

CHAPTER THREE



“If I’d gotten Mahu’s call.” Diego sighed. “If only I’d picked up his message, I could have met him at the museum. We could have locked the lienzo in my dad’s office. None of this would have happened. You have to take it to the sheriff, Amy.”

“No! He’ll send me back to Virginia, and I’m not going.”

Diego gave her a puzzled look. She wouldn’t meet his gaze, refused to explain.

After a moment, his face cleared. “You’re Mahu’s twin. Mahu isn’t eighteen yet. You’re a minor. A high school kid—a runaway.”

“I’m not a runaway! I graduated from high school last spring, and I’ll be eighteen in five days. I came to Santa Fe to find my family, to find Mahu ...” Her voice trailed off. Despite the heater, she shivered violently. She tried to stop but shivered even more.

“Okay. Remember, I’m one of the good guys.” Diego reached in the back for a bundle and dropped it in her lap. “Mi mamá is taller than you are, so these are going to be too big. But, hey. Anything’s better than what you’re wearing now, right?”

Amy made a sound that was somewhere between a sob and a laugh. She clutched the bundle to her chest.

“There’s a sweatsuit, a coat, a pair of athletic shoes, and extra socks. I looked for mi madre’s boots, but she must have them with her.”

She wanted to thank him, but she was afraid she’d lose control if she spoke, descend into hysteria. All she could do was nod. She hoped he understood.

Diego opened the glove compartment and removed the plastic sleeve that held the car registration. He replaced the paper with the scrap of cloth.

When the lienzo was safely in the plastic, he slid it into his heavy leather jacket pocket and turned off the motor. The heater stopped, and when he got out, a quick blast of cold air rushed in.

“We’ll talk more inside the café.” The door closed, and he was gone.

At first, Amy sat in the dim vehicle, trying to comprehend where she was, who she was with, whose clothes were in her lap, and what had happened in the gallery. But it was no use. She was still completely disoriented, so she gave up.

She tugged on the sweatpants, shoved her feet into the two pairs of socks, and then slipped on the shoes. They would have been too big, but the extra socks helped. Replacing the blood-soaked sleep shirt with the clean sweatshirt was a relief beyond words. With a shudder that seemed to start somewhere around her heart and radiate out to her hands and feet, she shoved the sleep shirt under the seat.

The coat was green wool, a heavy car coat with deep pockets and a hood. Green and purple weren’t a combination she would have chosen, but Amy was grateful for the warmth. Scooping Mahu’s cell phone up off the floor, she dropped it into the coat’s pocket and got out.

Snow still fell, but not as hard as it had earlier. Amy held her face up to the gray sky, letting the cold, wet flakes melt on her

cheeks. They felt like tears, but they calmed her. Because the sky was crying, she didn't have to. Leaning down, she gathered handfuls of snow to scrub her face and matted hair. It wasn't a bath, but it helped. When she felt marginally cleaner, she pulled the hood over her wet hair and went into the café.

Diego waited on a bench near the door. When he saw her, he rose to his feet, tall and lanky. Under his leather jacket, his T-shirt was inside out. Dark stubble accentuated his jawline and upper lip. His glasses balanced on the bridge of his nose at a precarious angle, and his curls were so tangled Amy wouldn't have wanted to try to drag a comb through them.

"You look a lot better." He jabbed at his glasses and took her arm. "I got us a booth, and I ordered oatmeal. My mother always says oatmeal is good in emergencies."

Amy didn't want oatmeal, but she didn't tell him. What she said was, "I'll pay you back." It was a silly thing to say. She could never pay him back. Maybe for the oatmeal, but she could never pay him for believing her, for coming to get her, for not forcing her to go to the sheriff.

"Forget it." He slid into an empty booth already set with silverware rolled in paper napkins and brown plastic glasses of water.

Speechless and shaky, she sat across from him and reached for her glass. The water cleared her head, brought her out of the shock, at least a little bit. After a moment, she looked across the table. "What's this about, Diego? What is a lienzo?"

"A manuscript from the 1500s. Paper was scarce and didn't last, so the Spanish conquistadors wrote on linen or cotton." He took the plastic folder out of his pocket and carefully removed the scrap of cloth.

He spread it out gingerly, a frayed rectangle a little bigger than a three-by-five note card. Cramped handwriting in badly faded ink filled one side. Stylized stick figures covered the other.

"Pictures in a manuscript?"

“Not pictures. Pictographs. I’m almost afraid to say what I think this is.” Diego’s voice was so low she could hardly hear his words, but his body language shouted that he suddenly knew why this scrap of cloth was important enough to cause someone to follow Mahu and then attack him for it.

“What is it?”

“I’m no expert, so, I could be wrong.”

“You could be right too. What do you think it is?”

“Pictographs on one side, Spanish writing on the other. What if this is a Spanish *translation* of a pictograph panel?”

“I don’t get it. How can anyone translate art? Aren’t pictographs and petroglyphs just pictures of life as it was? Or markers where there’s water? How do you translate that?”

