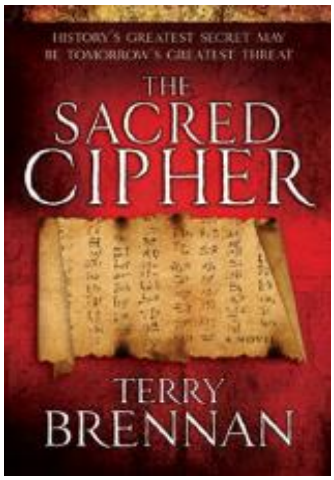
The Sacred Cipher

by Terry Brennan



About the Book

A secret room has been discovered in the chapel of the Bowery Mission. And what?s hidden inside could change the world as we know it.

When New Yorker Tom Bohannon uncovers an ancient cipher containing a dead language that has been lost in the sands of time, he doesn?t fully comprehend the danger that?s about to unfold. Though Tom and his team of ragtag scientists and historians want to decode the ancient text, there are others who don?t want the cipher revealed. And they are prepared to kill to keep it hidden.

From a market in 19th century Alexandria to an apartment in present-day New York to the tunnels beneath Jerusalem, the secret of the cipher has spanned the globe --- and threatened the lives of everyone in its path. Will Tom be next?

Discussion Guide

1. Early in the book we read about a significant discovery with great archeological, historical, and religious implications. Tom Bohannon and his team make the decision to keep the find a secret --- at least for the time being. What were his reasons for that decision? Was it the right decision? What would you have done?

2. Symbols play a large part in this story --- in the cipher?s text and in remnants such as the Coptic cross and lightning bolt. What do the symbols add to the story?

3. Many times during the novel, the safety of Tom?s team is threatened. And yet Tom still continues his quest. What do you think motivates them? Is it just curiosity? Or is there something more compelling him to move forward?

4. One of the recurring threats to Tom and his team is the group of dedicated men who are intent on restoring the honor

of The Prophet?s Guard, even if it means risking their lives. Describe their devotion. What makes it so intense? What are their motivations for carrying out their cause? Is that type of devotion still prevalent in the world today?

5. What role does news media play near the end of the story when secrets are finally revealed? How much influence does news media have on how we hear information today? Is this a threat or a benefit?

6. Some may view elements of this story as miraculous. What in this book could be described as a miracle? Do you believe in miracles?

7. Though its fiction, **The Sacred Cipher** includes themes and issues very real in our world. Do you think it?s helpful for fiction to explore controversial issues such as these?

8. Politics and religion cross paths many time in this novel. Would the story have been as suspenseful if there wasn?t pressure from both political and religious arenas? What about in real life? What if politics and religion weren?t so intertwined? Would you rather live in a world without politics or a world without religion?

9. There are many contributing factors at work in this book: action, characters, setting, history, religion, politics. What did you find most compelling and why? What clues did the author give to keep you reading? Did you anticipate any of the events in the story?

10. Discuss the novel's ending. What is the final message of this book? Is it positive or negative?

Author Bio

Terry Brennan has had an extensive career in journalism, winning several awards, including the Valley Forge Award for editorial writing from the Freedoms Foundation. Terry served eleven years as the vice president of operations for The Bowery Mission in New York City and is currently a management consultant.

Critical Praise

"Terry Brennan?s debut work is a high-concept barnburner. The action, the intrigue, the mystery... it kept me turning pages faster than I could read what was on them! My only question is: What is he going to come up with next?"

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Publication Date: July 1, 2009
Genres: Christian, Suspense
Paperback: 352 pages
Publisher: Kregel Publications
ISBN-10: 0825424267
ISBN-13: 9780825424267