

This is dedicated to my family, especially to my daughter, my husband, my parents and my brother. They make up my little universe and I love them all.

I hope whoever reads this will like it as much as I do. Also, as soon as I have time, I will work on its sequel. Won't be for a while, though.

Enjoy!!

P.S.: I want to thank everyone who reads my works. If you like what I write, you can leave a comment on the site and can rate it. Have a nice day. 😊

# THE LEGEND OF THE RING

## Chapter 1

Angela was hungry. Again. She could feel her stomach grumbling in pain. It was late already and the orphanage doors had long ago been closed and barred. She had to eat something or she was sure she would swoon. She got up from her bed slowly not to wake her room mate, a skinny girl of her age who in her opinion was looking worse than herself and surely needed food just as bad as her.

Rose, her roommate, was sobbing softly in her sleep. Angela had heard her cry herself to bed hours earlier, famished and sick. They had no one in the world to care about them or about any of the other kids in the orphanage. She felt so lonely. And hungry. She would have to sneak out again and steal something to survive. The staff at the orphanage only fed them stale food and leftovers.

She put on her shabby raincoat and stepped on the old rickety wooden floor carefully not to wake Rose. She was determined to steal enough food for both of them. If Rose didn't get food at least, she would probably die. And then she would really be all alone. Maybe she could try to filch some medicine for Rose, too.

Angela headed for the locked door of their room with a hair pin in her shaking hands. She really didn't want to wake Rose, she wasn't in the mood for her scolding. Not tonight, at least. She took the hair pin and put it in the lock, then she started to handle and move it until she heard the familiar sound of the open door. She sneaked outside the room as silent as a shadow.

The orphanage was immersed in darkness. It was almost quiet but she could hear the distant sobs of the other children locked in their rooms. Especially the young ones who usually went to bed hungry and beaten by the older and stronger ones who stole the little food they got from the orphanage staff. She wished she could help every wretched soul but she knew it was too much for her. So she thought she could at least help Rose. It was her way of making up for stealing so God would let her in his kingdom when it would be her time. Helping Rose was her good deed in this cruel world, the key to making it to Heaven when she died.

Angela listened for any sign of the orphanage's headmaster, Miss Eveline, a fat old hag who probably ate everything that

was in fact destined for the children from the government. But nobody seemed to care that the children were getting skinnier and skinnier every day while the respectable Miss Eveline was getting too fat for her clothes with each passing day. She wondered where she stuffed it all. When she made sure no sound was coming from behind her door, she hurried down the corridor towards the only place she could find the pills for Rose. She was having a fever and she was very weak because of the flu and the fact that their room was dank and cold wasn't helping. She really needed the medicine but Miss Eveline, who considered herself a good Christian and who taught them about religion, didn't deem she was worth to try saving and only saw it as a waste of good pills on a lost cause. When she last time asked for pills for Rose, she had slapped her face and told her that Rose was in God's hands now and that if He wanted, he would save her without the pills. But Angela wasn't going to wait for that. So first steal the pills and then go out and steal something to eat. That was the plan.

She descended the creaky stairs like a cat, trying not to make a sound. But the building was so old that it made it impossible for the flimsy stairs not to creak lightly under her weight. Angela knew where Miss Eveline kept all the medicines locked. And now it was the perfect time to take some for Rose. So she headed straight for the locked cabinet. She opened the door that led to the medical cabinet with ease but the cabinet itself was another issue. She tried picking it with her hair pin but it was in vain. And she couldn't just break the lock or she would

wake every soul in the orphanage. She needed to be smart about it. She looked around the tiny room and there it was: a tiny key sitting on the otherwise empty table in far corner of the small room. Could it be? Could she be so lucky? Hope made her cheeks redden. That might be the right key as nobody expected anyone to break the lock to the room to need to hide the cabinet key so... She stumbled over a stool and hoped nobody had heard anything, then she grabbed the key. She put it in the lock and turned it as it had fit right in. Yes!! It opened the cabinet lock! She grabbed some pain killers for Rose and stashed them in her pocket. Then she carefully locked the cabinet door again and placed the key back on the table where she had found it. She then exited the room and locked it back behind her hoping that nobody would notice a few missing pills this way.

Angela climbed the orphanage fence and jumped on the other side. Now to find some food!

