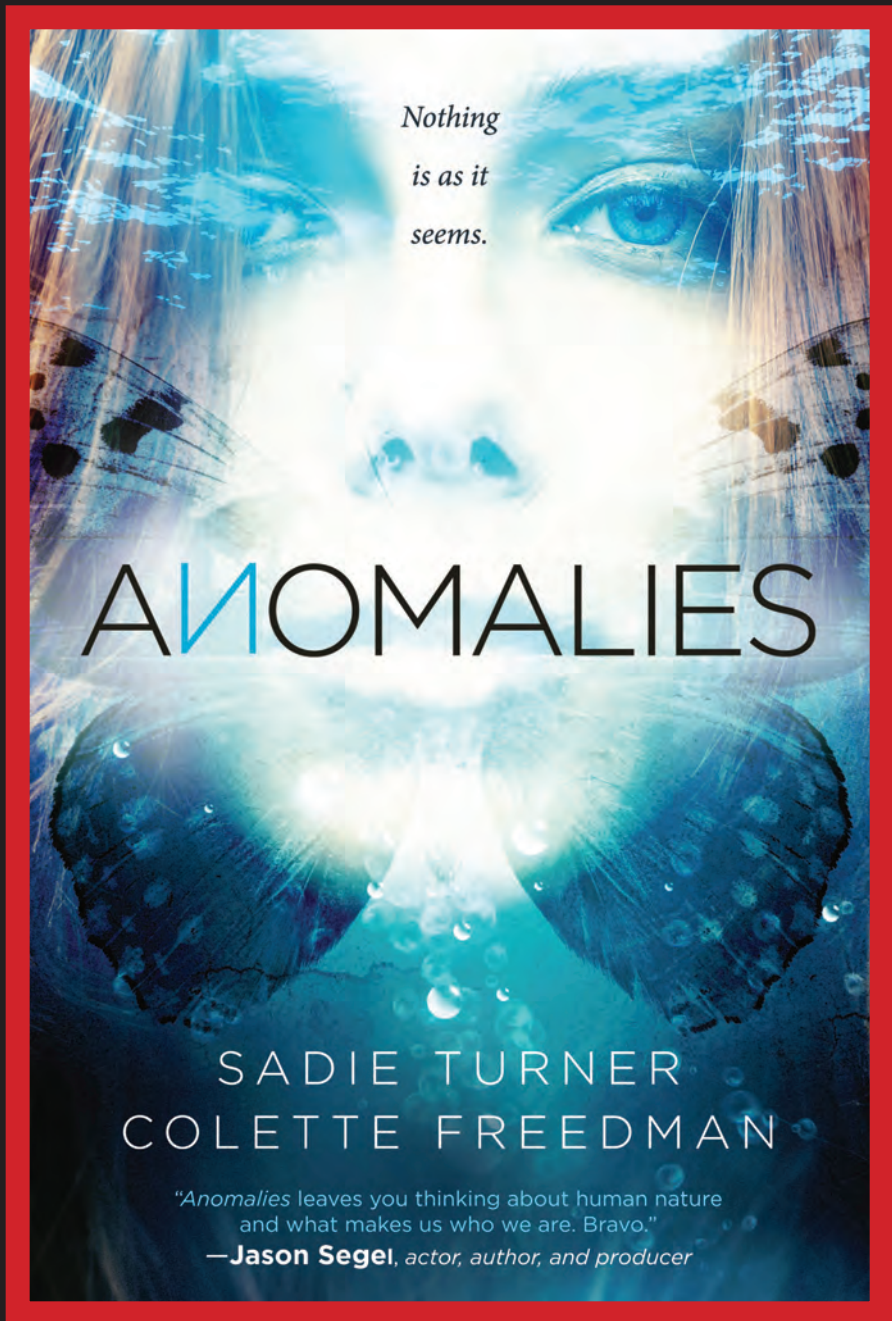


A SelectBooks reading sampler



Advance Praise for *Anomalies*

“This book makes spirituality exciting and vibrant. I predict it will be so successful that we’ll all have to learn how to pronounce ‘anomaly’ correctly.”

