

PROPHETS, A FABLE

Written by

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Based on, If Any

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INT. ABANDONED BRICK CAR PARK - NIGHT

\*Flashback\* ELIJAH, male Late 30's, bordering stoic and sinister leader of a group of vigilantes known as THE PROPHETS, sits alone in a warehouse.

EXT. WOODS BY A LAKE - DAY

\*Flashback\* LINDA(35), hair of fire, fit and desperate, is holding hands with a 10 to 12 year old little Chinese girl, YOUNG LAZARUS. They are running from gun shots. Up ahead is a boat with 2 men, Elijah(Younger) and YOUNGER RICHARD (Late 20's).

RICHARD

Linda!

LINDA

START THE BOAT! THEY'RE COMING!

Linda reaches the boat and hurls Young Lazarus into Elijah's arms. Elijah flings Lazarus to Richard. He catches her and sits her down. In slow motion we hear a gun shot. Elijah turns and catches Linda as she falls into his arms.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Take care of my baby. Take care of Alex.

ELIJAH

We're getting you out of here.

With what strength she has left she pushes Elijah into the boat.

LINDA

Drive Richard. GO!!!

Richard hits the gas and Elijah stands up in the boat. Linda turns and the chasers empty their guns on her.

INT. ABANDONED BRICK CAR PARK - NIGHT

\*Flashback\* STILETTOS click on the concrete floor. Approaching Elijah, she comes to a complete halt. VIVIAN/RUTH(50's), very direct and Elder Woman to The Prophets. She has a strong dedication to tradition and the legacy of their organization. A mentor of sorts, dedicated to the histories of The Prophets.

VIVIAN(O.S.)

Why?

ELIJAH  
You know why. I had her, Ruth. I  
had her in my arms.

Vivian steps into the light. She starts to lean in. She stops  
when she sees Elijah start to crumble.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
I FUCKING HAD HER RUTH!

VIVIAN  
We all make choices. She made hers.  
You make yours.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - AFTERNOON

LAZARUS, Chinese Woman (30s) messenger of The Prophets, is  
sitting in the corner of a coffee shop. MARY, female(40s),  
brave through her bruises, walks to the counter. The  
Barrister, REBECCA (30-New Age Hippie Vibe) is behind the  
counter. Rebecca has a sympathetic smile on her face.

ELIJAH (V/O)  
Sometimes it takes someone from the  
dark to shine the light.

MARY  
I would like a Blond Lite Roast and  
I would like to pay with this.

Mary slides a white piece of paper to Rebecca. We notice  
Lazarus is now paying attention.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

FOUR MEN aggressively put a black bag on the head of JOHN,  
dirt bag, 50s.

JOHN  
You dirty bitch!

Mary sobs as she is lead away by one man.

ONE MAN  
You know what you need to do.

INT. ABANDONED BRICK CAR PARK - NIGHT

Lazarus and four men surround MARY as they look down at John  
strapped naked on a table.

JOHN  
You can't trust these people!

Mary winces in pain as she touches her face.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
You got the wrong guy!

LAZARUS  
You must choose.

Mary reaches out for the branding iron.

JOHN  
Mary, NO!!!

Mary sears John with "Abuser."

EXT. LOCAL MAGAZINE OFFICE - DAY - LATER

A group of cops, forensics and reporters are gathered. A tape line borders the scene. LT. SID CAUSEY (50) is speaking with POLLY (50). Polly is the editor of the local arts magazine.

SID  
You found him like this and didn't think to call us earlier?

POLLY  
I thought it was just another homeless guy. We get a lot from New York this time of year.

SID  
I'll be sure to add just another homeless guy in my notes.

POLLY  
Look, Sid, we write the stories. I don't want the magazine to be the story.

SID  
I get it. We'll be in touch.

ALEX ABRAHAM, female(22), a new graduate of the police academy approaches.

ALEX  
What do we have here, Lieutenant?

SID  
Hey! What are you doing here?  
Aren't you graduating today?

ALEX  
I'm on my way. Thought I'd check  
out the action. Think I could cross  
the line?

SID  
Well, you're certainly a cop.

ALEX  
How so?

SID  
Lawyers don't ask permission. They  
ask forgiveness. Welcome to the  
Blue.

ALEX  
Thanks, Sid.

Sid lifts the tape.

SID  
He was given a tattoo.

ALEX  
What do you mean?

Sid lifts the blanket covering John.

SID  
He was branded. Apparently he's a  
bad monkey.

