


CHAPTER 165

Ava: Margot's Secrets A soft knock on the door pulls me out of my hazy morning thoughts as I finish packing my small suitcase. Vanessa must be early to escort me back to the airport, That's not Vanessa. Selene's hackles rise, a low growl rumbling in her throat. Something's wrong. I freeze, my hand hovering over the zipper. "What is it?" Not sure. Her nose twitches. But it doesn't smell right. Uneasy, I debate ignoring the knock, pretending I'm not here. It's a stupid thought. Any wolf can scent me in here. I crack open the door, surprised to find Margot Mitchell standing there, her face pinched and pale. "Ava, thank the Moon." She pushes into the room without invitation, her eyes darting around as if searching for hidden threats. "We need to talk." "Margot, what-" My words come out in a shout over the audacity of her intrusion. "The vampire. He's here." She grips my shoulders, her fingers digging in. "You have to keep him safe. You have to be loyal. You can't break the code." "What secret? What vampire? What are you talking about?" Yanking out of her grip, I take a few steps back. "Why are you here?" "You have to keep the secret," she hisses, as loud footsteps come 1/6 105 Ava Margot's increts Aw thudding, like people are running. Don't sell your loyalty, defect. Only Renard's promise keeps us safe. Without it, we're all doomed. "What promi-" "If you tell them, we all dic, Ava. You don't want our lives on your hands, do you?" My bodyguards burst into the room, their faces hard and unreadable. In a dizzying burst of movement and noise, they seize Margot by the arms, yanking her away from me. She yelps, thrashing against their iron grip as they drag her out. I gape after them, my mind reeling. What the hell just happened? "Ava, I'm so sorry about that." Kellan's voice snaps me back to the present. He stands in the doorway, his brow furrowed with concern. "Margot is one of the housekeepers for the lodge. She was here for maid duties. We didn't expect her to rush up to your room. like this. If you hadn't shouted..." He pauses. "Well. She must have fallen through the cracks during the transition. We'll take care of it." "It's fine." The words feel hollow, even to my own ears. Margot's frantic warnings echo in my head, refusing to be dismissed. You can't spill the secret. You have to be loyal. I chew the inside of my cheek, unsure how to process any of this. Kellan watches me, clearly expecting more of a response. I scramble for something neutral to say. "Is there a vampire around here?" The question slips out before I can stop it. Kellan's eyes widen, his mouth falling open slightly. "A vampire? 216 i5 Ava Margot's society How would a vampire make it onto pack lands?" But then he stares at me, obviously remembering that it just happened a few days ago in Westwood. I glance at Selene, who meets my gaze with a knowing look. Despite the security breach at Westwood, there's still the over-reliance on their senses. The assumption is that they can find any random intruder. Even Kellan feels that way. We should stay, she suggests, her voice a soft whisper in my mind. Something's not right here. I nod subtly, trusting her instincts. "Actually, Kellan, I've changed my mind. I won't be going back today after all." His brows shoot up, surprise coloring his features. "Are you sure? I thought you were eager to get back to Lucas and the search for Lisa." "I am, but..." I trail off, not quite sure how to explain my sudden change of heart. "I just think I should stay a bit longer. See if I can find out

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anything else that might help us find her. Lucas has things in hand at Westwood. Maybe I'll see things you don't." Kellan looks like he wants to argue, his mouth opening and closing a few times. But then he simply nods, accepting my decision with a sigh. "Alright. I'll let Vanessa know." "Thanks." I offer him a small smile, grateful that he's not pushing the issue. "And thanks for handling... that." I wave a hand toward the door where Margot was dragged away. 17:37 3/6 "Of course. He hesitates, as if debating whether to say more, then shakes his head. "I'll be downstairs if you need anything." With that, he turns and walks out, leaving me alone with Selene and my racing thoughts. I sink down onto the bed, rubbing a hand over my face. Lucas isn't going to like this, Selene remarks, hopping up beside "I know I can already picture his reaction—the furrowed brow, the clenched jaw, the barely restrained frustration. "But something's going on here, Selene. We can't just leave. Margot was talking about vampires and Renard. There's definitely a link. As if Sister Miriam wasn't proof enough of his working with vampires—but she wasn't involved in the attack. "It might help us get to Lisa." Agreed. She nuzzles into my side, offering her silent support. We'll figure it out together. I stroke her fur absently, my mind still spinning with questions. What secret was Margot talking about? A secret alliance between vampires and wolves, obviously. Except that seems a little too simple. There has to be more to it But the more I think over her words and try to break them down, the more questions I have. Whatever the secret is, am I supposed to hide it from Lucas and the others? Or am I supposed to hide sampiric secrets from even the other Blackwood wolves? Nothing she said was clear enough. M's It feels like being handed a key, but being informed only of the city in which its lock resides. What the hell am I supposed to do with this information? A shiver runs through me as I recall the terror in her eyes, the desperate edge to her voice. Whatever it is, it's big enough to rattle a woman who's lived under Renard's rule for years. With a sigh, I pull out my phone and send Lucas a quick text, letting him know about my change of plans. His response is immediate and terse. [LUCAS: What do you mean you're staying?] [AVA: Something's come up. I can't explain over text. I promise I'll be careful.] [LUCAS: I don't like this. At all. Call me.] Then a half-second later, as if he realizes he's coming off a little too controlling: [LUCAS: Whenever it's convenient.] [AVA: I will. I'm at the alpha lodge. I'm still under guards. Kellan's here. Vanessa's on her way. I'm perfectly safe.] I set the phone aside, not waiting for his reply. He's probably just going to try to convince me to return, and my mind's too busy working. Thinking. Pondering. Margot's probably been taken into detention to be questioned, so I won't have access to Her anytime soon, and that's assuming anyone even allows me within a hundred feet of her. I need to take a different route. 17:37. 4/6 "Let's go hunt down this vampire" Selene, ever faithful, doesn't argue but points out a problem. You won't find much with those guards following your every step. True. But going out without them is impossible. Lucas will lose hist mind. Vanessa might work, Selene offers, "I don't know if Lucas will consider her a bodyguard." Her wolf is strong. Stronger than her mate's. "Really?" It is not uncommon. Interesting. I've never met a mated pair where the female wolf is stronger. You have, but they do not show that dynamic. "Really? Who?" Your mother. Comentario Ver todos Publica tu primer comentario! **WwW.nOveLwoRM.©om**