The night was cold and a drizzling rain had just started. But her hunger was worse than the rain. So Angela started running through the rain towards the center of the town as the orphanage was at the outskirts of it. She knew there was a bakery downtown and as it was Friday night, the baker had made a few extra loaves of bread to sell in the morning as he usually did. He always baked more on Friday and sold the extra bread on Saturday morning. And after he would sell all the

bread, he left home earlier than during the other days of the week.

She slowed her running to a walk as soon as she passed the first houses of the small town. She sniffed the air as a gust of wind had brought a sweet smell of apple pies from some of the nearby houses. She wondered how it was that she still remembered the taste of it as she hadn't eaten a piece of apple pie in ages. But her mouth was watering at the thought. She tried to focus back on her mission, namely stealing a loaf or two and if she was lucky enough, some other goodies from the bakery without, of course, getting caught. She had done it before so it shouldn't be a problem now. And she was never caught because she wasn't greedy. She never stole more than she needed, and she didn't need much.

Angela took the corner towards the bakery with a lockpick in her hand. She made sure no city guards were on site and advanced carefully under the cover of darkness. The guards were probably drinking in some pub or sleeping with their heads on the table already drunk by now. But it was always better to be careful than to be sorry. She knew what the punishment for stealing was, especially for someone from the orphanage who wouldn't be defended by anyone, namely the judge would have her hands cut off to set her as an example. And she surely didn't want that to happen.

The blinds were shut and there was no light coming from the inside. But the owner and his wife lived on the first floor and

although they were probably sleeping by now, she would have to be quiet not to wake them. It was always better and desirable to avoid confrontation. So she put the lock pick in the lock and turned it slightly to the left, then to the right and then to the left again but a bit harder and then she pushed the door open. She was inside the bakery. The smell of freshly cooked bread was drowning her senses. She took a loaf from the oven and gulped it down in a few bites. Then she took two more to give Rose one and one for herself for later. But she was not content with only bread. Not this time. So she decided to break into the pantry and take some goodies from there too. She was wondering why would the baker and his wife keep the pantry locked too. What could they have in there?? Cakes? Cookies? Expensive salami or what that they felt the need to keep it locked? Well, she would try to lock pick that too this time. It was for a good cause, she told herself, Rose would need more than just bread and a few pills to get better.

So Angela used all her skill to pick the pantry lock. It proved more stubborn than the medical cabinet back at the orphanage. Which only made her more determined to open it. What did they keep in there? The golden goose? But then she finally heard the familiar click of the open lock and the pantry door was standing wide open in front of her. She struck a match and lit a small candle which she found earlier on one of the tables in the kitchen. There were sausages and a few types of jams, some jars of pickles and some other stuff but no cakes, cookies, candies or anything worth keeping a pantry locked.

She stuffed two large sausages in her small bag next to the loaves of bread when she got greedy and thought of taking a jar of plum jam too. She took the jar from the shelf when something caught her eye. She saw a piece of wood behind the other jars. She moved them aside and discovered a tiny engraved box. It looked old and dusty and of course, it was locked. Was there anything without a lock in this world? She figured that nothing worth it was left in the open so if this box was locked and hidden in the pantry behind some jars of jam, there might be something valuable inside. So she grabbed the tiny wooden box and threw it in her bag next to the food thinking to open it later when she would be in the safety of her room at the orphanage. She locked the pantry door behind her, just as she had found it, then the front door of the bakery she had just robbed and then she was off running back towards the orphanage.

## Chapter 2

“Hey, Rose, wake up!”, and Angela touched her forehead to check if she still had a fever. Her forehead was burning hot but Rose hadn't heard her so Angela shook her a bit. Finally, Rose opened her weary eyes just a bit and at first she seemed confused.

“Yeah? What is it, Angela?”, Rose asked half asleep and with an obvious effort.

“Wake up, I have some pills for you and something extra. I got bread and sausages. Come, take the pills and let's dine!”

Rose's eyes opened wide at hearing what Angela had just said and she seemed confused even more so Angela didn't say a word when Rose slightly pinched her hand to make sure it was all real and that she wasn't dreaming. Angela helped her get up and gave her the medicine and a glass of water to go with it.