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In the future there is no disease. There is no war. There is no discontent. All citizens are complacent members of the Global Governance. But one summer is about to change everything.

Keeva Tee just turned fifteen. All of her dreams are about to come true. She's about to make the trip to Monarch Camp to be imprinted with her intended life partner. One day they'll have perfect kids and a perfect life. But in her happy, carefree life in the Ocean Community, something weighs on her mind. She hears whispers about "anomalies"—citizens who can't be imprinted. No one knows what happens to them, but they never seem to come back.

As the truth slowly becomes clear, Keeva realizes that her reality is a living nightmare. In order to survive, she must be prepared to rely on an inner strength that she never knew she had. If she fails, everyone and everything she ever cared about is doomed.

Anomalies is available now wherever books or ebooks are sold!

A SelectBooks Reading Sampler
The Prologue and Chapter 19 of

Anomalies

Anomalies

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This edition published by SelectBooks, Inc.

For information address SelectBooks, Inc., New York, New York.

First Edition

ISBN 978-1-59079-361-9

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Turner, Sadie, 1973- | Freedman, Colette.

Title: Anomalies / Sadie Turner and Colette Freedman.

Description: First edition. | New York : SelectBooks, Inc., [2016] |

Summary:

In the future where no disease, war, or discontent exists, and all citizens are complacent members of the Global Governance, fifteen-year-old

Keeva discovers that nonconformity will be punished, dissent is not an option, and insurgents will be destroyed.

Identifiers: LCCN 2015023368 | ISBN 9781590793619 (pbk. book : alk. paper)

Subjects: | CYAC: Science fiction. | Identity--Fiction. |

Conformity--Fiction. | Individuality--Fiction. | Government, Resistance to--Fiction.

Classification: LCC PZ7.1.T92 An 2016 | DDC [Fic]--dc23 LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2015023368>

