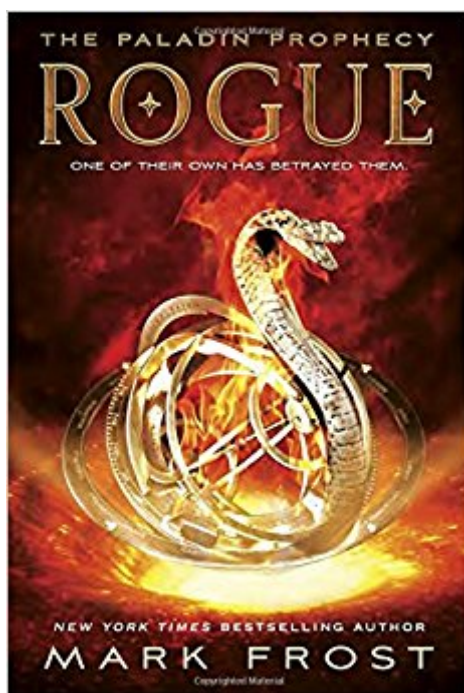


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Rogue: The Paladin Prophecy Book 3



Synopsis

In the third book in the New York Times bestselling Paladin Prophecy series, Twin Peaks co-creator Mark Frost delivers thrilling mystery and electrifying suspense—it is compelling to the very last page. Will West is playing a dangerous game. Months after uncovering the Paladin Prophecy plot to destroy all of humankind, Will continues to work with the mastermind behind the project—none other than his own grandfather, Franklin Greenwood. Will cooperates in order to keep his friends safe. But are they really secure in the hands of a madman? Under constant surveillance, Will and his friends secretly devise a plan to defeat his grandfather and the sinister Knights of Charlemagne. The team must enter the Never-Was, a hellish land beyond our own, and find an elusive group of supernatural beings called the Hierarchy. But as the battle approaches, the alliance uncovers old secrets that threaten to tear them apart. Can they protect Earth from the demons beyond? Or will a rogue player destroy them and the world they live in? Praise for the Paladin Prophecy series “Wonderfully inventive.”—Chris Columbus, director of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone “Heart-pounding. . . Breakneck pace.”—The New York Times “Nonstop action and a richly layered plot.”—Booklist

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

MARK FROST partnered with David Lynch to create and produce the groundbreaking television series Twin Peaks. He has written screenplays, including Fantastic Four, and is the New York Times bestselling author of eight adult books, including The List of Seven, The Second Objective, The Greatest Game Ever Played, and The Match. To learn more, visit ByMarkFrost.com.

ONE WILL
DON'T TELL ANYBODY.
“Have you ever tasted champagne, Will?”
“Can you say that I have, no, sir.” Franklin Greenwood gestured to his butler, Lemuel Clegg, who directed one of the uniformed staff members standing by with an open bottle toward Will.
“Just a splash,” said Franklin, then leaned over toward his grandson, seated to his right, and winked. “It’s not as if we don’t have something to celebrate.”
“That’s right, sir,” said Will. He watched the crystal liquid swirl around the bottom of his glass as the waiter withdrew the bottle. Will raised his drink, imitating his grandfather, and touched the glass to his lips.
“To the Prophecy,” said Franklin.
“To the Prophecy,” said Will. He took a sip and grimaced at the bitter bite of the effervescence. Franklin drained his glass in one greedy gulp and held it out for more. The nearby staff member holding the bottle rushed to refill it, without appearing to hurry.
“I can’t tell you what joy these last few months have brought me, Will. I’ve never wanted anything more than to share with my family the blessings I’ve worked so hard to create. And as you know, for the longest time I’ve given up imagining that would ever be possible.” Will nodded sympathetically, forced another small swallow of the frothy swill down his throat, then set down the glass, hoping he could get away with leaving the rest of it untouched.
“I feel the same way.”
“Will, this time we’ve spent together has meant more to me than I can even begin to express. Your willingness to listen and learn without judging, your positive attitude toward our goals.”
Franklin leaned over and laid a cold hand on top of Will’s.
“But do you know what has been most gratifying for me? The opportunity to bear witness to your burgeoning talents.”
“Thank you, sir.”
“I can think of no measurable way to assign a value to that. This is a priceless treasure. After so many disappointments in my personal life, I could never have hoped for more.”
“For me, too.” Will held his gaze and

