



Alex: The Commandant Camille Verhoeven Trilogy

By Pierre Lemaitre

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Upon winning the prestigious 2013 Crime Writers Association International Dagger Award, the judges praised Alex by saying, "An original and absorbing ability to leash incredulity in the name of the fictional contract between author and reader... A police procedural, a thriller against time, a race between hunted and hunter, and a whydunnit, written from multiple points of view that explore several apparently parallel stories which finally meet."

Alex Prevost--kidnapped, savagely beaten, suspended from the ceiling of an abandoned warehouse in a tiny wooden cage--is running out of time. Her abductor appears to want only to watch her die. Will hunger, thirst, or the rats get her first?

Apart from a shaky eyewitness report of the abduction, Police Commandant Camille Verhoeven has nothing to go on: no suspect, no leads, and no family or friends anxious to find a missing loved one. The diminutive and brilliant detective knows from bitter experience the urgency of finding the missing woman as quickly as possible--but first he must understand more about her.

As he uncovers the details of the young woman's singular history, Camille is forced to acknowledge that the person he seeks is no ordinary victim. She is beautiful, yes, but also extremely tough and resourceful. Before long, saving Alex's life will be the least of Commandant Verhoeven's considerable challenges.

A 2013 *Financial Times* Book of the Year
Shortlisted for the 2014 RUSA Reading List Horror Award

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

An Amazon Best Book of the Month, September 2013: A young woman has been kidnapped and the clock is ticking on her very life, but before persistent detective Camille Verhoeven can save her, he has to figure out who she is. We, meanwhile, know exactly where she is: squeezed into a tiny wooden cage, being starved and brutally tortured both physically and psychologically. But why? It's through Verhoeven's investigation that we find our answers. This three-act crime thriller is the second book in what is known overseas as "The Commandant Camille Verhoeven Trilogy," but it is the first to be translated from French to English. From the first page, it's gut-wrenchingly graphic, emotionally exhausting, and almost impossible to put down until the end. --*Robin A. Rothman*

From [Booklist](#)

During the reign of Louis XVI, a cage was designed to inflict maximum torture. It was built so that the person in it could barely move his or her limbs. Muscles would atrophy, totally crippling the inhabitant. In this horror-film-like French suspense story, this type of cage has been updated and suspended from the ceiling of an abandoned warehouse filled with rats. After a young woman is forced into a van off a Paris street, police know their time is very limited to find the victim before she's murdered. Police Commandant Camille Verhoeven, whose own wife was kidnapped and killed, is forced into taking on the case, which moves, quickly, from kidnap to hostage drama. The details concerning the woman in the cage are reminiscent of Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum" in their mounting despair. What the police uncover about the young woman sets them off in another, equally disturbing direction. Verhoeven's knowledge of kidnapping—how it's a special crime, marked by a great deal of planning and with a demanding time line—is fascinating. Filled with many twists and turns of plot, along with a huge surprise. --*Connie Fletcher*

Review

"An auspicious English-language debut . . . With quiet virtuosity, Lemaitre moves the narrative through its various levels toward a concluding act of retribution that is both ingeniously conceived and immensely satisfying. Tricky, disturbing and ultimately affecting, *Alex* is a welcome addition to the rising tide of European crime fiction that has followed in the wake of Stieg Larsson's death. Larsson's many readers should take this book to their hearts and should find themselves waiting, with some degree of impatience, for the next Verhoeven novel to appear."? *Bill Sheehan, The Washington Post Book World*

"An eloquent thriller with a denouement that raises eyebrows as it speeds the pulse."? *Kirkus Reviews (Starred Review)*

"An original and absorbing ability to leash incredulity in the name of the fictional contract between author and reader... A police procedural, a thriller against time, a race between hunted and hunter, and a whydunnit, written from multiple points of view that explore several apparently parallel stories which finally meet."? *CWA International Dagger Award Judges citation*

"Before you can say *Gone Girl*, he discovers the crime is far from random and Alex anything but an ordinary victim. This gritty page-turner, *Alex*, is the first in a promised trilogy. *Plus, s'il vous plait.*"? *Thom Geier, Entertainment Weekly*

"Fascinating . . . filled with many twists and turns of plot along with a huge surprise."? *Connie Fletcher, Booklist*

"Genuinely unpredictable in a way few suspense novels are."?Charles Finch, *USA Today*

"Will keep you turning pages until well past your bedtime--with all the lights on, of course."?Library *Journal*

"Lemaitre's impressive American debut . . . unexpected plot twists will keep readers turning the pages."?Publishers Weekly (*Starred and Boxed Review*)

"Lemaitre's plot is laid out with mathematical precision: a beautiful woman is kidnapped, stripped naked, thrown into a cage and subjected to the systematic torture of a brutal captor . . . Revenge narratives go all the way back to the Greeks, but it's the *vagina dentate* component that sets a specimen like *Alex* apart, as Lemaitre adapts Larsson's blueprint with moves of his own."?Marilyn Stasio, *The New York Times Book Review*

"Relentlessly gripping . . . Various subtle variations of the crime novel are handled with aplomb . . . By page 200 you may believe that you're moving to a pulse-raising conclusion. But you will be wrong; in some senses, the novel has only just begun."?Barry Forshaw, *Independent*

"The winner of countless French crime-writing prizes, Lemaitre is far too canny to join the ranks of thriller authors who merely revel in disturbing details and gory crimes. Where another novel would have finished, *Alex* is just beginning, and the book moves from read-as-fast-as-you-can horror to an intricately plotted race to a dark truth . . . There's humour here, and characters to return to, but really *Alex* is about thrills. And as the novel barrels triumphantly towards its unexpected but satisfying conclusion, it's in this respect that it deliver."?Alison Flood, *The Observer*

"What begins as a search for a missing person soon becomes a beguiling series of investigations linked only by *Alex*, a Parisian version of Lisbeth Salander. Camille, volatile, brilliant and just under 5 feet tall, is an equally riveting figure."?John Dugdale, *The Sunday Times*

"Hypnotic . . . [A] remarkably determined and dangerous young woman--a woman who admittedly makes Lisbeth Salander look like Mary Poppins."?Raven Crime Reads

"*Alex* had me gripped more than almost any book I can remember, with one shout-out-aloud, knockout twist after another."

?Peter James, #1 NYT-bestselling author of the *DS Roy Grace novels*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Marilyn Daniels:

In this 21st one hundred year, people become competitive in every single way. By being competitive today, people have do something to make them survives, being in the middle of often the crowded place and notice through surrounding. One thing that often many people have underestimated the idea for a while is reading. Yeah, by reading a guide your ability to survive raise then having chance to remain than other is high. For yourself who want to start reading some sort of book, we give you this *Alex: The Commandant Camille Verhoeven Trilogy* book as basic and daily reading reserve. Why, because this book is more than just a book.

Barbara Spangler:

The feeling that you get from Alex: The Commandant Camille Verhoeven Trilogy is a more deep you digging the information that hide inside words the more you get considering reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to know but Alex: The Commandant Camille Verhoeven Trilogy giving you excitement feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in a number of way that can be understood by simply anyone who read that because the author of this publication is well-known enough. This kind of book also makes your current vocabulary increase well. That makes it easy to understand then can go along with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We highly recommend you for having this specific Alex: The Commandant Camille Verhoeven Trilogy instantly.

George Pinard:

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