JOHN  
Who the hell are you?

ALEX  
(Sees the branding) Jesus! He's  
alive?

SID  
Your dad would have my neck if I  
showed you a dead body.

ALEX  
Wild guess, but noticing that  
wedding band, has anyone checked  
with his wife?

SID  
Not as strong a lead as you might think. We've had a number of these cases lately.

ALEX  
Are you glad I have a badge now? I get to deal with these dicks now.

SID  
Easy grasshopper. Baby steps.

INT. ADELE'S KITCHEN - DAY

ESTHER(14), sweet and sassy going on 21, scrolls social media over a waffle, untouched. ADELE(45), Esther's mom and City Commissioner, 40s, calls out

ADELE (O.S.)  
Esther, let's go!

Adele appears, finishing her hair.

ESTHER  
I don't want to go.

Adele enters.

ADELE  
It's Saturday! Shopping, right?

ESTHER  
I was gonna spend the day with Tisha.

ADELE  
Is there something going on?

ESTHER  
It's just her mom, uh...

ADELE  
Text her and we'll pick her up on the way.

ESTHER  
Thanks mom. You're the best.

ADELE  
Gonna need to write that down and date it.

ESTHER  
Don't be so dramatic.

Adele and Esther grab their stuff to go.

ESTHER (CONT'D)  
Just make sure you assure T's mom,  
we're teenagers now. We can go into  
stores by ourselves now.

Tisha gets up from the table, dumps the plate in the sink and  
both ladies head for the door.

EXT. LYDIA'S HOME - AFTERNOON

LYDIA(40's), black young stay at home mom, grips the open  
window of Adele's car.

LYDIA  
Don't let them out of your sight.

TISHA(14), Lydia's daughter, buckles up next to Esther in the  
back seat. Tisha seems demure around her mom. It's a front.

ADELE  
Got it.

LYDIA  
Sorry. Look at me, telling the  
commissioner what to do.

ADELE  
I totally get it. Hey, do you want  
to come with us?

Tisha shoots her mom a look.

LYDIA  
I have some stuff to do...

TISHA  
Thanks mom. Love you bye.

ADELE  
I will have her home by dinner.  
Enjoy your time off.

Adele backs out. Lydia calls after them.

LYDIA  
Don't talk to strangers. Be Safe!

Adele and the girls wave to Lydia.

LYDIA (CONT'D)  
(In a whisper) Just let them be  
safe.

INT. CARPET CLEANING VAN - DAY

A van is watching as the girls and Adele drive away. The van waits for Lydia to turn to the house. Follows Adele.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

A full auditorium is gathered to witness Cadets graduate from The Police Academy.

POLICE CHIEF  
Cadet Alexandra Abraham.

In the crowd, Vivian, 20 years older, screams and stands up applauding. Alex grabs her badge and turns to Vivian in the audience.

INT. RECEPTION ROOM - DAY

People have gathered after the graduation. Alex comes running across the room to her grandmother, Vivian and flings her arms around her.

VIVIAN  
I am so proud of you.

ALEX  
I'm so glad you made it.

VIVIAN  
He wanted to be her, Honey.

ALEX  
No he didn't.

VIVIAN  
No, he didn't...Honey, I sorry.

ALEX  
I made good a long time ago. I'm  
just not the Chapel Hill type, Viv.

VIVIAN  
No, I guess not. You're more like  
your mama.



ALEX

Think so.

In the background, Alex thinks she sees a man staring at her. It's Elijah, but Alex isn't sure. She doesn't know Elijah.

VIVIAN

A lot. She was much more  
adventurous than your father.  
Honey, are you ok.

The man, Elijah isn't there anymore.

ALEX

What? Oh, yeah. I just thought I  
saw someone.

INT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

Esther and Tisha are browsing stacks of blue jeans. Adele approaches with her own pair.

ADELE

Oh my God, look at the stitching on  
this.

TISHA

That's hot, Mrs. Reilly.

ESTHER

Hot and Mrs. Reilly in the same  
sentence?

Adele holds the jeans up to herself.

ADELE

I haven't worn a pair of jeans  
since you were in elementary  
school.

ESTHER

You should try them on.

TISHA

Just go ahead and buy them. You  
already want to.

ADELE

Let me grab a couple more. Stay  
here. I want your opinions.

Adele goes into the fitting room.

ESTHER  
She's weird.

TISHA  
All moms are weird.

ESTHER  
I guess.

TISHA  
I wish she was my mom.

