

ABOVE THE STAR

Novel Excerpt

CHAPTER 13

"It's beautiful." The words roll out of Tessa's mouth without a thought, as she and Ella stare at the sparkling gold village at the far edge of the beach. The structures are spherical on one side, and droop in miniature shimmering avalanches on the other. They have no sharp angles of any kind, but mimic the curve of the sea and the ripples it carves into the shore. To one looking inland from the deep sea, the village would appear as mere sand dunes, short slices of earth and its shifting gold, rising and falling carelessly beyond the tide's reach. From the beach, however, the intelligible design is evident.

Curved stairs lead to misshapen doorways, without doors. Raised tunnels—that look to Tessa like the feeding runways of the moles she exterminated from their yard in Seattle—curl between and connect the buildings. Small windows are formed in the outer walls of the gold village where sections of sand have given way, resulting in unexpected shapes. Every window faces the sea.

"The homes look carved," Tessa continues, "like the walls of a gorge. They remind me of the sculpted sandstone of the Grand Canyon, where your dad and I hiked before you were born, Ella. Hundreds of years of a river rushing against it, caressed by it."

"It may appear alluring, as you say," Olen begins, "but its occupants are treacherous and bloodthirsty. They have no regard for the beauty of any life other than their own."

"Who are they?" Archie asks. He had woken when Olen slid his limp body down an angled twenty-foot fragment of the shining external structure of the Olearon's ship. The sheet was lodged in the hull of the now extinguished glass vessel, six feet below the section of the outer wall that Tessa shattered. She and Ella had flung themselves out the yawning opening to slip down the smooth surface to the ground; Olen had resigned himself to follow, keeping his watch. Now the four stand on the divide between sea and shore among a graveyard of broken, still shimmering glass.

"They are the Millia sands," Olen answers in a whisper.

"Sand?" Archie repeats, rubbing the back of his head where a protruding welt and small cut dampen his white hair with crimson.

[page 1]

ABOVE THE STAR

Book one in The 8th Island Trilogy

By award-winning author

Alexis Marie Chute

AboveTheStar.com



ALEXIS MARIE CHUTE

780-499-4311

info@alexismariechute.com

FB: AlexisMarieProductionsInc

TWITTER: @_Alexis_Marie

INSTAGRAM: @alexismariechute

YOUTUBE: AlexisMarieChute

ABOVE THE STAR

Novel Excerpt

"I should not speak to you beings—humans as you're called—so freely, however you are the Wellsley family . . ." The Olearon pauses in thought before continuing, answering Archie's question and the inquisitive expressions on all three pale faces. "The Millia are formed of crushed seashells. Their name means 'soul of the shell.'"

"Sand people?" Tessa says.

"Yes, sand and selfishness." Olen puts a hand on Archie's chest before the old man takes a step closer to the Odyssey. "Hold back. We are safer here, beyond sight for now."

"Will you let us go, now that we've reached the island?" Tessa demands as she trudges closer behind Olen, kicking up silt. "We could slip under the cover of those trees over there—"

"You do not want me to let you go on these corrupt shores," Olen says vehemently.

"Sand people don't sound all that dangerous," Tessa scoffs.

"The life of the sea creatures is a difficult one. They are summoned by the Star at the center of the sea—beneath Jarr-Wya—but the Star is too bright, too warm, too wicked. The sea creatures never reach it. They spend their lives diving, but it cannot be done. They perish, wretched and unfulfilled, but their encasements remain and crash on the coral and break into countless pieces, more numerous than all the worlds together. They wash up upon this shore. The souls of the shells contain the bitter unfulfillment of their past masters. Many sunsets before, the broken fragments decided to unite and make their golden village, as they could not reach Jarr-Wya's sea-Star."

Ella signs star and then sea—as a question—which Archie recognizes. "I was thinking the same thing, Ell," he replies, and Ella offers a pained smile, clutching her limp arm. "Olearon, uh, Olen—"

"Yes, Archibald Wellsley."

