

Book  
2

MY BFF IS AN ALIEN

# SABOTAGE



VIVIAN TEO

## **Praise for *My BFF Is an Alien***

“An imaginative and enjoyable story about friendship and standing up for yourself. After reading this book, you’ll wish you had an alien BFF too!”

—**Low Ying Ping**, author of the Mount Emily series

“Miss 11 and Miss 9 both read this book within a day and totally loved it! Really well-written, with great nuggets of descriptive vocabulary. The alien BFF is certainly not what you’d expect of a typical extraterrestrial.”

—**Lyn Lee**, Lil Blue Bottle blog

“The book is an exciting read! I found myself holding my breath the whole time!”

—**Grace Lim**, 11

“This book is filled with twists and turns in almost every chapter. It has also taught me what true friends are about.”

—**Xavier Chua**, 12

“\* \* \* \* \*”

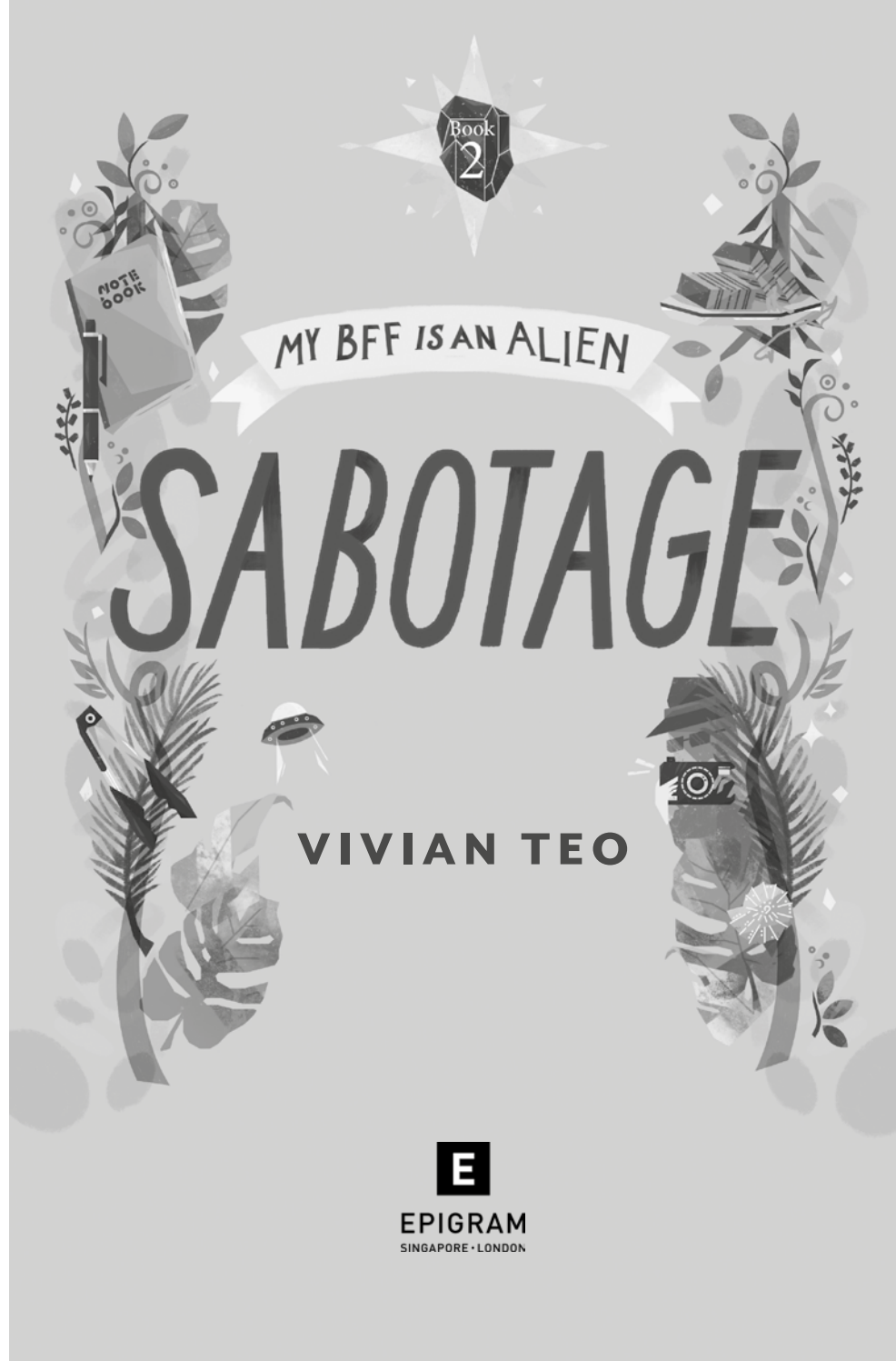
—**Dana Joy Sim**, 12

**In the series:**

*My BFF Is an Alien* (Book 1)

*My BFF Is an Alien: Sabotage* (Book 2)

*My BFF Is an Alien: Turbulence* (Book 3)



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For Pa and Ma,  
thank you for being my rock and my village

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Cover design by Ng Min Min

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Published in Singapore by Epigram Books  
shop.epigrambooks.sg

Published with the support of



National Library Board, Singapore  
Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

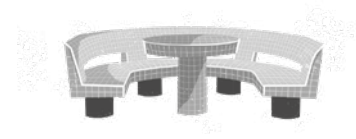
Name(s): Teo, Vivian.  
Title: Sabotage / Vivian Teo.  
Other title(s): My BFF is an alien.  
Description: First edition. | Singapore : Epigram Books, 2020.  
Identifier: OCN 1182785992  
ISBN 978-981-49-0108-6 (paperback)  
ISBN 978-981-49-0109-3 (ebook)  
Subject(s): LCSH: Girls—Juvenile fiction. | Friendship—Juvenile fiction. | Social media—Juvenile fiction.  
Classification: DDC S823—dc23

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

First edition, October 2020.