ESTHER  
I like your mom.

TISHA  
No you don't. No one does. She's a  
coward staying with that man.

ESTHER  
He's never home, right?

TISHA  
I hate him. When he is he treats  
her like shit and she just takes  
it. I wish he'd leave for good.

ESTHER  
Yike.

TISHA  
He hit me on once. Every time I'm  
around him, I'm uncomfortable.

ESTHER  
You can't say stuff like that.

TISHA  
It's true. He's a scumbag.

ADELE (O.S.)  
I'll be out in a second girls. Just  
two more pair.

TISHA  
Hey, let's grab a mocha shake.

ESTHER  
Mom said to stay here.

TISHA  
It's next door. We'll be right  
back. She's got two more pair,  
remember?

ESTHER  
Ok...Real Quick!

EXT. ABRAHAM'S HOUSE - DAY

JAKOB ABRAHAM (50s) is hanging Christmas lights. He is on a ladder and Vivian is giving the orders. Alex gets out of her car and walks toward them.

ALEX  
Still stuck on the white lights,  
huh?

Both Abraham and Vivian turn to see her in the driveway.

ABRAHAM  
Hey stranger.

ALEX  
Missed you at graduation, Attorney  
Abraham.

ABRAHAM  
Yeah...Sorry about that. I had  
closing...

ALEX  
I know, Daddy. Vivian told me.

Abraham climbs down off the ladder. Vivian breaks the pause.

VIVIAN  
Lighten up, both of you. Welcome  
home, honey.

ABRAHAM  
Heard where you're gonna be?

ALEX  
Not yet.

ABRAHAM  
Well...There's plenty of crime  
around here.

ALEX  
Yeah, but there's this attorney I'd  
have to face in court. So, next  
county over is better for me.

ABRAHAM  
Can't blame a father for trying.

ALEX  
Sure I can.

VIVIAN  
Knock it off!

Alex approaches her dad and gives him a pat on the back.  
Abraham smiles at his daughter and all three head inside.

EXT. DAY. COFFEE SHOP.

The girls come out of a coffee shop with their faces buried  
inn their phones.

TISHA  
Elliot is so smoky. Don't you  
think?

Shoves her phone in Esther's face.

ESTHER  
He's a little too cool for me. I  
like the nerdy guys.

TISHA  
You and that Duke Blue Devil  
Pedigree.

The guys from the carpet cleaning van, one BIG GUY(30) the  
other, GUN GUY(30-has a gun hidden in his belt), walk up.

BIG GUY  
Hi ladies, wanna hang out?

TISHA  
Um, no. We're 14.

The one with the gun shows the girls his gun.

GUN GUY  
Just my type. Let's go for a ride.

The girls are silent from shock. They drop their coffees.  
They walk out of frame with the guy, leaving us to look at a  
promenade full of people.

INT. FITTING ROOM - DAY

Adele finishes zipping up the jeans. She turns to check  
herself in the mirror. She calls out the girls.

ADELE

Ok. Now I want the truth. And be harsh if you have to.

Adele opens the fitting room door.

ADELE (CONT'D)

I think my ass may be...

Tisha and Esther are nowhere in sight.

ADELE (CONT'D)

Girls? Damn it.

INT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

The CLERK (20s, bored) is behind the register, scrolling her phone. Adele approaches the check out and places the jeans on the counter.

CLERK

These are cool.

ADELE

Did you see my daughter and her friend?

The clerk rings up the jeans.

CLERK

Um, I think they went outside, but I never saw them come back in. That'll be 74.69.

Adele hands the clerk her credit card, distracted.

ADELE

Thanks. I'll find them. Have a good day.

CLERK

Merry Christmas.

Adele hurries out the door.

EXT. PROMENADE - DAY

Adele looks around for Tisha and Esther. She sits down on a bench and takes out her phone. She texts Esther.

ADELE

ALL DONE! WHERE ARE YOU?

EXT. PROMENADE - DAY - LATER

Adele dials Esther's cell but it goes to voicemail. She types out another text.

ADELE

WHERE ARE YOU? I'M GETTING WORRIED.

She hits send. The text is the most recent of a thread of unanswered messages from Adele to Esther. Adele tries Tisha's number. No answer. Panic rising, Adele gets up and heads down the promenade.

Fade Out.

INT. OFFICE OF RICHARD TALMENT - DAY.

Richard Talment is sitting at his desk, smoking a cigarette. A page and his assistant come in.

RICHARD

What's wrong?

PAGE 1

It's your daughter.

