

# **SHE BELONGS TO THE DEVIL**

## Chapter 10 - The Culprits

Even after talking with the Princess, the King was unable to get clues about the real perpetrators behind Adeline's kidnapping because he never asked the right questions to the little girl.

He never asked questions like, "Who took you away from the garden?" or "Where did you go when Hawisa and Osanna went away from the garden?" And because of this, Queen Lillian was never mentioned in Adeline's story.

The King directly started his inquiry from questions like where she was and who Prince Theodore was. And after that his next question was "Who took you to the hill?"

And all Princess Adeline told him was that a nice man had taken her there. Adeline regarded General Osmond as a nice man because he had promised her to take her to her father and he had carried her, fed her, and took her to her new friend's home. Osmond had never assaulted her neither did anything to scare her.

After hearing how the 'nice man' took her to the hill, King Dragomir never asked another important question, "What was the nice man wearing?"

King Dragomir had just assumed that the man who kidnapped her was wearing a mask and black cloth. He had this pre-set perception about the kidnapper because that was what Hawisa, Adeline's personal maid, had told him while he was interrogating her.

And from the maid's description, he had presumed that the kidnapper was either a bandit, or a trained soldier from their neighboring Kingdom called Mihir.

Wyverndale and Mihir were both equally powerful Kingdoms and they were in a constant power struggle with each other, a cold war. The only thing that was stopping the two Kingdoms from war was the natural barrier between them, which was the sky high mountains and hills.

It would be difficult for thousands of soldiers to march to either Kingdom from a small pass between the two Kingdoms called the Jhom la pass. And these Kingdoms relied on petty tactics to get on the nerves of each other. This led King Dragomir to believe that the kidnapping might have been one of such tactics.

However, after her daughter was returned back to the Palace safely, the King believed that the kidnapping was done by a bandit. Mihir would have never returned a hostage if they really were behind Adeline's kidnapping.

If only King Dragomir had inquired about the nice man's dress or just the color of the dress, then maybe, he could have figured out that the kidnapper was none other than one of his own soldiers.

The soldiers of Wyverndale wore navy blue colored attire with black borders. Their attire included trouser, a knee length fitting robe, black long boots, and finally a metal armor on their chest. Their look was completed by a black hat and a double edged sword around their waist.

The man who was wearing the similar attire finally arrived at the Palace. He quietly entered the palace, careful not to bump into anyone. And then he headed towards Queen Lillian's quarter which was located at the South-West corner of the Palace.

It would take 25 minutes on foot to reach Lillian's quarter from the main gate. The area of the Palace was very large and the Queens and Concubines could use their personal carriages if they wanted to travel from one corner of the Palace to another.

The personal maid of Lillian was standing outside the Queen's personal chamber waiting for General Osmond to arrive. Inside the chamber, the Queen was pacing back and forth; she was desperate to hear about what had happened or rather tell what happened.

Osmond arrived in front of Lillian's chamber and stopped. He leaned towards the maid and whispered, "Announce to the Queen that I have returned from my mission."

The maid was unable to sense General's presence and when he spoke near her ear, she was spooked. She felt as if her soul left her body for a fraction of seconds. She calmed herself down by taking in deep breath and went inside the room, "Your Majesty, General Osmond has arrived."

Queen Lillian stopped pacing and quickly sat down on her elaborate chair. "Let him in."

After the maid left the chamber, General Osmond entered the room and bent down on one of his knees and bowed to the Queen. "Your Majesty, I've returned back from the Devil's Cave."

The Queen's dark eyes were filled with rage. She believed that the General had played a nasty trick on her. She gritted from between her teeth, "What took you so long? The Princess arrived more than an hour ago."

She rested her hands on the arm rest and asked in a stern voice, "So, tell me, what took you so long?"

General Osmond had no idea that the Princess was already back in the Palace. Though the talk of the night in the Palace was the Princess, Osmond was too busy trying not to bump on anyone for him to listen to what they were talking about.

Osmond was visibly confused to see Lillian in rage. He furrowed his brows and asked the Queen, "I'm sorry Your Majesty, but I don't understand what you are implying."

Lillian let out an evil laughter, scary enough to spook the maid who was standing outside. And then gave General Osmond a cold and piercing look, "So you have no idea how the Princess is back in the Palace?"

General Osmond was shocked to hear that. "She is back in the Palace? But how is that even possible. I took her to the Devil's Cave and watched her enter the Cave with my own eyes. And I immediately left the cave after leaving her there."

Osmond knew that the Queen was telling the truth by the way she was behaving. A part of his heart wanted to thank the God for protecting the Princess and lifting his huge burden of guilt. But at the same time, another part of his heart was scared for the repercussion of his failure.

Technically, he was successful in the mission that was assigned to him by the Queen. However, nobody had seen him leave the Princess in front of the Devil's Cave. And without any proof and witness to back him, he realized that he was doomed.

The Queen got up from her chair and mockingly asked, "Are you sure that you didn't trick me?"

A grim sneer appeared on her face. Then she started to pace back and forth with her hands behind her back.

"I have a theory of what you actually did. You took that little brat to another powerful witch or wizard and made them break the invisibility spell, but only the spell on the Princess. Then somehow you smuggled her back in her own room and waited for another hour before coming here. And then you came to me claiming to have left her in front of the Devil's Cave."

Her feet stopped right in front of General Osmond. Although he himself was famous as the Devil incarnate and was one of the strongest soldiers of Wyverndale, he felt powerless in front of The Evil Queen. He didn't dare to look her in the eyes and was kneeling down and bowing.

The Queen continued her accusation, "And you thought that I would just forgive you? After I had a taste of victory only to realize later that it was actually a defeat?"

Her eyes were now filled with scalding fury. A strange power could be felt around her.

A cold shiver ran down the spine of General Osmond, he knew that something very bad was about to happen.

The Queen continued speaking in a shrilling voice, "I had high expectations from you General Osmond, but you greatly disappointed me... No, disappointment would be an understatement; you insulted me by not following my orders."

General Osmond immediately fell on both of his knees and deeply bowed to the Queen. "Please forgive me for my incompetence, Your Majesty. But I would never dare to go against your order or even think about insulting you."

Lillian narrowed her gaze at the powerless man bowing for her forgiveness. She scoffed and said, "You are no longer of any use to me."

Then Lillian faced towards her another room and shouted, "Bring out the girl."