smiled shyly. "Grandfather?" "Yes, Will. "You've told me that, as we get to know each other, you wanted nothing more than to gain my trust. "That continues to mean more to me than I have words to express. Franklin's voice caught in his throat, choked with emotion. Moisture appeared in his hazy blue eyes. He gulped down another half glass of champagne, then took a pocket square from his crested blue school blazer and dabbed away some tears. "You don't have to say anything, Grandpa. And I only hope that, with all you've seen and heard from me these last few weeks, I've gained your trust as well. "Yes, of course. Franklin folded and pocketed his handkerchief and smiled benignly. "How may I convey that to you, Will?" "I think I'm ready to hear the whole story. Franklin considered the request, savored the final bite of his soy-fed Japanese Kobe rib-eye steak, pushed his plate back--another waiting staff member whisked it away instantly--then reached over and patted Will's hand. "Let's take a walk," said Franklin. They exited the old, weather-worn castle out a side door that Will hadn't noticed before, depositing them on the less-developed eastern side of the island. The late-summer sun hung low in the sky, shadows edging toward evening. Franklin started down a trim, graveled path that led through manicured gardens. Will kept exact pace with the old man's long, even strides. "I grew up on this island," said Franklin, looking around as they walked. "My earliest memories are all enmeshed with this place--these trees, the smells, the water, the magnificent views. "Were you born here?" asked Will. "Nearby," said Franklin, gesturing vaguely toward the mainland. "Father founded the Center a few years before I was born; I drew my first breath in the small school infirmary that was part of our original campus. All that's gone now, of course. By the time I was a toddler, Father had purchased the Crag and the island from the Cornish family. Everything about the Prophecy and our family's involvement with it starts with Ian Cornish. "Cornish came to Wisconsin after the Civil War, didn't he?" Franklin patted Will's arm. "You have been paying attention, haven't you?" "I figured that's why you wanted me to sort through all those old files up there," said Will, nodding back toward the tower that loomed over the castle's eastern half. "To learn about the Center and the Greenwood family tree. "As he glanced up at the tower's windows, Will held up two fingers behind the older man's back, so quickly that his grandfather couldn't see them. "Indeed. Well reasoned, my boy. Ian Cornish designed and manufactured rifles,

cannons, and munitions and amassed a great fortune, as you know, by the end of the Civil War. But he lost his oldest son in the war's final month, and it unhinged the man. He fled New England and settled here, a stranger to this part of the world, half mad with grief, and as a way to assuage his derangement, he put his fortune to frantic work. "What did he think that would do?" "In his diaries, Cornish writes of feeling haunted by the restless spirits of the men killed by his armaments--legions of them appeared to him at night, led by the ghost of his own son. Ian believed he was receiving instructions from these spirits about what to build up here and what to dig for down below. And the only way he could find peace was to obey their instructions. "So that's why he went down into the tunnels. They passed the small family graveyard that Will had noticed on an earlier visit--his own family's plot--the Greenwoods--and the gravestone of the man walking beside him, Franklin Greenwood, resting below the stone statue of a winged angel lifting a sword to the sky. "Something was calling him, all right," said Franklin. "But it wasn't the ghosts of dead soldiers--or should I say, that's not all it seems to have been. "So that's why he started excavating. "Extending the preexisting system of tunnels and caves under the island, always going deeper, yes. Driven to find something he believed his visions told him waited for him down there. Something he believed would absolve him of his sins and wash away his undying grief. "And he found it," said Will. "In that lost city down there. "Strange the ways and beliefs of men," said Franklin. "But sometimes when the mind breaks, and I believe that's what happened to poor Ian Cornish, it can lead you to even greater truths. Like Cahokia. Franklin paused in front of a small stone mausoleum to catch his breath. "Although it seems evident that the last of that ancient civilization died or were driven from their home countless thousands of years ago," said Franklin, "some trace of them remained in their lost city--a fragment of their consciousness, I suppose, embedded in a few precious objects they'd left behind. "Things they called aphotic technology. Franklin gave him an admiring glance. "You seldom cease to amaze me, Will. You really set your teeth into these research assignments of mine, didn't you?" "Like you said, never do anything halfway." Will shrugged. "What sort of objects?" "I'll come to that, but mark my words," said Franklin, raising a finger. "For what he brought back to the human race, Ian Cornish will someday be remembered as one of our most courageous explorers, every bit as important to the story of man as Galileo, Christopher Columbus, or the men who split the