Diego looked up. “You’re saying what most people think. Many serious researchers, including my dad, believe the petroglyphs are stories written on stone—like the hieroglyphics in the Egyptian pyramids. If the two sides of this manuscript say the same thing, this lienzo would be like the Rosetta Stone. It could unlock the meaning of the stories in the rocks.”

“It’s really valuable then.”

“Yep.”

“I wish your dad were here and we could lock it up! Whoever followed Mahu and attacked him is still after it. He’s determined to get it.”

“You say that like you know for sure. Did someone follow you to the rest area?”

Amy was finally warm. She shrugged off the coat. “He called me on Mahu’s cell phone. He said he’d found Mahu and he would find me.”

“Mahu’s attacker called you on Mahu’s cell? He has the number?”

“That man’s number—” Amy pulled the phone from the coat pocket and turned it on. “Maybe it’s in the list of calls.”

The waitress, a tired-looking woman with gray hair, appeared

with their order, but Amy didn't look up. The phone was different from hers, but she found the recent calls. *Unavailable*. Frustrated, she tried calling it. Nothing happened.

"No good?"

She shook her head.

"It was worth a try. Have some oatmeal. It's not as good as what mi madré makes, but it's not bad."

Amy closed the phone and put it back in the coat pocket. She gazed at the gray oatmeal. Without tasting it, she knew she couldn't eat it. In fact, she didn't think she could ever eat again. Drink more water maybe. "I can't eat. I have to know how Mahu is."

"You have to eat," Diego said. "I know it doesn't look too good, but it's okay. Cover it with raisins and try it."

"No thank you, Grandmother." Picking up her water glass, she drained it.

"We've got enough problems without you passing out from low blood sugar."

"I told you I can't eat! I have to know how Mahu is."

"At least take a few bites." Diego put down his spoon. "While you eat, I'll call the hospital. Deal?"

Amy rolled her eyes. "Deal. But I'm not promising any number of bites."

"Whatever."

Covering the oatmeal with brown sugar, Amy watched Diego get out his cell. She poured milk while he searched for the hospital's number. She ate two bites and heard him say into the phone, "Has Mahu Sekatewa been admitted?"

Amy stared at Diego. *My last name is Sekatewa. Not Adams—Sekatewa*. A long name but it tiptoed through her mind, softer than Adams. Se-ka-te-wa. Seka-tewa. She stopped eating, held her breath. Still, the name whispered to her. Sekatewa. Kaya Sekatewa.

Diego frowned. "I know you can't tell me anything about his

condition, but surely you can tell me if he's there. I'm his brother!"

A young busboy carrying a plastic pitcher headed for their table. As the tired-looking teen refilled their glasses, Diego put down his phone. "Nada."

"They wouldn't tell you anything?"

Diego shook his head. "I thought if the hospital could tell me he was there, we'd at least know he's alive."

Amy watched the retreating figure of the busboy. "He's alive. He's hurt. I don't know how bad it is, but I know Mahu is alive."

She felt Diego studying her, but she refused to look at him. He didn't believe her. His silence told her that. When the silence was unbearable, she forced herself to look at him. "What?"

He shrugged. "Isn't it obvious? How do you know? Mental telepathy or something?"

"Not mental telepathy. I just know I'd feel it if Mahu died. All those years, Grandmother Adams told me he didn't exist, but I dreamed about him. Mahu and I have a bond I can't explain. But I'm sure if he died, I would know the instant it happened. Argue all you want. I'm not changing my mind."

Diego held up his hands in mock surrender. "I don't want to argue. I believe you. I don't know why, but I do."

"Okay, then. You have to go to the hospital and get in to see him. I can't go because of the sheriff, but you can."

Diego shook his head. "I have to find X."

"X?"

"The creep who did this."

Amy started to object, say that was the sheriff's job. But she knew what he would say if she brought up the sheriff. "It's not your fault."

Diego was eating again. Between bites, he said, "Maybe it is. Maybe it isn't. The point is I'm going to find the guy. Mahu saved my life once. I owe him."

She heard it and wondered, but there wasn't time for a story.

“You owe him support at the hospital, not some wild goose chase after a criminal.”

Diego gave her an exasperated look. “What could I do at the hospital? I doubt they’d even let me see him. Besides, I have a plan—a good one. While I was waiting for you to change clothes, I figured out where to start. But it’s a long drive, so you’d better eat while you can.”

Amy looked at the oatmeal, considered it, and pushed it away. “What are you talking about? Where are we going?”

“Old Oraibi. To see your grandfather. White Bear is a shaman. He might know what’s going on.”

Old Oraibi. Home. White Bear. Ikwa. Like her name, the words slid effortlessly through her mind. Except the words turned her internal world upside down and inside out.

Diego was still speaking, and she forced her attention back to him. “White Bear will want to see you, Amy. And you have to tell him what happened to Mahu.”

Suddenly nervous, she said, “I’ll call. Let him know we’re coming.”

Diego shook his head. “Old Oraibi is a very traditional place. No phones. Not even electricity. We have to go. Try to eat a little more. I’ll go pay.”