“Now, let's eat! You'll feel a lot better in the morning” and Angela gave her a sweet smile and then she pulled the bread from her bag. When she pulled the sausages too, Rose's pupils dilated once again in wonder and appreciation.

“Where is all this coming from, Angela? Because I don't think Miss Eveline gave them to you...”

“Hah, no, you know well enough that the old witch Miss Eveline wouldn't give us scrap if she didn't get money from the government for us. So she only feeds us enough to keep us alive and get that money allocated for every child and nothing more. We are literally starving here...so I had to improvise.”

Rose took a bite of the fresh bread and a mouthful of sausage and didn't stop until she was full. Then she had another glass of water and Angela could see that she was a lot better already.

“Then who do I have to thank for this meal beside you, Angela?”

“No worries, Rose. Just get better, ok? I don't want all this spacious and luxurious room for myself...” and both girls started laughing at Angela's comment as the room was anything but that. “Anyway, I never steal from the poor, just from those who can afford it and won't suffer if I take a bit you know...so, really, don't worry about it, ok? And it's almost dawn, get some rest again and we can talk more in the morning when you'll be better!”

“Ok, thank you Angela! And one more thing before I go to sleep again...”

“What, Rose?” Angela asked a bit irritated as she wished to be left alone with her wooden box now and try to open it without Rose's prying eyes.

“If I ever had a sister, I imagine she must be like you. What I mean is that you are like a sister to me, nobody has ever been so kind to me besides you in this stinking hole of an orphanage...”

“Hush now and go to sleep. And I am not that good, it's just that I don't want to be left alone, ok? So don't get sentimental on me, just sleep, Rose...”

“Whatever...”, and Rose fell asleep again with a tiny tear in the corner of her eye.

Angela listened for her heartbeat and her breathing to make sure she was sound asleep before she dared to get the box out of her bag. This was more than stealing food, this was far worse. And if she got caught, if there was something valuable inside and she got caught, well, she didn't even want to think about what the city judge would do to her.

She placed the box on the small table by the window so the light from the breaking dawn would help her see better. It was the size of small pocket book, but thicker. It was light so it made her wonder if there really was anything inside or it was just an old empty box. But then again, if it was empty, why was it locked? No, there had to be something inside. But what could

it be that the baker had hidden in the larder behind some jam jars? Or maybe he put it there long ago and forgot about it.

Angela looked at the box again and shook it gently. Indeed, something seemed to be inside. She took her hair pin and tried to unlock the tiny lock, but it was all in vain. The lock wouldn't give in. After numerous failed attempts, she finally managed to break open the lock. She pushed the lid aside and ....money, lots of it. The baker's savings, most probably. A feeling of guilt rushed over her. She didn't want the baker's savings. He had worked for that money. If he saved it, he surely needed the money for something. Yeah, she didn't have a dime but this was wrong. If it had been a piece of jewellery, the baker and his wife could have lived without it, especially as they kept it in the pantry, but not their savings. The more she thought about it, the more determined she got to take it back, to break into his house again and put the box back where she had found it. Maybe the baker wouldn't even notice it was missing if she could put it back tonight.

All this effort for nothing! Angela got upset but not discouraged. At least she would take another plum jar instead. Then she started playing with the little box and running her fingers across the piece of wood. It was such a fine work. Then, she felt a protuberance on the left side of it, like a tiny mechanism or something. She looked closer for a more thorough inspection. It looked like a small button, but it was well hidden in the intricate model of the engravings on the box

that she could have missed it. She held her breath in anticipation and slowly pushed the tiny thing. To her utmost surprise, a secret compartment opened and there was a shining golden ring inside! It was in the shape of a snake. She took it out to have a closer look. It was dazzling! The most beautiful ring she had ever seen, not that she had seen many anyway but it was magnificent! There were two small rubies that stood for the snake's eyes that made it look almost alive. There was something strange about the ring. She wanted to try it on but she heard Rose mumbling in her sleep and she quickly stashed the ring in her pocket and the wooden box back in the bag. She would try the ring some other time and she would return the box and the money tonight. As for the ring, that was hers. That she wouldn't return. Not in a million years. Maybe the baker didn't even know about the ring. The more she thought about it, the more certain she was. So she could keep the beautiful jewel for herself. But she wouldn't be able to wear it out in the open or Miss Eveline would take it away from her as she knew that the orphanage kids were poor and didn't have anything that belonged to them. Least to say such an expensive piece of jewellery....

