WORLD FANTASY AWARD WINNER

LAVIE TIDHAR

NEOM

A NOVEL FROM THE WORLD OF *CENTRAL STATION*

SPECIAL PREVIEW EDITION

"Can we just all admit now that Lavie Tidhar's a genius?"
—Daryl Gregory,
author of *Spoonbenders*

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NEOM

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Excerpt from *Neom*
Lavie Tidhar

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From the multi-award-winning universe of* Central Station, *a complex desert-city of the future's inhabitants rediscover passion while at the brink of revolution.

The city known as Neom is many things to many beings, human or otherwise. Neom is a tech wonderland for the rich and beautiful; an urban sprawl along the Red Sea; and a port of call between Earth and the stars. Machines roam the desert in search of purpose; works of art can be deadlier than weapons, and improbable connections transcends the sands of time.

Just one robot can change a city's destiny with a single rose—especially when that robot is in search of lost love.

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The city of Neom in these pages is old.
The city of Neom today *remains mostly the dream of a Saudi prince, a futuristic wonderland backed by a marketing video.*

You can go visit it, though. Neom Bay Airport (IATA: NUM, ICAO: OENN) is real and there's even a weekly flight from Riyadh.

There's not much else there right now, but then again, who knows? In time there might be flowers and, if so, a robot might come to the souq one day to buy a rose.

1.
THE CITY

Beyond Central Station, that vast spaceport that links Earth with the teeming worlds of the solar system, there is a city. The city lies past the Gulf of Aqaba and the Straits of Tiran, in the old Saudi desert province that was once called Tabuk. The founders of the city called it Neom.

In sandstorm season the hot air is cooled down by gusts of wind blown into the wide boulevards of the city. The solar fields and wind farms that stretch from beyond the city proper deep into the inland desert capture all the energy Al Imtidad needs, feeding it back to serve all the city's needs.

On the shores of the Red Sea the sunbathers gather. The bars are open late. The kuffar sit smoking sheesha as children run laughing on the beach. Suntanned youths kite-surf in the wind. It is said it's always spring in Neo-Mostaqbal, in Neom. It is said the future always belongs to the young.

Mariam de la Cruz, who came trudging down Al Mansoura Avenue, was no longer so young, though she did not

consider herself in the least bit old. It was more of that in-between time, when life finds a way to remind you of both what you'd lost and what lay still ahead.

Of course she was perfectly fine. But she was minutely aware of the ticking clock of senescence on the cellular level. Or in other words, ageing. Which was a problem in a city like Neom, which had been built and then sold—floated on the stock exchanges of Nairobi Prime and Gaza-Under-Sea and Old Beijing—on the premise that *anything* can be fixed, made good, made better, that things do not have to remain the way they'd been.

In Neom, everything was meant to be beautiful, ever since the young prince Mohammad of the Al Saud dynasty first dreamed up the idea of building a city of the future in the desert of the Arabian Peninsula and along the Red Sea. Now it was a mammoth metropolitan area.

Al Imtidad, the locals called it. The urban sprawl.

Mariam had grown up there, had never known another place. Her mother came to Neom from the Philippines in search of work, had met Mariam's father, a truck driver from Cairo who knew the desert roads from Luxor to Riyadh, from Alexandria to Mecca.

He was dead now, her father, had died in a collision on the border of Oman, delivering Chinese goods to the markets of Nizwa. She still missed him.

Her mother had lived on, remarried once, was now in a care facility on the edge of town, in the Nineveh Quarter. Much of what Mariam made went on paying the fees. It was a good place, her mother was well cared for. In the old days

families would live together, would look after each other. But now there was only Mariam.

Now she walked, slowly in the heat, cars zooming past her in all directions. Latest model Bohrs, a Faraday roadster, a Gauss II black cab. No one ever named cars after poets, she thought. Her own taste in poetry ran to the neo-classical: Ng Yi-Sheng, Lior Tirosh. They weren't the most famous, they just . . . were.

The cars swarmed around her, ferrying people every which way. They resembled the movement of fish flocks, the way they flowed independently yet in unison. It was illegal to drive a car in Al Imtidad. They were all run by an inference engine. It was usually the way of things, Mariam had found. People didn't trust other people for things like driving them, or for making investment decisions, or for medical care.

Unless, of course, it was a matter of *status*.