RICHARD

What happened?

ASSISTANT

She's been taken, sir. She was at a shopping center and she and another girl we're taken.

RICHARD

I have to get to Wilmington. Has anyone spoken to my wife?

ASSISTANT

We're trying to reach her, sir.

Richard gets up and starts toward the door.

RICHARD

I need Bernie to get me to the airport. I'm not driving from Raleigh. Also, call the Police Chief. Oh, and Adele Eckhart. She's a County Alderman.

PAGE 1

Sir, she was with Ms. Eckhart's daughter. That was the other girl.

RICHARD

Jesus. Ok. I have to get to the airport.

EXT. PROMENADE - DAY - LATER

COPS are everywhere. Tape marks off the last place Tisha and Esther were seen. TV CREWS and REPORTERS have set up. Adele is speaking with a plain clothes cop, LT. BARR, overweight, beaten down by years of work, (50s). There is a crowd.

LT. BARR

We'll find them.

ADELE

Not standing here you won't.

LT. BARR

Alderman, there is a process.

ADELE

MADAME Alderman! I know, I know. I'm sorry Maxwell. I'm just sick to my stomach. They're two young girls. Lydia approaches, frantic. A COP stops her and Adele waves him off.

LYDIA

What the hell happened? I told you not to let her out of your sight! This town is sick with crime and you let my daughter disappear?

ADELE

I went to try on some pants and...

LT. BARR

Who are you?

LYDIA

The wife of Senator Richard Talment. Who are you? (To Adele) You of all people know what's happening in this town!

ADELE

Did you tell Richard?

LYDIA

He's flying in from Raleigh now. Why weren't you watching them?

ADELE

I went to try on some clothes and they left the store.

LYDIA

Didn't you tell them to stay in the damn store? They're teenagers...

LT. BARR

And Richard is her father?

LYDIA

Step-Father. Who are you again?

LT. BARR

Lt. Max Barr. I'm the...

LYDIA

Shut up! She knows more than you.

ADELE

I don't know what to say, Lydia. It's my fault.

LYDIA

Damn right...(To Barr)Now what are you going to do?

LT. BARR

Why don't the two of you go home, do some digging. Call me if you find anything.

As Lt. Barr is speaking, Lydia notices a man(SOLOMON-45) standing against a wall. She recognizes him and her face starts to melt in horror. Solomon smiles at her.

ADELE

Lydia, are you ok?

LYDIA

What? Yeah...We should go.

She looks back, Solomon is gone.

ADELE

(To Lt. Barr)You have my cell number. As soon as you hear anything, call me.

Lydia storms off. Adele follows.



EXT. RIVERFRONT - AFTERNOON

Elijah is sitting watching the water move. Lazarus walks up.

LAZARUS

Busy?

ELIJAH

Lazarus. (He hugs her) Been a while.

LAZARUS

Yeah, well. I promised not to bother you unless it was important.

ELIJAH

And I said, it was never gonna be important enough.

LAZARUS

This time it is.

ELIJAH

I went to Alex's graduation. She's doing fine. Can't imagine what's more...

LAZARUS

Two girls have been picked up.

ELIJAH

Someone should call the cops.

LAZARUS

Yeah.

ELIJAH

I'm guessing there's more to it.

LAZARUS

One of the girls is Esther Reilly.

ELIJAH

Alderman Eckhart's kid...Cops should be all over that.

LAZARUS

There's more.

ELIJAH

Who's the second girl?

Lazarus pauses. Vivian has quietly walked up. Elijah turns and looks at her.

VIVIAN  
It's Tisha, Eli.

Elijah sighs, stands up and walks away. Lazarus and Vivian are left to stare at the spot Elijah was in.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The Carpet Van drives up. THREE MEN pull Tisha and Esther out and take them through a door. They lead the girls to a cell. Other GIRLS are already there, eyes gaunt, staring up at the newcomers.

BIG GUY  
Get out.

ESTHER  
My mother is the commissioner.

TISHA  
You probably know my father.

From the shadows, the man from the promenade, Solomon walks up.

SOLOMON (O.S.)  
We know who your step-father is.  
That's why you're here.

Solomon steps into view.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)  
Our clients will pay a great deal  
for you.

Solomon grabs Esther's chin and turns her head side-to-side, inspecting.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)  
We won't get as much for you, but  
we will get something.

TISHA  
Who are you, you fucking pig?

Solomon turns and slaps her. Esther screams.

