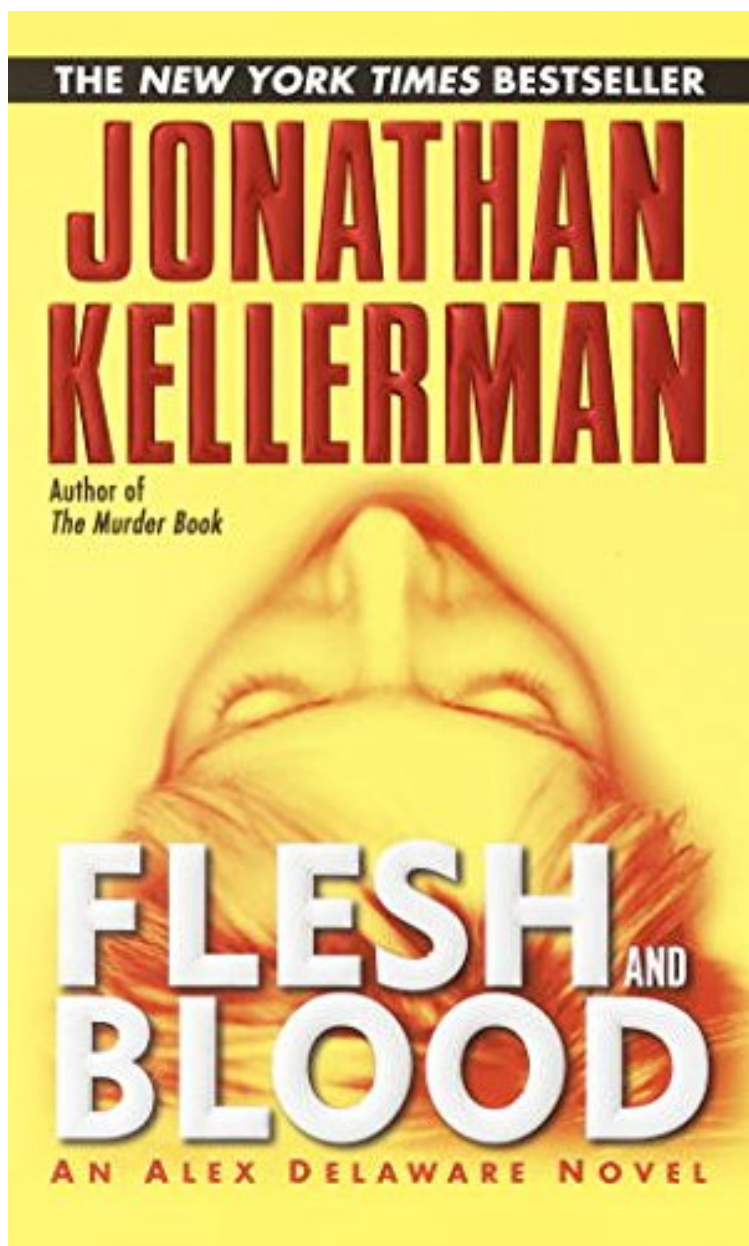


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Flesh and Blood: An Alex Delaware Novel



Par Jonathan Kellerman
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Par Jonathan Kellerman : Flesh and Blood: An Alex Delaware Novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Flesh and Blood: An Alex Delaware Novel:

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Description : Description du produitPerennial bestseller and acknowledged master of the psychological thriller, Jonathan Kellerman has created his most riveting and memorable work to date in the Alex Delaware novel about a troubled and elusive young woman whose brutal murder forces the brilliant psychologist-detective to confront his own fallibility.Lauren Teague is a beautiful, defiant, borderline-delinquent teenager when her parents bring her to Alex Delaware's office. But for all Alex's skill and effort, Lauren resistsangrily, provocatively. Reluctantly, the psychologist chalks Lauren up as one of the inevitable failures of a challenging profession. But years later, when Alex encounters Lauren as a stag party's featured entertainment, both doctor and patient are sticken with shame. And the ultimate horror takes place when,

soon after, Lauren's brutalized corpse is found dumped in an alley. Alex disregards the advice of his trusted friend, LAPD detective Milo Sturgis, and jeopardizes his relationship with longtime lover, Robin Castagna, in order to pursue Lauren's murderer. As he investigates his young patient's troubled past, Alex enters the shadowy worlds of fringe psychological experimentation and the sex industry, and then into mortal danger when lust and big money collide in Southern California. Jonathan Kellerman's *L.A. is evil*, seductive, erotic, and unforgiving, and *Flesh and Blood* is mind-opening in its drama of a driven man's personal quest, breathtaking in its ingenious plot, filled with unforgettable characters, and topped off by a terrifying climax. This is suspense fiction at its finest.