The oatmeal was cold, but she ate a little. *Ikwa.* The name made her feel safe. *Ikwa* will know what to do. A memory or a promise? Either way, the thought gave her courage. She slid out of the booth and headed for the door.

The snow had stopped, and as Amy and Diego climbed into the Jeep, the sun was a brilliant gold ball balanced on the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Something almost like hope whispered in Amy’s mind. Mahu was badly hurt, but he was alive. She was in more trouble than she’d ever imagined, but Diego was here to help. Neither of them knew what was going on, but they would ask White Bear, her grandfather—*Ikwa.*

Diego turned the key in the ignition and looked at her. “It’s

about an hour to Albuquerque and a couple more from there to Gallup. All interstate. Try to sleep.”

Amy let out a long breath and tried to release the sense of emergency. She leaned her head against the rest. She was safe, she was fed, she was clean. She was so tired.

As Diego backed out of the parking space and headed for the highway, she closed her eyes. For a few minutes, she drifted. Then as she began to sink toward sleep, the picture came—

Mahu on the floor, blood on his head and chest, blood on the floor, blood on her hands, on her sleep shirt.

She opened her eyes and sat up. Blacktop stretched ahead of them, a smooth ribbon of road flowing down a long hill that dropped from the mountains to the desert. But studying the vista spread out before her didn't help. The image still lingered, like a smear on a glass she struggled to see through. “I keep seeing him lying there,” she said.

“Think about something else.”

“Like what? Like that gruesome arrow?”

“No. Not that. Tell me how you met Mahu yesterday. When he and I were first getting to know each other, he told me he had a twin who was taken away by a strange grandmother when you were both little. Then a couple of weeks ago, he told me his twin would show up for their eighteenth birthday. But he didn't know how it was going to happen. How *did* it happen?”

“He knew I would be back?”

“Yep.”

Amy leaned her forehead against window's cool glass and forced her mind back twenty-four hours—not even twenty-four hours, only about fourteen. The music. The haunting line of notes from a red cedar flute that wasn't a song. Tiny bits of sound she somehow knew.

“I was crossing the plaza, heading back to the gallery after making the bank deposit. He was sitting under the portico at the Palace of the Governors playing his flute. He had a few jewelry

pieces spread out on a square of canvas, but all the shoppers had gone home. I stood and listened for a while. The music pulled me, so I walked over to him. He looked up, and when he saw me, he said, 'Kaya.'"

"*Sister.* He knew you as soon as he saw you. Did you know him?"

"It was so strange. I didn't know who he was, but when he said 'Kaya,' I said 'Mahu.' I didn't know who he was or why I said that name—it just came out of my mouth. Then he said, 'Twin. I knew our grandmother couldn't keep you forever.'"

"And you remembered what happened."

She shook her head. "Not then. I remembered that later. But I remembered *him*. Not the way he looks now, of course, but *him*." She paused with no idea how to explain.

"Like when someone comes into the room behind you and covers your eyes. You can't see them, but you know who it is."

Surprised, Amy turned and looked at Diego. "Exactly like that. How do you know?"

Diego grinned. "Mahu told me he thought it would be like that when you showed up. Of course, he remembered he had a twin, and he was expecting you sometime soon."

"Why did he think I'd be back for our birthday?"

"He said something about a prophecy White Bear taught him. He tried to explain it to me, but I was having a hard time with the idea of a twin sister, and I didn't listen as well as I should have. Moon Twins or ..."

Moon Twins. The shadow of a memory flitted across Amy's mind.

Diego was still talking. "... any idea what he meant?"

Amy reached for the shadow, but it vanished. She shook her head.

"Okay, then," Diego said. "The two long-lost twins recognized each other. Then what?"

Amy searched her mind for shadows. *Born for a destiny.*

“Hey, girl! You still here?”

Amy started. “What?”

“Did you and Mahu sit there and talk or what?”

Amy gave up on the shadow. “I had a million questions. I asked him to come to my room at the gallery. He told me about Taáta trying so hard to get me back ...” Her voice trailed off. After a moment she said, “Sorry. I can’t think.”

“Maybe you can sleep now.”

“Maybe.”

“I’ll sing to you. Close your eyes and think about little lambs jumping over a fence.”

Amy groaned. “It’ll never work.”

“Of course, it’ll work. Brahms’s lullaby always works. And before you object to my singing, I’ll have you know this tenor has been heard in some of the finest churches in Europe.”

Amy laughed.

“Don’t laugh! You’ll hurt my feelings. Besides, it’s true. The youth choir at my church went on tour my junior year of high school.” Reaching across the gear stick, he put his hand over her eyes and began to sing, “Lul-la-by and good-night ...”

Amy gave up. It was stupid. It would never work. But she was so tired. Diego’s voice faded. She drifted, not quite dreaming, remembering. The mesa was quiet. The rain had stopped, and in shallow puddles, tiny frogs croaked tiny frog songs. “Not lambs,” she murmured, “frogs.”