



## Isle of the Dead

*Alex Connor*

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## **Isle of the Dead** Alex Connor

In 15th century Venice it is a dangerous time to be alive. A permanent winter has rolled in over the canals and bodies keep washing up on the banks of the city. These bodies are especially hard to identify, since they have been skinned.

In the present day, a famous portrait by Titian has been discovered. Its subject: the 15th century suspected murderer Angelico Vespucci. The skins of Vespucci's victims were never found, so his guilt was never proven. Although it is rumoured that when the portrait arises, so will the man. And when flayed bodies start turning up all over the world, it looks like this is more than just a superstition. A murderer has been called back to life, and he is hungry for revenge.

## **Isle of the Dead Details**

Date : Published April 1st 2013 by Quercus (first published January 1st 2013)

ISBN : 9780857389640

Author : Alex Connor

Format : Paperback 512 pages

Genre : Thriller, Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction

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# **From Reader Review Isle of the Dead for online ebook**

## **Susan Gillespie says**

Really enjoyed this. Characters and plot kept my interest right to the end.

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## **Lynn says**

From 1955 to the present day we are introduced to a serial killer.

Legend has us to believe that The Skin Hunter will re-emerge when his portrait is unearthed. Many renowned art historians and collectors across the world are keen to buy this Titian that has been found, quite by accident.

This leads into the plot to try to explain how and why the painting is trouble. A very convoluted plotline and one that could have been simplified by some clever editing I think.

An easy read but I'm afraid to say, feels all too familiar.

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## **Mukundan Srinivasan says**

I started to read this book with a doubt it may be a fantasy - but not to be. It is definitely a page turner with intriguing dialogues and characters whom are not what they seem to be - foul playing for getting possession of a portrait of a murderer from the past... A psychotic, obsessed by the portrait and its sitter starts murdering women which seem to be unconnected and the race to save the last victim reveals the plot. I thought some scenes were out of logic and it did lost its steam in the end until what it promised to be a perfect psycho thriller

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## **Piyush says**

An absolute thriller. The way the story unfolds, the transitions from the present time to the sixteenth century Venice and back added an unparalleled flavor to the book. The style of murders and the seemingly unconnected victims coupled with the mysteriously disappeared portrait made it a real page-turner. The book was just like a jigsaw puzzle; as more pieces fell into place, the picture became clearer but not until the last page was read did everything add up. And the epilogue suggests there might be another book in the series( for which I'll be waiting eagerly)...

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## **Adele says**

Loved this, kept me right on the edge up to the last page, didn't see the conclusion coming and was very pleased to see it end that way

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### **Cynthia Sinsap says**

I love books about missing/ newly discovered artwork and books that connect mysteries from the past to the present. Alex Connor's books all center around art and are all excellent fast reads. Can't wait for the next one!

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### **Elfie1999 says**

This novel is the definition of a thriller. It was simply amazing!

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### **Andrea says**

Story-line sulla falsa riga di "Cospirazione Caravaggio", tuttavia stavolta abbiamo a che fare con un misterioso dipinto di Tiziano.

Penso che Connor abbia fatto un'ottimo lavoro, ha intrecciato una storia macabra del passato veneziano con un thriller dei giorni nostri, il protagonista principale Nino è sicuramente il personaggio descritto meglio di tutti e presenta una evoluzione narrativa maggiore rispetto al killer di turno, che nonostante vengo allo scoperto molto prima della fine a mio avviso non viene descritto in maniera dettagliata da Connor.

La struttura narrativa è ben fatta, l'intreccio dei intrighi è ben studiato e Connor riesce a distribuire sapientemente gli indizi che consentono al lettore di svolgere di indagini per provare a sbrogliare la matassa dei eventi.

Libro che mi sento di consigliare anche per l'originalità della trama, come del resto consiglio di leggere "Cospirazione Caravaggio".

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### **Jaimee says**

I was going to rate it three stars but I legitimately never saw the plot twist at the end coming. It was well written as well, although difficult to get through at some points. I don't regret reading it.

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### **Suzy says**

A very good book, even if not then normal kind of book I tend to read. Certainly kept wanting to turn the pages and definitely didnt see the ending coming, definitely worth a read and will be reading more by this author.

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### **Aquila Reale says**

“Il Dipinto Maledetto” è un thriller serrato, dal ritmo perfetto che non ammette sospensioni nella lettura. Io ne sono stata subito catturata anche se la trama, ben architettata, non è del tutto originale. La storia comunque offre un alto tasso di adrenalina e rivela un mistero che troverà la più inaspettata delle soluzioni.

Inizialmente ogni capitolo offre l’opportunità di conoscere vari personaggi: collezionisti d’arte, potenziali vittime, carnefici in ombra. Le tessere del mosaico sono sparpagliate tra Londra, Tokyo, Venezia e New York. In tutto il romanzo aleggiano misteri, intrighi e morte. Il male allunga i suoi artigli attraverso i secoli, giunge ai giorni nostri con il suo carico di odio e vendetta. Mi è piaciuta la descrizione dell’autrice del mondo dell’arte. I collezionisti, non tutti naturalmente, sono descritti come uomini pronti a tutto pur di accaparrarsi il ritratto. Con molta attenzione Alex Connor descrive la psicologia dei mercanti d’arte definendoli uomini geniali che nascondono le loro fragilità umane. Sono tra loro rivali, ogni accordo nasconde una trappola. L’avidità non ha limiti. Per bilanciare il male presente nel racconto appare, fin dal primo capitolo, un eroe. Si tratta di Nino Bergstrom. Sarà lui a lottare contro la leggenda mentre la polizia appare sullo sfondo coinvolta solo in un secondo momento.