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## Chapter 1

# THE RETURN

That scent. I stopped in my tracks on the pavement before the main road. No one else had that scent but Octavia.

A wave of melancholy hit me.

Octavia Wu's my best friend, and she's an alien from the planet Viridis, many thousands of light years away. That perfume I thought I whiffed was unique to Viridis, but it couldn't be because six months ago, Octavia left Singapore for her home planet to fight a war against The Others (invaders from another planet). About four months later she sent a scout to deliver a letter to me. She wrote that Viridis was on the verge of winning the war and that she would be able to see me soon. What she didn't say was *how* soon was soon. So I waited and waited, and two months passed by without another word. Did things at Viridis take a turn for the worse?

Or maybe...maybe she's...dead... No, no, she's not! I hated when these horrible thoughts came to my mind.

I shook the awful notions out of my head and decided that my nose was playing tricks on me. I turned left at the T-junction; I had exam prep to get to.

Suddenly someone yanked at my arm, forcing me backwards. "Ooof!" I puffed and stumbled. A cyclist zoomed past me, just centimetres from my face. "Watch where you're going!" A voice rang out behind me. I gasped, not because of the close shave I just had, but from her voice...

I spun around, and there she was. My BFF—in the flesh! Octavia's face was scrunched up as she waved her fist at the offending cyclist, who had sped off into the distance.

I couldn't believe it. I stared with my mouth agape, wondering if my eyes were playing tricks on me. Then Octavia said, "Hi, Abri." Her smile reached all the way to her eyes.

"Oh my *gawd*," I whispered breathlessly as my eyes turned prickly with tears. I reached forward and enveloped her with my arms.

"Ah!" Octavia said, my hug taking her by surprise. But then she chuckled and squeezed me back. I wasn't dreaming—Octavia was back!

