

The Loquacious "Lost Symbol": A Review of Dan Brown's Latest Novel by C. T. Martin

You've seen it in bookstores everywhere. There have also been television specials devoted to its conspiracy theory storyline. If you have not already noticed, it is here - Dan Brown's latest thriller featuring the character Robert Langdon in his novel entitled *The Lost Symbol*.

So is it worthy of purchase and adding to your library? In a nutshell the book is quite good, and does deliver as a thriller and a good quick read. If you liked the main character in the last novel, you won't be disappointed, as he stays true to form as a quick witted intellectual who deals with the pressure of the CIA breathing down his neck, while solving the mystery of his friend's disappearance, and dodging the clutches of a murderer. Although the author has repeated the formula that made *The Da Vinci Code* work so well, this new foray into the depths of Washington, D. C. just doesn't have the same pizzazz. Perhaps the reason why is that it seems to be a duplication of the same old formula. A completely different take would have been nice, but then that wouldn't necessarily guarantee the following of the fans of his other works.

The first fifty pages or so are very slow paced and left me wanting him to just get on with it. Thereafter it does begin to raise an eyebrow or two, as you are then whisked away into wondering the whys, hows, and wherefores of the plot.

The conflict is well written, tight, and controlled, making the reader care about the personal plight of the characters. It is done so well that the book actually surprised me with an ending to one of its storylines that I just did not see coming. You know the author has done well when a smile comes across your face like a reflex while reading the punch line.

The mystery, this time revolving around the Freemasons and a pyramid that has hidden symbols and messages inside, is quite intriguing. As can be expected of a novel of this caliber, the reader is not allowed to solve the puzzle very easily, but instead is led through various loops almost to the point of agony. This does lead to some frustration.

For a 500+ page novel it is somewhat loquacious. The thriller could perhaps have been done in about 400 - 450 pages. The ultra short chapters keep the reader in a quandary, as the mind, along with the character Robert Langdon, tries desperately to understand the mystery of the pyramid and its actual relevancy and importance in the real world. After all, in *The Da Vinci Code*, it was clear why and how an altered understanding of Jesus Christ and whether or not he had a descendant, would be an important secret to be either kept or revealed. In *The Lost Symbol*, however, the writer falls short of showing why the mystery of the pyramid is so monumental. The real mystery is in fact not revealed, but left open in a set of cryptic phrases that leaves one no closer to pondering the reason why so many people had to go to such great lengths (including death) to hide such information.

If you are new to reading this author, I suggest reading *The Da Vinci Code* first. Everything considered, however, *The Lost Symbol* is a good read, especially if you are a fan of Mr. Brown's other novels. However as a reader, I prefer succinct where possible, and loquacious only where necessary.