SOLOMON  
You have your father's mouth. Put  
these little urchins to the cage.

INT. ABRAHAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Alex comes into the office and MARGARET (40s) is sitting at her desk. When Alex comes in, she jumps up and hugs her.

MARGARET  
Hey kiddo! Congratulations! I'm so proud of you!

ALEX  
Thanks. And thanks for the gym membership. That's too much.

MARGARET  
It's your dad's money. (Winks)

They chuckle.

ALEX  
Thought I'd take the old man out for lunch.

MARGARET  
Can I see it?

She whips out the shield.

MARGARET (CONT'D)  
So damn cool.

ALEX  
Wanna come with us?

MARGARET  
Somebody has to hold down the fort.

ALEX  
(to the back of the room)  
Hey old man...let's go eat!

ABRAHAM  
Margaret, can you...

MARGARET  
Go!

INT. DINER - DAY

A bustling local haunt. Alex and Abraham are having lunch at a booth by the window.

ALEX  
Have you heard from Adele?

ABRAHAM  
Not sure why I would.

ALEX  
Her daughter was kidnapped, are you  
kidding? You're like friends.

Abraham sips his tea, staring out the window. Alex presses  
further.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Who's the lead cop?

ABRAHAM  
I heard it was Barr.

ALEX  
What? He's a dirty cop!

ABRAHAM  
ALEX?!

Patrons look over.

ABRAHAM (CONT'D)  
And why does this concern you?

ALEX  
Why isn't Sid running this?

ABRAHAM  
Heard you crashed his scene the  
other day.

ALEX  
I was just passing by.

ABRAHAM  
You know, that badge isn't a free  
pass to stick your nose in things.

ALEX  
Sure it is. I'm not a chicken shit,  
Father.

ABRAHAM  
What does that mean?

ALEX  
You reputation is one thing. What's  
right is another. This is the third  
kidnapping in 3 months.

ABRAHAM

Who are you? Alexandra, being full of piss and vinegar may seem cool, but with passion comes mistakes.

ALEX

Those girls will never be found.

Abraham shakes his head.

ALEX (CONT'D)

It's true.

Alex pushes her plate away.

ABRAHAM

Sometimes you have to wait until the right people are listening.

Abraham finishes his tea. Alex watches him.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Elijah walks into the warehouse after a long absence. Lazarus as well as a few others are there including GABRIEL(35/40) Hispanic Trans Woman and NICODEMUS (25) A mountain of a man, Jack Reacher type.

ELIJAH

Guess the cleaning crew doesn't come in everyday.

LAZARUS

Go slow. They may be wary of you.

ELIJAH

I would be too.

Lazarus walks him over. He knows everyone but Nicodemus.

LAZARUS

This is Nicodemus.

ELIJAH

Awfully big fella.

NICODEMUS

I've heard a lot about you, Sir. Good and bad.

ELIJAH

Trust the bad. I knew you when you were a child.

Gabriel jumps in and he talks VERY FAST.

GABRIEL

Oh, don't be so coy. You can't continue to beat yourself up. You made a mistake. We all make mistakes. Although yours got someone killed. Of course, that would worry me to join a team you were on, but we must try and overcome our...

LAZARUS

Gabby, I swear, I'll strangle you myself.

GABRIEL

Sorry.

ELIJAH

You I like. Any information on the girls?

NICODEMUS

We're trying to find out where they are hiding. I have a friend with Promenade security.

ELIJAH

And?

GABRIEL

We saw the kidnappers, but pretty sure they were a front. Just the heavies. There's someone else behind it.

ELIJAH

Lazarus?

LAZARUS

I've only been saving the seat. You're in charge, Elijah.

Elijah forces a smile. Lazarus smiles back.

NICODEMUS

We know Linda was doing the right thing. We not only have waited for you...We trust you.

GABRIEL

With our lives.

Elijah looks over the room.

ELIJAH  
Nicodemus, how well do you know the  
docks?

NICODEMUS  
I grew up on the docks, Elijah.

ELIJAH  
Go talk to some folks...Please.  
Laz, do we still have the coffee  
shop?

LAZARUS  
Yep.

ELIJAH  
Who's there?

LAZARUS  
Rebecca.

ELIJAH  
Rebecca is 10 years old!

LAZARUS  
She was 20 years ago.

Elijah pauses. Lazarus, Nicodemus, Gabriel, and the rest of  
the team stare, with smiles.

ELIJAH  
Ok. Thank you, everyone. The new  
chapter begins.

Black Out.