Al Mansoura Avenue, on the outskirts of midtown, was a pleasant road with many equally-spaced palm trees providing shade along the pavements on either side. The buildings were only a few stories tall, shops on the ground floor and nice spacious apartments above. Dog-walkers walked other people's dogs and nannies pushed other people's babies along the pavements. Cafes were open, blasting out cool air, and the patrons who sat sipping cappuccinos were busy interacting with each other in a meaningful manner, signalling to any passer-by that they were not merely relaxing but engaging in important face-to-face connectivity.

The shuttle plane to Central Station flew low overhead. Mariam passed the cafes, the shops selling cultivated pearls

and imported perfumes, anti-drone privacy kits, an artisanal bakery wafting out the smell of fresh sourdough loaves and sticky baklawah. A florist stall sold bouquets of fat red roses. The people who lived on Al Mansoura were the upwardly-mobile, and they lived on hope. Hope was a powerful drug.

Another shop, this one renting out luxury watches. She never understood that desire to wear these overpriced, tiny mechanical machines that measured time. Her own watch was a plastic knock-off from the roadside markets in Nineveh, mass-produced in Yiwu, shipped across the world on the Silk Road that China built. The sort of junk her father would have ferried in his truck. But people wore watches to tell the world they were rich, successful, that they were going places. That they took time *seriously*.

Mariam did too. She was paid by the hour. Now she made her way to the address and punched in the code and rode up in the elevator to the Smirnov-Li apartment. It was a nice spacious apartment, with floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the city and the sea far in the distance. The sort of place that was always rented because it was too expensive to own.

Hardly anyone owned their own place on Al Imtidad. Everything in Neom was rented—living spaces, luxury watches, people.

Smirnov and Li weren't in. Mariam filled a bucket with warm soapy water in their gleaming bathroom. They were a nice, handsome couple, men in their early thirties, their wedding photos hanging in the living room from some beach-side ceremony in Fiji or Bali, anyway one of those places people always went to get married in. While Neom's land belonged

still to the Saudis, the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice—the Mutaween—had no power beyond the border, and Mutaween agents had no power of enforcement within the sprawl. Neom's freedom had been part and parcel of the pitch package long before it ever had stocks for sale, when it was still just a corporate promo on a video-sharing site, some wealthy prince's unlikely, faintly ridiculous dream.

As Mariam cleaned the windows she stared out at the city. She liked having the apartment to herself, imagined herself living there, in all that minimalist simplicity. Sometimes Smirnov or Li would be there, but mostly they left her alone to do her job. It was a Neom thing. She knew from the last time she'd seen them that they had been talking about having children, which caused an argument since Smirnov (she never learned their first names, which was another Neom thing) was pushing and Li was resisting, worrying about the costs of an exowomb and arguing over the baby's eye colour.

She cleaned and vacuumed, fed the fish, dusted the shelves, took out the trash and dumped it into the automatic recycling chute.

If people were any poorer they just used some general-purpose household robot. If they were much poorer, they cleaned by themselves. If they were much richer, they had live-in staff. Li and Smirnov were at just the right income level to employ a human cleaner on a part-time basis. Just enough to drop casually in conversation, "Oh, yes, we just had the cleaner in yesterday," and so on. "Lives down in

Nineveh, the poor thing." They were nice people and they paid her well enough, and on time, which meant something. They always told her she could have whatever was in the fridge but, whenever she opened the gleaming chrome door, all she found inside were probiotic yoghurts. People in Neom took care of their gut bacteria the way people in other places looked after their children. Which is to say, personally.

When she left the apartment that afternoon she was hot and she was hungry, and she grabbed a falafel at a roadside stall. Oil ran down her chin and she wiped it with a paper napkin, not caring for the moment about the heat or anything else. Everybody loved falafel. A street was not a street if it didn't have at least one vendor on it.

She passed a branch of the old Banque Nationale de Djibouti, looking for her friend, Hameed. He could usually be found on the corner there.

Then she saw him, sitting as usual with his back to the wall of the bank. Looking up at the sun.

But something was wrong. Something about his posture, his stillness. She took a step forward and another. Then the wrongness intensified and she began to run.

When she reached him, for just a moment, she couldn't take it in. His face, usually so animated, was slack, the smooth skin scorched and torn, the head itself pummelled senselessly until it hung crooked from his neck. His left eye had been gouged from its socket and hung loose over his face. One of his arms was broken and his knees had been smashed, the whole motionless body crudely destroyed and left for dead.

