



Alice and the Assassin

R.J. Koreto

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In 1902 New York, Alice Roosevelt, the bright, passionate, and wildly unconventional daughter of newly sworn-in President Theodore Roosevelt, is placed under the supervision of Secret Service Agent Joseph St. Clair, ex-cowboy and veteran of the Rough Riders. St. Clair quickly learns that half his job is helping Alice roll cigarettes and escorting her to bookies, but matters grow even more difficult when Alice takes it upon herself to investigate a recent political killing--the assassination of former president William McKinley.

Concerned for her father's safety, Alice seeks explanations for the many unanswered questions about the avowed anarchist responsible for McKinley's death. In her quest, Alice drags St. Clair from grim Bowery bars to the elegant parlors of New York's ruling class, from the haunts of the Chinese secret societies to the magnificent new University Club, all while embarking on a tentative romance with a family friend, the son of a prominent local household.

And while Alice, forced to challenge those who would stop at nothing in their greed for money and power, considers her uncertain future, St. Clair must come to terms with his own past in *Alice and the Assassin*, the first in R. J. Koreto's riveting new historical mystery series.

Alice and the Assassin Details

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From Reader Review Alice and the Assassin for online ebook

Lourdes Venard says

In real life, Alice Roosevelt, the daughter of President Theodore Roosevelt, led an unconventional life. She was independent, headstrong and a rule-breaker. In other words, the perfect character for a work of fiction.

R.J. Koreto, in the first of a new series, uses Alice's independence to make her an amateur sleuth at the age of seventeen, aided by her Secret Service bodyguard, Joseph St. Clair, a former Rough Rider and the story's narrator. At thirty, he is older than Alice, but still young enough to turn the heads of young women, the president's daughter included.

The story opens after the assassination of President William McKinley (which led to Roosevelt's presidency). McKinley was shot by Leon Czolgosz, who had recently attended a speech by anarchist Emma Goldman. Alice, who lives with her aunt in Manhattan, is determined to investigate, first out of idle curiosity but later because she and St. Clair find themselves being followed, pushing her to believe there must be something—or someone—else behind the assassination. This leads them to all corners of New York—from the rarefied clubs of the city's biggest businessmen to the saloons of the Lower East side, where she meets with mobsters and anarchists. The whole time, she and St. Clair chase a shadowy man known only as "the Archangel."

The story is slow to start, but once it does, it is a gripping look at Manhattan, politics and big business at the turn of the century. Alice and St. Clair are engaging characters, and their back-and-forth banter adds much to the story. In real life, it is unlikely that Alice ever had a good-looking cowboy by her side—and that's a shame. But at least we can imagine what it would have been like, in this entertaining mystery.

Don Brynlesen says

Theodore Roosevelt's irrepressible daughter makes her debut as an amateur sleuth in this first of a series of mysteries starring her. The year is 1901, with her father's rise to the Presidency after the assassination of William McKinley, Alice has become America's First Daughter, and the most popular young woman in the land. To this end she's assigned a personal bodyguard; Joeseph St Clair, a former member of the Rough Riders, who soon finds his hands full trying to ride herd on Alice, accompanying her to bookie joints and other unsavory places in New York as she, fearful that her father may be the next target of an assassin's bullet, strives to find who is behind the man who killed President McKinley, and the identity of the mysterious man known as "Archangel".

While I enjoyed this book immensely, I had to take exception to some of the ways Alice Roosevelt was portrayed, including her swearing like a longshoreman at times, and other behaviors that I doubt she would have indulged in as a real historical person. Still, it was a good debut adventure, and I hope to see many more books in the series.

Kathy Martin says

This historical mystery stars a seventeen-year-old Alice Roosevelt and her Secret Service bodyguard/nanny

Sgt. Joseph St. Clair. It takes place shortly after McKinley's assassination. Alice, fearing for her father's safety, begins her own investigation into McKinley's death. Her search leads her and St. Clair into parts of New York that she hasn't seen before as she investigates anarchists and immigrants from various ethnic groups. Soon, clues lead her and St. Clair to the family of one of her childhood friends - Preston van Schuyler. It seems like the van Schyler's might be pushing the boundaries of the business practices of the day. They keep popping up in Alice's investigation.