Book design by Janice Benight

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

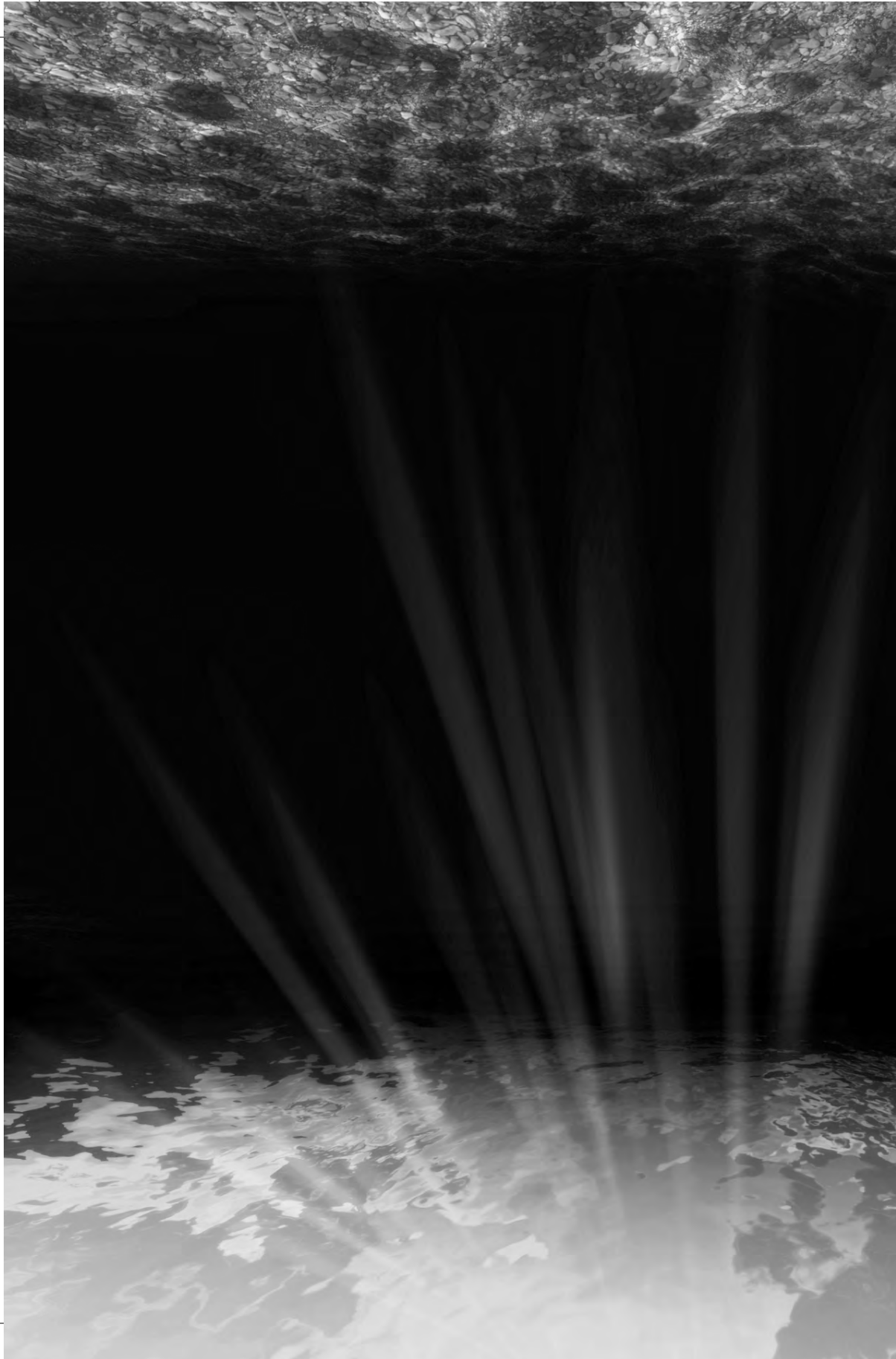
Anomalies

The Rise of the Underground



Sadie Turner and Colette Freedman

SelectBooks, Inc.
New York



*This is for anyone who feels different.
Who knows something isn't quite right.
This is for everyone who refuses to conform
and needs to Scream it. Shout it.
Shake it up. Twist it. Bend it, and shift the perspective.
This is for those of you who skip when others are walking
and who dive in while others are floating.
For those that have the courage to be true to themselves
no matter what.

This is for the exceptional.*

Nothing is as it seems.

Prologue

The screams pierce through the early morning ocean air. I don't know if they belong to the baby or my mother, I just know that I have to get home. Immediately. I knew something was wrong the moment I got up that morning. I had one of my feelings. I shudder as I rub salty water away from my eyes. Mother isn't scheduled to deliver my sister for several hours. I thought I would have time to get in an early swim.

I thought wrong.

The wails are deafening as I get out of the water and race up the shore. As I push open the wooden door of our home, the first thing I see is my mother. She is lying on a bed in a pool of blood. A stranger dressed in white with a large turban is closing her eyes. What is happening?

"Mother!" I scream, my six-year-old voice shaking with fear and sadness.

The stranger tries to hold me, but I pull away. My mother is dead. Her blond curls are matted around her head, giving her a disturbing angelic look. A tiny baby lies quietly on the bed next to her. My father, my rock, is broken on the floor next to my mother's corpse. He is sobbing.

"Mother," my voice cracks. My life is over.

"You must listen to your heart, Keeva," the turbaned stranger warns, lowering his accented voice and forcing me to come closer to hear him.

"How do you know my name?"

He doesn't answer. Instead, he picks up the infant and slips into the back room.

Moments later, there is a knock at the half-opened door. Two officials enter. They are dressed from head to toe in black, the uniform of the Global Governance. Protectors. Sobek Vesely's men.

"A citizen has been born," the shorter man says. It is a statement rather than a question.

