



## **Bound**

*Alan Baxter*

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

# Bound

*Alan Baxter*

## **Bound** Alan Baxter

Alex Caine, a fighter by trade, is drawn into a world he never knew existed - a world he wishes he'd never found.

Alex Caine is a martial artist fighting in illegal cage matches. His powerful secret weapon is an unnatural vision that allows him to see his opponents' moves before they know their intentions themselves.

After a fight one night, an enigmatic Englishman, Patrick Welby, claims to know Alex's secret. Welby shows Alex how to unleash a breathtaking realm of magic and power, drawing him into a mind-bending adventure beyond his control. And control is something Alex values above all else.

Shortlisted for the 2015 Ditmar awards - Best Novel

"I had a lot of fun reading Alan Baxter's BOUND... It's a teeth-gnashing, shadow-chasing, magesign-riddled sexy beast of a thing!" Margo Lanagan

"It blew me away" Kylie Chan

## **Bound Details**

Date : Published May 23rd 2016 by Voyager - AU (first published July 1st 2014)

ISBN : 9781460752357

Author : Alan Baxter

Format : Paperback 352 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Urban Fantasy, Paranormal, Magic, Thriller, Dark Fantasy

 [Download Bound ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Bound ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online Bound Alan Baxter**

---

## From Reader Review Bound for online ebook

### Jennifer (bunnyreads) says

This is a grisly urban fantasy with touches of horror, it's full of violence, language, sex, and fight scenes!

It's no secret (or maybe it is? if you haven't read my reviews), but I am a huge fan of fight scenes. Hand to hand, swords, big epics fights, whatever- bring 'em on! That this was bound (Haha, see what I did there) to be full of them, was a point in favor of this book right off. And it was full of them, but even better, it wasn't too full of them. They were top-notch (especially the later ones), well-paced and varied and most importantly they didn't feel like they were there to pad out a non-existent story.

I liked the different approach to the urban fantasy setting too. The jet-setting gave this more of a thriller vibe, giving it just that something different and the magic and the connection to the fae and the kin, get this far away from the usual supernatural "monsters". I'd put this more in line with the Skorkowsky's Valduncan series, than with Dresden- if I had to pigeon hole it

Alex comes across as a bit of a dick at first, in my opinion. He touchy and snarly and just not overly friendly at all, but he is also in a bad situation almost from the get-go. The likable side does come as we see some of his struggles and get to know him along the way.

That delay in connecting to Alex may be why this got off to a bit of a rocky start with me but once I settled into the book, it was a ride and a half! I am looking forward to seeing where the author takes this series.

I won this in a goodreads giveaway which was awesome, but in no way, affects my review.

---

### Dirk Flinthart says

REVIEW: "BOUND" BY ALAN BAXTER

One of the oldest adages in the world of writing fiction is "Write What You Know". It may not be a perfect formula, but it's a bloody good place to start, and it's served Alan Baxter well with his new novel Bound, the first in a series about protagonist Alex Caine, from Harper Voyager.

Caine is an illegal ring fighter, and a very successful one at that. The book opens in the ring, straight into the action, and it keeps going from there. In fairly short order we discover that Caine is not just a highly skilled martial artist, but he has a secret ability — the capacity to foresee his opponent's intent and actions by reading their 'shades'. Without much ado, Caine is embroiled in troubles with a match-fixer, leading him to accept an offer to travel to London with a mysterious man who says he knows Caine's secret. And once in London...

The pacing of the book is very strong. Baxter moves us from fights to revelations of deep magic, into the centre of a hidden world steeped in ancient lore with lashings of creepy creatures and violent confrontations. In true and appropriate form, Caine is revealed to be an unusually gifted Mage and is quickly drawn into a

quest to destroy a terrible grimoire linked with an unspeakably dangerous entity from the distant past. His allies are a shapeshifting half-Fey with a penchant for rough sex, and an incalculably powerful magical stone broken into three shards which must be reunited if Caine is to have any hope of saving himself from the influence of the grimoire.

The book's strengths are also Baxter's: himself a practitioner of a form of kung fu, Baxter draws upon his knowledge to provide Caine with not only a string of believable, fast-paced fight sequences, but a deeper code upon which to shape his behaviour. This last is important, because while the book overtly is about Caine's quest to destroy the grimoire and the being — 'Uthentia' — associated with it, much of the conflict that drives the narrative lies in Caine's efforts to maintain his control and his humanity as the influence of the grimoire increases.