"My God," Mariam said. "My God."

Her fingers stroked his cheek, tracing the soft flesh rubber. The biometric skin had been torn in chunks from the face, revealing the crude mechanical skull and brain behind it. It too had been bashed and broken, and the automaton sat lifeless against the wall.

"Hameed?" Mariam said. "Hameed?"

But there was no response. The one remaining eye stared into nothing. Mariam was shaken, for this was a kind of violence she had seldom experienced, and Hameed was her friend.

He had been a general purpose caregiver-automaton, the sort they used to have installed in old people's homes. He was old, had been made obsolete years before. Usually they'd dump the mannequins afterwards into recycling but Hameed escaped that fate and lived out on the street. He was always very chatty and he smiled a lot and people seemed to like him.

She wiped her eyes. Stood up, looked at the damage. It must have been kids, teenagers who did this. With crowbars or anything crude, some sort of bat. Mariam shook with anger. She called the shurta.

Other passers-by went round, ignoring the sight of the broken automaton. On a balcony on the other side of the road two women were having tea. A fruit-juice seller went past with his cart. A group of Djibouti bankers went past in faded suits.

Djibouti, situated on the Horn of Africa and the Gate of Tears, was the central hub of underwater cables linking Asia, Africa and Europe. They had gradually gained in political and economic importance as the digital overlaid the physical.

But they paid no attention to Hameed, either.

It wasn't long before a shurta cruiser pulled up, and an officer stepped out. The car was a sporty Marconi, striped green and white, with a curved sword on the side, and the officer was slightly less sporty, but with neatly trimmed black hair and polished shoes and an easy smile.

"Hey, Mariam," he said.

"Nasir," she said, relieved. She had known him since kindergarten, his mother had been friends with Mariam's. "I didn't know you worked midtown."

"I'm a sergeant now," he said, smiling a little self-consciously. "What seems to be the problem, Mariam?"

"It's Hameed," she said. "He's been murdered."

Nasir dropped the smile and approached the prone body of the automaton. He knelt down to look at the damage.

"I'm sorry," he said.

"You knew him?"

"Everyone knew Hameed. He was practically a fixture of the neighbourhood."

"So? Can you do something? Can you catch whoever did this?"

Nasir straightened. Looked at her closely.

"Would you like some tea?" he said. "There is a place around the corner from here."

"Can you catch them!" she said.

"Mariam, it's not a person," Nasir said. "It's just a chatbot with a face. It was designed to be appealing to people, but there was no consciousness, nothing but a set of pre-scripted responses in a neural network. It's not like one of the *real*

robots, the old humanoid ones they made for the old wars."

"But you can't—!" she said. "You can't just not—"

"I could get them for property damage," he said, "only Hameed wasn't anyone's property, he was, well, discarded. I suppose someone would have to clean it up, so maybe you could get them on littering. Yes—" He brightened. "Littering is a serious crime. We're always on the lookout for—"

But she was no longer listening to him. She nodded, politely, when he spoke, and when he offered her tea again she shook her head, No, thank you, and Yes, I'm quite all right, and then he called it in to the street maintenance crew to come and clean up, and then he was gone again.

But before he'd left he said, "Look, it was really nice running into you again." He shifted from foot to foot.

"Would you like to, I don't know, go out for dinner one night? Catch up on old times, you know . . ." he trailed off.

"Sure," she said. "Sure. I'd like that."

"All right, then." And he smiled that beaming smile again. "Then I guess I'll see you."

"I'll see you, Nasir."

Then he was gone, and she was left alone with the robot.

Mariam took the bus. Like the other vehicles it was fully automated and air-conditioned, and it took her away from midtown and to the edges. As she approached Nineveh Quarter the streets became a little dirtier (but not too dirty) and the wind carried more sand. When she stepped out of the bus

the sun was setting and over the desert she could hear the rumble of thunder. She slipped on her sunglasses and walked the rest of the way, dogs barking, children running barefoot, market stalls spilling out their wares. This was where the very many human workers of the city lived: the cooks and cleaners and the waiting staff, the manicurists and the hair stylists, house keepers, nurses and security guards, the ushers and attendants.

