



The Genesis Key

James Barney

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Fans of James Rollins, Dan Brown, Michael Crichton, Steve Berry, David Baldacci, and Raymond Khoury, listen up: James Barney is among us! A remarkable new master bursts upon the scene with *The Genesis Key*—a gripping debut thriller that combines a breathtaking *Da Vinci Code*-like historical/religious conspiracy with the science-gone-mad terror of *Jurassic Park*. A brilliant biologist finds herself at the center of a heart-racing international race to unlock the secret to life itself in James Barney's electrifying, page-turning hunt for *The Genesis Key*.

The Genesis Key Details

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Author : James Barney

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From Reader Review The Genesis Key for online ebook

Suspense Magazine says

What if you could live for an extra forty, fifty, maybe even one hundred years? What if science could manipulate your DNA to allow you an extended life? That's the premise of "The Genesis Key." Chock full of science, conspiracy, and ethical dilemma, Barney's novel takes you back to the beginning of history and explores man's desire for immortality.

Back in 1979, two archaeologists in Iraq are killed during the government takeover by Saddam Hussein. However, Hakeem Sargon, a museum curator fleeing his own murder, comes upon the scene and discovers what the couple's death has uncovered. Jump to the present where the couple's daughter, Dr. Kathleen Sainsbury, is conducting experiments to find an elusive 'longevity gene.'

When Sargon contacts her and tells her the story behind her parent's murder, he also presents her with a gift, an artifact he took from the site back in 1979. This sets Sainsbury off on a trail to discover the truth about her parents. A friend of Sargon's opens up a new world of thought for Kathleen, one involving the ancient Sumerians, Biblical history, and possible explanations for why man once lived for hundreds of years until after the Great Flood. When a reporter breaks the story Kathleen may have discovered the longevity gene in Sargon's artifact, Kathleen finds herself running from those who would destroy her to keep the treasure for themselves.

This novel brings in a touch of philosophy, ethics, history, and a plethora of science. Although there are some scenes set in Iraq, most of the action is centered on the Washington, D.C. and Maryland area.

Interesting characters, the obligatory/secret organization, and government black ops keep this novel moving. It raises some very legitimate questions about how science affects human life and debates how, as one scientist declares, "Sometimes science can be its own worst enemy."

Reviewed by Stephen L. Brayton, author of "Beta" for Suspense Magazine

DJ says

I LOVE this book! The author's writing style is superb, and he keeps the story interesting by shifting perspectives almost every chapter. Kathleen is a relatable and likable character, so that kept me reading. The author clearly spent a lot of time researching, so the book has quite a bit of information that readers who are well versed in biology/genetics and ones who are not can both enjoy this book.

I'd recommend to any reader who is looking for a believable science-fiction book! Now I am off to read the next James Barney book (:

Meagan Myhren-bennett says

THE GENESIS KEY

By James Barney

In September of 1979 Daniel and Becky Talbot are on the cusp of discovery. They have given the last 5 years of their life to an archaeological dig at Tell-Fara, Iraq to prove that Tell-Fara is more than a Ziggurat. But on the eve of Saddam Hussein's rise to power their dreams may be short lived.

Dr Kathleen Sainsbury, a world class biologist, works at Quantum Life Sciences(QLS) trying to find a cure for Alzheimer's and other age related dementias. When Washington Post reporter Bryce Whittaker does a story on new biology start-ups in the D.C. area, QLS is on the list, but when the interview is over he asks Kathleen out. Kathleen has never had good luck in the dating game so she reluctantly agrees to go out with him. Later that night, while Kathleen and her QLS co-workers are celebrating the Post interview, Kathleen is secretly photographed by Semion Zafer.

After Kathleen's date with Bryce there is a message on her phone from Tariq Al-Fulani who claims to have known her parents and that it is urgent that they meet tonight! With misgivings Kathleen goes to the location he mentioned and finds out that he is not who he claims to be. Rather he is Hakeem Abdul Sargon the former Director of Antiquities in Iraq until 1979. Sargon's family was murdered the day Saddam Hussein came to power the day before Kathleen's parents were murdered! Sargon witnessed the attack on the Talbots and then killed their murderers. When he searched the rubble for his friends he discovered the hidden chamber that Becky and Daniel believed was there. The ziggurat was no ziggurat but instead a massive tomb with a massive sarcophagus. Within the sarcophagus Sargon found an object that he has kept hidden all these years, an object that he feels he must give to Kathleen. He asks Kathleen to come in the morning that there is more to tell but overnight Sargon dies under suspicious circumstances and Kathleen is questioned by the FBI.

Kathleen then searches for a Dr Charles Eskridge whom Sargon mentioned. When Kathleen finds him she shows him the symbol Sargon found on the sarcophagus. A symbol that Dr Eskridge translates as THE LAST NEPHILIM. Dr. Eskridge then reads Genesis 6:1-4 to Kathleen which speaks of the Nephilim as human hybrid which would have explained the longevity of humanity before the Great Flood. Does the tooth that Sargon found in an ancient tomb hold the key that Kathleen has been searching for?

When Kathleen returns to QLS she tasks Julie and Jeremy with testing the tooth searching for its DNA! While Kathleen spends Easter Sunday with Bryce and her Grandfather who suffers from Alzheimer's Jeremy is hard at work. While Bryce and Kathleen are still in Annapolis, Jeremy calls. He's found a complete intact DNA strand. But after hanging up Jeremy is attacked by Zafer, who demands the DNA sample! As Jeremy tries to escape Zafer shoots him in the back. As he comes in to finish Jeremy off Kathleen arrives to check out Jeremy's progress and Zafer leaves.

