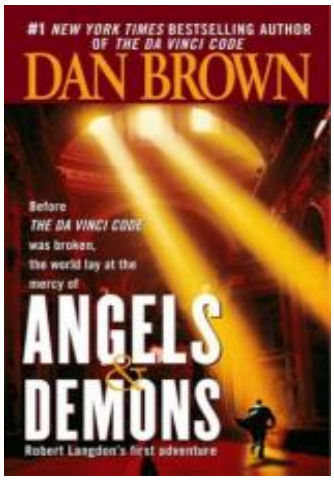
ReadingGroupGuides
The online community for reading groups

Angels & Demons

by Dan Brown



About the Book

An ancient secret brotherhood.
A devastating new weapon of destruction.
An unthinkable target.

World-renowned Harvard symbologist Robert Langdon is summoned to a Swiss research facility to analyze a cryptic symbol seared into the chest of a murdered physicist. What he discovers is unimaginable: a deadly vendetta against the Catholic Church by a centuries-old underground organization -- the Illuminati. Desperate to save the Vatican from a powerful time bomb, Langdon joins forces in Rome with the beautiful and mysterious scientist Vittoria Vetra. Together they embark on a frantic hunt through sealed crypts, dangerous catacombs, deserted cathedrals, and the most secretive vault on earth...the long-forgotten Illuminati lair.

Discussion Guide

1. What is your view of Robert Langdon? What motivates him to find out more about the circumstances of Leonardo Vetra's death? Is it merely academic interest? Aside from his scholarly knowledge, what else in Langdon's background helps him succeed during this adventure?

2. Discuss the other characters' motivations for their actions, both the "villains" and "heroes" in the story, including Vittoria, the Hassassin, the camerlengo, Cardinal Mortati, and Maximilian Kohler.

3. **Angels & Demons** is filled with examples of science versus religion, a debate that has raged for centuries. Is there room in the world for both science and religion? Is one likely to render the other obsolete? Would you rather live in a world without science...or in a world without religion?

4. Were you aware of the existence of CERN prior to reading this book? What is your opinion of the work they conduct, particularly in regard to antimatter technology?

5. Discuss Vittoria's role in the story. How does her knowledge as a scientist come into play? Leonardo Vetra was both a scientist and a priest. How did he reconcile these two seemingly disparate entities? In what ways did her father's beliefs influence Vittoria's own opinions of science and religion?

6. When he first meets Maximilian Kohler, Langdon tells him he is "undecided on miracles... . I study religious symbology -- I'm an academic, not a priest" (21). Does Langdon change his view on miracles by the end of the book?

7. Had you heard of the Illuminati before reading **Angels & Demons**? The Illuminati is rumored by some to be active today. Do you believe this is true? What is the enduring fascination with conspiracy theories? Given what Dan Brown reveals about the history of the Illuminati, is their alleged vendetta against the Vatican justified?

8. Camerlengo Carlo Ventresca emerges as one of the most complex characters in the story. What was your opinion of the camerlengo when he is first introduced? How about by the end of the book?

9. What role do the media play in the events that unfold? How about Glick and Macri in particular? The media were not interested in covering the election of a new pope until there was tragedy involved. How much influence do the media have on what information is relayed to the public? Is it true, as Glick believes, that "viewers didn't want truth anymore; they wanted entertainment" (190)?

10. The novel takes place during a 24-hour period. How does this narrative structure heighten the suspense in the story? What red herrings does the author use to keep the reader guessing? Did you anticipate any of the events in the story?

11. What did you find to be most compelling about **Angels & Demons** -- the action scenes, the characters, the setting, the history, or something else entirely?

12. Discuss the novel's ending. Do you think the Vatican (and Robert and Vittoria) made the right decision to keep the events that took place secret from the public?

13. In an interview on his website (www.danbrown.com), Dan Brown said that **Angels & Demons** "opens some Vatican closets most people don't even know exist." Did you learn anything about the Vatican, its practices, and its history that surprised you?

14. In the same interview Dan Brown goes on to say, "The final message of the novel, though, without a doubt, is a positive one." What do you see as the ultimate message of the book?

15. Have you visited Rome? If so, do you recall seeing the Illuminati symbolism that Dan Brown describes in the book, such as at the Piazza del Popolo and the Piazza Navona? If you have not been to Rome, has reading **Angels & Demons** inspired you to make a visit?

16. If you've read Robert Langdon's second adventure, **The Da Vinci Code**, compare the two books. What similarities do the stories share? How does the character of Rober Langdon change?

Author Bio

Dan Brown is the author of nine #1 bestselling novels, including THE DA VINCI CODE, which has become one of the bestselling books of all time. His Robert Langdon thrillers --- including THE LOST SYMBOL, ANGELS & DEMONS, INFERNO, ORIGIN and THE SECRET OF SECRETS --- have captivated readers worldwide and continue to spark intellectual debate, dialogue and conjecture. Brown's novels are published in 56 languages around the world with over 250 million copies in print.

In 2026, Brown was named ?Global Icon? by *Esquire* magazine in Spain and received the title of ?Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters? by the French government.

Brown has been cited as one of the ?100 Most Influential People in the World? by *TIME* magazine, whose editors credited him with ?keeping the publishing industry afloat; renewed interest in Leonardo da Vinci and early Christian history; spiking tourism to Paris and Rome; a growing membership in secret societies; the ire of Cardinals in Rome; eight books denying the claims of the novel and seven guides to read along with it; a flood of historical thrillers; and a major motion picture franchise.?

The son of a mathematics teacher and a church organist, Brown was raised on a prep school campus where he developed a fascination with the paradoxical interplay between science and religion. These themes eventually formed the backdrop for his books. He is a graduate of Amherst College and Phillips Exeter Academy, where he later returned to teach English before focusing his attention full time to writing. He lives in New England.

Critical Praise

"Dan Brown has to be one of the best, smartest, and most accomplished writers in the country."

Angels & Demons
by Dan Brown

Publication Date: July 1, 2001
Mass Market Paperback: 608 pages
Publisher: Pocket Star
ISBN-10: 0671027360
ISBN-13: 9780671027360