

AN ADRENALINE FUELLED
RACE AGAINST THE CLOCK

PERFECT FOR FANS
OF URBAN OUTLAWS

SCAR IS NO ORDINARY
SCHOOLGIRL; AND NO
ORDINARY CAT BURGLAR

IF SCAR MCCALL CAN'T KEEP
HER COOL, THINGS WILL
TURN WILD, AND DANGEROUS,
VERY QUICKLY

AN EXCITING DEBUT FROM
AUTHOR TAMSIN COOKE

HEIST FILE

TARGET:

AZTEC BRACELET

CLIENT:

DESCENDENT OF AN AZTEC PRIEST

ORIGIN:

MEXICO

CENTURY:

SIXTEENTH

MATERIALS:

GOLD AND TURQUOISE

MARKINGS:

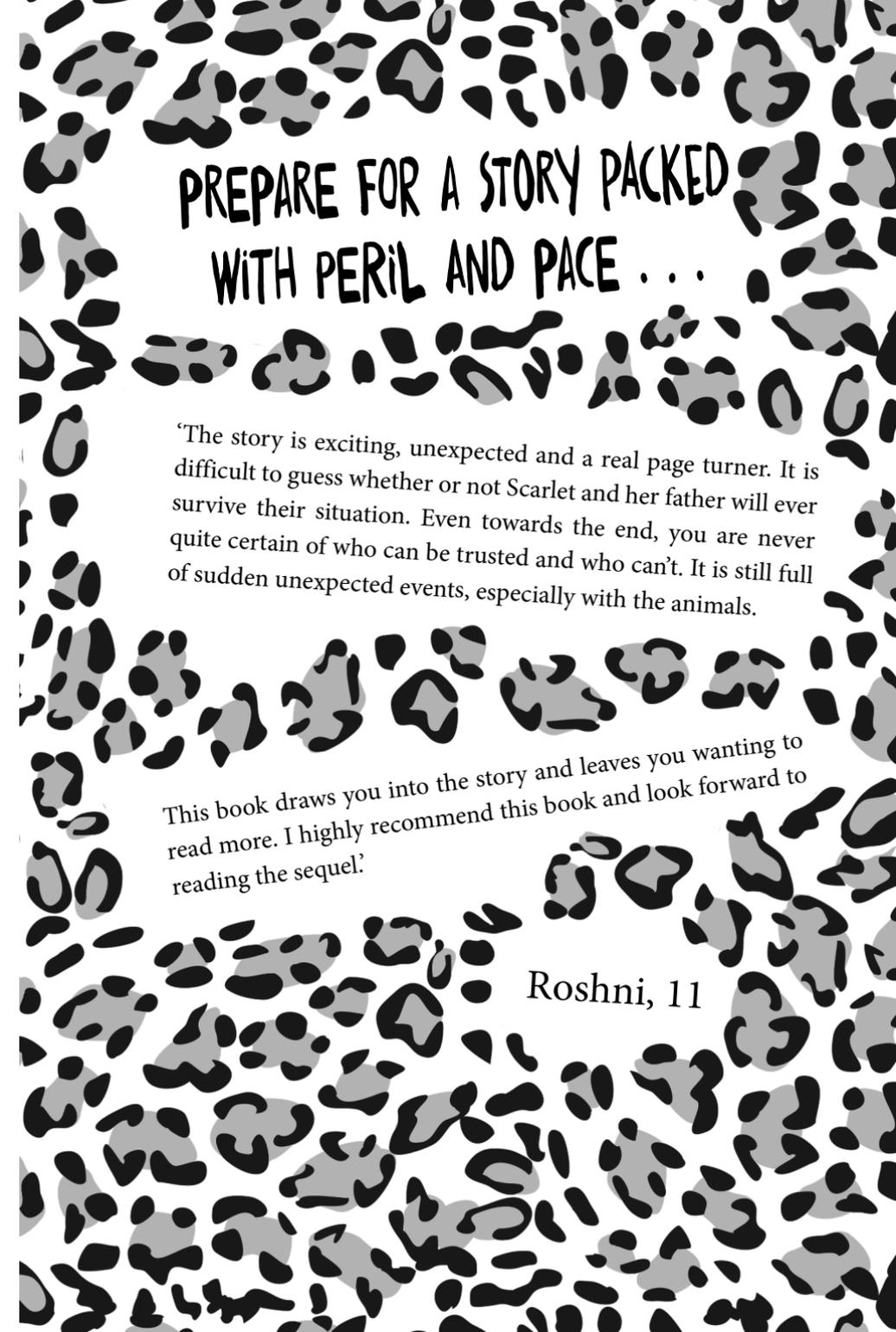
ABSTRACT ANIMAL IMAGES CARVED
INTO TURQUOISE STONES

CONDITION:

EXCELLENT

VALUE:

PRICELESS



PREPARE FOR A STORY PACKED WITH PERIL AND PACE . . .

“The story is exciting, unexpected and a real page turner. It is difficult to guess whether or not Scarlet and her father will ever survive their situation. Even towards the end, you are never quite certain of who can be trusted and who can’t. It is still full of sudden unexpected events, especially with the animals.

This book draws you into the story and leaves you wanting to read more. I highly recommend this book and look forward to reading the sequel!

Roshni, 11

For Violetta and Graham who always believed in me.
For Toby and Daisy who are my inspiration.

