



A Cruise to Die for

Charlotte Elkins , Aaron Elkins

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This should be the cushiest job Alix London's ever had.

The second Alix London mystery finds the art restorer in a world brimming with idle luxury, spectacular locations, and deadly intrigue.

Surrounded by art and wealth and the sun-drenched Greek isles, she's aboard a sumptuous mega-yacht with no responsibilities save the occasional lecture to the guests of her temporary employer, Panos Papadakis, one of the world's richest men. But there's a catch: Papadakis has long been suspected of being at the center of a multi-million dollar Ponzi scheme and Alix is actually there as an undercover operative of FBI special agent Ted Ellesworth, a member of the Bureau's Art Crime Team. They hope Alix can gather the inside information they need to finally put the cagey Papadakis away.

Alix's exposure to the enormous wealth of high-end collectors and the shadier aspects of the art trade—the avarice, naked greed, and ingenious scams—somehow brings her closer to her charming, "reformed" rogue of a father, and helps crystalize in her own mind just where she fits into the mix.

A Cruise to Die for Details

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Author : Charlotte Elkins , Aaron Elkins

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From Reader Review A Cruise to Die for for online ebook

Jasmyn says

When FBI agent Ted Ellesworth asks Alix to help be his eyes and ears during an art auction on a luxury yacht, it seems more like a vacation than a job. Elkins did a great job showing the luxury and decadence of the Greek tycoon's yacht and captures some of the very unique personalities on board very well.

What she finds instead is a possible counterfeit, maybe a murder, and a stream of finances that just isn't adding up. Once again she's neck deep in a mystery involving the high-end art world. This one was a little more convoluted than the first with lots of hands in the pot and tangled webs wrapping around things.

One of the best things about the series so far - I don't figure it out halfway through. There are enough hints that point me in a general direction, but the big reveal only happens when Alix and her "crew" all get together and share their collective information. The fact that it takes the entire team to figure out all the details in the end only makes things better.

The ending of this was quite intense though. More so than I expected, but it kept me on the edge of my seat until the last page.

Imjussayin says

A Cruise to Die For: Alix London 2

Chronological order recommended.

In A Nutshell: Alix London, art consultant, finds herself aboard a luxury mega-yacht on a cruise of a lifetime. Her job is to talk about art, her favourite subject, a couple of hours each day to the guests of Panos Papadakis, one of the world's wealthiest men. But there is a forgery in the Papadakis collection, and it catches Alix's connoisseur's eye. Problem is Alix has been placed there as an FBI undercover agent to find information on an art Ponzi scheme called fractional investment. So when a murder occurs to which crime is it related? Multi-layered plots, strong characters, and dramatic endings. A satisfying read.

The Plot: Alix has been placed as a spy on a rich man's yacht. But the story she uncovers, art forgery, is not the one she was sent to investigate. Ponzi schemes, murder, and the Albanian mafia are all part of the story, which has a heartbreaking ending.

The Protagonist(s): Alix is a poor little rich girl. Her father was caught and convicted of forgery. And her life of luxury evaporated along with his imprisonment. Alix chose to drop out of Harvard but is trying to reinvent herself as an art consultant to wealthy patrons. Alix comes over as resentful and unforgiving, which is an unusual place for a protagonist.

The description of life about the mega-yacht draws the reader in. I felt the sun bouncing off the page. And the interaction with Alix and the passengers and crew made good dialogue. I have invested in Alix; the character has caught my attention. However, I find the romance with the dull and good looking FBI agent Ted contrived. But for the most part, I enjoyed this story especially the psychological elements.

There are enthralling new characters. I especially like meeting the self-made types. It was fascinating reading how they treated people who served them. I would have liked to have seen more of Jeff London in the book, but I hope that will come.

The plot itself was convoluted; there are Manet's and Monet's, mobsters and forgeries and international conspiracies. It made for lively reading. But the grammar was sloppy in places, and some basic copy editing of the story was needed. It detracted from the world building because it created inconsistencies, and it also made the story pedestrian in places.

But the art forgery is a novel idea that is well executed, with dramatic characters and intriguing plot lines. So fans of modern detective mysteries may well find this a worthwhile read.

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Book Rating

Sexual Content: u

Language: u

Violent: u

Would I read the next one ~~or reread~~?: Yes

My rating system (* = star)

0* Could not finish this book (waste of time)

1* Finished the book but ~~didn't like it~~ not fulfilled

2* Finished the book it was okay.

3* A good read worth your time.

4* An excellent read often with a novel concept or unusual plot.

5* A magnificent read. A prominent example of the genre.

Margaret says

The pace is a bit slow. It didn't really pick up and get interesting until about 3/4 of the way through. Also, a lot more blasphemy than I prefer in my books. I did really enjoy some of the art history. At the end, it was a tad annoying that she flew to DC, but then the next chapter kept referring to her horrible flight from Athens to Seattle. Guess I'm just a stickler for details. I'm not rushing to read the next one in the series, but I'm not against considering it.