People like her. People who thought even an old robot might be a friend, not just a thing to throw away when you were done with it. She went to visit her mother at the home. Her mother looked good today, more vibrant, talking animatedly when Mariam came in.

"Your father will be back tonight," her mother said. "And we'll go out for dinner, and then to that halo-halo place you like. Wouldn't that be nice?'

"Yes, Mama. It will be very nice," Mariam said. Her father was long dead, and the halo-halo place closed down years earlier. She said, "I saw Hameed today.'

"The robot? You always liked him," her mother said. "Ever since you were a little girl. They're good with kids."

Her mother had worked in just such a home as she'd ended up in. That was where Mariam had met Hameed. Her mother could remember the past with startling clarity. It was the present that forever evaded her grasp.

"Yes," Mariam said. "Are you well, Mama?"

Her mother's hand rested on hers. Mariam looked at her mother's hand and marvelled at its spots and wrinkles, remembering again being a child, her mother's strong hands,

how gently she'd wash her in the bath. The hands unlined then, and still unmarked by years and the ravages of time.

"I'm well, Mariam. You worry too much." Her mother sat back and sighed. "Your father will be back soon . . . then we'll go out for dinner. We can stop at that halo-halo place you like so much. What do you think, love?"

"I'd like that, Mama," Mariam said.

Mariam took her shopping through the thronged streets to her apartment block. It had started to rain and the mud overflowed through the broken slab stones of the street. Kids rode around on electric scooters and shopkeepers put out hurricane lamps to hang from their awnings, as the power to this part of the city was often cut unexpectedly if it were needed elsewhere. When she got to her building at last the elevator wasn't working again. She climbed the stairs, at last reaching the apartment. She unlocked the door. In the small kitchen, she chopped garlic, set a pot of okra in tomato sauce to cook. She went to the balcony, lit a rare, illicit tobacco cigarette. One of her neighbours sold them and, on a night like this, no one was going to report her.

She stood on the balcony, looking out to the desert beyond the city. Lightning flashed out in the direction of Mecca, and the wind howled up here, driving with it rain-sodden sand.

She thought about the broken automaton, and whether Li and Smirnov would decide to have that baby and, if so, what colour eyes it'd have. She thought about the little money she'd

been saving up, each month, after all the bills and the expenses on her mother. She thought about Nasir, and whether she would call him back.

It would be nice, she thought, to have someone to bring her flowers.

2.
THE CARAVAN

Around the same time and some three hundred miles away as the quail flies, a boy was watching the approach of a Green Caravanserai from the top of an abandoned tower situated on the Ghost Coast of the Sinai Desert.

The boy's name was Saleh.

He watched the caravaners' approach.

The great khans slinkied across the sand, building and rebuilding themselves as they moved.

Between them came goats and slithering robots. Solar kites soared high above on the winds. Distant robed figures walked with the herds and children ran between the great khans.

Behind them all came the elephants.

The outlines of empty swimming pools dotted the landscape between Saleh and the caravaners. Bavarian castles jostled against Egyptian pyramids. A vintage American diner sat next to an abandoned Alhambra still maintained by rusty robots.

The Ghost Coast ran all the way from the ancient border with what was now the entwined dual polity of the digitally-federated Judea Palestina Union, to Sharm El-Sheikh near the tip of the peninsula.

Beyond it lay the Sinai, eternal and hostile to humans as it had always been.

Saleh gathered his courage. He slid down stairwells and in and out of windows. For just a moment he thought he saw the silhouette of a woman standing beside one of the empty swimming pools. She turned and looked at him and then she vanished, if she was there at all.

He put the apparition out of his mind and headed to the Green Caravanserai.

It was not *protocol* to go alone. The Abu-Ala foraged the Ghost Coast for old machines and they had long ago made arrangements with the caravaners, so Salah would be going against both tribe wishes and simple decorum.

But he had nothing lose. He had nothing but despair.

He crossed the road and came to the perimeter of the Caravanserai and stopped.

A strange caravaner boy with goggles slid down from the top of a khan tower and came to meet him. He stopped just behind the invisible line.

The two boys stared at each other.

Saleh wasn't going to let them intimidate him. Even though he *was* intimidated.

Two tiny crawling robots came over the line and examined him with feelers extended. Saleh felt hidden weapons trained on him.

The other boy said, "Try not to move."

Saleh stood very still. He took a deep breath. He said, "My name is Saleh Mohammed Ishak Abu-Ala Al-Tirabin."