The story is told by St. Clair who started life as a cowboy in Wyoming with side trips as a lawman in Wyoming to becoming a Rough Rider fighting with Teddy Roosevelt and to the Secret Service as Alice's bodyguard. He is a fascinating character who begins by indulging Alice's curiosity out of a sense of boredom but soon becomes intrigued himself. His cowboy persona hides a sharp man who might just have a couple of blind spots where Alice is concerned.

The novel's settings give the reader a grand tour of New York City in 1902. It also gives a good picture of the social structure of the city at that time. I liked the dynamics between the smart, sheltered and spoiled Alice Roosevelt and St. Clair. I'll admit to stopping in the middle of the story for a bit to research Alice since, while I'd heard of her, I knew little about her.

Fans of historical mysteries will enjoy this engaging and well-told tale.

QNPoohBear says

Alice Roosevelt, 17, is the daughter of the new President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt. While her father would ideally like Alice to join her stepmother in Washington to share hostess duties, but Alice finds the idea boring. She would rather hang out in New York City having fun, smoking cigarettes and annoying her aunt. Mr. Roosevelt knows he cannot run the country AND control Alice at the same time so for now, he lets her have her way. Alice is concerned that McKinley's assassin was not a lone wolf and may come after her family as well. She convinced her bodyguard, an ex-cowboy turned sheriff/ ex-Rough Rider to let her meet the infamous anarchist, Emma Goldman. Alice's search leads her to meet with people she never thought she would rub shoulders with. The investigation threatens to expose dark doings among Alice's own set, something her father would not approve of. Will her investigation threaten her family and will it affect her courtship with a member of one of New York's oldest families? (Not that she cares about THAT –she has no intentions of marrying anytime soon.)

What can I say about Alice Roosevelt? She was a pistol! I have long since adored her and her equally larger-than-life father. The author seems to do a great job staying true to Alice's personality and lively nature. She smokes in public, swears and is eager to learn to shoot a pistol (for protection, really). Yet, at 17, Alice is a woman-child. She doesn't yet know where she's going in life and what she wants. She still has a lot of maturing to do. Her sheltered upbringing has given her an inflated sense of importance (and indeed, now as First Daughter, she IS important) and dare I say it, has made her spoiled. At times she acts like a petulant child but her mild tantrums seem in line with being a teenager and a wealthy one at that. Her cousin Eleanor gets a brief mention here. Though the two could not be more different in personality and politics, I admire them both very much for being trailblazing women of the 20th-century.

The story is narrated by Alice's bodyguard, St. Clair. He is a fictional character and I can tell the author had fun with him. St. Clair was a cowboy, sheriff of Laramie in Wyoming Territory when he met T.R. When T.R. formed the Rough Riders during the Spanish-American War, he sent for St. Clair. We know St. Clair is

brave and tough but he also has a soft heart and a sense of humor. He can't stand up to women very well. His older sister, Mariah, is a great character. She acts as a mother-figure for him and tells him what he's thinking and feeling when he won't admit it. St. Clair really can't stand up to Alice. He has a soft spot for her and her investigation appeals to his love for adventure. I can see this partnership getting into a lot of trouble with Alice's family! Alice's aunt, Anna Cowes, is another woman St. Clair can't stand up to!

The fictional Van Schuyler family form the rest of the cast of characters. Preston, Alice's would-be-suitor, is a spoiled, wealthy young man at loose ends. He wouldn't suit her at all. He is too traditional and would probably want to curtail her activities. His relatives own a shipping company and are very ruthless, cut-throat businessmen- not uncommon at the turn-of-the-twentieth-century. I didn't like any of them.

As for plot, it was interesting but more of a crime novel than a cozy mystery like his Lady Frances Ffolks mysteries. The story leads to some dark deeds and dark places that I didn't quite care for. I did like learning more about the immigrants and the immigrant community though I did object to the stereotypical "Don" (what is this- "The Godfather : The Prequel"?). The Chinese Tong leader came off a little better. The anarchist angle was interesting and I don't disagree with much of what they had to say though their methods leave a lot to be desired. Alice has yet to learn the truth about her world and this adventure opens her eyes as well as the reader's.

I enjoyed the book but not enough to really be eager enough to read the rest of the series. I am curious about what kind of adventures Alice will get up to next so I probably WILL end up reading the other books!

Linda says

"Fortune favors the bold."

And if you're seventeen year old Alice Roosevelt, you've got plenty of fortune and a king's ransom in boldness.