Pamela Barrett says

A tantalizing mystery on a multimillion dollar yacht, full of artwork by the old Masters, cruising Greece; could be my other life...well a woman can dream can't she? Alix London is having this dream-come-true adventure because of her expertise in spotting forgeries, it helps that her dad was one of the best forgers of his time; before he got caught. This book by the Elkins', one of many they've written, is a treat to be enjoyed

during a long cold winter. A 5 star entertaining who done it, with a lot of art history to give it texture.

Meg Morden says

Another great entry in this series which I devoured whole! This time the FBI has arranged for Alix to be a lecturer on a luxury cruise through the Greek Islands to end in Albania. The cruise is on the yacht of a Greek mogul who has a penchant for investing in art and the cruise will culminate with an auction of his priceless 19th and 20th masters. But all is not what it should be: two of the paintings are forgeries and Alix jeopardises her position by blurting out the truth about one of the paintings as soon as she boards. Murder, attempted murder and a standoff with Albanian mafia are all part of the fun. The plot revolves around works by Manet and Monet and the book discusses the difference between these two masters whose similar names often confuses art neophytes.

Nancy says

This was an entertaining story, but it would have benefitted from another editing. There was a sloppy passage in which Alix complains of jet lag due to her flight to Seattle from Greece. Actually, she had gone to Seattle via Washington, DC, where she had spent a few days. This was such an obvious gaffe that I don't know how it didn't get picked up.

But I learned more about art, Monets and Manets, than I had known previously. And the book moved along at a decent clip.

Mikayla Almquist says

I'm not quite sure how, but this series has simply flown to the tippy top of my favorites list. Honestly, both books 1 and 2 were impossible for me to pause and I practically tore through them each in a single sitting.

The characters, the plot spacing, the background characters, the research, the CHARACTERS?! I've not had the urge to try to mentally hug and squeeze fictional people this strongly in a very long time. Honestly, please go and read this series, you WILL NOT be disappointed.

Ilka says

I was indreibly disappointed by this book. First it takes 50 of 250 pages to re-introduce, at length, all the characters from book 1, even though one of them plays no role in the novel at all and the others are important, but could have been introduced in less detail later when they become important. Then the mystery is not so much a mystery to be solved as a story the main character is there to witness but not be actively involved in in any meaningful way. And third, every mystery that needs three chapters after the climax to explain what really happened until finally the protagonist and the reader understand everything, just didn't do its job properly beforehand.

Donna LaValley says

Here is number 2 of the Alix London series. In this one, Alix is going aboard the Artemis, a fabulous yacht owned by a Greek billionaire, for a cruise around the Mediterranean, a cruise which culminates with an auction of some of Panos Pappadakis's paintings. The FBI has asked her to attend and pose as an art lecturer while listening for clues to a ponzi-scheme involving art sales. Instead, she of course finds that one of the most celebrated paintings by Manet is a forgery.

The fallout involves gossip, murder, and the return of Ted, an FBI operative whom she met in New Mexico and with whom she shares a frisson of attraction.

The characters are much better developed in this book, adding to the enjoyment. Panos's wife Gabby is a retired opera singer, a fading beauty no longer pleased to be a trophy wife. Panos is unattractive, explosive, and smarmy. The crew has varied and interesting people, and the guests are main attractions themselves: a pop star, a reclusive bachelor, and others who can afford to spend a few million on art.

Having never been to the Greek islands, I enjoyed the descriptions of locales and of the ship itself – all very well described. The art background information was good. Alix's real personality is still hard to find (we know she likes speed, whether driving or skimming water), and the reader doesn't know what she looks like other than that she's 5'9" tall and has a good figure. Her father becomes even more likeable in this volume, and their relationship warms up a few degrees. I like this book and the series and recommend it!

Lis Carey says

Alix London, after not hearing from Ted Ellesworth for much longer than she expected, gets a call from him at last.

He wants her to do another job for the FBI, and this one is undercover. Well, not really, he says. She'll be going on a luxury cruise with a Greek financier and art investor. The Greek tycoon, Panos Papadakis, is auctioning off twenty-three highly valued art works, and he wants someone to talk to his guests/customers about art in general and these works and artists in particular. The FBI wants her to just listen for any tidbits about his fractional investment scheme, which they suspect of being in reality a Ponzi scheme. What could be easier?

But Alix hasn't been aboard much more than an hour when she recognizes--though for reasons she can't immediately pinpoint--that the Manet in the auction is probably a fake, and is almost immediately hit on the head. With Panos and his American wife Gabby, as well as some of the boat's security, standing over her as she regains consciousness, she incautiously blurts out her suspicions.

Oh, and the Manet has been slashed, too. It won't be in the auction after all.

