

Inferno: (Robert Langdon Book 4)

By Dan Brown

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With the publication of his groundbreaking novels *The Da Vinci Code*, *The Lost Symbol*, and *Angels & Demons*, Dan Brown has become an international bestselling sensation, seamlessly fusing codes, symbols, art, and history into riveting thrillers that have captivated hundreds of millions of readers around the world. Now, Dan Brown takes readers deep into the heart of Italy . . . guiding them through a landscape that inspired one of history's most ominous literary classics.

“The darkest place in hell are reserved for those who maintain their neutrality in times of moral crisis.”

Harvard professor of symbology Robert Langdon awakens in a hospital in the middle of the night. Disoriented and suffering from a head wound, he recalls nothing of the last thirty-six hours, including how he got there . . . or the origin of the macabre object that his doctors discover hidden in his belongings.

Langdon's world soon erupts into chaos, and he finds himself on the run in Florence with a stoic young woman, Sienna Brooks, whose clever maneuvering saves his life. Langdon quickly realizes that he is in possession of a series of disturbing codes created by a brilliant scientist—a genius whose obsession with the end of the world is matched only by his passion for one of the most influential masterpieces ever written—Dante Alighieri's dark epic poem *The Inferno*.

Racing through such timeless locations as the Palazzo Vecchio, the Boboli Gardens, and the Duomo, Langdon and Brooks discover a network of hidden passageways and ancient secrets, as well as a terrifying new scientific paradigm that will be used either to vastly improve the quality of life on earth . . . or to devastate it.

In his most riveting and thought-provoking novel to date, Dan Brown has raised the bar yet again. *Inferno* is a sumptuously entertaining read—a novel that will captivate readers with the beauty of classical Italian art, history, and literature . . . while also posing provocative questions about the role of cutting-edge science in our future.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Exclusive: Inside *Inferno*

Explore the sights of *Inferno* alongside Robert Langdon in this exclusive first look at Dan Brown's latest thriller.



As Langdon continued on toward the elbow of the square, he could see, directly ahead in the distance, the shimmering blue glass dial of the St. Mark's Clock Tower—the same astronomical clock through which James Bond had thrown a villain in the film *Moonraker*.



The Tetrarchs statue was well known for its missing foot, broken off while it was being plundered from Constantinople in the thirteenth century. Miraculously, in the 1960s, the foot was unearthed in Istanbul. Venice petitioned for the missing piece of statue, but the Turkish authorities replied with a simple message: *You stole the statue—we're keeping our*

foot.



Amid a contour of spires and domes, a single illuminated facade dominated Langdon's field of view. The building was an imposing stone fortress with a notched parapet and a three-hundred-foot tower that swelled near the top, bulging outward into a massive machicolated battlement.



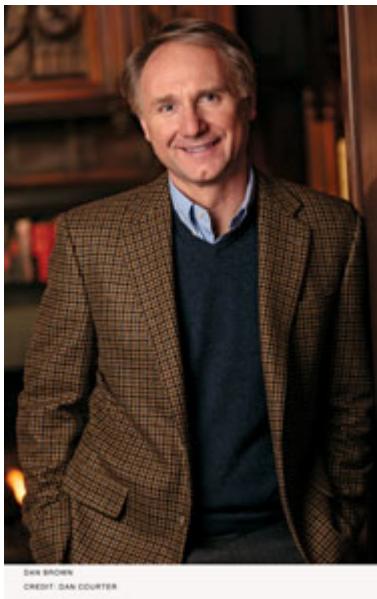
Langdon found himself standing before a familiar face—that of Dante Alighieri. Depicted in the legendary fresco by Michelino, the great poet stood before Mount Purgatory and held forth in his hands, as if in humble offering, his masterpiece *The Divine Comedy*.

Amazon Exclusive: Additional Reading Suggestions from Dan Brown

- *The Divine Comedy: Volume 1: Inferno*—(Penguin Classics)
- *The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology*—Ray Kurzweil (Author)

- *Brunelleschi's Dome*—Ross King (Author)
- *The Lives of the Artists Volume 1*—Giorgio Vasari (Author), George Bull (Translator)
- *The Book Of Symbols: Reflections On Archetypal Images*—ARAS

Q&A with Dan Brown



Q. Inferno refers to Dante Alighieri's The Divine Comedy. What is Dante's significance? What features of his work or life inspired you?

A. *The Divine Comedy*—like *The Mona Lisa*—is one of those rare artistic achievements that transcends its moment in history and becomes an enduring cultural touchstone. Like Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, *The Divine Comedy* speaks to us centuries after its creation and is considered an example of one of the finest works ever produced in its artistic field. For me, the most captivating quality of Dante Alighieri is his staggering influence on culture, religion, history, and the arts. In addition to codifying the early Christian vision of Hell, Dante's work has inspired some of history's greatest luminaries—Longfellow, Chaucer, Borges, Tchaikovsky, Liszt, Monteverdi, Michelangelo, Blake, Dalí—and even a few modern video game designers. Despite Dante's enduring influence on the arts, however, most of us today have only a vague notion of what his work actually says—both literally and symbolically (which, of course, is of great interest to Robert Langdon). A few years ago, I became very excited about the prospect of writing a contemporary thriller that incorporated the philosophy, history, and text of Dante's timeless descent into *The Inferno*.