In another sense, this strength is also a potential weakness. In this book we are introduced to Caine, and we know him only through his fighting skills and his martial discipline. We discover that he was orphaned, and lived rough for a while before finding a sifu — a master — to guide him, and from that day on he has essentially lived a life on the fringes: he fights, he wins, and in between he lives quietly, alone in the country.

That's enough for a first book, especially one as pacy and action-oriented as *Bound*. The reader is invited in for a fast, dangerous ride, and Baxter delivers precisely that — with a few touches of wry humour here and there, particularly amidst the support characters. Nevertheless, this is only the first Alex Caine novel, and it draws the protagonist (and the reader) into a very high-powered, fast-moving world with some truly fearsome enemies.

In other words, fun as *Bound* is, Baxter is setting himself a hell of a challenge for the next book. In a genre where enemies traditionally get bigger and badder with each new instalment, we're already pretty far up the power scale. And in the meantime, we've really only been shown one aspect of Alex Caine. Somehow, the next book is going to have to give Caine room to grow and move, while still keeping the action rolling.

It's going to be fun to watch!

(Oh — and bonus points to readers of Australian horror and fantasy who spot the Tuckerised characters in the narrative!)

*Bound* by Alan Baxter  
Dark Urban Fantasy Fiction  
Publisher: Harper Voyager, 2014  
ISBN: 978-0-7322991-0-1

---

## Shaheen says

This is the first Alan Baxter book I've picked up, and I'm certainly going to be back for more!

I loved the gritty, bloody, dangerous world that Baxter introduces in this book — Alex Caine is quickly taken from the world he knows (which isn't exactly safe and wholesome, him being partial to illegal cage fighting) to one of magic and mortal peril, populated by blood-thirsty Fey and an evil Godling. I enjoyed uncovering the world alongside him, meeting the Clan Lords and learning about the different types of Fey.

I must admit that Alex took to the world too quickly, and he resisted it for too long. That's confusing, so let me explain. A stranger turns up and goes 'Oh Alex, you know how you can read people? Well that's magic. Come help me with a mysterious magical task I have for you!', and Alex is on a plane in a few hours. Of course, the situation is more complex than this, but when we come right down to it, I think Alex followed Welby too readily. But this eagerness disappeared quickly when Alex was confronted with Silhouette and the truth about Fey creatures. Alex had no problem believing in the magic of the book, the influence that Uthentia has, the powers of the Darak stone, but he needed vampires and werewolves explained to him three different times? Even I understood what Silhouette was saying the first time around.

Otherwise Alex Caine is a kick-butt protagonist and I liked journeying all over the world with him. One of my favourite things was how Alex was no longer bound by the mundane constraints we all are: lack of passports, money, and a change of clothes didn't slow down his adventures one bit. I like this because all too often readers are expected to believe in amazing magic but the characters are still concerned with relatively mundane things, which doesn't make sense to me.

Alex becomes *Bound* to a cursed book early in the novel, and the longer he is in possession of it, the more his personality and motivations change because of its evil influence. Because it affects his psychology, Alex begins to have difficulty differentiating between what he wants and what the book is making him do. It increases the frustration, anger and rage that he feels and constantly pushes him to violence. Predictably, he finds that Silhouette can help him channel that aggression in bed and satiate the rage, but that leads to increasingly violent sexual encounters. I was uncomfortable with this for many reasons, but this situation was in keeping with the dark tone of this book, which includes a lot of blood, violence, and death.

In addition to an interesting protagonist, Baxter has created a varied and complex secondary cast, including side-kick/romantic interest Silhouette and the evil duo Mr Hood and Miss Sparks. Although I couldn't bring myself to like Silhouette – she's entirely too predictable – I did find Sparks and Hood compelling as the bad guys. The relationship between the two is shown through Sparks' eyes. I initially thought that she either hated Hood and was waiting for an opportunity to kill him, getting revenge for the depraved things he did to her, or she was somehow compelled to satisfy him, perhaps by magic. But the reality is even stranger and I liked this aspect of the book. I'm disappointed that Sparks will probably not feature in the sequels (although I can't say for sure).