"She's dead," I immediately say, unsure why I am lying. I know my responsibility as a citizen is to confirm the baby's birth to these government officials so that they can record her in the census. Officials are always present at a child's birth. It is the law. Their job is to insert a small crystallized dot, called a Third, containing data for the encrypted codes of our Global Governance, between the baby's tiny eyebrows.

A strong instinct is begging me to justify the lie. "Please, just let us grieve," I implore, nodding to my wailing father.

The men respectfully bow and leave, recording on their data tablets what has transpired. They have no reason to suspect I am lying. Citizens of the Global Governance don't lie. It is not in our nature. There is no reason for me to lie.

The turbaned man emerges from the back room. He hands me my baby sister. Her fingers are so tiny. So delicate. Her eyes are so bright. She looks just like my mother.

For months, my mother and I had been talking about names for the baby. Now, my mother is dead. I digest the terrible reality and begin to cry. The stranger gently takes the baby from me, “You have sad eyes, Keeva. Sad eyes which will allow you to both observe the world and the truths within yourself.”

I am in shock. I cannot digest what he is saying. I want my mother. I want my sister. I want everything to be fine and it never will be again.

“Everything will be fine,” the stranger says kindly as if he can read my thoughts. “I am Harijiwan. I promise to protect her until you are ready. Be strong, Keeva.” He swathes the baby in white, as if she is part of his costume, and heads toward the door.

“Her name is Sun,” I call out before turning to comfort my distraught father.





I am awakened.

The first thing I want to do with my newfound knowledge is to get out.

I need to get to the elevator. I need to get above ground. I think I know where to start searching for my sister, so I can no longer commit my time to the Underground. I have to find Sun. But Taj made it very clear that once I am deprogrammed, I am supposed to stay in the Labyrinth and train before I can return above ground. I am not supposed to leave. I need to be indoctrinated to the revolutionary mindset before my reentry, and what Taj says is law down here.

It makes me wonder if I'm just trading in one dictator for another.

Still, I try to make a run for it. Once I wake up after the deprogramming, I pretend to sleep as the Ilex sisters chatter endlessly, discussing minutiae with their singsong rhymes before they finally decide to go to dinner. Once I am alone, I creep out of the tent and head toward the elevator. The main thoroughfare through the Labyrinth is empty: the revolutionaries are all at the dining tent. I make a beeline to the elevator, determined to leave. I wish I could say goodbye to Kai, but I need to find my sister. I arrive at the base of the elevator and realize that one needs a code to enter.

To get in. To go up. To get out.

There are number and letters on the holo keypad. I have no idea what to push. Frustrated, I tap several buttons, but nothing happens.

"You need a code," a small voice informs me.

I spin around. Zilli is standing just beside me.

"How did you . . . what are you doing here?" I sputter.

"I followed you," she says simply, "from the tent."

"Why?"

"Because you are going to save humanity."

"Listen, Zilli. I really wish you'd stop saying that. I have to go somewhere."

"Where?"

"Somewhere."

"You can't go." Zilli starts to pout.

"I have to."

"That's not the plan."

"The plan's changed." I am losing my patience. "What's the code?"

"I'm not telling you." Zilli crosses her arms in front of her.

"Zilli, please. I have to find my sister. She's like you. She needs to find her family."

"This is my family," Zilli says stubbornly, "and you are supposed to help us."

"I can't, I have to go."

"But I don't want you to go."

I've never argued with a child before. There's no logic behind their reasoning. I crouch down to her level, "Listen, Zilli. It's very important that I go. I promise that I'll come back and I'll bring you someone to play with. Someone close to your age."

“How do I know you’ll come back?” Zilli pouts.

She has a point. I don’t know myself that I’ll want to come back. I can’t enter the elevator without her help and she is too young to reason with. I remember Rane’s constant fights with her baby brother. The only way she could get what she wanted was to bribe him. I have nothing to give, except . . .

“Zilli, what if I give you something very special. Something that is so important to me that I will want to come back for it.” I look at my wrist. The bandanna my father gave me is still wrapped around it. It gives me both strength and a tangible memory of him. I untie it and wrap it around her tiny wrist.

