TICKETS FOR MURDER

Other books by Niyla Farook
Murder for Two

TICKETS FOR MURDER

NIYLA FAROOK



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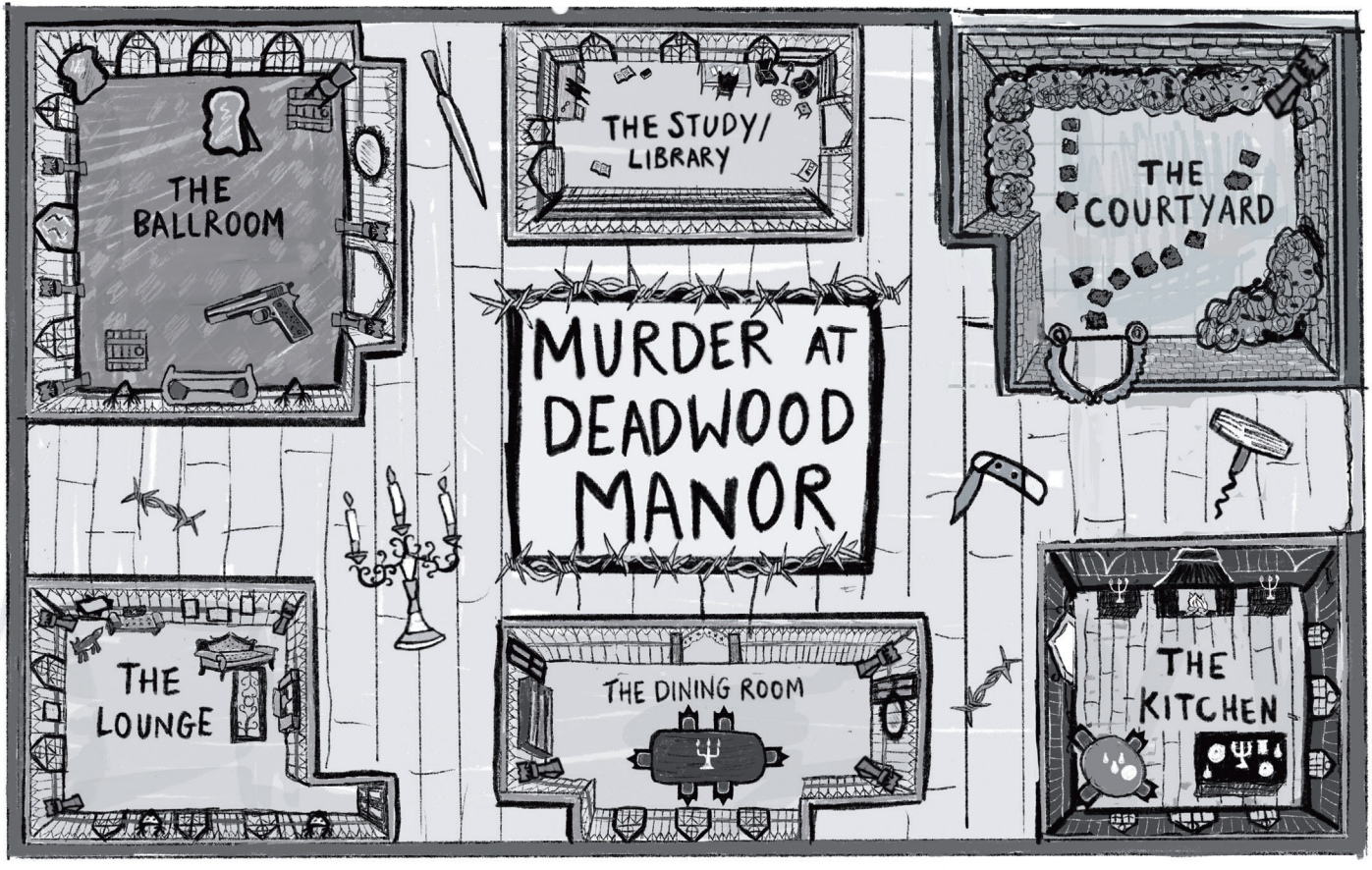
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For my sister and brother,
for all the support and laughs.