atom. Franklin lifted a small black device from his pocket and pointed it at the stone building in front of them. Carved doors, which had appeared to be purely decorative, pivoted on hidden hinges and with a grind of stone on stone swung open. Franklin pushed the device again. Just inside the doors, two sleek stainless-steel panels slid apart, revealing the car of a large and ultramodern elevator. "Allow me to show you," said Franklin, pointing Will toward the car. Will stepped inside, and Franklin followed. He punched commands into a complex control panel on a side wall just inside the doors. Looking over his grandfather's shoulder, Will watched him enter a specific sequence of numbers. The outside stone doors closed, and the steel panels whispered shut. Will felt a whoosh of air compress around him. They began to descend, smoothly ramping up to what felt like considerable speed. This is the ground-level entrance to the same elevator we discovered in the hospital a mile down below, Will realized. "If what he found was so important, why didn't Cornish ever tell anyone about it?" asked Will. "Oh, but he did," said Franklin. "Cornish had made many influential friends back in his native New England. Chief among them his fellow members in what, on the surface, appeared to be a social or academic club in Boston. Prominent men, pillars of that community, makers of history, all part of an organization rooted in tradition and culture whose origins were bound up with the birth of liberty and freedom in early America. "But in fact that organization's history ran much deeper than Ian knew, back to the ruling castes and monarchies of western Europe, centuries before our continent was even discovered. The man took an old-fashioned key from his pocket and held it out on his open palm. It appeared more ceremonial than practical. On its porcelain tab Will saw a three-lettered insignia, intertwined with a ruler and a compass, which he recognized instantly. "The Knights of Charlemagne," said Will. "Exactly. Once he revealed this discovery to his colleagues back east, they took tremendous interest in supporting Cornish's work here. A few years later, when the poor man's mental state deteriorated, it was under their supervision that the first meaningful explorations of Cahokia moved forward. Do you begin to see how this all flows together, Will?" "Yes, sir." "Ian Cornish's oldest son died in the Civil War, but he also had a second son, too young to fight, who knew about Cahokia from the beginning. Cornish initiated the boy into the Knights, and he traveled west with his father when he first journeyed here. This only surviving son of Ian Cornish assumed a key role as the enterprise took shape. And when poor Ian lost what feeble grasp he had on the last of his reason, finally taking his own life, this sturdy young man, Lemuel Cornish, was appointed by his fellow Knights to continue this great work and keep his father's legacy alive. Lemuel. "Kind of an