“This is a present from my father. It is the most precious thing I own. Will you hold onto it until I get back?”

Zilli nods. She is thrilled with her new present, although still reluctant to let me leave.

“Do you know the code to get into the elevator?”

She nods.

“Can you please tell it to me?” I am trying very hard to be patient.

“OK,” she finally says. “The code is PROTECTORS333.” Zilli turns to leave.

“Thank you,” I call behind her and punch in the letters and numbers. As I tap the last number three, I expect the door to hiss open. Instead, a loud wail emits from the elevator. An alarm. I’ve been fooled by an eight-year-old. I stand, hands in the air, as the first people on the scene approach, weapons raised.

And deliver me back to Taj’s tent.



“I must say, Keeva, I’ve never had someone try to escape from the Labyrinth. You are the first.”

“I want to go up,” I say. Even though Taj has offered me a seat, I stand.

“I appreciate your spirit,” Taj chuckles. “Sometimes what we think we are looking for, isn’t what we are looking for at all.”

“What does that mean? Why do you talk in so many riddles?”

“Because humans have gotten intellectually lazy. You expect the answers given to you instead of working for them.” She sighs, “It’s why it was so easy for my brother to take over. He specializes in instant gratification.”

“I just want to go.” Now I feel like a petulant child.

Taj walks over to the large bookshelf and pulls out an ancient leather bound book. “Have you ever read this?”

I can’t help myself as I grab the book from her. I’ve wanted to touch a real book my entire life. I inhale the musky scent and greedily touch every inch of the leather binding. I turn the pages, touching the smooth paper, thrilled to see the printed words neatly typed across the pages. It is *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu.

“No.”

Gù yuē: Zhī bǐ zhījǐ, bǐizhànbùdài; bùzhī bǐ ér zhījǐ,
yī shèngyī fù; bùzhī bǐ, bù zhījǐ, měi zhàn bì dài.

“I have no idea what you just said.”

“It’s the ancient language of the Asias,” Taj says. “*It is said that if you know your enemies and know yourself, you*

can win a hundred battles without a single loss. If you only know yourself, but not your opponent, you may win or may lose. If you know neither yourself nor your enemy, you will always endanger yourself."

"So, you're saying I don't know myself."

"Not yet. You will."

"How?" I demand. I am so frustrated. I feel like I've spent my entire lifetime trying to figure out who I am and I'm not anywhere closer than when I started.

"Trust yourself. Trust your instincts," Taj says as she unhinges her octopus bracelet and puts it on my newly bare wrist. Suddenly, tiny eight legs shoot out of the octopus's body. The legs seem to have a life of their own as they mechanically wind up my arm before locking shut. It is as if I am wearing a piece of medieval armor.

"Whoa. How did they do that?" I say, looking at the eight legs, which now cover my forearm. "When you wore the bracelet, the octopus's legs were curled around the metal cuff. Now they're extended onto my arm."

Taj grabs a stick and calligraphies a word into the sand.

"C-E-L-P-H?" I say, spelling the word slowly. "What does that mean?"

"This Celph is an ancient artifact from Babylonia. It is a talisman with unique powers which only its wearer can unlock."

"Is it magic?" I wonder, trying to manipulate the bracelet; yet it stays fast.

"Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic. Arthur C. Clarke said that, and he's right. From my multimillennium of lifetimes, I can testify to that."

"You said it's an ancient artifact. So, how can it be advanced technology?"

"Indeed." Taj smiles but elucidates no further. Another riddle.

I touch the cool metal, entranced by its beauty. "Why are you giving it to me?"

"Why did you give your father's bandanna to Zilli?"

"So she would trust me."