DEADWOOD MANOR PARK
DEADWOOD MANOR
CAFE CORNER
WILDFLOWER WAY
PICNIC PART
THE BANDSTAND
WATCH TOWER
FOLLY
MAZE
TICKETS
TO THE CARPARK
ENTRANCE AND TICKET BOOTH
PLAY PLACE


THE BALLROOM
THE STUDY/ LIBRARY
THE COURTYARD
MURDER AT DEADWOOD MANOR
THE LOUNGE
THE DINING ROOM
THE KITCHEN

DIRECTOR TARIQ'S OFFICIAL STATEMENT

Location: On a plane, California-bound.

This is an official request for indefinite leave from **Director Ani Tariq of the Tariq Ultrasecret Supersleuth Centre (TUSC).** The last case solved by the TUSC was six months ago. The Case of the Rogue Rabbit. A successful one (the case, not the rabbit), just like the TUSC's most notorious case – The Murder of Mrs Kostas/Dimas. We made the national news! Business was booming.

And that's been the problem.

Solving these cases requires too much time and energy. So, I'm requesting temporary immediate leave to explore other hobbies.

The TUSC will not have an interim director. Therefore, the whole TUSC will be going on sabbatical from here on in.



1

RIRI

The perfect summer officially started – and ended – yesterday.

Right now, we're in imperfect territory because Dad and my twin sister Ani are running late. *Late!* I double-checked their flight time and the distance from LAX to our hotel, the Sunburst Resort, even considering summertime mayhem. Plus, I *triple*-checked weather conditions and the cab booking confirmation. Paper trails are important to me, so I forwarded all this via text *and* email to Ani, Mom and Dad. There's no excuse for them to be late!

Oh, that reminds me – I finally have my own phone! It was a gift for my twelfth birthday. It turns out that solving a murder in a foreign country with your then-estranged twin sister doesn't warrant a gift. But turning a year older does. Parents are such paradoxes.

Mom's sigh cuts across my thoughts, and I look up at her through my sunglasses, wrinkling my sweaty forehead.

She sips her nearly empty water bottle, dewy make-up shining. 'Riri, do I need to remind you that I can take that phone away as quickly as I gave it to you?' She pushes her own sunglasses up to hold back her untamed curls. We decided to wait outside for Ani and Dad and the rest of our party, so we can check in together.

'Sorry.' I lock my phone, which reminds me how sticky my palms – and entire body – are. My light-green floral summer dress and glittery-white flip-flops make me feel overdressed. I'm not wearing my hijab traditionally by covering my neck – because it's so sweaty, Mom helped me stuff my hair inside a straw sunhat. I practically *bathed* in sunscreen this morning straight after my usual shower, and I'm *still* red-hot. I'll have to shower away all my sweaty germs tonight – maybe twice! The second day of summer is one of the hottest here in California. Me and Mom struggling with the heat is saying something because normally we love it! I wonder how Ani and Dad will tolerate it – Castlewick has much cooler summers than California. 'I was just tracking Ani on the Find My app.'

Mom fans her face with one hand and checks the time on her smartwatch with the other. 'Hmm, they are running later than scheduled,' she utters to herself then nods and speaks at her normal volume: 'OK, keep your eye on them. I'll try to ring your dad.'

This flashes me back to last summer, at Leeds-Bradford Airport with Mom, waiting for our Uber to take us to Castlewick. Mom rang Dad at the airport, only then it was for the first time in three years. Our relationship now is so

much better than it was then – I smile at the memory.

My phone shows that Ani – and Dad, hopefully (you never know with Ani's wanderings) – are stuck in traffic. I tell Mom and she chews her lip, smudging her red lipstick. 'Why isn't he answering?' she wonders, worried, before hanging up and redialling.

I try ringing Ani – Mom probably didn't because Ani's phone battery always dies when she's travelling, because she plays games and streams videos. It's like her sole aim for journeys is to make her battery go from a hundred per cent to zero. But still, I try. 'Come on, Ani.' I tap my phone, one beat per second. 'Pick *up*.'

Ani answers on the fifth ring. 'Yeah?'

Butterflies flutter in my chest when I hear her voice. We talk and text every day but knowing that she's *here* – in California, *my* home state – is different. Giddiness rushes through me. Well, and pressure – I want her to love California as much as I do, and as much as I love Castlewick. 'Hi, TUSC Director and Supersleuth Ani! It's TUSC Sleuth Riri requesting the reason for your delay,' I say, so merry that I don't cringe at my lisp. 'I have your current location on my phone, and you guys are stalled.'