unusual name, Will said. "Not for the nineteenth century," said Franklin, looking up at the walls. "I knew him, of course. As did my father. Lemuel Cornish sold us the estate that became the school. But he didn't tell my father anything close to all he knew. He saved that for me." "Why?" "Thomas Greenwood--my father, your great-grandfather--was many things. A man of vision, a born leader, and in the field of education nothing less than a prophet. He was also . . . How shall I put this? Franklin glanced at the ceiling. "You know I'm right, Father--an incorrigible Goody Two-shoes." Will couldn't help laughing. "How do you mean?" "Thomas never met a heathen he couldn't convert, a hopeless case he couldn't save, a sinner he couldn't redeem. Goodness, always Goodness, with a capital G. All of human existence divided neatly into black and white, and my father confidently armed with an unshakeable faith in his ability to discern the difference." Will felt the elevator car vibrating ever so slightly as it began to slow, almost imperceptibly. "What's wrong with that?" asked Will. Franklin looked slightly annoyed by the question; the vivid scar tissue behind his ears turned a brighter shade of pink. "What's wrong, dear boy," said Franklin, meeting Will's eyes with a restrained but reproachful look, "is that such a simple, reductive, dare I say childlike philosophy leaves out all the gray, the in-between, the place where men who learn to actually think for themselves get to decide how to live by their own rules." The car stopped, and the panels silently slid open in front of Will. "And that's where most of the interesting things happen," said Franklin. "Where's Will?" asked Brooke, just entering the suite. Nick looked up from his three hundredth push-up. "Dinner with Old Man Elliot again." Nick flipped to his feet and towed off, pumped, covered with sweat, and grinning at her like he couldn't help it. He couldn't really. Brooke, as usual, looked effortlessly flawless--outfit, accessories, hair, just a hint of makeup, every aspect of her presented self put together like a perfect recipe. "He's spending an awful lot of time over there," said Brooke as she set down her backpack on the table, then pulled out an appointment book and started writing in it, absentmindedly twirling a stray strand of her golden curls. "What about Ajay?" "He's still over at the Crag, too, working late, organizing those old whatchamacallit--archives." "Ar-kives, not ar-chives. You put chives on a baked potato." "You're a baked potato," said Nick, still grinning at her. Brooke shook her head and laughed, then took a longer, more admiring look at him. "Whatever training program they've put you on is doing wonders for your bod. And

absolutely zero for your brain. Nick turned a chair around and sat across from her, resting his chin on his arms. "Since you're so deeply into playing camp counselor, don't you want to ax me where Elise is?" "Ax you? All right, I'll ax you. Pray tell." "No clue," said Nick, drumming his fingers. "Why you want to know where everybody is all the time?" "She gave him one of her patented looks of exasperation. "Can I be curious about my friends?" "She picked up the black phone on the table and punched the lone button. When the operator picked up, she asked, "Would you page Elise Moreau and have her call me, please?" "What's today's date?" asked Nick when she hung up. "What does that have to do with anything?" "You've got your calendar right there in front of you, snowflake. What's today's date?" "August seventh," said Brooke. "Oh, that's right," said Nick, snapping his fingers. "It's National Be Curious About Your Friends Day." "She gave him a longer look, and for a moment a flash of malice showed through, before she covered it over. "There must be some way I can unknow you." "Keep dreaming, darlin'." Nick watched Brooke as she went back to writing in her book, his smile falling off when she stopped looking his way; then he stood up and moonwalked toward the kitchen, glancing at the wall clock. "May I offer you a refreshing beverage, Brooksie?" he asked. "A water would be fine, thanks." Facedown in her book. "One H²O, coming right up."

I shall start off by saying this was an AMAZING series! I very much enjoyed the whole series (even the second book, which apparently some people like this was nothing more than a filler book or a waste). I still liked this book but I had a couple of qualms with it. My first problem is that I read somewhere that this series is supposed to be a trilogy. That means that this being the third book, it should have tied up all of the loose ends. But I never learned what happened to whether or not Ronnie Murso lived or died (last I read, the kids believed him to be kidnapped and we know his syn-app was destroyed by a ride-along and it was implied that you COULD die if your syn-app did but after that happened there was no more speak of Ronnie Murso). I never learned whether or not Will's mom lived (Dave told him in Alliance that usually people don't live after being tagged with a ride-along but usually doesn't mean always). And finally, the conclusion has Will writing a letter that he hopes his dad will be alive to get one day. But I think that, because this is supposed to be the final book in the series, Mr. Frost should have made a decision as to whether or not Will's dad lived