R. J. Koreto sets the stage here with a panorama of electrically charged historical situations. The timeline is set after the assassination of President McKinley in September of 1901 and the swearing-in of Teddy Roosevelt himself. The air is ripe with the sting of anarchy and the assumption that Leo Czolgosz acted as a "Lone Wolf". We'll even enter into the den of the Freethinker Club and dialogue with the likes of Emma Goldman.

Special Agent Joseph St. Clair will be handed a monumental assignment wrapped in the diminutive stature of Teddy's teenage daughter, Alice. Formerly of the Rough Riders and a boot-wearing, Stetson hatted cowboy, Joe knows his stellar agent skills will be challenged as he tries to reel in the untameable Alice. Joe has a lively vein of adventure himself as well which gives into the "jump without looking" gene imbedded within Alice's DNA. He readily admits that this little wildcat will test every nerve with: "I know, and your fearlessness frightens the hell out of me."

Alice wishes to pursue the anarchy trail with concern for her father, Teddy. This first step will take them on a precarious road filled with questionable situations that no seventeen year old would even dream of experiencing. But then this is Alice and this is meant to be the lively noted conquests of a young woman who won't take no, never, or not at face value.

R.J. Koreto has done a fine job with his historical research. But we, as readers, must suspend belief around every corner as Alice slips into free-rein of every situation. Alice is pushy, opinionated, outlandish in her thinking and mindset.....just as she was in real life. This is every inch an adventure novel to be enjoyed for simply being just that.

Will Special Agent Joe St. Clair ever get a handle on all of this in the next books of the series? Just think of what Teddy had to say: "Can't run the country and handle Alice at the same time."

I received a copy of Alice and the Assassin through NetGalley for an honest review. My thanks to Crooked Lane Publishing and to R.J. Koreto for the opportunity.

Lindsay Heller says

So, this was a book about Alice Roosevelt solving mysteries. Obviously I read this for Alice, Theodore Roosevelt's indomitable daughter, because, well, she was awesome. But I'm not really sure why she had to be solving crimes. It's not like this isn't something I can't imagine quite well, it's just that... can't there be a book about someone in history that was not a detective NOT solving crimes? It's just so old hat at this point. And this particular mystery was a bit lame. It sort of started out as looking into McKinley's assassination, which might have been valid, and then pretty quickly veered into a mysterious personage known as the Archangel that was working on the behalf of a family called the Van Schuylars. I was NOT surprised by the outcome.

But the characterization of Alice was delightful and I liked her secret service bodyguard, our narrator, quite a bit. I just wish the plot had been as good as the characters were.

Nancy Reynolds says

I really enjoyed the book. I was intrigued by the idea of a new series based on the life of the audacious (from all accounts) of Alice Roosevelt, while her father was President. Although the story got "bogged down" a little in the middle, I found it to be a great start to a new series. I will definitely read the next book to see how things progress.

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

Alice and the Assassin is the first book in a new series (An Alice Roosevelt Mystery) and it was an absolute delight to read. As a big fan of the Roosevelt family was I intrigued by the idea of a historical mystery series featuring the headstrong and impossible Alice Roosevelt. Alice, together with her bodyguard Joseph St. Clair takes on the assassination of William McKinley in this book. Or rather some questions surrounding the murder. Was the killer really alone?

I found the book quite enchanting to read and Alice Roosevelt is such a wonderful character. I checked up her life on Wikipedia and it feels like this book really captures her and her personality. Despite being only 17 in this book is she a daring and wonderful character, which is why her father has put her in Agent Joseph St. Clair hands since he can't run the country and keep an eye on her at the same time.

I can say the only thing that is a drawback with the book, is that it was quite easy to figure out who was a bad guy and the revelation towards the end of the book was hardly a surprise. However, I did enjoy Alice and Joe's investigations and this is a series that I certainly want to read more titles from.

3.5 stars

I want to thank the publisher for providing me with a free copy through NetGalley for an honest review!

Joan says

This was a pleasant mystery set in 1902 New York. Alice Roosevelt at 17 was a feisty young woman. I liked her tenacious spirit. She was unafraid to barge into the dangerous realm of financial power in her attempt to find out the truth about President McKinley's assassination. After all, her father was now president and he might be in danger.

We experience the action through the eyes her her Secret Service body guard, St. Claire. I liked his calm strength. He was a very patient man and was saddled with a job many would not like.