Ani gives a brief chuckle. I've noticed that whenever I say anything related to the TUSC, she gets quieter. 'Traffic is slow.' Her words are brief and stoic.

I try to think of a response, but Mom's here now, casting a shadow over me.

'Is that Ani?' Her tone is urgent, so I guess she's worried that Dad still hasn't answered. He wouldn't knowingly

ignore her – Mom and Dad are the friendliest they've been since their divorce. And if he were taking another call, Dad's the type of person to text her during it to let her know. Suffice it to say, Mom's got nothing to worry about. I mean, Ani would be hysterical if something had happened to Dad.

'Yes.' I pass Mom the phone whilst putting it on speaker.

'Assalaamualaikum, Ani,' Mom says.

'Walaikumassalaam,' Ani replies.

'Is your dad with you?'

'Yep, right beside me. I'm actually squished and uncomfortable. He sits funny. Outstretched at the back of the taxi. There's a word for that, you know. *Manspreading*.'

'Imani, you lying,' Dad says, then chuckles. I automatically smile at the sound of his voice. 'It's your huge rucksack, you know. Why you have so many toys?'

Ani lets out a breath. 'They're not *toys* –' her tone is clipped – 'they're *comic books*. Collectors' items. Be worth big money one day but, for now, I'm going to read them all summer long. Besides, that's all I've brought with me. And my tablet.'

That's all: meaning the sleuthing tools that she always carried – a waterproof notepad, a compact mirror, a small torch, a pen, bubble-gum, a UV light to read invisible ink, a little pot of black powder, white paper, a measuring tape, a magnifying glass and wristwatch – aren't in her rucksack.

Dad chuckles. 'Well, your rucksack, it's a mini comic-book shop.'

I let out an attempted laugh to try and ease the tension.

Meanwhile, Mom is patiently waiting for their conversation to finish so she can speak to Dad. 'Mom says I have a mini bookshop in my suitcase,' I add. She specifically told me to go easy on the books that I packed for this trip but, for the first time ever, I had to disregard what she said. I just had to – so many books, so little time! I'm hopeful that this vacation will revert to being perfect, so I'll have loads of time to sit by the pool and read a book in the sun.

'Abderrazzak,' Mom says in a sharp tone, 'why didn't you answer my call?'

'My phone, it died,' he explains. 'Sorry, I should have asked Imani ring you. She playing games on my phone.'

Mom lets out a breath of relief, so quiet that only I can hear. She nods as if Dad and Ani are in front of her. 'It's fine. So, what's the delay?' Her eyes wander over to my screen, where Ani's tracker is moving slowly.

'Traffic,' Dad says. An old man speaks in the background, indiscernibly. Then Dad tells us, 'The driver, he taking a shortcut now.'

'Good,' Mom says, readjusting her laptop bag so that it's slung over her shoulder while she holds her handbag. 'We're going to wait in the lobby because it's so hot out. We'll see you soon.' She hands me my phone back and I marvel at how she strides to the resort's entrance.

Meanwhile I stay where I am, taking in the behemoth of the building and its sparkly sign that reads: The Sunburst Resort. A warm breeze makes the palm trees that line the entrance sway like they're dancing. The resort is octagon-shaped with thirty floors and wide, sparkling

windows. People skitter in and out of the resort in tropical, floral clothing.

Mom stops outside when her phone rings, and passes me her handbag. Judging by the voice she puts on, it's a work call. She motions for me to stay there. 'I guess we're not gonna wait in the lobby,' I say to myself then sit on my suitcase. My feet dangle off it, and it's hard to appreciate its variety of book stickers from this angle. I put Mom's designer handbag between my legs, supported by my ankles, so it doesn't touch the ground. I open my messenger bag and fish out my vegan leather notebook. I can use this time wisely to review our vacation's itinerary. Everyone has two copies of it. One by email or WhatsApp and one physical copy (laminated). But I just *know* that someone will make an excuse and/or something won't go to plan, so it's best that I work on memorising it.