At this the other boy looked more interested. "You are an Abu-Ala?"

"Yes."

"You are not the designated contact," the boy said.

"No."

"So why are you here?"

Saleh was sweating, though the air was chilly. He said, "I have something."

"So?"

"Something to trade."

The boy looked interested again. "Is it valuable?" he said.

"I think so."

The boy seemed to consider. "Still," he said. "We deal with the tribe, not with individual scavengers. It makes everything easier. Safe."

Saleh said, "There is only me."

"Excuse me?"

Saleh swallowed.

"There is only me," he said quietly.

And then he started to cry.

The other boy's name was Elias. Saleh sat miserably on a mat while Elias brewed sage tea.

Saleh accepted the tea gratefully.

Elias brought out pistachios and hard biscuits. He set them on a plate and sat cross-legged opposite Saleh.

"What happened to them?" he said. He spoke gently.

Saleh shrugged.

"We were excavating in Dahab," he said. "It used to be a robotnik nest during the second, no, maybe the third war. You must have seen the satellite pictures of Dahab, right? It had a terrorartist attack in the fourth war and the whole place is suspended in a sort of still-ongoing explosion, but if you wear a null suit you can navigate through the temporality maze—anyway. We were digging. Dahab's full of valuable old stuff, it's just hard to get. Then, something . . . broke loose." He blinked. "I don't know what. A ghost."

"A *ghost*?" Elias said.

Saleh shrugged again, helplessly. "One of the old Israeli robotniks, I think. It was still alive somehow, inside the explosion. Most power sources don't work inside the terrorartist installation so we bring in portable fusion generators when we go in. I think my father brushed too close to the old robotnik and somehow it drew power from the generator and, and it came alive. They were cyborgs, with biological brains but mostly machine otherwise. I don't even know if it was *alive* in any real sense, only responding to what it saw as battle. So it came loose and it killed my father and the rest of. . . . It killed everyone.'

"I am sorry," Elias said.

Saleh closed his eyes. The tea cup felt warm between his hands.

"Everyone else was away," he said quietly. He had to get the words out. Had to tell Elias what happened. In a way it was a relief.

"Most of the tribe's down in Sharm or St. Catherine's. But I got it, you see." He opened his eyes and stared at the other boy, this Elias, with his strange goggles and short cropped hair and curious, interested gaze.

"You got it? What?" the boy said.

"The thing we were looking for." Excitement quickened in him then. "My grandfather Ishak and my father, Mohammed, they kept looking. Even though it was dangerous. Even though it was hard. Every year the terrorartist bubble moves outwards just a little. It is still alive, the explosion still happening. You know much about terrorart?"

"A little. Rohini started it, didn't she? The Jakarta Event."

"Time-dilation bombs," Saleh said. "Yes, Rohini. There were others. 'Mad' Rucker who seeded the Boppers on Titan. Sandoval, who made the installation called 'Earthrise' out of stolen minds on the moon. There were never many. And they were mass murderers, every one. But the art, I know people are still interested in it."

"There are collectors," Elias said. "Museums, too. What did you find?"

"This," Saleh said, simply. He opened his bag and took out a small metal canister. It felt so light. "It's the time-dilation bomb."

Silent alarms must have gone off somewhere, because a

moment later he had caravaners and drones both surround him. He never even heard them coming.

Elias let out a slow exhalation of breath. "And how did we miss that?" he said.

"It's empty," Saleh said. "The explosion, Dahab, everything? It's still going on. My father, my uncle, they're still inside it. An endless death, still happening. The robotnik pulled them into the field. Only I got out."

He didn't dare move. The weapons were on him.

Elias said, "May I see it?"

"Of course."

Saleh gave it to the other boy.

He could see numbers dance behind Elias's goggles. Elias nodded and the weapons around Saleh relaxed, if only a little.

Elias said, "It's genuine. That's a real find."

"I told you," Saleh said, defiant.

"You speak for your tribe?" Elias said.

"I speak for myself."

"And the Abu-Ala? Where do the rest of your people stand on this?" Elias said.

Saleh shook his head. Carefully. "This is mine," he said. "It is all that is left. The others will appoint a new speaker in time."

"What do you want for this?"

"I want enough," Saleh said. He was desperate. "It's priceless, an original terrorartist artefact."