"Exactly." Taj smiles, "Your instincts are strong, they just need to be honed. You think you're a guppy, but you are really an octopus . . . one of the smartest warriors on this planet and a defender of the sea. Like their arms, they are not limited to a couple of strategies; they have eight ways to defend themselves against their predators. Octopi can do everything to defeat their enemies, from offensively squirting ink to defensively camouflaging themselves to hide. Like you, they are fast swimmers. Take the artifact, Keeva. It will help you when things look most bleak."

"How will it help me?" I am entranced by this stunning piece of jewelry.

"It has powers which can only be unlocked when you truly know yourself."

"Then I'll never unlock it," I mutter.

"You need to start believing in yourself, Keeva. You have two options . . . you can be a great leader, or you can disappear. If you choose to embrace your greatness, this bracelet will help. It allows the wearer to access bits of unused DNA . . . giving access to extra memory, unrivaled speed, ultra-strength. You name it."

"How will I know when it starts to work?" I ask.

“You’ll know. The Celph will show you.” She walks to the tent entrance and opens the flap, suggesting that our conversation is over. “Spend a couple of weeks down here, Keeva. Watch. Listen. Learn.”

“Do I have a choice?”

“No.” Taj smiles as she ushers me out.

I have to give her credit. At least she didn’t sugarcoat it.



CALIX SULKED IN HIS ROOM. It was another Saturday night and he was stuck in his father's penthouse.

Calix's misery was interrupted by a buzzing at the door. He entered the main room just in time to his father opening the door for his four best friends.

"This is so awesome," Calix's best friend Rao said, looking around as he entered.

"Wait. What are you doing here?" Calix asked, as Rao was followed by Byron, August, and Emmet.

"What are they doing here?" Calix demanded as Sobek graciously ushered the boys in.

"I know I've been hard on you, Son. So, I thought I'd organize a little surprise sleepover. Something spontaneous and fun for you."

"A surprise sleepover?" Calix felt himself parroting the words back to his father. Something was wrong. Something was very wrong. Sobek didn't have a spontaneous bone in his body. Everything he did was calculated.

"Don't look so surprised." Sobek uncharacteristically put his arm around his son, leading him to the couch where his friends had already settled themselves. "It's time for you to relax a little. Let go."

Calix was shocked. His father hadn't let him hang out with his friends since he had returned from camp. In fact, Calix couldn't remember a time when his friends had been invited up to his father's penthouse . . . to his father's lair. Calix's best friends always visited him at his mother's

apartment, which was warm and inviting. While many of them had asked about Sobek's penthouse, none had dared to visit. And now Sobek had invited them for a sleepover. "Seriously?"

"Absolutely. I have access to a few new vids they might enjoy, including the new Sickled Blade trilogy."

"Epic!" Rao and Byron high-fived.

"It's my pleasure, boys." Sobek smiled. He had come up with a surefire plan to ensure that his son would join him.

Even if it meant possibly killing a few of his friends to convince him.

Sobek had spared no expense to make Calix's friends comfortable. He brought in big black leather couches, which the boys sunk into, ready to watch the promised double feature. The ever-present Rika diligently handed the four boys big bowls of popcorn and large thirst quenchers as they settled in for the evening. They would be the first of their friends to see it, as the vid hadn't yet been released to the public. But World Leader Sobek had access to all the pre-release vids being made in West America.

Calix dug his hand into a large bowl and settled in to watch the coming attractions. The last few days had been a disturbing blur, and his friends brought him an admitted sense of normalcy. Rao, August, Byron, and Emmett were sprawled out in front of the projection. The teens were Calix's closest friends. They had all grown up together in Sabbatical City; they played holo tag together and were in the same class in secondary school. Byron and Calix had acted in theater together. Emmett and Calix had been on the debate team together. August and Calix had run on the track team together. And Rao was Calix's best friend, his

closest confidante. Calix had known them since they all went to Monarch Camp when they were five years old.