I've enjoyed *Bound* a lot and encourage readers who like their urban fantasy dark and gritty to pick it up. Fans of *Butcher* and *Wendig* won't be disappointed. I'm looking forward to reading the next two books in the Alex Caine series, *Obsidian* and *Abduction*, which will be released soon by HarperVoyager.

A copy of this book was provided by the publisher for review.  
You can read more of my reviews at [Speculating on SpecFic](#) .

---

## Geoff says

Loved this.

A great urban fantasy based around an underground-fighter dragged kicking and screaming into a world of magic and mayhem.

The revelation of the mysteries that flow throughout *Bound* are timed perfectly to maintain and escalate the reader's interest, keeping up a pace that encourages rather than bores or overstimulates. The plot moves along nicely, and ticks all the boxes. The character development is great, and the overall charm of *Bound* shines through without being lost in the writing itself.

Great read. Highly recommended.

## Leesidge says

I'm not into magical thrillers, but this one, I liked reading. Alex is a good character, he is a tortured soul, and finds a fellow tortured soul on his journey. I loved the familiar scenes of Sydney, the South Coast, Newtown (I love Newtown!) and other countries, but knowing that this book is essentially an Australian based book, was the catch for me.

---

## Lilyn G. | Sci-Fi & Scary says

Bound wasn't an easy book for me to read. I had some initial reservations about it, but as I do love the occasional dark fantasy book, I decided to give it a shot. Alas, Bound and I never quite bonded. It is the perfect dark/urban fantasy read for readers who love the Chosen one spiel. It is also absolutely absent of even a whisper of a love triangle. The epic quest is, indeed, epic, and the evil guys are very evil. The Chosen one, as one might expect, does have trouble coming to terms with his powers, but eventually begins to master them. Soon he is a force to be reckoned with, but you know everyone's going to try.

Alex Caine is the macho man with the dark past that he doesn't talk about. His companion is a feisty, sexy female who attaches herself to him for non-epic reasons. Actually, most of the men portrayed in Bound come across as strong/macho characters except for a few bit-player parts. Sex and sexuality play a large role in Bound. If you like your 'adult interactions' to be on the violent and/or demeaning side, you're sure to be pleased. Unfortunately, sexuality is part of the problem with Bound. All the female characters ooze sex appeal and/or seek validation through it. That, combined with Caine's macho-man persona, give the story a 'teenage boy fantasy' air that is not particularly appealing.

But, Bound is not awfully written and I don't want to give the impression that is. While I do think the author has some more skill development to do, it's obvious the talent is there. Bound is held back by a bit too much introspective weight around its middle, and a cup full of 'struggle for control and temptation' where periodic dashes would do better instead. However, mostly this is simply not a book that appealed to me. I prefer, when I dabble in fantasy, to deal in ghosties, ghouls, and things that go bump in the night. My urban fantasy needs wise-cracking anti-heroes that you want to smack even as you can't help but root for them. Bound is a more traditional fantasy read in an urban/modern setting.

Still, I have no doubt that there is a large market out there that would enjoy Bound. The action sequences were fun to read and easy to visualize. Alex Caine is the book version of the on-screen action hero. As the series develops and Alan Baxter has a chance to refine his writing and flesh out his characters, I think there's a pleasant surprise awaiting. (There are two other books out in the series as of the time of this review, but I obviously have not read them, so I can only guess.)

Disclaimer: I received a copy of this book free from the author for review consideration.

---

## Jodie How says

A fast paced, supernatural fantasy. A wonderfully entertaining read.

In a small way, reminiscent of Lord of the Rings.

Bound feels very comfortable and familiar in its story construct. However, also original and exciting. Like all Baxter's work, it hits the mark.

Read this and you're going to get covered in a decent amount of gross monster guts :0).

I'll definitely be reading Obsidian and Abduction. I'm thoroughly invested in Alex and Sil's adventure.

---

### **S.B. Wright says**

It's great to follow a writer and see that hard work and persistence pays off. Alan Baxter is one such writer and it was great news to see that he had secured a three book deal with HarperVoyager for the Alex Caine series.