Q. Where did do your research for Inferno? How long did you spend on it?

A. Researching *Inferno* began with six months of reading, including several translations of *The Divine Comedy*, various annotations by Dante scholars, historical texts about Dante's life and philosophies, as well as a lot of background reading on Florence itself. At the same time, I was poring over all the new scientific information that I could find on a cutting edge technology that I had decided to incorporate into the novel. Once I had enough understanding of these topics to proceed, I traveled to Florence and Venice, where I was fortunate to meet with some wonderful art historians, librarians, and other scholars who helped me enormously.

Once this initial phase of research was complete, I began outlining and writing the novel. As is always the

case, when a book begins to take shape, I am drawn in unexpected directions that require additional research. This was also the case with *Inferno*, which took about 3 years from conception to publication.

With respect to the process, the success of these novels has been a bit of a Catch-22. On one hand, I now have wonderful access to specialists, authorities, and even secret archives from which to draw information and inspiration. On the other hand, because there is increased speculation about my works in progress, I need to be increasingly discreet about the places I go and the specialists with whom I speak. Even so, there is one aspect of my research that will never change—making personal visits to the locations about which I’m writing. When it comes to capturing the feel of a novel’s setting, I find there is no substitute for being there in the flesh...even if sometimes I need to do it incognito.

Q. What kind of adventure will Robert Langdon face this time? Can you give us any sneak peak at the new novel?

A. *Inferno* is very much a Robert Langdon thriller. It’s filled with codes, symbols, art, and the exotic locations that my readers love to explore. In this novel, Dante Alighieri’s ancient literary masterpiece—*The Divine Comedy*—becomes a catalyst that inspires a macabre genius to unleash a scientific creation of enormous destructive potential. Robert Langdon must battle this dark adversary by deciphering a Dante-related riddle, which leads him to Florence, where he finds himself in a desperate race through a landscape of classical art, secret passageways, and futuristic technology.

Q. What made Florence the ideal location for Inferno?

A. No city on earth is more closely tied to Dante Alighieri. Dante grew up in Florence, fell in love in Florence, and began writing in Florence. Later in life, when he was exiled for political reasons, the longing he felt for his beloved Florence became a catalyst for *The Divine Comedy*. Through his enduring poem, Dante enjoyed the “last word” over his political enemies, banishing them to various rings of Inferno where they suffered terrible tortures.

From Publishers Weekly

The threat of world overpopulation is the latest assignment for Brown's art historian and accidental sleuth Robert Langdon. Awakening in a Florence hospital with no memory of the preceding 36 hours, Langdon and an attractive attending physician with an oversized intellect are immediately pursued by an ominous underground organization and the Italian police. Detailed tours of Florence, Venice, and Istanbul mean to establish setting, but instead bog down the story and border on showoffmanship. Relying on a deceased villain's trail of clues threaded through the text of Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, the duo attempt to unravel the events leading up to Langdon's amnesia and thwart a global genocide scheme. Suspension of disbelief is required as miraculous coincidences pile upon pure luck. Near the three-quarters point everything established gets upended and Brown, hoping to draw us in deeper, nearly drives us out. Though the prose is fast-paced and sharp, the burdensome dialogue only serves plot and back story, and is interspersed with unfortunate attempts at folksy humor. It's hard not to appreciate a present day mega-selling thriller that attempts a refresher course in Italian literature and European history. But the real mystery is in the book's denouement and how Brown can possibly bring his hero back for more. Agent: Heide Lange, Sanford J. Greenberger Associates. (May)

From [Booklist](#)

That Robert Langdon. He goes through more machinations in 72 hours than a phalanx of folk would in several lifetimes. This time out, the professor wakes up in a Florence hospital unable to remember the last several days. A bullet has grazed his head, and some bad people are after him, but with the help of the lovely Dr. Sienna Brooks, he's able to escape—and escape and escape, as he slowly comprehends that a plague is

quite deliberately about to be released, and it's his job to figure out the puzzles and symbols that lead to its location. All of Brown's books have a big idea underpinning them—the family of Jesus, freemasonry—and here one of them is Dante's Inferno, a theme that will probably resonate more with readers familiar with the work, though many pages are spent explaining the man, his muse, and the influences that shaped the epic poem. The other theme sharing center stage concerns population control and humanity's determination to be fruitful and multiply itself into oblivion. Is it a worthwhile endeavor to cull the human herd in order to save it? In posing this and other troubling questions, Brown weans himself away from the guidebook atmosphere that permeates the story, as Langdon and Brooks race from Florence to Venice to Istanbul, and asks readers to think about their own answers to the overpopulation dilemma. Fans will once more enjoy the through line of the Langdon formula—the race to find a find an iconic object at the corner of deadly thrills and plot twists. The negatives are here, too: paper-thin characters and windy descriptions. But for those hungry for more Brown, this has some meat on its bones. --Ilene Cooper

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Alberta Sanchez:

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