Travel itinerary by Riri Tariq (Tariq edition)

Location: The Sunburst Resort, Crownslake, California

Duration of stay: 42 days

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Day 1	• Everyone to get acquainted (or reacquainted) • Check into rooms and do a luggage check	Downtime – naps for the jetlagged, and sightseeing (but nothing to breach the itinerary plans!) for the Californians	At 6.30 p.m. everyone to dine at the hotel restaurant

Day 2	VIP tour at Deadwood Manor Park	Solve the murder mystery at Deadwood Manor Park!	At 6.30 p.m. everyone to dine at the hotel restaurant
Day 3	Go for a stroll in the Flower Fields	Visit the Museum of Making Music	At 6.30 p.m. everyone to dine at the hotel restaurant
Day 4	Soak up the sun at the hotel	Enjoy the hotel's amenities	At 6.30 p.m. everyone to dine at the hotel restaurant
Day 5	Pottery class	Reservations at hotel spa	At 6.30 p.m. everyone to dine at the hotel restaurant
Day 6	Surfing lesson at the beach	• Enjoy the beach • VIP access would allow for another session at Deadwood Manor Park	At 6.30 p.m. everyone to dine at the hotel restaurant
Day 7	Paddleboarding at the beach	Go shopping then on a hiking trail	At 6.30 p.m. everyone to dine at the hotel restaurant

'Paddleboarding is on day seven?!' screeches a voice from behind me.

'Ani!' I turn with such energy that I topple over my suitcase, taking her and the contents of my messenger bag with me. Papers fly in the air like leaves, and my books

land with a *thud*. My heart flutters and pain pulses through me but I'm the lucky one – I landed on Ani so she broke my fall. I spread my hands out on the warm ground to lift myself up, ignoring the nagging feeling that I need to do more than sanitise my hands and change my clothes. With a quiet groan, I stand upright.

'Umph. What a way to greet me.' Ani's voice is muffled because she's lying face-down on the ground. My eyes bulge – what if she's hurt her face? Or knocked out a tooth?!

Before I can spiral or scream for help, she jumps up and grabs Mom's handbag. 'I landed on this,' she informs me. 'Luckily.' Then she glances around at our parents, who are in their own discussion, standing stiffly next to each other. Ani crosses her arms over her chest. 'Parental negligence, wouldn't you say so, Riri? And to all the bystanders – the hotel staff and the people sitting in their cars – thank you for nothing!'

My instinct is to defend 'the bystanders' but she does have a point – no one rushed over to help us. No one even hollered to ask if we're OK. Her first impression of California should've been way more positive than this – but I can fix it! I look at her as she huffs and puffs at everyone who 'could've saved us'. The last time we saw each other in person – due to school and our own lives in other countries – was six months ago while we were solving The Case of the Rogue Rabbit in Castlewick. She's grown taller since then, and her untied hair is longer and much curlier. I overheard Mom advising her on hair products, and she

must have paid attention as her curls are tamer now. Ani's cropped cargo pants, baggy and three-quarters in length, are neon orange. They stand out against her white short-sleeved shirt and nude-coloured double-strap sandals.

Ani lowers her head to meet my eyes above her cat-eye sunglasses. 'Are Californians always this aloof to people in distress?'

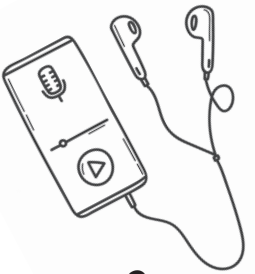
'No,' I rush to say. 'I promise you, California is great. It's the best.' She has been very vocal in her uncertainty about California as the location for our first family summer vacation (we don't count last year as a *vacation* per se, more like a family reunion). That's why the itinerary is set the way it is – for her – and all of us – to have the best time here. 'And not to generalise, but the people are great too.'

As if to prove my point, someone rushes over to us. 'Riri, you OK? I saw you fall in slow-mo! It looked so cool! I would've helped but Simon was parking the car.'

I squeal and throw my arms around my best friend. 'Adora! You made it!' They're holding no luggage – only a giant lollipop strapped to them like a rucksack that's filled with lots of normal-sized lollipops, I'm certain.

I introduce them to Ani, my smile unstoppable. 'We're all on vacation together!'

Ani gapes at me then at Adora, failing to return our smiles and laughter, '*What?*'



2

ANI

It was one thing dragging me to the State of California. Far from Castlewick. And my best friends. Now I have to be on holiday with these strangers too?!