Bound is the first book in the series and introduces us to Alex Caine, an MMA fighter who uses what he thinks are unique abilities to sense his opponents intentions before they act. He fights in Sydney's underground Martial Arts cage matches, coasting along, making a decent living until he's approached by a mysterious Englishman named Welby, who suggests that Alex could do much more with his abilities.

A reclusive sort, Caine initially rebuffs (although rebuff is putting this nicely – Alex Caine swears like you'd think an illegal cage fighter might) Welby. That is until a crime boss, who has lost money on Caine's fight, makes a short holiday to London with Welby sound like a better idea. What follows is an escalating adventure that mixes epic dark urban fantasy with thriller pacing.

Bound is noticeably different to Baxter's earlier series both in terms of craft and genre. As I noted above the Alex Caine series is a fusion of thriller and Urban Fantasy. The pressure doesn't let up the entire novel. It's a polished piece of work. Baxter's earlier works are more in the vein of horror/dark fantasy adventures. Bound feels like Baxter's trimmed down the prose to fighting readiness and he's come out swinging.

I'd compare this series to Jim Butcher's work in terms of Urban Fantasy, though whereas Butcher riffs of hard boiled tropes, Baxter most definitely riffs of the thriller genre. I also found Bound to be a little more adult in tone and delivery. I am so thankful that HarperVoyager allowed the swearing and the dark fantasy/horror elements to come through. Nothing worse than having a hard as nails cage fighter, talk as if he's got a plum in his mouth. The darkness, violence and sex might turn some readers off but I think Baxter and HarperVoyager are treating us as adults with this one and that's refreshing, it's not gratuitous but when you have flesh eating fey and bloodsports there is enough there to maintain our suspension of disbelief.

I imagine Jason Strathairn for the movie role.

This book was provided by the author.

---

### **Philip Fracassi says**

A wonderful dark urban fantasy -- very well-written and fast-paced with characters you come to care about. The first of a trilogy (I'll be snatching up 2 and 3 right away). Wizards and witches and monsters all set around a street fighter's mentality with plenty of cosmic horror to leave Lovecraftians and dark Fantasy seekers equally satiated and wanting more. Highly recommended.

## Matthew says

I picked up Bound, by Alan Baxter, on the recommendation of a friend. I owe that friend a few drinks now.

Bound is about cage fighter Alex Caine, a man who can see his opponents moves before they make them. Following a successful fight Alex is approached by an Englishman called Welby, who knows his secret and wants Alex to help him unlock the key to an ancient and powerful grimoire. Drawn into a world filled with magic, violence, and a chaotic Fey godling called Uthentia, Alex must harness his innate magical ability and fighting skills to prevent the end of the world as we know it.

Upon finishing Bound my first thought was 'damn.'

My second thought was that if Stephen King and Jim Butcher ever had a love child then it would be Alan Baxter.

Finally, my third thought was that Bound is a seriously entertaining read.

Full of dark, gritty and bloody goodness, Bound is possibly one of the best debut novels I've read in many years. Cracking action and dialogue propel the story along at a fast pace as the reader journeys from the cages of the underground fighting scene in Sydney to the icy wastes of Iceland. I loved the fight scenes, and I could tell they were written by someone who has trained extensively in hand to hand combat and martial arts. I almost felt the bones being broken and smashed at times throughout the book, and their realism kept me enthralled. The world in which Bound is set was also gloriously gritty and full of things that go bump in the night. Dark horrors exist everywhere (the Three Sisters for example), and the world is full of mythical and supernatural creatures such as gargoyles and the Fey.

Alex Caine was also a fascinating protagonist. Flawed in many ways but still noble and honest, he was a believable hero who I couldn't help but cheer for as the odds kept stacking up against him. His rages, lust, frustration, and mistakes throughout the story only added depth to his character and made him more human. His dialogue and interplay with the other characters (like Silhouette) throughout the novel were also loaded with wit and humour that had me chuckling well into the night.

The other characters and creatures in Bound were also interesting. I loved the idea of the Kin, and the dark horrors like the Three Sisters and the Subcontractor. However, the two characters I absolutely adored were the evil duo of Mr. Hood and Miss Sparks and their Black Diamond Inc. They are the perfect narrative foil for Alex and Silhouette, and their dark and twisted relationship and actions brought a real nefarious essence to the story that was both creepy and strangely thrilling as well.

