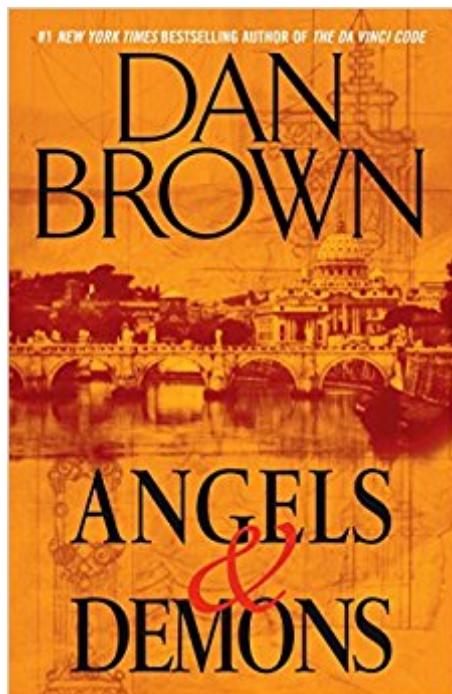


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Angels & Demons: A Novel (Robert Langdon)



Synopsis

From the #1 New York Times bestselling author of *The Da Vinci Code* comes the explosive thriller that started it all. An ancient secret brotherhood. A devastating new weapon of destruction. An unthinkable target. When world-renowned Harvard symbologist Robert Langdon is summoned to his first assignment to a Swiss research facility to analyze a mysterious symbol -- seared into the chest of a murdered physicist -- he discovers evidence of the unimaginable: the resurgence of an ancient secret brotherhood known as the Illuminati...the most powerful underground organization ever to walk the earth. The Illuminati has now surfaced to carry out the final phase of its legendary vendetta against its most hated enemy -- the Catholic Church. Langdon's worst fears are confirmed on the eve of the Vatican's holy conclave, when a messenger of the Illuminati announces they have hidden an unstoppable time bomb at the very heart of Vatican City. With the countdown under way, Langdon jets to Rome to join forces with Vittoria Vetra, a beautiful and mysterious Italian scientist, to assist the Vatican in a desperate bid for survival. Embarking on a frantic hunt through sealed crypts, dangerous catacombs, deserted cathedrals, and the most secretive vault on earth, Langdon and Vetra follow a 400-year-old trail of ancient symbols that snakes across Rome toward the long-forgotten Illuminati lair...a clandestine location that contains the only hope for Vatican salvation. Critics have praised the exhilarating blend of relentless adventure, scholarly intrigue, and cutting wit found in Brown's remarkable thrillers featuring Robert Langdon. An explosive international suspense, *Angels & Demons* marks this hero's first adventure as it careens from enlightening epiphanies to dark truths as the battle between science and religion turns to war.

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Customer Reviews

I read "Angels & Demons" after reading Dan Brown's "The Da Vinci Code," and I have to say that I do not think it matters what order you read the two books although there are clear indications this book was written first (Brown does several examples of blatant foreshadowing, including early on the idea that one square yard of drag will slow a falling body's rate of descent by twenty percent). The two books are similar in that Harvard symbologist Robert Langdon deciphers clues to try and solve one murder while trying to prevent others in a mystery that involves the secrets of the Catholic Church. In this book a physicist is murdered at CERN, the Swiss research facility, and branded with a symbol representing the Illuminati, the centuries old underground organization of scientists who have a vendetta against the Catholic Church. The ancient secret brotherhood has acquired a devastating new weapon of mass destruction and intends to bring down the Vatican (literally). Which book is better? My initial reaction would be that I liked "The Da Vinci Code" a bit more because so many of the clues were written out. When Langdon has to look over paintings, statues and other visual clues I find myself wishing Brown had supplied photographs in his book so that I could play along looking for clues (he does provide most of the requisite images at his website, but I did not know this until after the fact and I suspect most readers will not want to stop and go online to call up the photographs). Not that I had much success in my endeavors, but I did know that Leonardo Da Vinci wrote in his journals backwards so that I was ahead of Langdon for a half a page at one point.

Harvard professor Robert Langdon and CERN scientist Vittoria Vetra have just one night to prevent the Vatican from being destroyed by an antimatter bomb. Can they do it? Of course. But the fun lies in how and why. A sample of antimatter has been stolen from physics center CERN by the Illuminati -- the all-powerful group made so famous by Robert A. Wilson's books. Here, they are represented as being an ancient order of scientists upset with the way the Church has treated science and scientists. (Me, I always liked the bankers-as-secret-force or blood-relatives-of-Jesus explanation of the Illuminati, but this will do.) This provides for plenty of science vs. religion conversations, and Brown does a good job with them. ANGELS AND DEMONS is a fast, but satisfying read. It rolls along unstoppably, not the least of which because the action takes place over a 24-hour span. Even if -- as I did -- you guess what's really happening half-way through the book, you'll never guess what happens in the last 40 pages. The book is laced with fun facts about electing a pope and the

Vatican, like that St. Peter's bones are not in the golden casket in St. Peter's Basilica, but two stories under it. Brown knows the layout. And that the artist Raphael's last name was Santi. He also knows how marble statues were carved. Brown's no Irving Stone (THE AGONY AND THE ECSTACY), but he does manage to inform without being pedantic. As Vittoria and Langdon race around Rome, we get quite a tour, with great descriptions. (Pick up a paperback copy next summer and bring it to Rome. Take the Brown tour.) What's interesting is that all the places and pieces of art in this book really exist.

My first introduction to Dan Brown was through his incredible thriller, 'The Da Vinci Code' and figured that I had missed out on his previous works, so I picked up 'Angels & Demons' the day after I finished TDVC. This is in every way it's equal. Every bit as compelling. Every bit as entertaining. Every bit as FUN. If you enjoy solving puzzles -- especially REAL ones, than Dan Brown is an author you NEED to get to know and F-A-S-T. One of the things which made this book so instantly enjoyable was one of the main characters I already knew, Robert Langdon, world famous Symbolologist from 'The Da Vinci Code'. Set aside some time to completely absorb this amazing tale, because once you start it, you will instantly be captured up in this highly addictive story. Robert is suddenly awakened early in the morning by the Director of the worlds leading science center, CERN located in Switzerland asking for advice. Robert is less than interested and hangs up when his fax machine spits out a picture which makes his blood run cold. Within a few hours, he is on a quick trip to Europe (heavy emphasis on the word 'Quick'). A murder has been committed. The victim, one of the most gifted scientist in the world has been brutally killed and the mysterious brand of the secret brotherhood of the Illuminati is left on his chest. NOT just ANY brand either, an Ambigram, a word which can be read the same right-side-up as well as upside-down. But Robert is convinced that the Illuminati have been disbanded for the better part of a century. Even so, his curiosity leads him on a quest which will take up the rest of the day and open up secrets long forgotten and better left buried. Somehow Dan Brown has introduced the element of Antimatter into the story in such a way as to be totally believable.

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