I let go and looked at the face beaming back at me. Octavia's hair had grown longer, reaching slightly past her chin. Her face looked sharper and thinner than before. The consequences of war, I thought.

"You came back," I croaked over the lump in my throat.

"I told you I would, Abriana Yeo," Octavia said, still smiling. Memories of everything we did and said poured into my mind.

"Did you win?" My voice came out quivering.

"Yes, more or less." Octavia nodded, her eyes watery.

We held each other's hands and started laughing, tears still glistening in our eyes. To passers-by we probably looked like two loonies, but we didn't care.

We joyfully linked arms and made our way home by the same route we had taken countless times before. On the way Octavia told me her story. As cars and buses whooshed noisily past us, I hung on every word, her voice so clear and familiar.

Octavia and her family had returned to Viridis to find their troops making headway in their pushback against The Others. Although they were initially taken by surprise, the Viridians were fortunate to have an arsenal of high-tech weapons and special families like Octavia's, who were endowed with superpowers. (Oh, didn't I mention she had superpowers?)

The war between The Others and the Viridians carried on for months and during that time, Octavia worked in the infirmary, treating the wounded with her healing powers. The Viridians finally declared victory eight months after the war started. The Others that remained were captured and imprisoned. After the war Octavia's father, Uncle Justin, took over as Head of Council (or

King of Viridis) from Octavia's grandmother and was now busy rebuilding Viridis. With everything under control and the infirmary well-staffed, Octavia told her parents she wanted to return to Singapore.

Her story ended just as we reached our block of flats. With our arms still hooked, Octavia led me to one of the benches at the void deck.

"You know," Octavia said as we sat side by side, "when it finally looked like we were winning the war, I wished I was back in Singapore. And I feel selfish saying that when my loyalty should be to Viridis, but all I could think of was my time here. I thought about school, our search for the anteris and our time at camp. Sure, there were ups and downs, but I was happy. That was when I decided to send one of our scouts here with the letter."

I didn't expect that to come from Octavia. I knew she felt a strong sense of duty to Viridis. When we were searching for the anteris—a Viridian element which props up space tunnels for travel—Octavia felt that it was her duty to retrieve it and do her part for her planet. But maybe it wasn't so surprising that she felt this way. She didn't have any friends on Viridis, and like me, she was just a girl who would rather be doing teenage stuff like streaming the latest TV series, listening to Taylor Swift, and struggling with schoolwork and exams (okay, that's more me than her) instead of worrying about life-and-death issues.

"No, it's not selfish," I said, supportively. "I get it."

"If there is anybody who gets me, it's you," she said, her face brightening up. "And you know what? I'm going to stay here for as long as I can."

"Really? Are you sure? Can you do that?" I asked hopefully.

"I won't be Head of Council until many years from now. I don't think I'm of much use to Viridis at the moment." She chuckled.

"If you could stay forever, that would be the best thing since...the invention of the internet!" I said and hugged her tightly.

"Too...tight!" she coughed and laughed. Then she looked seriously at me. "I can't promise forever, Abri. But I promise I will be here for as long as I can."

I nodded eagerly. My BFF was back, and she was going to be here for a long, long time...unless the wretched Others returned and waged another war in Viridis! Something she said earlier struck me. "Why did you say 'more or less' when I asked if you won?" There must be more to the story.

"Our security team believes a few of The Others escaped, and they are trying to track them down. So they are not completely out of the picture," she explained.

"So...The Others. Are they really that scary?"

The happy glow on Octavia's face faded. "Yes. The Others have the power of mimicking, which allows them to take the form of Viridians. That was how they tricked us in the first place. They came to us because their planet was collapsing from the depletion of resources. They



were seeking resource-rich planets to colonise and would kill and enslave the natives.”

I mulled over what Octavia said and shivered. I hoped the Viridians could track down the escapees and eliminate them, once and for all.

“Boo!” Octavia yelled suddenly.

“Wah!!” I startled. Octavia laughed hysterically.

