



Q&A WITH ALEX FINLEY, AUTHOR OF *VICTOR IN THE JUNGLE*

Q: *Before we get into the book, let's get a few basics out of the way. Have you ever colluded with a foreign government?*

A: With a foreign government, no. But I have had, shall we say, “foreign liaisons,” which means anyone with access to my security clearance files knows all about my love life. Ah, to be young. This is foreign collusion I can support.

Q: *Your first novel, Victor in the Rubble, focused on the absurdities of the bureaucracy inside the US government. Is that a prominent theme in Victor in the Jungle, as well?*

A: As I've said before, writing *Victor in the Rubble* was something of a catharsis, a way to work through all the ridiculousness I had experienced and witnessed as I played my very minor role in the war on terror. Writing *Victor in the Jungle* was much more fun. I set out to write about the fun and adventure a career in CIA can provide, despite the absurd dysfunction of the bureaucracy and despite (or because of) the very real risks of the job. I hope this book captures the thrilling chaos and camaraderie that Agency exploits can bring when you've got the right people on your team. But yes, even in the jungle, Victor—and others!—have their share of bureaucratic hoops to jump through.

Q: *Exotic locations play a role in both your books. In Victor in the Rubble, Victor squares off with camels and sand in West Africa. What was the lure of the Amazon jungle?*

A: The adventure! How fun is it to be in a place where you can't see anything but everything can kill you? It really gets the blood pumping, which the mosquitos and flies love! I also like the symbolism of the jungle for Victor's work. It is totally chaotic, sometimes scary, full of risks, but also incredibly fun, much like what Victor and his team experience in the book.

Q: *How has the character of Victor Caro developed or changed in this novel?*

A: Victor has brought the whole family along this time. I wanted to show that working for CIA is not a career, but rather a lifestyle. The entire family plays an important role, not just in supporting the CIA officer, but sometimes even in running operations.

Q: *Has Victor ever experienced government shutdowns in his career?*

A: Victor has! In fact, it happens in this book! Read it to find out if he is essential.

Q: *Does your mother read your novels?*

A: She claims she does, and I know she wouldn't lie to me because she has told me I am her favorite child. She also certainly *contributes* to my novels. Without her, this book wouldn't have vegetarian piranhas or an allusion to Swedish porn. She is very proud.