The strength of this book is the historical setting. We learn quite a bit about New York and the powerful business people of the era. The mystery is slow in progressing and there is really little suspense. Readers paying particular attention to detail may figure out the bad guy before Alice does.

I received a complimentary egalley of this book through Partners in Crime Virtual Book Tours. My comments are an independent and honest review.

Tonia says

I loved this book! I have been fascinated for a long time with Alice Roosevelt. She was a force to be reckoned with. I know this book is fiction but given what I have read of her, I could see her behaving like in the book. Joseph St. Clair is a character that I could really visualize. I don't blame Alice for having a crush on him. Can't wait to read the next one!

Joe Slavinsky says

I love books with strong female leads, and this book is all that. I loved it! The fact that it's listed as "Alice Roosevelt Mystery #1" gives me hope that it continues for a while, as I found it well written, with obviously great characters, and a plausible plot. I've been a fan of historical fiction for some time, and this book hit all the right notes. Kudos to Mr Koreto, and I see the next one is already out, so I will be reading it fairly soon.

Robin says

Alice Roosevelt, spirited daughter of President Theodore Roosevelt, drags her bodyguard around New York

to uncover a mystery relating to the assassination of President McKinley.

An entertaining enough fictional adventure, but I can't say I was hugely enthralled. Alice's character is amusing and I enjoyed the banter between her and her bodyguard, but beyond that it was an average plot with average writing. I could let the unrealistic places the daughter of the president wound up in and people she talked to slide, as unlikely as it was even given her very real spunky nature, it was plausible enough for the sake of a good story. Unfortunately, the plot just seemed to dragged on, despite being a very short 288 pages. It picked up at the end, but by then I'd already figured out what was going on.

I also frequently wished we could have seen Alice's point of view.

Good, fun characters with lively dialogue and banter, but everything else fell just a bit short of the mark.

Advanced review copy from publisher via NetGalley. My opinions are my own.

Historical Readings & Reviews

L.A. Chandlar says

Love this book! The cowboy and the princess. I ADORE Alice and her gun-slinging body guard, the former Rough Rider, St. Clair. What a pair! They make an incredible duo and I love them just as much as I love the intriguing mystery.

LadyJBookishNook says

review coming later

Ivonne Rovira says

The titular Alice is Alice Roosevelt, the willful daughter of President Teddy Roosevelt, who once said to author Owen Wister: "I can either run the country or I can attend to Alice, but I cannot possibly do both."

Alice and the Assassin is clearly the debut in what is to be a series in which the clever, iconoclastic Alice, 17 as the novel opens, teams up with her 30-year-old Secret Service bodyguard, Joseph St. Clair, to solve politically tinged mysteries. Like her father, St. Clair finds Alice a handful, what with smoking in 1902, when women puffing on cigarettes was considered scandalous; gambling on horseraces through bookies, chewing gum, barging into low haunts, demanding and getting her own way at a time when women weren't deemed intelligent enough to handle their own money or decide their own children's fates, much less vote or hold office. I'm sure author R.J. Koreto undertook considerable research, peopling his novel with real-life contemporaries of Alice and Teddy Roosevelt; however, Alice's behavior seems over the top even for Alice Roosevelt. She comes off as a bored debutante seeking thrills for thrills' sake rather than as the intelligent, if impetuous, beauty who understood politics as well as her father. Despite whatever research he undertook, Koreto also refers to Alice's aunt as Aunt Anna; Anna Roosevelt Cowles was never referred to as anything but Aunt Bye or Aunt Bamie. And if anyone believes that even a folksy cowboy-turned-Secret Service agent

would risk his job by allowing the president's daughter to brush shoulders with anarchists or drink rotgut beer in Lower East Side saloons, I have a great deal for you on the sale of what was then known as the East River Bridge.

In this novel, Alice gets a suspicion that President William McKinley's assassin, Czech anarchist Leon Czolgosz, did not act alone, despite the official police determination. Readers get to see the pair interview a sour Emma Goldman, amongst other real historical figures and some fictional ones, in a conspiracy that will remind them of the Kennedy assassination. I won't ruin the book by revealing what Alice and St. Clair discover, but I will say that I saw where the novel was heading about one-fourth of the way in. *Alice and the Assassin* isn't a great mystery, but colorful Alice and St. Clair make up for it. Here's to hoping the next novel isn't quite so over the top.

In the interest of full disclosure, I received this book from NetGalley and Crooked Lane Books in exchange for an honest review.