## Chapter 3

Angela put the box and the money back that night and it was just as she suspected, the baker hadn't even noticed it was missing. She took some more bread and jams and she was out. She decided to find a quiet spot, away from prying eyes, and put on the ring. And she knew the perfect place, her favorite hiding spot where she used to go when she wanted to be left alone and just relax: the small abandoned hunting cabin in the woods just outside town.

She had about two more hours before the orphanage doors would be closed for the night and before Miss Eveline would check that all the children were in their beds. So there was enough time to get to the cabin. She went down the same path as always but there was something in the air, it was as if the forest was more alive than usual. Then she remembered: the hunting season was open. Which meant something else, too: the hunting cabin might not be abandoned anymore, the king's hunting party might be using it during the hunting season. So she would have to be careful as she didn't want to give up on going there.

Angela had a small but sharp knife tied to her belt which she always carried for protection. She was seventeen years old and

she was a beautiful girl and she had had to use that in various occasions. Most of the times it had been enough to show that she could use it and that she was ready to use it in case she had to, without having to actually use it. But there had been a few times when she really had to use the knife to protect herself like the time she had met a gang of drunkards who intended to mess with her. And she wasn't to be messed with.

Angela was a skilled lock picker and she was skilled with her knife. She could also use a bow, although she was not very good at it. In her trips to the hunting cabin, she had found the knife and a bow and arrows which she trained in while roaming the forest.

The orphanage provided the children a scrappy breakfast, a poor lunch and an even worse meal for dinner. So after breakfast, all the kids in the orphanage who were older than 12 were free to go to town and work for people for a meal if they wanted more than what the orphanage provided. But not all kids preferred to work, some started to pickpocket people in busy and crowded areas of the town or steal cheap stuff which they later sold for a few dimes.

Angela too had to resort to stealing to survive and to try to improve her life. It wasn't something she was proud of but whenever she had tried to get a job, the men would only see her as a helpless wench from the orphanage whom they could have their way with so she eventually gave up on trying to get a

job and started stealing. Never much though, just enough to keep her going.

On the way to the cabin Angela wished she had her bow with her, too. She was afraid that if the king's hunting party had gone to the cabin they could have taken her bow. It was old, but it was working. Then again, maybe they didn't need that old piece of wood. As she approached the cabin, she could hear the hunters blowing in the horns for their dogs to get the prey. They were hunting deer and boars and blowing their horns and making quite a racket. At least the dogs were quiet, no dog was barking, they had been well trained.

She could see the cabin in the distance and she decided to advance carefully and check if there was anyone inside. She advanced slowly through the tall grass, making as little noise as possible. When she was only a few steps away from the cabin, she stepped right into a boar trap which caught her right foot. It was so unexpected that she let a loud cry of pain escape her throat. This only made her panic even more. As she was trying to escape the iron contraption, a large golden retriever started barking next to her as it had surely been drawn by her earlier yell of pain.

“Shhh, go away! Go back to your owner! “ but the dog wouldn't go away, to her utmost distress. The last thing she wanted was for the king's men to find her there. She would have to explain what she was doing there and why she wasn't at the orphanage where she belonged.

But it was too late. Three hunters accompanied by more dogs came to see why the first dog was barking in a frenzy. Her foot was bleeding but she was still trying to escape the mechanism when she finally realized there was no way to get loose, so she waited for the hunters to approach her, while she was already making up excuses in her head for her reason of being there.

The tallest and most handsome of the three approached her while the other two were standing and watching him, dumbfounded with the whole situation. He seemed to be in charge, as far as Angela could tell.

“Princess, leave the girl alone!”, he addressed the golden retriever whose name was obviously Princess. The dog immediately obeyed him and stood by his side, still curious about the girl caught in the trap.

“Don't move”, he then addressed Angela. “You will only worsen things if you keep wiggling, stand still and I will try to release you!”. He was speaking calmly but as someone who knew what he was talking about and had everything under control. For a moment, Angela forgot about the pain.

The hunter jerked the iron boar trap a few times until he could feel it give in.

“Need any help, your...?” one of the other two hunters spoke when the one helping Angela hushed him to be quiet.

## Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

