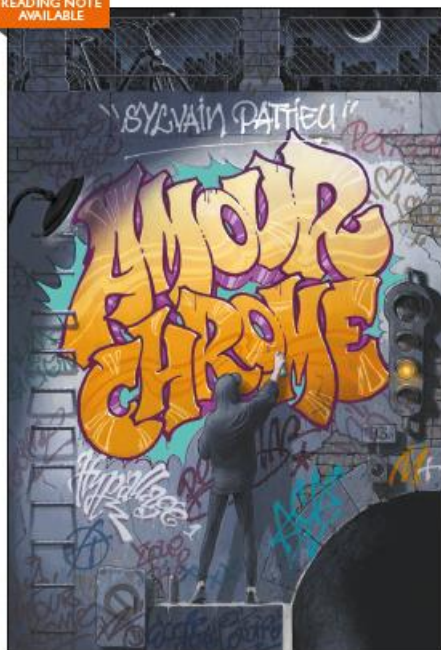


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HYPALLAGE VOL. 1: CHROME LOVE

*Mohammed-Ali loves Aimée.
Aimée loves soccer.
A spoken, rhythmic language, like suburb
slam poetry. A style that will hook readers
and non-readers alike.*

In the ninth grade, Mohammed-Ali is quiet and popular.
Middle school is going great.
He's chilled.
On the surface, at least, because he leads a secret life. At night he goes out tagging. And more than anything he loves Aimée, but she only thinks about soccer.
How can he get her to notice him?
Fortunately, Mohammed-Ali can count on the support of Lina and Margaux.
In love as in soccer, you need to have a game plan.
You need to have style.
He'll invite Aimée to watch a game.

Age 13+

Softcover | 192 pages | 148 x 218 mm | €14
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Series of 4 volumes, each focusing on a different character. Vol. 2 In September 2021: Aimée

AWARDED Prix Vendredi 2021

GENRE: YA fiction, coming-of-age

THEMES: first love, puberty, identity, adolescence

PUBLIC: mixed audience

AGE: 13+

A summary that reflects the book's narrative style and rhythm.

Mohammed-Ali may be from the notorious suburbs to the north of Paris, but he's a good kid. He studies hard and gets good grades. He was even elected to represent his classmates in the middle school's student council to "facilitate better communication between the students and teachers." But even though he's a good student, Mohammed-Ali is still popular. He's not the kind of smart kid that gets called a nerd. He's the kind of smart kid that you respect. His teachers love him and his parents are proud. But Mohammed-Ali has two secrets. The first is that he goes out tagging at night. Mind you, he's smart about it. He only sneaks out for an hour or two, when his parents are watching TV, and he's back in bed before the end of their show. After all, he's gotta be well-rested for school the next day. His second secret is that he has a serious crush on a girl at school named Aimée. She's super tall and athletic. Her passion is soccer. His friend Zako made fun of him when he found out. He said that a black girl like Aimée would never date an Arab guy. No chance in hell, bro. Not that it really matters. She never talks to him anyway and she's always hanging out with Aminata and Mariama. The very idea of going up to her makes him break out into a sweat.

Everything changes when Lina and Margaux find out about his little crush. Lina and Margaux aren't the kind of girls you wanna piss off. They talk back to the teachers, chew gum in class, make fun of the kids they don't like... They can sniff out weakness a mile away. They've been

friends ever since they fought each other in an alleyway after school. It doesn't really make sense, but hey, bitches be like that. Besides, it's none of Mohammed-Ali's business. But unfortunately for him, their teacher decides to put the three of them in the same group for a class project. The assignment is pretty simple: choose a place that you wouldn't usually frequent, go there together as a group, and then present the experience and your findings to the class. Mohammed-Ali is excited about the project, but not about working with the class terrorists. What's more, they can't agree on the place. Mohammed-Ali suggests the Tamil temple. Or how about the local market? The girls shoot down all of his ideas. When their teacher asks them what subject they've chosen, there's an awkward silence, and then Lina suddenly blurts out that they're going to visit the lesbian film festival. Everyone giggles and stares at her. Omg, wtf, are you gay? She mumbles that it was a joke, but it's too late: their teacher is thrilled.

