catch her eye, but she keeps her eyes on her hand.

“Where’s James?” I ask. She removes her hand, and that’s when I realize how rude I have just been. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean it like tha—”

“He’s working on that wooden plank he told you about the other night. So that we have a way to keep moving. You’d have better treatment at the castle anyway. And we’d finish our mission of getting you to the King to help end this war.” It’s difficult to determine whether her tone is quick because she’s hurt by my comment, or if it’s quick so she can rapidly tend to me and be on her way. Regardless, I recall James mentioning the wooden plank he plans to drag me on, however I’m frustrated with this mission and the King. I had only been having visions for the past five years and because the King finds out about me, they have to come and get me. If they hadn’t, I wouldn’t have met Evelyne, and I probably wouldn’t have had that vision. My ribs probably wouldn’t be broken right now. It’s his fault. It’s his fault we have such a horrible end.

“I think you have a fever. Do you feel warm?” I nod. She lays the cold rag on my forehead this time and lets a few cool drops of water leak from the rag down the bridge of my nose and the sides of my face. Then she undoes a few buttons on my shirt, opening up the collar and pulls the blanket down to my waist. She reaches inside the pot and grabs another rag and wrings it out, placing it on my neck and chest. I can already feel some relief from the heat.

“Thanks.” She gives a small nod, keeping her eyes level with the trees. “Evelyne?”

“Hm?”

“Evelyne. Could you please, just look at me?” I try being gentle, but her avoidance hurts. It takes her a few hesitant seconds, but she eventually pulls her sight from the trees and focuses down on me. “Are you alright?” I ask. “With the news? I’m concerned.” She blinks a few times, like she’s trying to hold tears back.

“I am as alright as you would expect me to be, Henry.” She takes the rag from my forehead and soaks it back in the pot.

“It’s alright to be afraid,” I say, watching the consistent movement of her hand dipping the rag into the pot. “Evely—”

“You were right,” she interrupts. I’m surprised. She’s actually going to talk about this? “I shouldn’t have been told. I’d be saner not knowing than I am now.” She wrings the rag out.

“Evelyne—”

“You even fought to keep the truth from me. But, I kept pushing and pushing so I would find out. But now that I know, I understand why you didn’t want to tell me. You knew I couldn’t handle it. That I’d lose my mind. I mean, I ran into the woods. James had to go out, find me and try convincing me everything was going to be okay. That what you saw wasn’t set in stone.” She begins dabbing the sides of my face. I try pushing her hand away, but it doesn’t make a difference.

“Evelyne, please. Just calm—”

“But for the past three days we’ve camped here, ever since James brought me back, I keep thinking about it. I can actually see it happening in my head. Me, getting my throat slit. And choking on my... own blood.” Her voice shakes on those last few words. “I’m not convinced I’ll

be okay. Or you'll be okay." She takes the rag back and drops it in the pot. "There is no hope for us. You said yourself that it can't be changed." She takes a breath and pauses for a few moments before asking, "Is that true, Henry?" Her tone shifts as if she's searching for hope now. "Is there honestly nothing I can do to change my fate?"

I sigh in hearing her panic, not knowing what to say to make it better. Her eyes are glossy and her nose has become a light shade of pink.

"Evelyne, I..." I shake my head, completely speechless. She drops her face into her hands and trembles as she cries. I turn to face the sky again, trying to keep myself together. It pains me to see her so scared. And it hurts more that I can't do anything to fix it. How can there be no way to alter the future? What was the point of seeing it if I couldn't make a change?

I squeeze my eyes shut, holding back tears as I hear her weep. I shake my head, refusing to believe it. There has to be something I can do to change our fate. To save her at least. I'd die for her if that's what it took.

"No," I exhale. "No." Evelyne is sobbing in her hands now. I force my body to turn to my right side and the ribs on my left protest with stabbing pain. I groan in response but continue past it and push myself up until I'm sitting. That's when Evelyne notices. She gasps at the sight.

"Henry, what are you doing? You have to lay down. You're going to hurt yourself." She tries to ease me back down but I grab her wrist to stop her.

"No," I say out of breath. Her eyebrows raise in confusion.

"What?"

“That’s not your fate.” I dry her cheeks with my left hand while my right trembles to keep me up. “I’m not going to let you die that way. I’m going to change it.” I inhale, trying to breathe through the sharp pain. “I promise. Just please tell me you’ll trust me to do it, and you’ll stop worrying and live your life like nothing’s changed.”

“I can’t live like nothing’s changed—”

“I-I know it’s a lot to ask for. But I can’t stand seeing you like this. It’s hard.” She’s still for the next few seconds, staring deep into my eyes as if discovering something for the first time. “I won’t let anything happen to you. Alright?”

“What about you?” she sounds concerned, and I manage a small smile.

“Don’t worry about me. Just know I will protect you. And I always will. Nothing’s going to happen to you, alright?” The left side of her lips curve slightly, revealing something that appears like hope sparking in her hazel eyes.

“Alright.”