All in all Bound was a bloody excellent read. I cannot recommend this book enough to fans of Butcher and Wendig.

4 out of 5 stars!

[smashdragons.blogspot.com.au](http://smashdragons.blogspot.com.au)

## Shannon (Giraffe Days) says

Alex Caine grew up in foster homes and was a wild kid until he started learning martial arts; since then, he's had focus, discipline and a means of earning a living in illegal cage fights. He always wins, too, because he has a secret advantage: he can see people's shades, and knows what his opponents are about to do. It isn't until he meets Englishman Patrick Welby that Alex learns there's a name for what he is: mage. Once Welby unlocks the door to the hidden world of magesign and the Fey, Alex is reluctantly drawn in. Welby has his sights set on a powerful magical book that he hasn't been able to read, but he thinks Alex can. He wants Alex to go with him from Sydney to London to try and read the book, being held by a cranky and unlikeable bookseller called Peacock.

Welby's hunch was right: Alex can read it, only with unexpected consequences. The book is actually a vessel for a trapped piece of a Fey god, a being of chaos that was driven from this plane with only this one little bit remaining, a piece that latches onto a mortal soul and drives them to destruction. Alex is no less a victim, and with his training is driven to lethal acts. He'll do whatever it takes to get rid of the indestructible book, even braving the dens of flesh-eating Kin, before any more people die at his hands.

With the help of an unlikely but beautiful, inhuman ally called Silhouette, and pursued by a ruthless and ambitious magical-artefacts dealer called Mr Hood, Alex finds himself traversing the globe to hunt down shards of the powerful stone that first rid the world of the godling, Uthentia. Time is running out and the stakes are getting higher. Even if he succeeds in his quest to find the long-hidden pieces, he has only a hunch and conviction that he will be able to use what took three powerful mages to wield long ago. But there's only one way to find out.

I'm not a big reader of Urban Fantasy, mostly because the majority of books that fall under that sub-genre always use mysteries or detective work as their plot, and mysteries tend to bore me. Character development especially, and also world-building, are all-too-often overlooked in a mystery (or detective or thriller or CIA) novel. I'm not sure why Urban Fantasy must contain some kind of mystery-detective plotline, but I'm guessing it's a way to explore the familiar-unfamiliar world for the sake of the audience. When it's not a mystery, it's romance - paranormal romance. I find the latter more interesting and engaging because romance, by dint of its nature, relies on characters, so you get plenty of character development (or you should). *Bound* pleasantly straddles several tropes common to Urban Fantasy, combining Fey and Kin with human, magic and mystery with crime and violence, love and obsession with murder and mayhem. It has more of a classic Quest structure than a detective one, and uses the trope of introducing a new, hidden and complex world to an ignorant human as a means of providing exposition at a gradual pace. Overall, it works.

*Bound* is a gritty, dark urban fantasy, full of violence and gore and visceral imagery. There are hints of other works here - or rather, certain scenes reminded me of other works, which is not to say Baxter lacks originality but that stories create a community of ideas and imagination, which I love. The golems reminded me of Jonathan Stroud, the island of malnourished worshippers and the obese dictator reminded me of Iain Banks' *Consider Phlebus* (the first of his Culture science fiction series). Other elements of the novel reminded me of less tangible stories, books I couldn't quite remember or grasp. Overall it makes *Bound* feel like familiar territory, one that doesn't need much exposition to understand.

Alex Caine is a good protagonist and hero-figure, leading us into this new world unwillingly, but never baulking at what he knows he must do. For the most part, he asks good questions and uses his head. I can only hope that his character is more fully developed and explained over the following two books, as we don't learn a whole lot about him here. Silhouette, likewise, is a shadowy figure (no pun intended), but an excellent one. She's only half-human, and Baxter does a good job of developing her inhumanity while at the same time giving us plenty to like and relate to. The world of the Kin and the Fey is an interesting one, and while it might not be the most original of storylines or worlds, it is quite entertaining, in a dark and often

violent way.