Look, I love strangers – OK, I *tolerate* strangers. Did that a lot during the supersleuthing days – witnesses, suspects, grieving families, police. But I was actually coming around to the idea of my first plane ride being to *California* of all places. First summer holiday abroad being with Riri and Mum. And what an epic one it is – I mean, who goes on holiday for *six weeks*? Mum and Dad said they've been saving hard for years for us to have a holiday like this.

But no one said anything about *this*. And the weather – Riri undersold the heat. Said it would be hot but not *scalding*. Not happy about that either. My face is scorching.

First impression of California: NEGATIVE.

Already I can tell the weather is going to make me

sweaty and uncomfortable – Castlewick's summers would be California's winters. And the community won't be small like Castlewick's – technically, we're holidaying in a touristy city called Crownslake. Population as per Google: 113,000. Sucks for me because I prefer small communities so I can get used to people. Figure them out.

'Ani, I didn't get a chance to greet you!' Mum rushes over. Her hug makes me dizzy. So does her strong perfume – lavender and musk.

'Hi, Mum,' I say into the sleeve of her summer dress. Pretty sure her and Riri are wearing similar dresses on purpose. All in all, it's good to see them both.

I return Mum's hug as she squeezes me tighter. Like she doesn't want to let me go.

Until I can't take it anymore – 'Ow!' I shriek. Wince as she lets go with a worried look on her face. Pain pricks my elbow.

'Are you OK?' Mum asks.

The group Riri invited is staring at me – Adora and two older teenagers. They look at me, confused. Dad's face is furrowed with concern.

I stretch my neck to see my left elbow. Bleeding. From Riri falling on top of me. 'Oh, I'm sorry, Ani! I must've pressed your elbow when I hugged you,' says Mum. Riri averts her eyes. Her and blood – or anything gory– don't mix well.

I smile. 'It's fine.'

'Wait, no one worry!' someone with a croaky voice announces. The teenage girl. 'I've got a first-aid kit in the

car! Next to my Palo Santo candles. Let me get it.' I notice now she has a big book – about eight-hundred pages – under her arm.

'Ew, Palo Santo stinks,' Adora utters, nose crinkling.

'Thanks, Valentina,' Mum says. 'My first-aid kit is at the bottom of my stuffed suitcase.'

Riri taps my shoulder. 'Valentina is Adora's older sister,' she whispers. 'She's the best! The non-twin big sister I never had. We talk almost daily, we're so close.' I squint to see the title of Valentina's book – SHAKESPEARE COLLECTION – as Riri tells me more about her. Out of habit, I produce a mental TUSC profile.

TUSC PROFILE

Name: Miss Valentina Martinez
Gender: Female
Pronouns: She/her/hers
Age: 19 years old
Occupation: Part-time bowling alley employee
Full-time college student

Physical characteristics:

1. Purple streaks in her cropped black hair
2. Mole on upper lip
3. Eyebrow piercing on both brows

Observation: She's very tall, about 5'10

'*Hola*, I'm Valentina, by the way. Valentina Martinez,' she says to me with a big grin. I try to replicate it as I introduce myself. Valentina looks between me and Riri. 'Riri, Ani, you're twins indeed – I see the resemblance. It's a compliment!' Then she dashes to the car. Her legs dangle out as she searches for the first-aid kit. I notice the book is still tucked under her arm. Like it's connected to her body.

First impression of Valentina: POSiTiVE.

Seconds later, Valentina comes back with the first-aid kit.

'Imani, I wipe it for you,' Dad says, accepting the kit from Valentina. He walks over to me before I can decline his offer – I like to clean my own wounds. Knees click as he squats. Then I see the blood trailing down my arm. I didn't notice. Didn't even feel it.

I look around. Then ask Riri, 'Who's the green guy?' He's mumbling stuff to Valentina. She looks at him like he's the real-life Sherlock Holmes or Miss Marvel.

'Oh, you mean Simon? He's Valentina's boyfriend and he drove them here for two whole hours from Camarillo.' That's where Riri, Mum and Adora's family live.

'Hey, you,' I call to him. His face literally looks like the person-about-to-puke emoji. 'Hello. Simon, is it? Are you going to faint or something?'

He gulps. Nods then says, 'Uh, yes. I hate blood. I'm so, uh, nauseous.' He's worse than Riri with squeamishness.