Prsentation de l'diteurBONUS: This edition contains an excerpt from Jonathan Kellerman's *Victims*. Perennial bestseller and acknowledged master of the psychological thriller, Jonathan Kellerman has created a riveting and memorable Alex Delaware novel about a troubled and elusive young woman whose brutal murder forces the brilliant psychologist-detective to confront his own fallibility. Lauren Teague is a beautiful, defiant, borderline-delinquent teenager when her parents bring her to Alex Delaware's office. But for all Alex's skill and effort, Lauren resists angrily, provocatively. Reluctantly, the psychologist chalks Lauren up as one of the inevitable failures of a challenging profession. But years later, when Alex encounters Lauren as a stag party's featured entertainment, both doctor and patient are sticken with shame. And the ultimate horror takes place when, soon after, Lauren's brutalized corpse is found dumped in an alley. Alex disregards the advice of his trusted friend, LAPD detective Milo Sturgis, and jeopardizes his relationship with longtime lover, Robin Castagna, in order to pursue Lauren's murderer. As he investigates his young patient's troubled past, Alex enters the shadowy worlds of fringe psychological experimentation and the sex industry, and then into mortal danger when lust and big money collide in Southern California. Jonathan Kellerman's *L.A. is evil*, seductive, and unforgiving, and *Flesh and Blood* is mind-opening in its drama of a driven man's personal quest, breathtaking in its ingenious plot, filled with unforgettable characters, and topped off by a terrifying climax. This is suspense fiction at its finest..com Psychologist Alex Delaware hasn't been in private practice for a long time, but when the mother of a former patient calls and asks for his help, he can't turn her down. He couldn't help Lauren Teague when she was alive, but something about his failure with the beautiful, sullen teenager who grew up to be a high-priced call girl won't let him walk away after her bullet-ridden body turns up in an L.A. dumpster. When she wasn't turning tricks, she was a straight-A student; despite his detective pal Milo's demurrals, Alex is convinced there's a connection between Lauren's death and another beautiful UCLA psych major who disappeared a year earlier. With his customary skill and compassion, Jonathan Kellerman draws us deep into Lauren's complicated life, from a university campus to a Malibu estate owned by a wealthy publisher of soft-core porn (who bears a distinct resemblance to the pajama-clad mogul who made a small white bunny famous). Kellerman's last couple of books have been a bit disappointing, but here the bestselling author is writing up to the high standard he set in his earlier ones. With solid plotting, well-realized characterizations, and a strong narrative drive, *Flesh and Blood* delivers the real goods on every page. --Jane Adams

Extrait Chapter 1 Sad truth: Had she been just a patient, I probably wouldnt have remembered her. All those years listening, so many faces. There was a time I recalled every one of them. Forgetting comes with experience. It doesnt bother me as much as it used to. Her mother phoned my service on a Saturday morning soon after New Years. A Mrs. Jane Abbot, said the operator. She says her daughters an old patient. Lauren Teague. Jane Abbots name meant nothing to me, but Lauren Teague sparked an uneasy nostalgia. It was an 818 number, somewhere in the Valley. When Id known the family theyd lived in West L.A. I searched my old case files before returning the call. Teague, Lauren Lee. Intake date, ten years ago, the tail end of my Wilshire Boulevard practice. Shortly after, I cashed in some real estate profits, tried to drop out, met a beautiful woman, became friends with a sad, brilliant detective, learned more than I wanted to know about bad things. Since then Id avoided the commitment of long-term therapy cases, stuck to court consults and forensic work, the kinds of puzzles that removed me from the confines of my office. Lauren had been fifteen at referral. Thin file: one history-taking meeting with the parents followed by two sessions with the girl. Then a missed appointment, no explanation. The next day the father left a message canceling any future treatment. Unpaid balance for the final session; Id made a halfhearted effort to collect, then written it off. When old patients get in touch its usually because theyre doing great and want to brag, or exactly the opposite. Either way they tend to be people with whom Ive connected. Lauren Teague didnt qualify. Far from it. If anything, I was the last person shed want to see. Why was her mother contacting me now? Presenting problems: poor school achiev., noncompliance at home. Clin.