The boys were thrilled to watch the horror vid. Each was on the brink of manhood and would soon be leaving his Community. This would be one of their last bonding experiences before real life took over. Shy Rao, a science prodigy, had been matched with a girl in the Academic Community and would be moving to East America, where he would apprentice in a physics laboratory. Brawny August and talkative Byron had both been matched with girls from Ocean Community and would be moving west. August would apprentice at the Desalination Plant and Byron would apprentice in the fishery. Only Emmett and Calix would be staying in Sabbatical City. Emmett had been matched with a local girl and would work in the family business distributing Thirds, and Calix, the only Protector in the group, had to stay put to fulfill his destiny. Both Emmett and Calix would follow their fathers' footsteps. Calix shuddered; only he knew that his father's footsteps were made of a shimmery metallic from an alien planet.

"How are you enjoying the vid?" Sobek's booming voice echoed throughout the room. No one heard him enter, they had all been too engrossed in the climactic first murder in which a teenager's belly was sliced open by a masked man wielding a sickled blade.

"Excellent, sir," Byron stumbled as he tried to stand up. "This is some sick stuff."

The other boys nodded in unison. Although Calix still hadn't forgiven his father for his lessons at Monarch Camp, he was grateful for the time with his friends, which Sobek

had orchestrated. He chimed in, "It's really cool, Father. Thanks."

"Of course, Son. I may be the world leader, but I still like to think of myself as cool." Sobek smiled at the boys. "Now, relax and enjoy. Prepare to be scared beyond your wildest imaginations."

"Awesome!" the boys screamed in unison before turning their attention back to the screen.

"Calix, may I see you for a moment?"

"But Father," Calix protested, "It already started."

Sobek didn't respond, rather, he turned and went into his inner office. Calix groaned and got up from his seat next to Rao. He had no choice but to obey.

"What do you want, Father?" Calix stood in the door-jamb craning to watch the vid. On the screen, the masked man was sharpening his blade. The surround sound made each scrape of the knife sound like nails scraping across a chalkboard. It sent shivers through his body. Calix glared at Sobek, repeating his question. "What do you want, Father?"

"To continue your education, Son," Sobek said. "In fifty seconds, I am going to need you to close your eyes."

"Huh? Can't we do it later, I don't want to miss the vid."

"Don't be ridiculous. It is a silly pretense. Actors pretending to be students on a camping trip, systematically and brutally murdered one by one. It is just make-believe. The blond actor is really the killer."

"Did you just ruin it for me?" Calix was furious.

"It is not about a contrived story, Calix. It is about your ability to drink auras. I need you to start practicing."

"On my friends? No way. I'm not letting them turn out like Sarayu," Calix said defiantly.

"And they don't have to . . . if you can control yourself and only take what you need. Just steal a little bit. They won't feel a thing."

"No." Calix stood his ground. His father was a sick man.

"It is not a request, Son." Sobek glared.

"I am not going to practice on my friends," Calix insisted.

"Not all, just one. Pick one friend."

Calix was stunned. He thought his father's gesture of inviting the guys over was a kind one. He should have known better; his father was never kind. He was a cold-hearted monster, and Calix would never be rid of him. He wanted to run, to escape, to get as far away from his father as possible; yet he also knew it was far easier to obey him than to refuse him. The last time he'd resisted his father's request, he found himself hanging from a ceiling with butterflies dancing in front of his eyes. But he could not choose one of his friends to hurt. He simply would not do it. He would fake it. How hard could it be to pretend? Calix smiled at his father and nodded compliantly.

"Good, Son. Now, close your eyes and breathe. Feel the energy of the room around you."

Calix smiled. He would focus on his father, not his friends. If Sobek wanted someone's aura siphoned, he was fair game as well. "Now what? My eyes are shut."

Sobek looked at the screen in the other room. The first student had wandered into the forest, seconds away from getting killed. He could smell the terror of Calix's friends. Rao was a bit nonchalant, but the other three were lapping it up. Emmett was the most absorbed in the picture. He had stopped eating popcorn, and both his eyes and mouth were wide open, as if transfixed in fear. Sobek grinned; this

would be an easy choice. Calix could pick the low-hanging fruit, starting off with the easiest of the four and picking them off one by one. Emmett's fear was so strong it was palpable. It would be so simple, a child Lien could do it. Sobek could see the boy's aura—he could almost taste it, even from the other room. He only hoped his son's senses were strong enough to detect the same.

