

## Queen Of legends

I am many things, but a Queen I am not. I wasn't born in a lavish castle with the best wet nurses money can buy while a royal mother pushes for a baby she has dreamt about her whole life. While a King sits patiently on his throne wondering if the child would be the son he always wanted to hunt with, teach, and mold into the finest King. Only to be presented with a baby girl. His love is still there when he looks upon her and carries her for the first time, to have his beard pulled by her small fingers and laugh, for in that moment he sees nothing more than his child. I, however, wasn't as fortunate to have such a lavish life with the story everyone expects.

Not just a few days ago I was like drop in the ocean, a part of it, but never different from it. Like many children my age I was abandoned by two people who probably thought that they were putting my best interest into their decision only to be met with the truth, that they were weak-hearted because they could not give up a life of their own even for their own blood. I can write a series of books with reasons why they would leave a child, but it wouldn't change the fact that I was now alone. That I wouldn't have the comfort of the only two people in the world who were supposed to cherish me like a gift sent down by the heavens. Instead, I feel like I'm trapped in a hole that's deep enough for the Sun to miss the one child who needs every bit of warmth she can get, but I don't have that nor will I ever.

Yet how is it that a girl, with no land or name, find herself in a situation most would laugh at. Me a Queen, and of course not just any ordinary Queen, but the Queen of Legends. Now I feel the eye rolls of other girls and women alike, that if I was to tell this story they would only respond to me with snickers, eye rolls, and the occasional "yes life is so hard", but if only they knew what it actually meant to be a Queen of Legends, suddenly they too would toss the crown to anyone so that their fate won't be sealed.

Here I am unbeknownst to me I have always been a Queen. My life isn't just about a sad abandoned girl that thought nothing of herself, and it isn't surprising just to find out that her story doesn't end there, but that life throws her curveball giving her what she thought she always wanted, to be special. To not just be the drop, but be the ocean itself. To have a life of her own, to maybe... just maybe be something more than the story given to her by birth. I've said it before and I'll say it again I am not that girl. I was satisfied with the life I was living, I was satisfied with not being special, I was satisfied.

I can remember the game I used to play with the other orphans about a Queen. If I remember correctly it had a song too.

"There once lived a queen  
of beauty and grace  
unknown to her that  
She would become the end of the  
Land  
In her rule many die  
In her rule land went dry

In her rule many cried tears of  
Blood  
For when she holds the crown  
The land will go down  
How many people will go down”

In this game many hated to be the Queen because they had to chase the other kids and touch them to be “killed”. The only way the game ends is if the children work together to kill the Queen or the Queen kills all the players. But at the end this Queen is crowned the Queen of Legends. I only knew the game I would play when I was a little girl, and now I'm behind the locked door of my cottage trying to hold back the King's guards from coming in. I can't even fathom what I, who worked under a seamstress to make gowns for the wealthy, could have done to get King Siberius the Great, first of his name, ruler of the North, keeper of peace, and bringer of chains to see me as a threat. His guards think otherwise. I mean I know that the needle is mightier than the sword, but that's not enough to hurt the King. Unless I pinch him by mistake while sewing his pants together to get the fit right, and even then that won't happen because Patricia would rather me work on embroidered handkerchief, than high paying customers. If we ever do get a Royal to come into the slums of the North.

My day, at least I would like to think would have started like any other. With me running to get ready for work because I decided to read a book while telling myself that this is my last chapter only to be caught off guard with the last paragraph and needing to read the next page. Of course I had to call it lights out eventually, well that and my candle burned out. I could already hear Martha telling me off again for burning through another candle that's supposed to last me a month and that took I it upon myself to waste it on reading nothing. But she wouldn't understand that after making beautiful garments for a bunch of ugly sacks with caked up faces that never wear the same attire twice, I mean Gods forbid I wear the same old dress that was probably worn by a dead women during The Great Change. I am tired of dedicating my life to them while the only me time I get is bedtime. So I choose to give some of that time to read and live the life I live just for a while and then take a peek at how someone else is doing.