“Oh, how I missed you, Abri!”

“Chicken backside!” I nudged her with my elbow.



“Mum, look who’s back!” I shouted excitedly as we stepped into my flat. But it turned out Mum already knew; she and Aunty Katy came out of the kitchen together.

“Oh sweetie, I knew you would be over the moon when you saw Octavia!” Mum said cheerily. “Aunty Katy and Octavia dropped by while you were at school. Octavia couldn’t wait any longer and wanted to surprise you. I guess she managed to catch you on your way home!”

“Yeah, she did—literally!” I said, giving Octavia a cheeky glance. “Hi, Aunty Katy!” I greeted and hugged Octavia’s mum.

“Hi, Abri,” Aunty Katy responded in that soft, gentle voice that I didn’t know I missed until that moment. “It’s so good to see you again.”

I took a good look at Aunty Katy; she had also lost weight. “Where’s Uncle Justin?” I looked around expectantly.

“Justin’s still in Taiwan dealing with business matters,” Aunty Katy said with a wink.

We left the adults to their conversation and went to my room. I dropped my bag on the floor and sat in my swivel chair while Octavia plopped down on my bed just like she always did. I couldn’t wait to catch Octavia up on everything that had happened since she left.

I told her about our school’s decision to give us demerit points for the camp incident; the awesome Universal Studios trip we won at the camp challenge (though Jia-ning, who sat next to me on the roller coaster, almost burst my eardrums with her screams); Shefali’s birthday celebration at her mum’s restaurant, where we had the best chicken biryani ever; and Mum’s new dessert-making craze (macarons, soufflés, crème brûlée—you name it, Mum’s made it). Octavia listened to it all with a twinkle in her eye, laughing (mostly at Jia-ning’s antics) and interrupting only when she had questions—“Do you think we could go to Shefali’s mother’s restaurant again?”

“OMG! The exams are next week!” I exclaimed suddenly. In my exuberant state, I had clean forgotten about them!

I grabbed my desk calendar and showed her the dates in October that I had circled in red ink. “Maths is next Monday, English is on Tuesday—”

“Why did you cross all those dates out? And what do those numbers mean?” Octavia interrupted. She was referring to the page on the flipside. I turned the calendar around and saw that it was the “April” page. All the dates were crossed out with an X and there were numbers scribbled beneath them.

“Oh! I was marking the days you were gone,” I explained.

Octavia took the calendar from my hand and flipped it to “September”. The Xs ended at 30 September, and under it was the number “197”.

“You were gone for 197 days. I guess now I don’t need to mark 1 October, huh?” I said with a laugh.

Octavia didn’t laugh but looked up sadly at me. “I’m sorry I couldn’t send news to you earlier. You must have thought I wasn’t coming back.”

There were indeed times when I thought Octavia wasn’t coming back. On good days I told myself that Octavia just needed more time to win the war and would come back two, three years later. On bad days I imagined that she had died. Sometimes I stared into the night sky hoping for a sign from Octavia, like maybe a streaking light from her spacecraft or a special signal sent from Viridis. I ended up disappointed every time.

But I didn’t tell her all that. Instead I said, “The fact that you managed to send a courier while the war was going on is already an amazing feat. Thanks for doing that,” I said, putting my hand over hers. The letter from Octavia gave me hope that she was alive and that I would

see her again. On bad days, I would take it out and read and re-read it.

Octavia smiled and flipped the calendar back to “October”. She traced her fingers over the exam dates I had marked. “Okay, got it. I’m prepared for the exams.”

“Show off,” I muttered with mock disgust. Of course I knew Octavia was prepared. The perfect scores she constantly got in tests were proof of the more advanced education in Viridis. I was always amazed that she never got bored and dozed off in class when she already knew everything.

“Oh, I almost forgot!” Octavia said, slapping her forehead. “Someone wants to meet you.”

“What? Who?” I asked.

