

Via was walking through the woods, when she heard a rustle behind her and to her right. She turned in a circle but saw nothing. She started forward, and promptly tripped on something embedded in the ground. She scrambled to her knees and grabbed a stick as she stood. Via whirled around, her caramel colored waves flying into her face as she brandished the stick at the bush. She edged forward and poked the stick into the bush, drawing the branches apart. Via leaned over the brush and saw her younger sister, Opal, laying on the ground in the bush. Her long blonde waves were pooled on the ground beneath her.

“Ow!” her sister exclaimed. Via crossed her arms. “You poked me,” Opal whined.

“Serves you right.” Via replied. “You were following me.” Opal sat up. “I wanted to see where you were going,”

Via rolled her eyes. “I was going on a walk. In the woods. Like I said I was going to do.” Opal jumped up. Peering nosily behind Via, she asked,

“What'd you trip on anyway?” Via and Opal walked a few paces and stared at the ground. Half lodged in the ground, something gold glittered where Via's shoe had smacked into it. Opal crouched down and picked it up.

“It's... A key!” Via peered curiously at the dirt smeared key. She plucked it out of Opal's hands, ignoring her sister's outraged expression. She spun it around in her fingers and noticed a raised design on both sides. “What's that?” Opal asked.

“I don't know,” Via replied.

“Isn't that the library statue? It looks the same.” Opal asked.

“Maybe,” Via replied. “Mom said we're going downtown tomorrow. We can probably swing by the library to check”.



The next day, Via, Opal and their mother headed downtown to go exploring. They had recently moved to Stillwater, Minnesota, and hadn't had a chance to look around, except going to a few stores. Some of their boxes had fallen out of the moving truck due to faulty locking. Their mother, Octavia, had taken pity on the distraught driver and forgiven her. So now here they were.

“Mom, can we go to the library?” Via asked after they'd seen everything. “There's a book I've just been *dying* to read.” Their mom bobbed her head in time to the music playing on the radio. “Sure we can, sweetie.”

Opal groaned. “The *library*?” Via poked her in the ribs.

“We’re looking at the statue, idiot.” she hissed at her sister.

“Mom! Via called me an idiot!”

“Olivia,” Her mom said warningly. Luckily for Via, they were already there. They got out of the car, and Via and Opal headed up the grassy slope to inspect the statue. There were two statues, one of a seated lion, the other of a fox laying down, reading. The same two faces that were on the key. Their mother followed them and they headed inside. Via found a book titled *Famous Keys, Locks and Hidden Rooms*, and checked it out.

Later that night, she was laying in bed, reading, when she came to a page that said something about architectural blueprints. She was about to skip over the page, but she stopped cold when she saw the name of the library. *A secret room*. That was it. That was the secret. She read the entire book that night. She had an extra necklace chain, so she put the key on that.

The following morning, she headed downstairs for breakfast. She wore dark gray capris, and a cornflower blue shirt, two of her favorite colors. Their mom was busy at work, as was their dad, so Via made herself breakfast. She put two pancakes on plates and put them into the microwave. One for her, one for Opal. Opal came down the stairs a few minutes later. She was wearing flowy lavender shorts and a closely fitted white tank top. A wise choice for the midsummer heat.

Via slid the book across the table to her.

“Pancake in the microwave.” Opal grabbed her pancake then looked at the page.

“A secret room?” Opal asked. Via nodded. She pulled out her phone and texted her mom. **Can me and opal go to the library?** Her mom texted back. **Sure, just be back by 12.** Opal and Via went to the garage to get their bikes, then headed to the library. They went inside and Via went up to the librarian. She was probably in her late twenties, wearing a flowy loose white shirt, and black leggings, with brown hair.

“Hi, I was wondering if me and my sister could look at a blueprint of the library?” Via asked the librarian sweetly.

“Sure, I’ll have to go grab one from the back. One moment,” the librarian, Laurel, replied. She headed through the door into the library office, and came out a few moments later with a blueprint. Laurel rolled it out on the table and Via peered at it. “Have you been in all of these rooms?” Via asked her. The librarian smiled. “Most of them I’ve been in. Except for... this one.” She pointed out a room on the blueprint. “Why do you ask?”

“Oh, just curious I guess. Do you mind if I take a photo?” Via replied. The librarian gave her an odd look, then nodded.

“She’s weird.” Opal told her. As they were about to leave, Opal noticed something.

“What’s on your necklace?” Opal asked Laurel in a seemingly innocent way.

“Oh, a few years back there was some crazy whispering of secret rooms in the library, and I thought it was cool, so I got a copy of the rumored key. But you must know that since you have one too.” Via looked down at the key.

“I didn’t know that. I actually just found it. But that’s cool. Thanks for telling us.” Via and Opal headed up the hallway and looked at the photo of the blueprint.

“Up here, in the...” She looked up at the sign. Historical accounts. A perfect place to hide a secret room. They headed in and looked for anything about foxes, lions, statues, or secret rooms. They had been browsing for probably half an hour when Opal cried out.

“I found something!” Via rushed over and looked at what Opal was looking at. The spine of the thin maroon book said in gold lettering: ***The Complete History of Lions, Foxes and Statues.*** Via brushed her fingers over the spine, in a reverent sort of way. Her fingers touched a small black drawing of a keyhole, and she realized it was 3-D. Exactly what they'd been looking for. She tried to pull it off the shelf, but it wouldn't budge. She took the key in her fingers, and slowly slid the key into the hole. She turned it. And it clicked. Part of the shelf slid out of the wall about an inch, and Opal and Via pulled it open. So there the two sisters stood, gazing down the wooden staircase... at the secret room they had just found.