The cruise gets stranger and stranger, with some very interesting people included among the tiny number of people invited to join the cruise and be physically present for the auction. It gets even stranger when Ted

arrives, posing as the nephew of a countess who was invited but hurt her knee and couldn't make the trip. If Ted is going to be there, why was Alix needed?

Alix is enjoying the luxury, and even making friends with Gabby and a few others on the cruise, but the real questions are, a)what's wrong with the Manet (other than the slash), b)what's with Ted's on/again/off again behavior, and c)just what is her (supposedly) ex-art forger father's "new undertaking"?

It's an engaging story, an interestingly convoluted plot, and not too heavy. I like Alix, and increasingly her dad. Overall, it's a fun read or listen.

Recommended.

I bought this audiobook.

Cherie says

Step aboard a luxury cruise of a lifetime in Aaron J. Elkins and Charlotte Elkins' *A Cruise to Die for*.

The unique and well-written characters made this book. Alix London is a likeable heroine. A bit bumbling in her spy skills, she does have a way to be in the right place at the right time. Ted Ellesworth was a harder read than Alix and quite the undercover agent. The array of the yacht guests were sometimes more interesting than the storyline and were quite fun to read about.

For a mystery, I felt this one was a bit slower in pace than the ones I'm used to reading. I also wished the killer's reveal was handled differently. However, the clues and red herrings did keep me guessing.

The authors explored the lifestyle of the superrich, and I enjoyed vicariously living in such splendor for a few hours. The art history and archaeology mentioned when they were in Crete fascinated me.

A Cruise to Die for by Aaron J. Elkins and Charlotte Elkins is a whimsical and fun read, and I would enjoy reading more books featuring Alix London.

Jennifer S. Alderson says

Enjoyable art-related mystery! Setting it on a cruise gave it a lovely Agatha Christie vibe. The end was a bit muddled but still fascinating. The art history details were quite wonderful and well placed. Recommended, though start with book 1 to understand the character development better.

Julie says

A Cruise to Die For by Aaron and Charlotte Elkins is a Thomas & Mercer publication. This book was released in Sept. 2013.

This is the second Alix London mystery.

Alix is commissioned by the FBI art division to work undercover on a fabulous yacht. An art auction is to take place on board the yacht. The FBI is onto a scam where shares are purchased in works of art. So, Alix is to lecture on the pieces up for auction and eavesdrop on conversations and so on. In the meantime, Alix is beginning to reconnect a bit at a time with her father.

The cruise is awesome. The best accommodations are luxurious, the food gourmet, the service is above and beyond. But, Alix immediately senses something is off. A painting on display being passed off as original, is most assuredly a forgery. The investigation takes on international proportions, when murder and the mafia come into the mix.

There is no shortage of motives, scams, double crosses and intrigue with the most interesting locations thrown into the background.

Not only do the authors lend a inside view of the art world and the moral issues involved, but the general attitude of the wealthy and sense of entitlement they assume. There is never a thought given to others and the burdens they place on people.

Alix learns a bit about herself as well along the way. Her own silver spoon having been yanked from her mouth, leaving her and her father living with much less than they were accustomed to. Alix still has a moral compass and knows what lines she will cross and those she won't.

Art is always an interesting topic and when crimes involving art are in the spotlight, the underbelly is exposed. In this instance it appears there is a forger so talented, he can fool even the most extensive testing. Alix gets her father involved in determining how that was accomplished.

A quick read, highly engaging, witty, with sharp dialogue. I hope this series continues for a long time. Over all an A.

Lori says

Alix London, daughter of an art criminal, works for the FBI and is investigating an art forgery/ponzi scheme ring. She's an art expert and is aboard a yacht as a lecturer. One of her colleagues shows up as well, undercover as the designated bidder for an invited guest who cannot make the Greek isles tour. The murder is secondary to the art crimes. I made the mistake of reading this second installment before reading the first and feel I missed out on character development needed to appreciate the series. I didn't enjoy this installment enough to want to read the earlier or later installments in the series. I prefer "murder mysteries" so it just did not hold my attention. Fortunately it was short enough to finish.

Betty says

This is my second Alix London Mystery and I have liked both these books very much. I'll definitely read more. But I could only give it three stars because there is a very bad editing error in the ending of this book. In the 3rd last chapter, Ted tells Alix that she will be flown from Athens, Greece to Washington, D.C. for debriefing and he will meet her there in a couple of days for lunch. The next chapter shows them both meeting at the restaurant in D.C. and the conversation they have there. All well and good. But, skip to the final chapter where Alix arrives in Seattle to be met by her father and the narrative states that she is very exhausted from the long twelve hours flight from Athens to Seattle. No mention of the meeting in DC at all, as if it never happened.

I don't know how such a discrepancy could have been overlooked but I think that the authors might want to fix this. Readers are apt not to forgive this big of an error. However, I like Alix and I keep hoping things will work out with Ted, so I will definitely be reading the next book in the series.