Of course after finally getting to work on time, with not a second to spare, I go and start working on my last project that I didn't get to finish. Another handkerchief probably for another high-class Nobleman that thinks that wearing one with his family crest will get the attention of a female in hopes of courting them. Once Patricia gave me the “okay” I leave and head back to my Cottage.

When I make it to the Cottage where Martha takes care of us orphans, I'm greeted by a letter at the front of the door saying “I took the kids to the nearest forest so that they can play be back in a few, can you do me a favor and start preparing for dinner thanks-Martha”. I can only laugh, I may be good with a needle, but when it comes to cooking I'll be lucky not to burn the house down. I pay no mind and close the door leaving it unlocked for Martha and the other kids. I try and start the preparations to of best of my ability by peeling a potato.

A few minutes into struggling to peel off potato skin I hear footsteps, which doesn't surprise me, until I hear them circling around the Cottage. I realized that they're trying to prank me, jokes on them. As I head to the door I start to hear the sound of metal against metal clanking together, and the footsteps sounds a bit too uniform to come from a bunch of kids. That's when a dark realization drained in. I haven't heard Martha calling for me, telling me that she is here like she always does. And then I hear the footsteps stop all together.

“Martha Quincington by order of King Siberius the Great, first of his name, ruler of the North, keeper of peace, and bringer of chains, we order you to hand over the orphan Alda that is under your care for being revealed to be the Queen of Legends by a high source.

The King demands that you give us the girl with no resistance.” It sounded like the King's royal guards, but what are they doing here?

“Why?” I said, and then clapped my hands over my mouth after realizing how stupid that was.

Of course I just had to open my mouth, but I couldn't help it! I wanted to know why they would think that I, out of any other girl in the village, could be a Queen. Just as I was hating my lack of good timing, I notice that I don't hear any sounds coming from the guards. My body freezes as I see the worn door knob turn. Without thinking, I throw myself at the door and lock it, forcing the weight of my body against it. I look around frantically for anything that could be useful, and my eyes fall upon a chair not too far out of arm's reach. I press my hand to the old oak door and lean out for the chair, praying the lock holds. As soon as my hand grabs the chair's back, I feel a sudden impact from the other side of the door and I'm silently thank Martha for changing the lock on the door a few months ago. I quickly shove the chair under the door knob and wedge it at an angle between the floor and the door, and lean against the door again, using all the muscles in my body to stop the soldiers from getting through. As I feel another impact, I can hear the grunt of the soldier who I was battling. I was terrified, these men had years of training, years of breaking down doors, and I was just the apprentice seamstress. I knew my odds weren't good.

“Open this door Martha or we will be forced to break it down” bellowed the deep voice that spoke before.

This can't be happening and of course the potatoes are done cooking, *great*. First time I cook these things correctly and I have to deal with a bunch of sardines in their tin cans thinking that they just found a diamond, when really they found nothing.

“Alda isn't here,” I cry, finding no point in hiding, seeing as I opened my big mouth before. “She's in the market getting some vegetables for us to cook dinner with.”

“If that's so then why lock the doors, why not let us in, and prove it instead of causing such a hassle for yourself?” he challenged.

So what now they train guards to be smart too, whatever happened to those simple days when guards were taught to fight and not to think.

“And even if she was in the market which I suspect she's not, then we would have heard something by now seeing as the whole kingdom is looking for her.” Even from behind this door I can see him grinning. Jackass.

This doesn't make any sense to me. Now I'm being tracked down just because someone thought that somehow, out of all the orphans in the world I had to be someone with something to hide. I feel an even greater force hit the door, and I stumble back a few feet, but even that doesn't distract me from the sound of splintering wood. I launch myself back at the door. I can feel sweat dripping down the side of my face, and my heart pounding as the panic rises up in me. The only thing stopping these soldiers from getting in is a small locked door, a chair and my body weight (which is not a lot, let me tell you.)