“It’s one of our generals. He wants to meet you and thank you personally.”

“Thank me? For what?” I asked, genuinely confused.

“You’ll see. C’mon, General Bin’s waiting for us,” Octavia said, getting off the bed.

“Is he General Bin, as in Mr Bean, or bin, like dustbin?” I asked, following behind.

“Dustbin.”

We headed next door to Octavia’s flat. On the way out, we saw that Mum was treating Aunty Katy to her freshly baked lemon meringues.

“General Bin! We’re here!” Octavia shouted when she stepped into her home.

It felt surreal coming back to the flat with Octavia—I had got used to her absence. The last time I was at

Octavia's flat was a month ago. While Octavia's family was away, Mum and I would come by once a month to dust and mop their flat—Aunty Katy had left us the spare key. As she mopped the floor, Mum would grumble about how Aunty Katy didn't send her a single message the whole time they were away. I'd say to Mum, "We don't have to clean for them, you know?" But then she would just sigh and say, "Then it would be all dusty and dirty when they come back."

I knew that Mum also missed Octavia's family, especially Aunty Katy, who was always so attentive when Mum regaled her with her latest kitchen adventures, unlike me, who had zero interest in the baking process. Mostly I grunted, "Can I just eat the cookies?" or something similar.

"Ah! This must be the famous Miss Abri!" A man bellowed as he stepped out from Octavia's room. He was tall, way taller than Dad, like, at least 1.9 metres tall. He was tanned, with a head full of silver hair and wrinkles around his eyes. He looked kindly, like what I imagined a genial grandfather would look like. "I want to shake your hand!"

"I'm not famous, lah." I gave a nervous laugh and wondered what Octavia had told her people about me. I shook his hand, and he returned with a few solid pumps. For an old guy, he had a firm grip.

"I haven't told her," Octavia said with a laugh.

"What?" I looked at them, confused.

"Miss Abri, I wanted to personally extend my

gratitude to you. Your roast duck helped us in the war. Your ingenious plan to poison our enemies helped us gain the upper hand during the fight. You should have seen the scum after they unknowingly consumed that confounded meat which we had snuck into their food—brilliant, just brilliant!" General Bin exclaimed with a loud clap of his hands.

I gasped. After seeing Octavia fall very ill from eating roast duck, I gave her one kilogram of the meat to take back to Viridis, thinking that if Octavia fell sick from eating it, maybe The Others would too. But I never thought they would really use it, not when Viridis had way more high-tech weapons than roast duck! It was a lot to take in.

"My BFF—she's a smart one," Octavia said, putting her arm around me. My cheeks burned hot but I felt proud. It's not every day you learn that you helped save a planet.

"Indeed, Miss Octavia! It's no wonder you two are best friends," General Bin smiled. "Well, now that I've completed my number one task of meeting and thanking Miss Abri, I'm afraid I have to move on to more boring chores. I shall leave you two to it. And thank you again, Miss Octavia, for letting me have your room. I hope it won't be long before you can have it back again."

"What are you really here for, General Bin?" I had to ask because I was sure he didn't fly thousands of light years just to thank me for the roast duck.

"Well, because Miss Octavia here"—General Bin

deliberately narrowed his eyes at Octavia—“insisted on returning to Singapore. In fact, ‘insisted’ feels like an understatement, but I digress. I believe Miss Octavia has told you that there are a few of those vile beings still at large? As head of the security team, I’m here to make sure it is safe for her to stay. I will be making a full sweep of Singapore using a tracking device that can detect chemicals released by The Others.

“Now you girls had better not go poking around this device. It contains a smidgeon of said chemicals, which we retrieved from The Others; it can make living things go feral,” he warned, scrunching up his face in mock disgust. His exaggerated expression drew our chuckles.

“Alright then, I’m going to get busy,” he said, relaxing his face, “but remember, Miss Octavia: if there are signs of The Others here in Singapore, you will have to return to Viridis, like we agreed. We have bolstered our security and our planet is more strongly fortified than ever before; there is no safer place than Viridis. And as future ruler-in-waiting, your safety is of the highest priority.”