TUSC PROFILE

Name: Mr Simon Avery
Gender: Male
Pronouns: He/him/his
Age: 19 years old
Occupation: Part-time bowling alley employee
Full-time college student

Physical characteristics:

1. Blonde hair with a long fringe
2. Gap between front teeth
3. One eye is blue, the other brown

Observation: Always says 'uh' between words

'I have anti-sickness tablets if you want one. And this wristband as well.' I hold up my other arm to show Simon. Yes, it turns out that I, Ani Tariq, am travel-sick on planes. Mum had sent Dad anti-sickness tablets, courtesy of her job at NovaStarr Labs, just in case. Dad didn't want to take any chances, so he packed a wristband too.

'Your, uh, your wristband would be, uh, great, thanks. But, uh, please make sure there isn't any blood on it.' He leans away from me. Give him a funny look as I take it off.

Does Simon know blood is inside him? I toss him it while Dad continues to clean my elbow.

'I'm Ani, by the way,' I tell Simon.

He nods once. Puts the wristband on. 'Nice to, uh, meet you. Thanks again for, uh –'

'No problem.' I cut him off because he seems too nervous. Too nauseous. Too highly strung. And he managed to drive for two whole hours? Not to judge but that's hard to believe. Then again, he was late getting here, so maybe he's a slow driver.

First impression of Simon: MIXED,
NEARLY NEGATIVE.

'Adora, come here and give the first-aid kit to Ani!' Valentina shouts from the car.

They jog over. Giant lollipop on Adora's back shimmies as they do while a Tamagotchi on their waistband sways. Then they return in a flash. Lick their lips and pass the first-aid kit to Dad. Mum strides over to us too, maybe to oversee Dad's technique.

'Thanks,' I tell a lingering Adora. They lick their lips again to reveal a blue tongue.

TUSC PROFILE

Name:	Mx Adora Martinez
Gender:	Non-binary
Pronouns:	They/them/theirs

Age: 12 years old
Occupation: Student at Camarillo Palms Elementary School

Physical characteristics:

1. Buzzcut, black hair
2. Wears a choker around their neck
3. Has temporary tattoos on their hands (the kind that are applied with water)

Observation: Licks their lips a lot

'So, you're not squeamish?' I ask them, then nod at my bloody elbow.

'Nah.' Adora shrugs. They're wearing maroon dungarees. I have similar ones back home. Ugh, that I forgot to pack, I just remembered. 'I'm still trying to find my fears.'

I tilt my head and look at them, intrigued. 'Really?'

They laugh and it sounds musical. 'Yep. Maybe this trip will help me out.'

'Is it . . . an active search?'

'Better the devil you know, right? I'd rather know my fears than be taken by surprise.'

First impression of Adora: POSITIVE.

'Where are your parents?' I carefully ask them. Hope I'm not being insensitive.

'Didn't Riri and your mom tell you? My folks are in Mexico visiting family. Well, the main reason is because my mom is there to research for an article she's writing. Me and Valentina were supposed to go but then Simon got VIP tickets to Deadwood Manor Park.'

'OK . . . ?' I *was* excited about the park. About going through the maze and seeing the manor and folly in real life. Not as much now – *Simon* bought the tickets?

'What do you mean "OK?"' Adora's eyes almost pop out. 'Deadwood Manor Park VIP tickets are super-duper hard to get! Simon was on the waiting list forever and kept it a secret to be a surprise for when he managed to score the tickets! He accidentally doubled his order from four – Mama was set to join us – to eight, so me and Riri thought her, you and your folks could come along. It worked out because Mama had to go to Mexico and Papa tagged along. Obviously, there's seven of us in total but it's no biggie. One less person to take attendance for, I guess.'

'Isn't that lovely?' I quip, dryly.

'Valentina is my guardian on this trip.' Adora grins at me like I asked for all this information.

But from all that, I gather Valentina and Simon will be responsible for Adora. Knowing Mum and Dad, they'll act like they're responsible for everyone. Fun (not).

'No offence,' I say, 'but are you three going to do *everything* with us?' No one in the history of the world has ever called *me* sappy but I wouldn't object to *some* family time.

Adora grins lopsidedly. 'Nah, don't worry – we're only

here for three weeks. That's half of your vacation, and Riri made us a separate itinerary. It'll overlap with yours sometimes, so don't worry, you won't *not* see me around.' So that's why my itinerary says 'Tariq edition'. Adora's must say 'Martinez edition'.