While working together on preliminary research and contacting the festival organizers, Lina and Margaux find out that Mohammed-Ali is in love with Aimée. At first they make fun of him, but when they realize that he really cares about her, they decide to take him under their wing. First step: start dressing better. He can't expect Aimée to give him a second glance if he's always wearing sweats that are three sizes too big! The girls even show up at his house and rifle through his closet, giving him fashion pointers and sorting through his clothes. Mohammed-Ali isn't so sure... He wouldn't even know what to say if Aimée tried to talk to him. Truth be told, being a 14-year-old boy isn't easy. He's noticed some fuzz on his upper lip and in other embarrassing places. And he sometimes wakes up in the middle of the night with sperm all over his boxers. So gross. Mohammed-Ali feels ashamed and unsure of himself. He'd just about die if his parents found out. He hates this feeling of being in-between and wishes that things could be like they were before.

On the day of the festival, Lina, Margaux, and Mohammed-Ali take the RER into Paris (after promising their parents that it was for a school project and they'd be careful). They don't really know what to expect, but the festival's PR person immediately puts them at ease. The day goes by in a blur as they watch films, attend debates, and meet some of the filmmakers. Mohammed-Ali's brain is in overdrive with everything he's learned. This festival is way more than a bunch of gay chicks just hanging out. He can't wait to share it with their classmates.

Meanwhile, Mohammed-Ali continues to sneak out to tag. One night, he's approached by three older street artists. At first, they're pissed off because he's been tagging over their work. That's just not done, bro. Mohammed-Ali isn't sure whether to cower or run, but when he finds out who they are, he can't help but express his admiration. He's seen their tags all over the city. What starts out as a potentially violent confrontation turns into a partnership as the three older artists invite the youngster to hang out with them and learn more about street art. Mohammed-Ali feels like a super hero with a secret night life.

On the day of their presentation, Mohammed-Ali, Lina, and Margaux are all super nervous. At first, everyone is giggling, but as they get further and further into their presentation, the other students are intrigued. They explain how a festival is organized, the relationship between film and associations, how the films are selected, how the festival is advertised, etc. They emphasize the festival's objective to be artistic and militant by choosing interesting films that challenge the status quo. In conclusion, they encourage their classmates to be open-minded with themselves and with others. When their presentation is over, there's a

long pause, and then dozens of arms fly into the air. Their classmates have tons of questions. Afterward, Aimée comes up to Mohammed-Ali and thanks him for the interesting presentation. She explains that one of her favorite soccer players is gay. She keeps talking, but Mohammed-Ali is in a daze. Aimée is talking to him? Is he dreaming? Lina and Margaux give him a discreet thumbs up.

To thank Mohammed-Ali for doing them a solid and helping them get such a good grade on their project, Lina manages to convince her drug-dealing brothers to get her two tickets for the soccer game between France and Germany. She gives the tickets to Mohammed-Ali and tells him to invite Aimée to go with him. He can hardly believe his luck. This is way better than a lame first date to see a movie! When he bumps into Aimée in the hall, she smiles and says hello. For once, she's not with her friends. Mohammed-Ali takes a deep breath and asks her if she wants to go to the game with him. She's thrilled. Are you serious? You have tickets for the France-Germany game? Of course I'd love to go! Whew, Mohammed-Ali breathes a sigh of relief. Now they just have to get permission from their parents...

Much to the teens' dismay, their parents insist that Mohammed-Ali's father drive them to the stadium. The conversation in the car is so awkward and stilted that Mohammed-Ali wishes that he could just disappear. Finally, his dad drops them off outside the stadium. He says that he'll be watching the game in a nearby bar and will pick them up again when it's over. The two youngsters make their way into the stadium, feeling slightly euphoric at the prospect of doing something so grown-up. The next several hours are magical. The conversation flows as they cheer, groan, and high-five one another throughout the match.

They have no idea that three men have just blown themselves up outside the stadium or that other terrorists have opened fire in the streets of Paris and the Bataclan. Everyone else is standing in front of the TV in a state of shock. Mohammed-Ali's mother frantically calls his father, begging him to get the kids and bring them home. His father explains that nobody in the stadium has been permitted outside yet. It's pure chaos. He promises to get their son back as soon as he can.

Inside the stadium, a voice comes over the loudspeaker at the end of the match, urging everyone to keep calm and await further instructions. Instinctively, Mohammed-Ali and Aimée hold hands. There's nothing sexual about it. They just need to feel that they're not alone. When the spectators are finally evacuated, Mohammed-Ali's father comes running over and hugs them both as tears stream from his eyes. They immediately drive to Aimée's house, where her mother is anxiously awaiting her daughter's return. Mohammed-Ali walks her to the door and in the split second before going inside, Aimée gives him a kiss.