I looked at Octavia. She didn’t tell me about the pact. But she just gave General Bin a bored look. “Yes, yes, I know. But you’re not going to find anything here. Firstly, The Others are thousands of light years away. Secondly, they don’t have the anteris, which they would need to travel through space over such distances. Thirdly, they don’t even know where Earth is!” She rolled her eyes impatiently at the last sentence. She had probably argued these points more times than she cared.

General Bin sighed. “Yes, the probability is low, Miss Octavia. And we’re being extra cautious by doing a sweep of Singapore. Anyhow, if there are no traces of The Others here, I’ll treat this as a pre-retirement sightseeing trip. Earth may be primitive but that’s what makes it such an interesting place. I wonder what surprises await!” He gave a belly laugh and bid us goodbye.

“Well, he seems like a jolly good fellow!” I said, copying General Bin’s bouncy intonation as we headed back to my flat.

Octavia laughed. “General Bin has served Viridis his whole life and watched me grow up. He was my teacher for a few years too. That scanning thing he was talking about? It’s really just a formality to appease our council. Like the council, my parents and General Bin were initially against the idea of letting me come back to Singapore. But when they realised that I wasn’t going to change my mind, General Bin told the council that he would personally take on the job of scanning Singapore for signs of The Others. But we all know he’s not going to find any traces of The Others here.”

We passed by the kitchen on the way back to my room. Mum and Auntie Katy were still chit-chatting happily.

“But why does the council not want you to come back? I mean, it’s not really that bad here, is it?” I asked after I shut the room door. For me, I loved living in Singapore and couldn’t imagine living anywhere else.

“The older generation Viridians don’t get what I see

in Earth. They think your planet is backward, and the people here are irresponsible with the natural resources they've been given and are paving the way to their own demise."

"Wah, that's a bit harsh. They sound real snotty!" I grumbled.

"They don't know Earth and its people like we do. Though they are not entirely wrong. Earth, compared to Viridis, is indeed backward. But we've met so many people here, like you and your family, who have such goodness in their hearts. That's what makes a place worth living in."

"Yeah, who cares what a bunch of old fogeys have to say—the princess of Viridis thinks Earth is awesome!" I pumped my fist in the air. "So how did you convince your parents and the head of security to change their minds in the first place?"

"Oh, I faked being depressed."

"You what?"

Octavia shrugged. "I acted out of sorts and pretended to lose my appetite. I knew it would get to a point when Father, Mother and General Bin would relent because they can't bear to see me like that. General Bin might look like a giant but he is a big softie at heart when it comes to me." Octavia looked pleased that she had the adults wrapped around her little finger. "But really, it wasn't hard to do. After all, I did miss you and this primitive place," she grinned.

I forced a smile in return. I knew my BFF had done

everything she could to come back, but I couldn't decide whether Octavia's ability to scheme her way through things impressed or worried me more. After all, I was really mad at Octavia when I found out she'd used me to get her parents to let her search for the anteris. She later promised that she would never lie to me again, and as far as I knew, she'd been honest with me ever since. I mean, she kept her word and came back like she said she would, didn't she? And that was all that mattered.



## Chapter 2

# BACK TO SCHOOL

Octavia returned to school on Friday. Shefali and Jianing were pleasantly surprised and couldn't stop asking what she had been up to in Taiwan this whole time.

The mean girls had a different reaction.

"Why is she back? I thought she was gone for good!" Jessica Chan exclaimed to Naomi Goh (my former BFF) when they walked in and saw Octavia at her seat.

"I'm so *not* sorry I ruined your day, Jessica!" Octavia remarked loudly, and the girls seated around her erupted in giggles. There was no witty comeback from Jessica, who was probably still in shock from seeing her arch nemesis.