“Il Dipinto Maledetto” è un thriller che si legge con piacere nell’attesa di vedere ogni tassello collocato al suo posto. Se credete nelle leggende, in ognuna c’è un fondo di verità, prestate attenzione a chi potrebbe seguirvi nell’ombra. Il Cacciatore di Pelli non ha mai smesso di cacciare. Buona lettura :)

Recensione completa sul blog Penna D'oro <http://pennadoro.blogspot.it/2017/03/...>

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## **Ahi Keleher says**

Isle of the Dead is an engaging thrill ride that keeps you hooked page after page. Though Venetians did their best to cover up the horrific murders attributed to Angelico Vespucci in the 1500s a warning has carried through to the modern day: "When the portrait emerges, so will the man." Titian painted a portrait of Vespucci that disappeared along with the notorious merchant. Now that painting has come to light, leading to a string of copycat murders spanning the globe. Only an amateur sleuth, assisted by his surrogate father's ties with the art world, is able to connect the murders and get at the truth of what is happening. The clock is ticking down toward the fourth murder...he knows when it will happen, but not the identity of the victim.

Whilst browsing through my favorite used book store I came upon a copy of this and was intrigued by the subtitle: "A sixteenth-century conspiracy. A modern day murderer." At just shy of 500 pages, it looked like a good book with which to kill some time. Having read numerous murder mystery novels, I figured it would be pretty run of the mill. I was pleasantly mistaken.

The author has a good narrative style without bogging down the action. She kept multiple plotlines going seamlessly; I never got lost in the plot. The characters were unique and easily remembered. The chapters are short, making it easy to plow through large chunks at a time - it's a hard book to put down, always leaves you wanting more. Just when I was thinking that it was going to wrap up in a nice bow there was a blindside thrown at me that was a complete surprise. Overall I commend the author's craft.

Full of twists and turns and edge-of-your seat action, Isle of the Dead gets a strong recommendation from me.

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## **Kiran says**

Overall, not as good as *The Rembrandt Secret* but better than *The Caravaggio Conspiracy*. Outlining all the different characters involved, and the dynamic between the various top dealers in the major global art centres - the first third of the book, it felt like Alex Connor was trying so hard to build the suspense from the start. But this book did really pick up towards the end and became more of a fast-paced thriller (although more generic, losing some of the context of the art world, and could in fact have been any type of "hunt for serial killer" novel with an attractive "ordinary bloke" turned action hero); with a decent enough twist at the end. This definitely has born to be a "movie script" written all over it.

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## **Lois Freeman says**

Honestly loved the story. Full of drama and suspense, at times I truly believed the skin hunter had somehow appeared with the painting. At times the book can be a bit long to read but the ending truly shocked me! I never saw it coming, but what spoilt the book slightly for me was how most of the mystery was solved like halfway in the book so it felt like the ending had already happened but the plot twist was a welcome surprise.

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## **Julia Molloy says**

Alex Connor's latest thriller, *Isle of the Dead*, sees conspiracy and murder surface because of a mysterious painting. When Gaspare Reni, art collector, and Nino Bergstrom, his adopted son, are presented with Titian's painting of sixteenth-century murderer Angelico Vespucci, they are alarmed as to what it could mean. The rumour is that when the painting emerges, so will the man – when the painting's finder is brutally murdered. Will Nino and his ageing friend be able to get to the bottom of the painting's legend, or will it be too late for the victims?

The book market has become saturated with thriller novels that straddle two time zones, and I have to say that I expected more from Connor, whose debut *The Rembrandt Secret* achieved great success. Even though the plot is cleverly done and you do get the usual suspense and twists and turns that come with the genre, there was something missing from *Isle of the Dead*.

Perhaps it's because I've read so many of these types of novels that I expected more. Alex Connor clearly has the art-knowledge prowess, being an artist herself, to pull off such a plot. Yet some sections of the novel felt over-dramatized and contrived. When we see the events of the novel through the killer's eyes towards the end of the book, there was something almost cliché about the grotesque descriptions and disturbed mind-set of the murderer that destroyed any sense of reality. And, with hindsight, the mastermind behind the copycat murders is apparent from the beginning – something which makes the ending a bit of a let-down.

I also felt that the sections set in the sixteenth-century were almost irrelevant. The reader has no clear idea of who the speaker is until the last few pages, and even then the speaker is of little consequence. The novel would not have lost anything by omitting these pages.

Although Connor's plot is cleverly woven together, the short, jumpy chapters were one of the biggest issues

for me. I have no issue with short chapters, but when there is little consistency of perspectives from one chapter to the next, it is difficult to get wholly drawn in to the plot and its characters. Sections of the book are told from the perspective of almost every single character – again, something which diminishes the quality of the book for me. We are kept at a distance from the characters which straightaway loses any emotive connection with *Isle of the Dead*.

If, however, you are a fan of this style of fiction, the twisting plot itself will be enough to satisfy you. Not the best of the thriller novels on the market today, but still worth the read.

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