"That is it." Elias turned it over in his hands. Saleh knew it was lighter than it looked.

Elias said, "What do you need the money *for*?"

Saleh said, "There is nothing for me here. I want to go away. Far away. I thought. . . ." He stared into a space only he could see. "There's a place called Central Station. It's just the other side of the sea, and then beyond the desert. They say you can find anything there. They say you can get a ship off Earth as easy as getting a boat. I would like that. I would like go on a ship. Travel up to Gateway. Then farther still."

"Mars?" Elias said. "The moon?"

"Titan," Saleh said. "I always wanted to see Titan."

Saleh could see apology in Elias' eyes.

"You can't run away," Elias said, as gently as he could. "Even in space, you'd still just be yourself. And lonelier than you could ever imagine."

"Maybe," Saleh said. "But I have to get out."

"I'm sorry," Elias said. He shook his head. "It's rare," he said. "It's valuable. There's no question about it. But it's just an empty bomb husk. Even with provenance. You'd have to find the right collector, and even then. . . . It won't get you to Mars. It would barely get you a one-way ticket on the 'stalk. We would buy it off you, of course. But we are wholesalers, not collectors. I can't offer you what you want and, even if you could somehow sell it at full price somewhere else it won't be as much as you'd want."

Inside Saleh, hope died.

"My father, my uncle, my cousins, everyone . . ." he said.

"Yes," Elias said.

"All for nothing," Saleh said.

"Not nothing," Elias said.

Saleh barely heard him. He stared at that awful, empty

husk. So many lives. And so many still caught in that explosion, the final installation of a mad artist who took delight in destruction and death.

He could go back, he thought. Go find the rest of the Abu-Ala, follow the coast to Sharm.

He didn't want to, he realised. Even before it all happened, he did not want to live his life this way. Scavenging old tech in the crumbling, rotting, endless maze of kitsch architecture on the Ghost Coast. Marrying, and having a family, so one day he'd have a son, so one day his name would pass on along with the tribe's.

He wanted to see Al Imtidad, he realised. He wanted to see the glitterball underwater cities of the Drift, or the view of Earth as seen from the observation decks of Gateway high in orbit. He wanted the moon. He wanted Mars.

Instead he was here.

He couldn't, wouldn't, go back, he thought. He shook his head. He blinked back tears.

"Thank you," he said, formally. He took back the find. The bomb. "I will find a buyer. I will go—"

"How will you go?" Elias said.

Saleh felt trapped. "I will go," he said. "I will find a way."

"You could come with us."

Saleh looked at Elias. The other boy was smiling.

"You could be useful," Elias said. "And we can always use a steady set of hands." He tapped his goggles, which must have connected him with the rest of the caravaners, Saleh realised. "It is already decided by quorum. If you would like to, that is."

"Where do you go?" Saleh said.

Elias shrugged. "Along the coast, still, for a while. Then back through the desert before the summer comes. Perhaps to Bahrain."

"Where the Emir of Restoring and Balancing sits on its throne?" Saleh had dreamed of visiting that island, too.

"There is a market there for antiques amongst both digitals and humans," Elias told him. "You will come?"

"I . . ."

Saleh saw himself reflected in the other's goggles: small, human, afraid.

But Elias extended his hand to Saleh. His hand was warm in Saleh's grip.

"Yes," Saleh said.

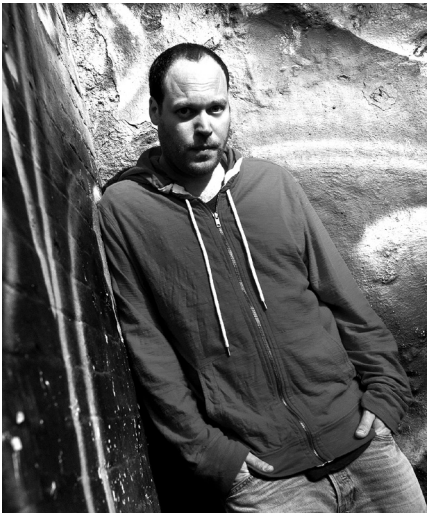
"Good," Elias said simply. They rose together from the woven mat.

"Tell me," Elias said, smiling. "Have you ever met an elephant?"

Saleh shook his head. He was smiling, too.

"Then let me take you," Elias said. "They'd love to meet you, you know."