Ever since our parents filed an official complaint to the school—Jessica had thrown Octavia's "keepsake" (the anteris) into the sea at camp—she and her posse

have toned down their snide remarks at me, probably from fear of getting into more trouble. Jessica had been issued demerit points for stealing, and word about her misdemeanour had spread among our class. For an entire month after that, she had lost her smugness and looked so deflated, I almost felt sorry for her.

But Jessica didn't remain down in the dumps for long. Two months later she clinched the first prize at the interschool synchronised swimming solo championships—a first for a Bukit Timah Secondary Girls' School girl. The sync swim team she headed also won its first interschool synchronised swimming team championships—another first for BTSGS—and Jessica became the school's celebrated athlete once again. The stealing incident became a thing of the past and her haughtiness naturally returned. Every now and then, she would throw hostile glares in my direction to remind me of my past transgression against her.

As for Naomi, we hadn't spoken since our friendship officially went kaput when I refused to cover up for Jessica; as far as I was concerned, Naomi now fitted perfectly in Jessica's circle of evil.

In all honesty, I'd harboured a tiny bit of hope that maybe, just maybe, Jessica and Naomi's friendship wouldn't stand the trials of camp, after Naomi performed poorly at the camp challenge and failed to stop me from filing the complaint against Jessica. But all I saw after the camp fiasco was the two of them growing closer by the day. They would always pick each other as partners

When the man and his two companions turned around, it became clear that he had the wrong people; the three men before him were Asian. “Mi dispiace,” Mateo said apologetically.

“Non c’è problema,” the stocky one replied. The three men disappeared into the crowd, leaving the baffled Mateo staring at their retreating silhouettes.

The men were in the same exact shirts his three Caucasian customers had on. It was as if they had changed their faces, he thought in bewilderment.



## Acknowledgements

To all the young and grown-up readers of *My BFF Is an Alien*: I’m truly heartened by the messages I’ve received about your love for the first book. It is because of your encouraging words that I happily lie awake every night making up stories in my head, then can’t wait to get up in the morning to write again. Thank you for your support, and I hope this second book has lived up to your expectations.

Thank you to all at Epigram Books. I cannot say enough how much I enjoy working with all of you. Edmund, Lynette, Christopher, Doretta, Chloe, Diane and Min Min—you have my eternal gratitude.

To Chai Li, my two girls (E and E), my parents, family and friends, who have rallied behind me in countless ways. I know no amount of thanks is ever enough but still, thank you, and I love you all to bits.



## **About the Author**

Vivian Teo worked as a financial journalist and editor for fourteen years at major US and UK trade publications. She became a freelance writer to spend more time with her two daughters and to write about things close to her heart. This led to *My BFF Is an Alien*, her first middle-grade series.

She now enjoys writing about parenting and education issues for parenting websites and blogging on her own parenting/lifestyle website, *The Stuff Childhoods Are Made Of*, at [www.vivianteo.com](http://www.vivianteo.com).

Vivian is an alumnus of the University of Melbourne and Methodist Girls' School. Like Abri, she started off quite friendless and unathletic in secondary school but graduated with a tribe of good friends and fond memories of performing Chinese dance and cheerleading. However, she doesn't miss homework and exams.

Follow Vivian Teo on Facebook @VivianTeoAuthor and Instagram @VivianTeoWriter.





**Coming in 2021...**

## ***My BFF Is an Alien: Turbulence***

Secondary Three is turning out to be a great year for Abriana and Octavia. Abri's standing at BTSGS receives a boost after she wins a major writing competition, and Octavia's gunning for a spot on the school's tennis team. But when the BFFs encounter a strange waterspout in Singapore—part of a barrage of severe weather events the world is experiencing—the girls suspect The Others may be responsible. But Abri and Octavia's investigations are derailed when an accident ignites a feud with the mean girls, while a schoolgirl crush threatens to cause a rift between the best friends.

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ISBN 978-981-49-0108-6



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