My mind is racing and i'm looking everywhere, trying to figure out what I can use to escape. My eyes collectively take in, the large pile of firewood, the chimney, and the flint rocks for fire, and the door to Martha's bedroom. Suddenly I have an idea.

I can't allow myself to be captured by these guards. If the King wants me this bad then I can only imagine what's in store for me. I shove myself away from the door sprint down the long hallway past the kids bedrooms and the storage room and into the kitchen.

I hear another bang from the door, and I know the wood won't hold for much longer. Quickly I grab some of the wood kept next to the chimney and throw it inside. I press my hand to the inner right corner of the chimney, felling its rough edges for an open pocket, where Martha hides the key to her bedroom. Martha found this sweet little hideaway while cleaning the chimney of soot, and decided it was creative place to hide her key, and she showed me this when I was fifteen. I was always responsible and since I enjoyed taking care of the younger kids, she wanted me to know incase something happened when she wasn't there. Feeling a smooth edge, I grasp the key and quickly step down from the chimneys edge. I spin on my heel and dash to Martha's bedroom door. She sleeps next to the kitchen in case one of our “little angels” goes for an unauthorized midnight snack. Shoving the key into the keyhole, I twisted it right and throw the door open. I count the planks of wood on the floor starting from the far left corner of the room, and when I hit nine i race over and tear the floorboard up. (give her a splinter to find later) Putting my hand in I lifted up parchment paper that was rolled up and tied with a red silk fabric, and I go back again lifting up the.

I sprint over to the counters and snatch up the flint stones. Before I go back to the chimney I made sure to turn off the oven so that the potatoes wouldn't get overcook.

They can thank me later I guess.

The banging stopped and I look through the narrow hallway that connects the kitchen to the living room, giving me a clear view of the front door.

“ So Alda when are you going to open the door?” The guard chuckled.

I tense and I can only stand still now. How? How could he be sure that it's me inside here. There's no way! Unless...Martha's letter on the door! I must have forgotten to take it in with me. As the next slam against the door shakes the very ground I tremble on, I realize with dread that they aren't going to hold back.

I turn back around and start to climb the inside of the chimney and half way up I get the match that's in my pocket and lit it up against the brick wall. When I hear the door finally break through I drop the match starting the fire of the chimney as I finish heading up to the top.

I can hear the destruction happening below me. The rooms being broken into, pictures being shattered, walls being torn down, tables being turned, and nothing being overlooked. The place that I called my home is being destroyed. The only safe haven that the orphans and I have is being destroyed over a misunderstanding. Tears start to take over my eyes as I try to hold them back. I can't cry at least not in this moment. I have to get out and leave far away. I looked below me and see that it wasn't a bad jump. I wiped away the tear that was still in the corner of my eye. I braced myself, closed my eyes, and jumped.

For some reason I thought that hitting the ground wouldn't be so hard and yet my legs feel like someone kept on hitting them with a hammer. My legs are in pain and so is my butt, a pain I can only describe as being overwhelming bothersome since it's not really the impact that hurts more, but the shock after that you can't run away from, but I have to face it head on.

Opening my eyes I noticed that the ground wasn't the problem or what I fell on...it was a guard. His face was defined with an angular jaw line, his eyebrows were on fleek and followed the slight curve of his eyes, his nose was long and defined just like the rest of his facial features, but his hair stood out the most, it was white, he must be Albino. He seemed pretty young to be a King's guard, but I don't question anything anymore.

I can tell that by the scar he had on his right cheek almost coming completely down to the inside of his armor that he has had his share of fights and seen the many eyes of his enemies fade to grey on the battlefield. I can see him slowly drifting back into consciousness... *He's slowly drifting back into consciousness!* And I'm still here on top of him. I shake my head and pulled myself together. I get off him and start to run towards the Dark Forest as fast as I could.

