Author: Alan Carter

“Flipper” was how they called that body in the beach: headless, with arms and legs eaten by a couple of sharks, unidentified except for the fact that it — correction, he was a male. Cato Kwong, the ex-poster boy from the police force, received a call from his ex-boss who told him to handle the case until he could send reinforcement. But Cato wasn’t interested in waiting for the reinforcement — he wanted to prove that he was still a good cop. But perhaps Cato should’ve just waited, because his little game would cause the death of someone he knew.

Prime Cut is a debut novel for the emerging crime writer Alan Carter. From the first page, you can’t help but glue your eyes on the brutality and the tragedy happening on each paragraph. Alan has a description skill that makes you think you could smell the blood, as if the whole story was unfolding right before you. Each character is so believable, with enough background stories you can relate to. Just what you’d expect from a book that’s been shortlisted for 2010 Debut Dagger Award.

But there’s one thing I’m a bit unhappy about this book. I found the story is disturbingly racist, although I’m not sure if Alan does this intentionally to represent the problem of racism in the world today. Otherwise, you can call the book multicultural — Cato, the main character himself, is a Chinese descendant living in a Caucasian-dominated country and there are a few Africans also making an appearance in the story.

Like a believable crime novel? Then this book is for you.

Verdict: 6/10

By Al Hendra (Aldy Hendradjaja)
Word Count: 266