"My granddaughter wants to know, I want to know: why is there a star under the sea? Where we come from, stars are up in the sky."

[page 2]

ABOVE THE STAR

Book one in The 8th Island Trilogy

By award-winning author

Alexis Marie Chute

AboveTheStar.com



ALEXIS MARIE CHUTE

780-499-4311

info@alexismariechute.com

FB: AlexisMarieProductionsInc

TWITTER: @_Alexis_Marie

INSTAGRAM: @alexismariechute

YOUTUBE: AlexisMarieChute

ABOVE THE STAR

Novel Excerpt

"Five thousand sunsets past, the midnight hour erupted with lightning and fire. The blaze was blinding and the crash shook Jarr-Wya; trees split and their topmost leaves burst into flame. The Star . . . it started as a black spot amidst the light, but it grew till it encompassed the sky. I kissed my mother and brothers then, knowing that our flames would soon fail to burn, never to be relit. I bowed low to the Lord and the Maiden. They have been good to the Olearons, leading with wisdom and protecting Jarr-Wya with courage for many ages.

"Our flames burned blue that night—but the Star had mercy on us, its only mercy. It plummeted into the sea, where it now dwells, below Jarr-Wya."

"That's a relief." Archie chuckles.

"Yes and no, Archibald. The Star changed much on the island. The birth of the Millia. The black flyers grew claws from their wingtips. The voice of the trees, when the wind plays upon their branches, now sing a foreign melody. We lost the rain, but for the fewest of days; some places of Jarr-Wya turn from forest green to desert nothingness. The sunlight grows weaker and the nights more treacherous.

"And the Bangols' minds—" continues Olen, his flame flaring up behind him.

"Zeno," Archie whispers.

"They have grown mad, wild! They conspire against their own, crushing their leaders to blood, rubble, and bone dust. They are of the earth, but forsake their very nature, poisoning the soil and clay, corrupting the fruit of Jarr-Wya. They starve their kin, hungering only for dominion."

"That doesn't sound like Zeno, from my experience of him," Archie reflects. "He's going to lead me to Ella's cure and help us return home."

"Is that what he told you, Archie?" Tessa says and grits her teeth. "Oh, you are more foolish than I thought! How could you do this to us?"

[page 3]

ABOVE THE STAR

Book one in The 8th Island Trilogy

By award-winning author

Alexis Marie Chute

AboveTheStar.com



ALEXIS MARIE CHUTE

780-499-4311

info@alexismariechute.com

FB: AlexisMarieProductionsInc

TWITTER: @_Alexis_Marie

INSTAGRAM: @alexismariechute

YOUTUBE: AlexisMarieChute

ABOVE THE STAR

Novel Excerpt

"I do believe she is right, Archibald. You have been deceived." Olen acknowledges Tessa for the first time by meeting her eyes with his own twin black voids.

"Is it all a lie? When Zeno mentioned a cure, I didn't recall reading it in the notebooks. I had hoped Arden's motives were good, but instead I now see—for the first time—he really did walk out on us."

"As I have been saying for years, Archie. You've got to let him go. We have, right, Ell?" Ella does not look up from her feet, half buried in the sand. When she does raise her face, her expression suddenly changes from forlorn to fear as she notices movement out of the corners of her eyes. She points without making a sound.

Tessa gasps. "Where did the village go?"

"The Millia are the village. They are this beach. They are coming for us."

[page 4]

ABOVE THE STAR

Book one in The 8th Island Trilogy

By award-winning author

Alexis Marie Chute

AboveTheStar.com



ALEXIS MARIE CHUTE

780-499-4311

info@alexismariechute.com

FB: AlexisMarieProductionsInc

TWITTER: @_Alexis_Marie

INSTAGRAM: @alexismariechute

YOUTUBE: AlexisMarieChute