

## First Pages--Read with your glass half full

### Excerpt #1:

When I wake up, the other side of the bed is cold. My fingers stretch out, seeking Prim's warmth but finding only the rough canvas cover of the mattress. She must have had bad dreams and climbed in with our mother. Of course she did. This was the day of the reaping.

I prop myself up on one elbow. There's enough light in the bedroom to see them. My little sister, Prim, curled up on her side, cocooned in my mother's body, their cheeks pressed together. In sleep, my mother looks younger, still worn but not so beaten-down. Prim's face is as fresh as a raindrop, as lovely as the primrose for which she was named. My mother was very beautiful once, too. Or so they tell me.

### *Hunger Games – Suzanne Collins*

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### Excerpt #2:

Harry cut through the morning rush-hour crowd like a shark fin through water. I was following from twenty meters back on the opposite side of the street, sweating with everyone else in the unseasonable October Tokyo heat, and I couldn't help admiring how well the kid had learned what I'd taught him. He was like liquid the way he slipped through a space just before it closed, or drifted to the left to avoid an emerging bottleneck. The changes in Harry's cadence were accomplished so smoothly that no one would recognize he had altered his pace to narrow the gap on our target, who was now moving almost conspicuously quickly down Dogenzaka toward Shibuya Station.

The target's name was Yasuhiro Kawamura. He was a career bureaucrat connected with the Liberal Democratic Party, or LDP, the political coalition that has been running Japan almost without a break since the war. His current position was vice minister of land and infrastructure at the Kokudokotsusho, the successor to the old Construction Ministry and Transport Ministry, where he had obviously done something to seriously offend someone because serious offense is the only reason I ever get a call from a client.

### *Rain Fall – Barry Eisler*

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### Excerpt #3:

My mother drove me to the airport with the windows rolled down. It was seventy-five degrees in Phoenix, the sky a perfect, cloudless blue. I was wearing my favorite shirt – sleeveless, white eyelet lace; I was wearing it as a farewell gesture. My carry-on item was a parka.

In the Olympic Peninsula of Northwest Washington State, a small town named Forks exists under a near constant cover of clouds. It rains on this inconsequential town more than any other place

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in the United States of America. It was from this town and its gloomy, omnipresent shade that my mother escaped with me when I was only a few months old. It was in this town that I'd been compelled to spend a month every summer until I was fourteen. That was the year I finally put my foot down; these past three summers, my dad, Charlie, vacationed with me in California two weeks instead.

It was to Forks that I now exiled myself—an action that I took with great horror. I detested Forks.

*Twilight – Stephanie Meyer*

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### Excerpt #4:

The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel.

“It’s not like I’m using,” Case heard someone say, as he shouldered his way through the crowd around the door of the Chat. “It’s like my body’s developed this massive drug deficiency.” It was a Sprawl voice and a Sprawl joke. The Chatsubo was a bar for professional expatriates; you could drink there for a week and never hear two words in Japanese.

*Neuromancer – William Gibson*

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### Excerpt #5:

She was willing to die, of course, but she had not planned to do it so soon, or in such a prolonged and uncomfortable fashion, or at the hands of her own countrymen.

She slumped against the wall, which was of cut stone and immensely solid, as prison walls often are. “I do not have the plans. I never had them.”

“I am not a patient man. Where are the plans?”

“I do not have—“

The openhanded slap whipped out of the darkness. For one instant she slipped over the edge of consciousness, then she was back again, in the dark and in pain, with Leblanc.

“Just so.” He touched her cheek where he had hit her and turned her toward him. He did it gently. He had much practice in hurting women. “We continue. This time you will be more helpful.”

*The Spymaster’s Lady – Joanna Bourne*