Over the next few days, Mohammed-Ali doesn't really know what to think. The whole experience was terrifying, and yet it was also the best night of his life. It is wrong to think that when so many people lost their lives? He'd like to talk to Aimée about what happened and about the kiss, but it's like she's avoiding him. Finally on Friday, she comes up to him. She apologizes for avoiding him and explains that she likes him a lot, but she can't have a boyfriend right now. They're too young and she needs to be able to focus on soccer. It's like a punch to the gut, but Mohammed-Ali tells her that he understands and that she'd better

make the national team someday. Aimée is relieved. She knows that Mohammed-Ali is hurt, but he's a good guy. She hopes that they can still be friends.

Several weeks later, Mohammed-Ali finds himself in another soccer stadium with Lina, Margaux, and his friend Zako. It's much smaller than the stadium where the national team plays, but Mohammed-Ali still feels weird. He can't help but check for the nearest exits around him. But his unease disappears as soon as Aimée runs onto the field with her teammates. The teens are totally caught up in the action, cheering and booing as though their life depended on it. Mohammed-Ali doesn't know what the future holds, but for now, he's content to be here, in this stadium, with his friends.

WHAT THE AUTHOR HAS TO SAY

The genesis

After several publications for adults, *Chrome Love* is Sylvain Pattieu's first novel for young adults. The series was inspired by the idea to write about a *group of teenagers in Seine-Saint-Denis* (where he lives and teaches). He decided to *follow several characters over a period of several years*, with each novel (three or four total) focusing on one of the characters and *two issues: one personal and the other more general and societal*.

Inspiration

Sylvain Pattieu drew inspiration from memories of his teenage years in Aix-en-Provence, in a middle school with students from various backgrounds. The fight scene between two teenage girls from different social classes actually took place! The experience of puberty and the references to the graffiti world were also inspired from his memories. Having lived in the suburbs north of Paris since the age of 21, having taught high school in Villepinte, and now the father of two children attending a local public school, he also drew inspiration from his own familiarity with the very diverse Seine-Saint-Denis.

Changing bodies

Mohammed-Ali is confronted with his changing body.

A subject that is rarely tackled in YA literature. "More often, this subject is addressed with respect to girls, maybe because the changes are more visible: periods, breasts... For boys, puberty is often framed in terms of virility. But lots of things change for boys too and going from a child's body to that of a teenager is a strange process: body hair, erotic thoughts, sweat, peach fuzz, the first time you have to shave. I remember that kids made fun of my peach fuzz, but I didn't dare talk to my parents about it. I had to deal with it on my own."

First love

The main issue that Mohammed-Ali is confronted with is love. He's in love for the first time. The author intentionally went against clichés: Aimée is the one who plays soccer and she's the one who decides to sacrifice this budding love for her soccer career.

Language

"Due to my environment, my work, and the music I enjoy, I'm constantly in contact with a different language. I don't have a musical ear, but I do have an ear for language and it's easy and natural for me to transcribe the language that teenagers use with one another. It's extremely lively and dynamic, and I wanted to use it in a literary way. It also introduces a certain rhythm. This language is legitimate and it has just as much right to be in a novel as a more formal register. That's what I say to teenagers who are sometimes surprised to find swear words in my writing. I encourage them to write with their language."

Difficulties

"My main difficulty was the presentation scene. When I was teaching high school, three young women (who weren't particularly good students) expressed their desire to present a report on a lesbian festival. I based myself on this memory because it was an interesting experience. But in my first version of the text, I avoided the classmates' reactions because I was afraid of falling into the pitfall of cliché homophobic reactions. My editor is the one who suggested that I include the other students' reactions. I really felt like I was walking on eggshells. I didn't want hostile or homophobic comments. The perception of homosexuality has evolved since I was a teenager. In all series for teens, there's at least one gay character and he/she isn't a caricature. So I tried to blend together hostile and ignorant reactions with more open and tolerant ones. But that was a really difficult passage! I definitely sweat a lot while writing it!"

Adults

"There are a few parents and teachers, but at that age, you're in a place that parents can't really access. Your life revolves around your friends, and that's what I wanted to express. As for the character of the young teacher, it reflects my own experiences and pays homage to my colleagues who are close to their students."

Graffiti

"I didn't want Mohammed-Ali to be a bland good student. He needed a secret, a rebellious side that would make him sneak out of the house at night. But it's still an artistic passion, not just rebelling for the sake of rebelling."