impressions: fath. angry; moth. possib. deprsd. Tension bet moth and fathermarital strss? Parents agree re: Laurens behavior as the prim. prob. Uneventful birth hx, only child, no sig. health probs., contact pediatric M.D. to verify. School: per Mom: Laurens always been smart. Used to love to read, now hates it. B2 aver. till last year, then change of attitude, new friendsbums (fath), some truancy, Cs and Ds. Basic mood is sullen. No communic. Parents try to talk, get no resp. Suspect drug use.As I leafed through the file, Jane and Lyle Teagues faces came into semifocus. She, thin, blond, edgy, a former flight attendant, now a full-time mom. A heavy smokerforty-five minutes without tobacco had been torture.Laurens father had been slit-eyed, blank-faced, reluctant to engage. His wife had talked fast . . . nervous hands, moist eyes. When shed looked to him for support, hed turned away.They were both thirty-nine, but he looked older. . . . Hed done something in the building trades . . . here it was, elect. contractr. A powerful-looking man, fighting the advent of middle age with long hair, sprayed in place, that fringed his shoulders. Black pelt of beard. Muscles made obvious by a too-tight polo shirt and pressed jeans. Crude but well-balanced features . . . gold chain circling a ruddy neck . . . gold I.D. bracelethow did I remember that? Put him in buckskins and he couldve been a grizzly hunter.Lyle Teague had sat with his legs spread wide, consulted his watch every few minutes, fondled his beeper as if hoping for intrusion. Unable to maintain eye contactlapsing into dreamy stares. That had made me wonder about attention deficit, something he mightve passed on to Lauren. But when I raised the topic of academic testing, he didnt stir defensively, and his wife said Lauren had been examined two years before by a school psychologist and found to be normal and extremely bright.Bright, he said, putting no praise into the word. Nothing wrong with her brain that a little discipline wont cure. Accusing glance at his wife.Her mouth twisted, but she said, Thats what were here to learn.Lyle Teague smirked.I said, Mr. Teague, do you think anything else is going on, besides Laurens being spoiled?Nah, basic teenage garbage. Another look at his wife, this time seeking confirmation.She said, Laurens a good girl.Lyle Teague laughed threateningly. Then why the hell are we here?HoneyYeah, yeah, fine. He tried to tune out, but I stuck with him, finally got him talking about Lauren, how different she was from the cute little kid hed once taken to job sites in his truck. As he reminisced, his face darkened and his speech got choppy, and by the end of the speech he pronounced his daughter a real hassle. Hope to hell you can do something with her.Two days later Lauren showed up in my waiting room, alone, five minutes late. A tall, slender, conspicuously busted, brown-haired girl, treated kindly by puberty.Fifteen, but she couldve passed for twenty. She wore a white jersey tank top, skimpy, snug blue-denim shorts, and ludicrously high-heeled white sandals. Smooth, tan arms and long, tan legs were showcased by the minimal clothing. Pink-polished toes glinted at the tips of her sandals. The strap of a small black patent leather purse striped a bare shoulder. If shed been studying the hookers on Sunset for fashion tips, shed learned well.When young girls flaunt, the result is often a comic loss of equilibrium. Lauren Teague seemed perfectly at ease advertising her bodylike father, like daughter?She favored her father in coloring, her mother in structure, but bore no striking resemblance to either. The brown hair was burnt umber sparked with rust, thick and straight, hanging halfway down her back, parted dead center and flipped into extravagant wings at the temples. High cheekbones, wide mouth glossed pink, dominant but perfectly proportioned cleft chin, heavily lined, azure-shadowed blue eyesmocking eyes. A strong, straight, uptilted nose was dashed by freckles shed tried to obliterate with makeup. Lots of makeup. It stuccoed her from brow to jaw, creating a too-beige mask.As I introduced myself she breezed past me into the office, taking long, easy strides on the impossible heels. None of the usual teenage slumpshe held her back straight, thrust out her chest. A strikingly good-looking girl, made less attractive by cosmetics and blatancy.Selecting the chair closest to mine, she sat down as if shed been there a hundred times before. Cool furniture.Thank you.Like one of those libraries in an old movie. She batted her lashes, crossed and recrossed her legs, threw out her chest again, yawned, stretched, folded her arms across her torso, dropped them to her sides suddenly, a cartoon of vulnerability.I asked why she thought she was there.My parents think Im a loser.A loser.Yup.What do you think of that?Derisive laugh, toss of hair. Her tongue tip skated across her lower lip. May-be. Shrug. Yawn. So . . . time to talk about my head problems, huh?Jane and Lyle Teague had denied previous therapy, but Laurens glibness made me wonder. I asked her about it.Nope, never. The school counselor tried to talk to me a couple of times.About?My grades.Did it help?She laughed. Yeah, right. Okay, ready for my neurosis?Neurosis, I said.We have psych this year. Stupid class. Ready?If you are.Sure. I meanthats the point, right? Im supposed to spit out all my deep, dark secrets.Its not a matter of supposed toI know, I know, she said. Thats what shrinks always sayno ones gonna force you to do anything. You know about shrinks.I know enough. Some of my friends have seen em. One of them had a shrink give her that shi That stuff about never forcing her, then