'All done, Imani.' Dad rises. 'Try not to hit it on anything. It's quite deep, you know.'

I nod. 'Thanks.'

'Are you sure you're OK?' Mum asks.

'I'm fine. I have a high pain tolerance, right, Dad?'

He shakes his head at me, brows furrowed. Think he's remembering my experiments from years ago to test my pain tolerance. Don't recommend them.

'Can we please check in now?' Riri asks. Adora walks by her side and from here, I see they come up to Riri's shoulder, shorter than both of us.

'Yes, of course. Everyone, let's head inside. We're late,' Mum says.

Adora says, 'Great. I bet Ani didn't appreciate us fussing over her graze.'

I frown at the back of their head as they turn towards the hotel's entrance. Then look around. No one else noticed their snide remark? Also, this stings – both their words *and* my elbow – because we were getting on well earlier. Speed-walking gets me beside Adora in no time. 'Hey. My dad said my cut was "quite deep". And no one fusses over me unless I allow it. And I *didn't* this time.'

Adora turns to me then blinks like they didn't realise I was there. 'Oh. Sure.'

Second impression of Adora: MIXED,
TURNING NEGATIVE.

We're trapped in silence. 'So, you're Riri's best friend,' I state, for the sake of it.

'Yeppers. And you're her twin sister. Hey, if you haven't got your itinerary, don't worry. I've taken the liberty of printing you out a copy. Not only is it laminated but it's in a plastic wallet. For you.' They wink and click their tongue like they know something I don't.

'Excuse me?!' My nostrils flare. But I can't think of a retort due to jetlag.

Third and final impression of Adora: NEGATIVE.

'Ani, are you OK?' Riri sidles up beside me.

I give her a bitter smirk. 'Did you hear? Adora has *taken the liberty* of getting me a fireproof, tearproof and stainproof copy of the itinerary!' It's true, I've lost my own copy. And I know Riri sent it to my phone but I had to delete it because my memory was full from all the GIFs I have downloaded. But am I going to admit that to Adora and Riri? No way.

Riri's forehead crinkles. 'Oh, don't be offended by Adora's unique sense of humour. They're always overprepared with a spare copy for everyone. And they have perfect recall.'

'Dad says perfection doesn't exist. So, you're imposing idealism on me. Not cool.'

'No, they have a photographic memory of anything they've ever read, said, heard –'

'That's good to know,' I sarcastically say, 'because after

my nap I'll make them reflect on their snide remark about my wound. They called it a *graze*, Riri. A *graze*.'

Panic flashes over Riri's features. 'No, I don't think they meant it like that. They're fun. Please give them a chance like I did to LaShawn and Helin back in Castlewick.'

I roll my eyes. 'Fine.'

'Everyone, stay together!' Mum orders, ushering us over to the others. 'Pick a buddy and always stay with them but ultimately, I want everyone to stay with the *group*.'

'Riri, can I be your buddy?' Adora asks, with so much hopefulness I could gag.

I look straight ahead and feel Riri's eyes on me. 'Of course.' She sounds friendly. Yes, I was going to ask Riri if she'd be my buddy. I can't now, can I? That'd be pathetic.

I pretend I don't notice but now I'm thinking who my buddy could be. Mum? Dad? So uncool to buddy up with your parents. Definitely not Simon or Valentina, seeing as they're joined at the hip – literally. Because there's seven of us, it looks like I'll be my own buddy. Be better that way, anyway.

I trail behind Mum and Dad.

Outside the hotel, we pass a lion-shaped water fountain. The water is so blue it must be dyed. But it goes nicely with the bright-green palm trees. Marble steps cut into a grassy verge lead us up to the entrance. From the top of the steps to the doors, there's a red carpet. Staff waiting with bright smiles.

'Simon –' Mum turns to find him – 'can I have yours, Valentina's and Adora's passports please?' Then she looks

at Dad: 'And Abderrazzak, can you open that PDF of the hotel booking confirmation, please?'

Dad and Simon fumble in their bags while Mum makes our entire party of seven stop in the middle of the entrance. I don't think she's noticed.

But someone in a fancy hotel uniform does. He runs over to greet and herd us away so others can get past. 'Hello and welcome to the Sunburst Resort! Are you ready for the experience of a lifetime?'

Well, so far I've been annoyed and blindsided. So no.