and returned to his son or went abroad like Brook (but for travel since he's too old to be studying) or died. I mean, obviously since Franklin Greenwood had packed up and left, his dad must know Will is safe. And if we are to assume that his mom died due to the ride along, then what collateral does Franklin have over Hugh for him to have to continue to do work he knows will destroy the human race? What is there to stop him from leaving like he did before? Therefore, either they killed him or he's alive, in which case maybe the ending should state that he contacts Will to let him know he's coming back for him like he promised in the video at the beginning of the series. Or some kind of ending that ties it up. And if we are to assume she has not died then where has she been in Alliance when Franklin was trying to trap Will at the end and this book of the series when Will is constantly talking about his dad and never her? My second problem with this book is that I think Mr. Frost spends much too much time describing the never-was and their way around it. I found myself skipping over multiple paragraphs because I was becoming bored with it. I just wished he would have cut down on that and talked about other more important things, like tying up loose ends and maybe a bigger battle with the Makers. Which brings me to my next point. This entire series was really leading up to the battle with the Makers. The battle is really pathetic in this book. We are supposed to believe that the Makers are so fearsome, but an angel and four kids could take them and an entire army of monsters out? And that while one Maker is firing fireballs from his staff at Dave, the other seven just did nothing and allowed the kids time to destroy their portal arc, revive two of them that died when it fell, and draw a portal in the air with the Carver? All while they're supposedly taking out an entire army of thousands and thousands of monsters? It's not plausible. On top of that, the battle was so short. He should have spent more time and pages on this since this was the climax of not just this book, but the entire series. Like I said, overall it was a decent book. It wasn't horrible like, say, *Allegiant* by Veronica Roth for example (go read those reviews; they were scathing!). But it could have used a little more details, time, and attention.

I really enjoyed the series, for the most part, however I feel that the author got a bit bored with writing it. From my perspective there was enough to write at least another book as this entire book leads up to the battle between the Makers and the group kids. The book moved along at a good pace and included a number of good battles and allowed the main characters to expand their skills however once you get near the end of the book there is a lot of build up regarding how the main issue is going to be solved. A battle starts, things transpire, and then you flip the page and it is weeks into the future?? We never get any details on how they succeeded at their plan or what else happened, it is just all done. It was a bit disappointing to go through the entire book only for the

series to end the way that it did. I feel that the author either ran out of time or just lost a desire to continue writing the series and decided what's the easiest and fastest way to end this so I can move on. Did I enjoy reading it? for the most part yes, Would I recommend the series to a friend who loves the genre as much as I do? Probably not as the ending is rather disappointing.

I have avidly read every book in this series, and waited a long time for this one. The characters, mystery, scale and mystical tone of the first two books was amazing, and I have loved every second of it. I thought this series was going to go for a while, it had so many mysteries and clues and unfinished stories, so obviously this one has to close off at least as many as it opens up right? right? For the first 50% of this book I was loving it. The pacing was as fast as ever, the stakes higher than ever, and a great tone of "We have no idea what we are doing". This first half is strange for the series, as it actually shifts out of Will's point of view, and then does another change up and goes out of chronological order. This was a weird change, but it worked super well. I don't want to spoil anything, because the writing in the first 100 pages (or so, not sure when on kindle) were the best part of the book. The second half is where everything goes wrong. The pacing starts getting super boring, and the tone of desperation gets bashed into your face for far too long. You get the feeling of untouchability after fight scene after fight scene. If anyone has read the Dresden files, you might understand my complaint about the characters getting into too much trouble, so the threats and bad guys become desensitized. This by and of itself would not have ruined the novel, it might have knocked it down to 4 stars. The ending was what killed this book for me. But not the ending to this book. the ending to the series. I literally finished the book, ready for the next one. Hyped even. The book had done the best job at finishing what had happened in it, unlike the last two, and was over solid, other than pacing issues in the last half. But then I didn't see the blurb for the next one. Then I looked online for what the next one was. Then it hit me: this was the last one. I went back and re-read the ending, and still couldn't believe it. Literally nothing had been resolved. Personal stories of the 5 main characters hadnt been finished. The Knight and their weird illumanati ness still hadn't been resolved. Nothing felt even remotely finished, just blurbed about for so little time I didn't even notice it was supposed to be a wrap up. Looking back on it, maybe, maybe this series could have been properly finalized with 100 more pages and a total change to the last chapter. It doesn't matter though. This is what we have.

Awesome ride, and a excellent read for all ages. *ALERT: SPOILERS AHEAD!* For those of you who read the first two books, and found that Brooke is "on the bad side" she turns back in the end,