Where I struggled some was with the writing. Baxter's prose is solid, his details are nicely placed, and the dialogue flows quite naturally. But what I got really tired of was the constant use of the rhetorical question. Baxter uses it a great deal when Alex starts reflecting and thinking and in general, trying to figure things out. The occasional rhetorical question works fine, but sometimes there were several in the one paragraph and it does weaken the writing (not to mention makes Alex a tad annoying in those moments).

I enjoyed *Bound*, both for its dark, twisted other-worldly creatures and, at times, downright terrifying scenes of violence and grisly murder (the scene with the children was particularly hard to read), as well as for the simple but layered world-building. Alex Caine starts off the series as an ordinary man with a couple of extraordinary talents; by the end, he's something more than human and forever changed by his experiences. It can only get more interesting from here on.

*My thanks to the publisher for a copy of this book.*

---

### **Amanda J Spedding says**

A fast-paced, action-packed first book of the Alex Caine series, that had me pretty much hooked from the beginning. Magic and monsters and Magesign, oh my!

See my full review here: <http://amandajspedding.com/2014/11/08...>

---

### **Marijn says**

A poor writing style and awkwardly inserted sex scenes had me struggling to finish this book.

---

### **Adrian Collins says**

Originally reviewed by M.L. Spencer on Grimdark Magazine.

Alan Baxter's *Bound* (Alex Caine Book One) is a brutal story that moves at a break-neck pace. It's ripe with dark, conflicted characters in a turbulent, urban setting that has a mixture of martial arts, magic, and supernatural themes. I definitely recommend *Bound* for readers who take their violence seasoned with gore, sarcasm and sex.

In *Bound*, Alex Caine is a successful martial artist who makes his living clobbering opponents in the ring. But all his exhaustive training hasn't prepared him for the dangerous world of magical intrigue he gets caught up in. Bound to a stone relic that augments his already kick-ass supernatural powers, Alex finds out that far more than just his own life is now at stake. If he fails to conquer the stone's power and its link with an ancient evil trapped between realms, then the entire world is in grave peril.

Alex Caine is a formidable and enjoyable protagonist whose vicious fights to the death are as exciting as they are gruesome. Alex teams up with Silhouette, a sexy and competent woman of the Kin, a race of half-vampire, half-were-creatures. Together, the unlikely couple battle forces both ancient and powerful, all the

while struggling to keep Alex's violent new powers from consuming his mind.

Baxter's efficient prose never gets in the way of the story, and his dialogue is vivid and dynamic. I had a lot of fun reading this book. It kept me hanging in there, eagerly flipping pages to find out who was going to be the next brutalized victim or what twisted deed would be performed next. This story packs a punch!

---

## **The Grim Reader says**

A few years ago I went through a stage of reading nothing but fantasy fiction. I got a little tired of it and decided it was time for a break. Only recently I have started reading some again. When I saw Alan Baxter's 'Bound' and heard that it was like Jack Reacher with magic, I was all in. 'Bound' has recently been re-released with some great new artwork. I have come across Baxter's work in various anthologies and have enjoyed his stories. 'Bound' is the first book in a trilogy that features the escapades of martial artist/cage fighter Alex Caine – a man with an unusual ability to see his opponents moves shortly before they execute (giving him quite the advantage when fighting!).

'Bound' is a great read. Baxter (a Kung Fu teacher) clearly knows about fighting and the scenes where Caine is dishing out some punishment are handled well. The book has many fantastical elements and is quite dark but it doesn't fall into the cliché category. The pacing of the book is one of its real strengths with barely a breath being drawn between the next exciting sequence. The dialogue (so often a downfall with many writers) is crisp and authentic, keeping you immersed inside the story.

Caine himself is an engaging character, I wasn't sure about him early on in the book, particularly at the start when he comes across as kind of arrogant and narky, but hey, good guys can't be nice all of the time, right? As the story progresses he does become more personal and I soon found myself warming to him and cheering him on as he battles evil.

Other characters including the excellent Silhouette and Mr Hood are also given great depth and there are some great ideas at play. I enjoyed Caine's transformation throughout the book. At the start he is a fighter with a strange gift but he becomes something much different by the stories end.

'Bound' is a great example of dark and gritty urban fantasy. It's filled with great action, cool characters and an engaging protagonist. Unlike some trilogies 'Bound' gets straight into the action, not wasting time with page after page of world building and politics, something that I find the Fantasy genre guilty of quite often.

---