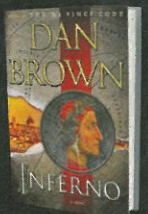


The Nine Circles of Dan Brown

On May 14, dark prince of conspiracy-based historical thrillery Dan Brown will release *Inferno*, the Dante-inspired fourth book in his Robert Langdon series, a novel whose first printing of 4 million copies all but guarantees that it'll be a giant hit—and that it will create lots of extra work for everybody. Abandon all hope, ye who crack the spine.



1 DAN BROWN'S PUBLISHER

Doubleday's plan to keep *Inferno* out of fans' hands before the book's release date is still classified, but it's probably at least as intense as the

one Scholastic had in place for 2007's *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*: **1.** The author's manuscript was transported by plane—no

2 BOOKSTORES

"It's best sellers like *Inferno* that people attempt to steal because they know they'll be able to flip them quickly,"

says Emily Simpson, a manager at Strand Book Store, which should see some extra foot traffic on May 14.

3 CRITICS

"I'm not an especially fast reader," says book critic John Crace, who reviewed *The Lost Symbol* for the *Guardian*, even though no advance copies

were made available. "With a Dan Brown book, I can probably read 50 pages an hour. *Inferno* is probably going to be 480 pages, so I can read it

4 COMPANION-BOOK AUTHORS

Simon Cox, author of *Cracking the Da Vinci Code*, *Illuminating Angels & Demons*, and *The Dan Brown Companion*, plans to write an entire 85,000-word *Inferno* companion book within a week of the novel's

release. "It feels like my entire life has centered upon Mr. Brown's publication schedule. I have to wait until the day *Inferno* is released and queue with everyone else," he says. "Then I get lots of coffee and read the

5 DANTE SCHOLARS

"If Dan Brown is going to make people think about Dante, by all means!" says Yale's Giuseppe Maz-

zotta, former head of the Dante Society of America, who'll likely have to field lots of questions

6 CATHOLICS

"The man is a fraud," says Bill Donohue, president of the Catholic League, which has protested Dan Brown before. "He's continued to lie about the Catholic Church. When *The Da Vinci Code* came

out, I first thought, *Okay, it's a work of fiction*, and then I looked at the opening page, and it said 'Fact,' and I thought, *What?* With *Inferno*, it says the same thing. The reason we went after him

7 FLORENCE, ITALY

If the past is any indication, Florence, where *Inferno* is set, will be besieged by Brown fans.

just like the previous cities Robert Langdon has visited. *The Lost Symbol* inspired at least five

8 READERS

Brown ends most of his short chapters with cliffhangers, which are dangerous for anyone trying to keep a bedtime.

SELECTED CLIFFHANGERS FROM:

ANGELS & DEMONS

- "Mr. Kohler, I do not know how this marking appeared on this man's chest ... or why ... but you are looking at the long-lost symbol of the world's oldest and most powerful satanic cult."
- "Phase two begins shortly. Get some rest. Tonight we change the world."
- "She gazed proudly at the canisters. 'Director, you are looking at the world's first specimens of antimatter.'"
- "Robert Langdon was about to escape the Louvre, whether he wanted to or not."
- "Finally, he felt the blood begin to flow."
- "Starving up at her from the floor, discarded like a piece of trash, was an eyeball. She would have recognized that shade of hazel anywhere."
- "He crossed the room and ran a dark finger across her ivory abdomen. I killed last night, he thought. You are my reward."
- "Tightening the rope-tie around his waist, he raised the hood over his head and allowed his red eyes to admire his reflection in the mirror. The wheels are in motion."

e-mails. **2.** It was edited in a secret room and locked in a safe overnight. **3.** It was printed in a restricted area, where few people and no cameras were allowed. **4.** The books were shipped in trucks

with tracking devices to make sure no drivers made detours (typically books are just sent via FedEx or UPS in small numbers).

"They know they'll be able to get a good return. We had an issue recently with people trying to lift mass quantities of *Fifty Shades of Grey* because

they know it's something that's been on the best-seller list. Thankfully, we have closed-circuit cameras and a security staff that keeps a great eye out."

in nine hours. There are certain things you can expect: Robert Langdon will be in the middle of a supernatural, religious, or political conspiracy. There will be various cryptic clues to decode

along the way, some of which will be entertaining, some of which will be utterly banal. But no 480-page book benefits from being read in one long haul."

book in less than eight hours. The problem with Dan Brown is he likes to release little clues on Twitter and Facebook. Last time I ended up writing 30,000 words that didn't make it into my book based on a clue that he tweeted. I have read up on my *Divine Comedy*, going through the *Cam-*

bridge Companion to Dante sleuthing for anomalies, symbols, metaphorical references, and anything that hints at alternative history. I work for sixteen hours each day. It's not easy, but I have to make sure that I get my books on shelves first."

about Dan Brown. "But will they ever get to the point of reading me? I doubt it! Will they ever read the great scholars? How many people

really read Dante? How many people read because they have an intellectual concern with the complexities of evil? Maybe two people."

with both prior books is he's very slippery. He tries to play both sides of the street. With *Angels & Demons*, he said the Illuminati vowed vengeance against the Vatican in the 1600s. Well, the Illuminati weren't even founded until 1776. He had to put them in the 1600s

to bring in Galileo as a whipping boy. He says it's a novel, and then he says it's based on history, until he's challenged again. You basically promote a lot of anti-Catholic stereotypes to the audience—how are they going to separate fact from fiction?"

different sightseeing tours of Washington, D.C., where that book is set. In 2006, just after the *Da Vinci Code* movie came out, visi-

tors to Paris could choose from almost 30 different *Code*-themed tours and vacation packages.

PHOTOGRAPH: COLUMBIA/EVERETT COLLECTION (HANKS)

THE DA VINCI CODE

- "Fache was keeping his prey on a very tight leash tonight. Wisely so. Robert Langdon had proven himself one cool customer."
- "The man's southern accent disappeared, and his voice morphed into a deeper, mellifluous whisper. 'You are here, Mr. Langdon, because I want you here.'"
- "Katherine's destiny is to light this torch. Mine is to extinguish it."
- "My God ... I've made a terrible, terrible mistake!"
- "All four are dead. The precious truth is lost forever."
- "If all went as planned tonight in Paris, Aringarosa would soon be in possession of something that would make him the most powerful man in Christendom."
- "And now, at last, his final pawn had entered the game."
- "Ten miles from the Capitol Building, a lone figure was eagerly preparing for Robert Langdon's arrival."
- "The line went dead."



9 TOM HANKS

He'll have to regrow this hairstyle for the movie adaptation.

BY ASHLEY COLLMAN, REBECCA MILZOFF, MAX THORN, ALEXA TSOULIS-REAY, AND ALEX YABLON