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THE SCARLET FILES

CAT
BURGLAR

TAMSIN COOKE

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CHAPTER ONE

I lie flat against the edge of the roof, my senses on high alert. Come on, Dad, where are you? Surely it shouldn't take this long to see if a room is clear. Then a hand clutches my shoulder and my body jumps. Somehow I manage not to fall off the three-storey house. I stare at Dad in amazement. How can he be so quiet? I haven't heard a footstep or even a scuffle on the tiles.

Dad swoops over the lip of the roof, dropping to the second floor balcony below. This is it—the moment I've been waiting for. I take a deep breath and scramble over the guttering. With fingers clinging to the roof, I dangle nine and a half metres above the ground. Adrenalin surging, I swing my legs and hurtle through the air before landing, knees bent, beside him. I rub my arms and stretch out my fingers.

Dad and I are dressed the same—black overalls, balaclavas, thin leather gloves, and rucksacks. Our night-vision goggles make the world green. Together we stare through the glass double doors. The room in front of us is empty, but the owners are sleeping in the next bedroom. Have we woken them? I hate to admit it, but my landing was much louder than Dad's.

Thankfully no lights appear, and Dad picks the lock in the door. Reaching into my back pocket, I pull out a sliver of foil. I hand it to Dad and watch him use it to block the sensor. He slides the door open a fraction, and when the alarm doesn't go off, he yanks it further on its rails.

Dad creeps into the house first and I follow closely behind. He shuts the balcony door, while I take stock of the room. Everything is exactly where I expect it to be—the double bed, the rug, the chest of drawers, the mask, and the jewellery box. Dad's plans were perfect.

I step forward when Dad grabs hold of my arm and jabs his index finger at the large oval rug. My mouth dries. I can't believe I forgot. I give him a quick thumbs-up.

We grab the edge of the rug and carefully roll it back, to reveal small pressure pads dotted about on the carpet. If I'd stepped on one of those, an alarm would have exploded somewhere. Most of the pads are clustered below the spot where the Aztec mask is hanging. Even through my night-vision goggles, the mask looks horrible, frightening. I'm not sure how anyone could sleep with that thing staring down at them.

I watch Dad navigate the room. He pulls some tweezers out of his bag and starts fiddling with various wires. While he deactivates an alarm attached to the mask, I tiptoe across the carpet, avoiding the few pressure pads in my path. My target, the jewellery box, is on top of the chest of drawers. According to Dad's plans, the box is free from alarms, but I finger the area just in case. Good—there are no wires or signs of extra security.

Tilting the wooden lid, I find the box stuffed with brooches, bracelets, and necklaces. I ease some of it to one side when I hear a noise. I freeze. There's another noise—a creak. Someone, somewhere in the house, is moving. I hardly dare breathe. My eyes dart between the door to the landing and Dad, who stands motionless with the Aztec mask in one hand. Dad lifts his free hand, holding it out in front of him. I know what he's telling me: Don't panic. Don't move.

I stay still. Feet scuff the carpet on the landing. Now should we bolt? Again I glance at Dad, but his hand remains in the air. The footsteps pass our door, but that doesn't mean we're safe. What if it's someone collecting a cricket bat to bash us over the heads with? Or phoning the police? I hear a click, and a soft glow of light appears from under the door to the landing. Then I catch the sound of tinkling. I let out a quiet sigh. It's just someone going to the toilet.

Still I don't move and neither does Dad. The tinkling seems to be endless. Finally, I hear a chain flush and a click, and the glow disappears. The footsteps begin again,

passing our room, and a bed creaks as someone climbs into it. Dad's hand is still flat against the air. My muscles ache from being so tense. I know he's waiting for the person to fall back to sleep. But really? Do we have to wait this long? At last Dad changes his flat hand into a thumbs-up and twists back around.

As quietly as I can, I dive back into the jewellery box, this time rummaging with more speed. Soon my eyes fall upon a thick bracelet covered in precious stones and I can't contain my grin. I've found it! Fingers shaking, I lift the bracelet, wrap it up in a square of black velvet, and slip it into the front pocket of my rucksack. I pull out an exact replica and stuff it in the bottom of the box. Then I carefully pile on the rest of the jewellery, trying to remember the order in which I took it out. A beaded necklace and dragonfly brooch were definitely on the top. I close the lid, and wipe down every surface I touched. Stepping back, I examine my work. No one will notice . . . hopefully.

I turn around to see Dad reactivating the alarm, now attached to a fake mask hanging on the wall. He wipes down the whole area before hopping over the pressure pads. I meet him by the double bed and together we unroll the rug. Dad studies the room and nods. He uses the foil to stop the sensor, and signals for me to open the door. Slipping outside, I wait for him to join me out on the balcony.

I feel lightheaded. The tension drains away. I can't believe I stole the bracelet . . . all on my own!

Dad relocks the glass doors, as I hoist the rucksack onto my shoulders. Together, under the moonlit sky, we climb over the railings and swing onto the first floor balcony. Without pausing, we leap over another set of railings and drop to the ground. No streetlights—we run to our black car and jump inside.

Dad drives two streets away, before saying, ‘NVGs.’

I tear off my night-vision goggles and Dad does the same. He puts on the headlights.

‘So what do you think? How did I do?’ I burst.

‘You were great,’ says Dad.

I clasp my gloved hands together. ‘When can I do it again?’

‘Soon,’ says Dad. ‘But right now, I think you should try to get some sleep. After all, you do have school tomorrow.’