



# You Deserve Nothing: A Novel

By Alexander Maksik

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## You Deserve Nothing: A Novel By Alexander Maksik

Set in Paris, at an international high school catering to the sons and daughters of wealthy families, *You Deserve Nothing* is a gripping story of power, idealism, and morality.

William Silver is a talented and charismatic young teacher whose unconventional methods raise eyebrows among his colleagues and superiors. His students, however, are devoted to him. His teaching of Camus, Faulkner, Sartre, Keats and other kindred souls breathe life into their sense of social justice and their capacities for philosophical and ethical thought. But unbeknownst to his adoring pupils, Silver proves incapable of living up to the ideals he encourages in others. Emotionally scarred by failures in his personal life and driven to distraction by the City of Light's overpowering carnality and beauty, Silver succumbs to a temptation that will change the course of his life. His fall will render him a criminal in the eyes of some, and all too human in the eyes of others.

In Maksik's stylish prose, Paris is sensual, dazzling and dangerously seductive. It serves as a fitting backdrop for a dramatic tale about the tension between desire and action, and about the complex relationship that exists between our public and private selves.

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

"A superb debut novel."

**-The Sunday Times**

"With writing that is reminiscent of James Salter's in its sensuality, Francine Prose's capacious inquiry into difficult moral questions and Martin Amis's loose-limbed evocation of the perils of youth."

**-The Christian Science Monitor**

"Maksik depicts [his story] fearlessly--and brilliantly, with graceful exactitude.

**-The Daily Beast (One of the Best Debuts of the Fall)**

"The book is just too damned good to put down."

**-The Stranger**

"Maksik, in his account of adolescent yearning and grown-up fallibility, does something like what Hemingway did in his non-debut memoir, "A Moveable Feast" - he vividly evokes a destination for generations of foreign seekers."

**-San Francisco Chronicle**

"A novel rivetingly plotted and beautifully written. . . [Maksik] writes about the moral ambiguity of Will's circumstances with dazzling clarity and impressive philosophical rigor."

**-The New York Times**

"One of the most engaged reads I've had in years." — **Alice Sebold**

"Alexander Maksik deftly evokes the beauty and pathos of Paris, and the story of Will, Gilad and Marie--each compelled towards moral and sexual awakening-- is at once dark and luminous. This is a book to be read all at once with a glass of wine in a café or a cup of tea while tucked safely in bed." — **A.M. Homes**

"*You Deserve Nothing* is a powerful, absorbing novel about a charismatic expatriate teacher and the students whose lives he transforms, for better and worse. Alexander Maksik is an unusually gifted writer." — **Tom Perrotta**

"*You Deserve Nothing* rings true from first page to last. Here is a writer who understands why the artful telling of a difficult story is a brave and important thing to do. Read this book." — **John Burnham Schwartz**

"A provocative, constantly surprising, and original novel. This is a thrilling debut." — **Susanna Moore**

"Maksik's superb novel takes on the most fundamental question--how are we supposed to live?--with a

freshness and urgency that are nothing short of masterful. This is a gorgeous book, as honest and rich a depiction of life's contradictions as I've encountered in many years." — **Ben Fountain**

"Alexander Maksik's first novel, *You Deserve Nothing*, is a thoroughly engaging, passionate, and challenging read that finely walks the line between morality and amorality. In a society, and at a time, when individual identity is so closely tied to collective narcissism, Maksik's novel asks what are the true sources of selfworth? And how shall we live?" — **Tom Jenks, editor, Narrative magazine**

#### About the Author

Alexander Maksik's first novel, *You Deserve Nothing* was published in 2011 by Europa Editions (US) and John Murray Publishers/Hachette (UK). Subsequent translations will appear in Italy, Spain, Germany, Russia, Korea, and The Netherlands.

His writing has appeared or is forthcoming in Tin House, The New York Times, Harvard Review, The New York Times Magazine and Narrative Magazine, among others.

A graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, he's presently the Provost's Postgraduate Writing Fellow in fiction at the University of Iowa.

He lives in Paris and Iowa City.

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**Betty Dunham:**

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