

SECRETS WE KEEP by Valeriya Goffe

EXCERPT

“But what about me? All of us?” Olena exclaimed, with her tears flowing down her cheeks. She pointed at the large photo, which was standing on Anna’s table, featuring the whole family gathered near their country house last summer. Everyone in the photo was laughing. Ivan was trying to hold both Lapa and Zirka up in his arms, and they were trying to wiggle their way out.

“You were the glue which kept all of us together. Are you just going to abandon everyone, chasing your dream around the world with some random guy? We want to be part of your life.”

“Mom, please don’t say that.” Anna embraced her mother, as tears appeared in her eyes as well. “We will find a way to all be together. I promise. I will make it happen. We do not need David for that.”

Olena smiled weakly. “Is that true?”

“Of course. We create our own destiny. We will be all together. Rich or poor—that I don’t know—but we will be together. Dad eating his favorite sandwich, Lapa and Zirka stealing food, you and Aunt Motria bickering about poor marriage prospects for Sveta and me... And you know what, we will even expand our family. I will make sure we find our long-lost African relatives. We will finally learn where Grandpa came from.”

Olena’s eyes filled up with tears again. Anna brought up the most sore subject of all for her mother.