"What do you feel?" Sobek whispered.

"Nothing. I mean . . . wait." Calix paused, eyes closed, and breathed in. He tried to focus all of his attention on his father, although he could feel something in the other room. It was muted at first, but then it grew in intensity. As another victim was killed on the screen . . . the sound of the serrated knife brutally cutting him apart, Calix sensed the fear in the room. It flushed over him like a wave, empowering him with a newfound strength. Calix tried to ignore it, but it was hard to control his feelings. He answered his father honestly, "I feel . . . I feel . . . electricity, like my fingers are buzzing."

"Good, Son. Good," Sobek encouraged. "Now, keep your eyes closed and continue to focus."

Again, Calix tried to concentrate on his father and breathe in Sobek's aura, which was right next to him. But he couldn't sense anything. Sobek didn't give off any emotion, and if he did, it was way too nuanced for Calix to feel. Instead, he continued to feel the lure of the terror from the other room. Calix could sense his friends' energies and almost read them. Rao's energy was amused. He was mocking the film, clinically wondering how it was anatomically possible to slice open a gut and pull out entrails. Byron and August were scared, terrified even . . . but it was

Emmett who was completely petrified. His whole body was quivering. Without opening his eyes, Calix could taste his friend's terror.

"What do you feel, Son?"

"Power," Calix whispered. His hands were shaking. Even from the next room, he could sense the aura. It was exhilarating.

"Good. Now, you are going to harness that power."

"How?" Calix's whole body felt alive as if something had been awakened in him. He tried to fight it, but it was too strong.

"Go sit down next to your friends."

"Please, Father. I can't," Calix said weakly, but even as he was protesting, he felt himself drawn into the other room. Shaking, Calix sat on the couch next to Emmett.

And he breathed in.

About the Authors



Photo by Savannah Bloch

SADIE TURNER is a Los Angeles-based producer and writer originally from Brighton, England, who works in business development with several Hollywood entrepreneurs. She has various projects in development and also teaches yoga.

COLETTE FREEDMAN is an internationally produced playwright, screenwriter, director, and novelist who was recently named one of the Dramatist Guild's "50 to Watch." In collaboration with *The New York Times* best-selling author Michael Scott, she wrote the thriller *The Thirteen Hallows*. Her critically acclaimed novel *The Affair* was published in January 2013, and the sequel *The Consequences* was published in February 2014. Colette's play version of the book earned great acclaim as it toured Italy from February through May 2013.

She has authored over twenty-five produced plays including *Sister Cities*, which was the hit of the Edinburgh Fringe and earned five-star reviews. It has been performed around the United States

and internationally, including Paris (*Une Ville, Une Soeur*) and Rome (*Le Quattro Sorelle*). She wrote the screenplay that is currently in preproduction starring Jacki Weaver, Alfred Molina, Tom Everett Scott, Stana Katic, and Troian Bellisario. Her musical *Serial Killer Barbie* premiered at NoHo Arts Center in Los Angeles in November 2014 and opened in New Zealand in September 2015.

Colette has been commissioned to write several screenplays including an adaptation of the best-selling novel, *The Last Girls*, a modern adaptation of *Uncle Vanya* and the thriller, *Mystery of Casa Matusita*, starring Malcolm McDowell. She has co-written, with international best-selling novelist Jackie Collins, the play *Jackie Collins' Hollywood Lies*, which begins its regional tour in 2017.

As a director, Colette has won over sixty awards for her commercial work, including the International Summit Award, Telly, and Communicator Awards. She was also first place winner in Creative Writing at the Santa Barbara Writer's Conference. She just co-produced her first film, *Quality Problems*, starring Jack McGee, Jenica Bergere, Brooke Purdy, and Doug Purdy.

For more information, please visit
www.colettefreedman.com