the next week he committed her to a mental ward. Why? She tried to kill herself. Sounds like a good reason, I said. Shrug. How's your friend doing? Fine like you really care. Her eyes rolled. I said nothing. That, too, she said. That's the other shrink thing just sitting there and staring. Saying Ah-ah and Uh-huh. Answering questions with questions. Right? Uh-huh. Very funny, she said. At what you charge, I'm not coming here forever. And he's probably gonna call to make sure I showed up and did a good job so let's get going. Dad's in a hurry? Yeah. So give me a good grade, okay? Tell him I was good. I don't need any more hassles. I'll tell him you cooperated. Tell him whatever you want. But I'm not going to get into details, because Confidentiality, yeah, yeah. It doesn't matter. Tell them anything. No secrets from Mom and Dad? What for? She played with her hair, gave a world-weary smile. I've got no cool secrets anyway. Totally boring life. Too bad for you try not to fall asleep. So, I said, your dad wants you to get this over with quickly. Whatever. She picked at her hair. What exactly did he tell you to accomplish here, Lauren? Get my act together, be straight, be a good girl.

She laughed, arched one leg over the other, placed a hand on a calf and tickled. Be straight, I said. As in drugs? They're paranoid about that, along with everything else. Even though they smoke. They smoke dope? Dope, tobacco. Little after-dinner taste. Sometimes it's booze cocktails. We're mature enough to control it, Lauren. She laughed. Jane used to be a stewardess, working all these fancy private charters. They've still got this collection of tiny little bottles. I like the green melon stuff. Midori. But I'm not allowed to touch pot till I'm eighteen. She laughed. Like I'd ever. Pots not for you? I said. Pots boring too slow. Like hey, man, let's pretend we're in the sixties, get all wasted and sit around staring at the sky and talking about God. Another gust of laughter, painfully lacking in joy. Pot sure makes them boring. It's the only time she slows down. And he just sits and veges on the TV, munches nachos, whatever. I'm not supposed to be talking about their bad habits, I'm the one who needs to change. Change how? Clean my room, she singsonged. Do my chores, get ready in the morning without calling my mom a bitch, stop saying fuck and shit and cunt. Go to class and pay attention, build up my grades, stop breaking curfew, hang out with decent friends, not low-life. She rotated one hand, as if spooling thread. And I'm supposed to get you to do all that. Lyle says no way, you never will. Lyle. Her eyes got merry. That's something else I'm supposed to not do. Call him by his name. He hates it, it drives him crazy. So no way you'll stop. She played with her hair. Who knows what I'll do? From the

Hardcover edition.