"She's heading towards the Dark Forest!" Screamed a guard which I can only assume was him.

Now the sound of metal clanking together follow me to the forest, but what they lack I have, I have lived in the slums and have traveled through this forest well enough to navigate my way around blindfolded. I was jumping dodging, trying to run as fast as I could, but the pain from the fall still hasn't subsided. I stopped at times to rest and tell the distance between me and them. Too bad for them I can hear their armor which tells me, at least to some extent, their location. I run to a big tree not too far from where I am now and crouch behind it and catch my breath.

I hear a crack a few feet away and I dare not to move or breath. I slowly move my head towards the direction of the sound, but only catch the shadow of what seems to be a kid. I quickly rub my eyes and looked again, but by then the figure left. There is no way that a

child could be this deep into the Dark Forest. Even with the Suns heading down now, it still wouldn't make any sense for a child to be in such a dangerous place.

It couldn't have been....a sighting of them hasn't happened for over five hundred years and were thought to be all extinct. *A Lost Boy*. I can remember hearing Martha talk about the folklore to the children about the *Lost Boys*, kids that died with their childhood ripped away at such a young age. They weren't able to cross over and now haunt the woods playing games with other children to take them deep in the forest as well to make any children one of them. There was more to their legend I'm sure of it, but now is not the time to delve on the past.

I looked back over to the direction where I last heard the guards just to calm my growing fear. When I feel a cold metal hand touching my shoulder pulling me close to their body. The guards found me, they probably had other guards track me down in the forest, damn their smart. They chained me up and took me back outside of the Dark forest. Even as I left the forest I swear that I could hear a child's laughter coming from the depths of the forest.

They threw me into a cage that was connected to a carriage and they to head to the castle. One guard continued to look at me as if I was an animal which I'm sure I look the part. As we headed out another guard turned with a grin on his or her face.

The guard takes off the helmet and I see that it's a woman, "When I heard that I had to find the Queen of Legends I was expecting to find an old hag, but to my surprise it was a fine specimen as yourself, *Alda*." the guard said, she put emphasis on my name which made me cringe.

Having someone as disgusting as the King's royal guard say my name, it angered me. Had I not been chained I would slap that smirk right off of her mouth.

"What do you say? I can make your time in the castle more pleasant, *Alda*"

"I would love that" I responded getting as close as I can to get to her in the cage.

"When are you going to shut up and drop dead for me? King's underling" I said under my breath. Her eyes narrowed...Shit she heard me.

Enraged with my comment she grabbed onto one of the chains around my neck and pulls it slamming me closer to the bar and tightening my neck. I use my hand to try and create some distance from the chain, but I had no luck. I gasp for air, but it's no use the more I try to breath the less air I am getting. My eyes tear up and I can feel my circulation stop, I feel cold.

The guard laughs, this time I try to use my legs and put it against the bars to put distance between me and her. The guard lets go I and I fall back just to be pulled back towards the guard like a paddle ball. She laughs even harder, but I was not going to give her the satisfaction. I muster up enough spit and shoot it as her helmet which makes it into her eyes. She tightens her grip even more and I can feel that I am at my limit. One

guard finally pushed her away from the chain allowing me to breath. I take the opportunity to take in all the oxygen .

“Remember the King wants her alive” the guard says. The other guard snickers and moves away. I can recognize his voice being the one who alerted the guards telling them that I was heading to the Dark Forest.

“Are you okay?” He said looking at me.

His helmet covered most of his face, but I can still see his white hair, and even more his red eyes, he must be Albino. Eyes that I could tell were sincere with what he was asking, *let's hope that this does not become like one of those YA folklore where the girl falls in love with the dashing,sincere, brave man who is supposed to be her enemy.* I wasn't able to speak because I was still trying to catch my breath. So I just nod my head to respond. After that whole show I was a bit happier to be in the cage than outside with *them*. The horses are whipped once more to start the carriage, off we were again heading to the King's castle were my fate awaited me.