And together, the two boys left the khan, hand in hand, and wandered off into the enclave of the Green Caravanserai; where a herd of elephants was playing in the mud.



Internationally renowned author Lavie Tidhar has been compared to Philip K. Dick by the *Guardian* and to Kurt Vonnegut by *Locus.* He works across genres, combining detective and thriller modes with poetry, science fiction, historical, and autobiographical material.

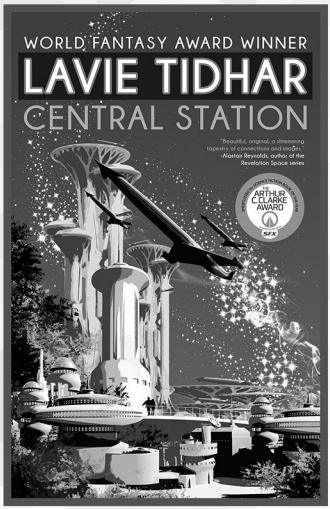
Tidhar's breakout novel *Central Station* received the John W. Campbell Memorial Award and the Neukom Literary Arts Award; it was nominated for the Arthur C. Clarke and Locus awards. *Central Station* has been translated into more than ten languages, and won a Nebula Award in China.

Tidhar's next novel, *Unholy Land*, was a Prix Planète SF winner, shortlisted for the Locus, Campbell, Sidewise, and Dragon awards, and was on best of the year lists from *NPR Books*, *Library Journal*, and *Publishers Weekly*. Tidhar's 2021 novel, *The Escapement*, is currently a 2021 Philip K. Dick

Award nominee, and was a *Publishers Weekly* Top-10 Forthcoming Fantasy Title, a *Foreword* Book of the Day**,** and on the Locus Recommended Reading list. His other awards the World Fantasy and British Fantasy Awards for his novel *Osama*, a British Science Fiction Award for Best Nonfiction, and the Jerwood Fiction Uncovered Prize for *A Man Lies Dreaming*.

In addition to his fiction and nonfiction, Tidhar is the editor of the acclaimed Apex Best of World Science Fiction series, and a columnist for the *Washington Post*. His media appearances include Channel 4 News and BBC London Radio. His speaking appearances include Cambridge University, English PEN, the Singapore Writers Festival. Tidhar has been a Guest of Honour at book conventions in Japan, Poland, Spain, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, China, and elsewhere. He is currently a Visiting Professor and Writer in Residence at Richmond, the American International University.

Lavie Tidhar grew up on a kibbutz in Israel and has lived all over the world, including South Africa, Vanuatu, Laos, and the UK. He currently resides with his family in London.



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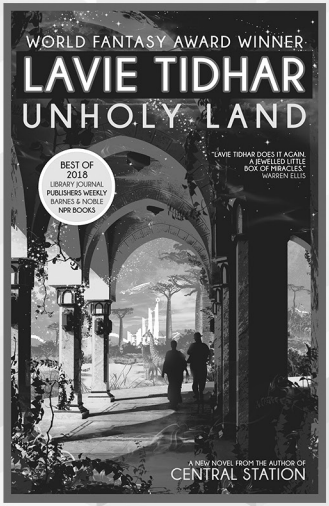

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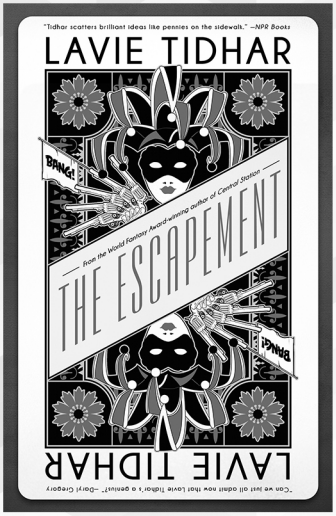

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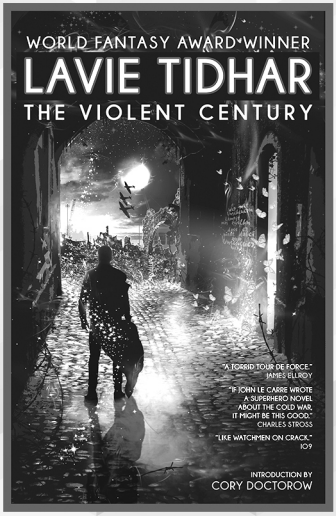

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