While FBI assists with Jeremy's shooting because Kathleen is a common factor in two crimes, Julie and Kathleen work on sequencing the DNA strand Jeremy found. Hours later they find the longevity gene an ancient deactivated retrovirus hidden away by time.

But when Bryce Whittaker breaks a story that QLS has found the gene for long life everything comes apart. Kathleen's life is on the line and her trust in many people is shattered. There are secret organizations and governments out to control what she has found. What could be a miracle to some is seen as financial collapse by major world governments and a perversion of the human race many people. Will her discovery see the light of day or will it be stolen away in the night?

While Kathleen struggles to decide what she should do, she is in a fight for her life as some of the very people she thought were trying to protect her seem to have turned against her. Who can she turn to as the sample that could give her Grandfather his life back is destroying so many that get in its path? Does Genesis hold the key that will lead her to the truth?

This exciting fast paced debut novel is sure to capture even the most reluctant reader's attention. This is excitement at its best and hopeful the start of many equally thrilling works from a talented new author. I, for one, look forward to James Barney's next work.

Luanne says

This is a debut novel that blew me away. It is definitely a page turner.

The prologue starts off more than 30 years ago with the parents of Dr. Kathleen Sainsbury on a archaeology expedition. That day 30 years ago will be brought into Kathleen's current life and her biology work with fruit flies. The doctor will find out what really happened with her parents and cause her to look at her own work in biology.

This is a must read.

L. Silvey says

A decent summer read and fairly well written for this first time novelist. There were a few things that irked me, first, with Dr. Sainsbury who came off as very naive when it came to men (it felt targeted and typecast) and why would you allow someone you barely know to join you on a day trip out of town? Just odd. I would have liked it if Dr. Sainsbury's rejection of religion as explored more rather than the science vs. religion aspect.

I was most bothered by the last 50 pages or so. What happened to Julie? Anyone miss her in the last scene? And Agent Wills? He spent years trying to capture Gomez then jumps in bed with him? How'd that leap happen? What happened to the Olam Foundation? To Elias Rubin who was dying? The gov't didn't pay out the QLS investors and Dr. Sainsbury didn't secure money for her employees after everything? She just took a sailboat and took them on a trip?

Don't get me wrong, I liked the book, in fact, I finished it in just over a day. The action was great and paced well, there were just a few loose ends that left me scratching my head, but hey, it's the guy's first book, I'll give him some leeway. I'm eager to see what he comes up with next.

Hira says

I won this book via BookTrib - and in my general opinion, books that are promoted by BookTrib are genuinely of a superior quality. "The Genesis Key" by James Barney is no different. As a riveting thriller, this book is definitely worth a read. However, as riveting, fast-paced and sensational as it may be, it is really nothing special.

The beauty of this book, however, lay in the eclectic mix of subjects that the narrative includes - from mystery, to conspiracy, to government cover-ups, anthropology, history and mythology combined, this book sends the reader into a dizzying array of subjects to understand and explore. The plot is tied together well, and in a manner that is satisfying - but it does leave something to desire. Perhaps, the problem lies in the fact

that it is far too much like other novels such as "Angels & Demons", "The Alexandria Link", etc.

Kathleen Sainsbury is the daughter of an anthropologist and an archeologist Daniel and Rebecca Talbot, who died while excavating Tell-Fara, a ziggurat that they believe is more than just a historical mound. Year later, Kathleen is now a scientist working on research relating to gene therapy for human aging. Working on the INDY (I'm Not Dead Yet - a Monty Python reference, which for me, was the best reference in the entire novel) gene, Kathleen Sainsbury's research intertwines with that of her parents when a man from her past, someone who knew her parents, entrusts her with a mysterious relic that her parents found at Tell-Fara.

The characterization is spot-on, and I love that almost none of the characters are what they seem, making them truly multi-dimensional and intriguing. Also, I loved that the pace of the narrative, is really fast, and keeps the reader engaged. The problem I have is with some of the scientific inaccuracies, and the ending. The ending was deeply unsatisfying to me - as is with a lot of these novels. There's a big hoopla in the narrative, and in the end, everything is neatly packaged and boxed away. But I would definitely recommend it to readers who are into mysteries, thrillers, anthropology and technological thrillers! :)

Yolanda says

I received a signed copy through Goodreads giveaways.

Dr. Kathleen Sainsbury is a respected biologist. At her company QLS and her small team are working with fruit flies. They are making progress on the INDY gene when the Dr.'s past comes into play, dangerous play. She learns some nice things about her murdered parents and their important work in Iraq. Involved are the FBI, CIA, local and international ties which make for an action packed adventure. An enjoyable read, I hope to see more from this author.

Glen Stott says

This is one of the best mysteries I have read. It deals with the INDY (I'm Not Dead Yet) gene. A brilliant microbiologist, Kathleen Sainsbury is trying to find the INDY gene, which she hopes will cure her beloved grandfather of Alzheimer's. The gene not only would cure diseases that are associated with old age, but it would extend human life span to 200 to 400 years. Others who are also searching for the gene are the US Government to control it and a mega rich entrepreneur in Israel to save his life and make a ginormous profit. The mystery stretches from Mesopotamia thousands of years ago, to the overthrow of the Shah of Iraq, to present day intrigue among microbiological researchers. The premise was ingenious and the road to the conclusion was very well handled. I felt the macro ending was very predictable, but the interest is in the details which were well done.

Unfortunately, really smart characters made really stupid mistakes, which were not addressed in the plot. As soon as I read that the book was about extending life to over 200 hundred years, I immediately began to wonder about social/economic, environmental, and religious impacts that it would have on a world that already has a population of over 6 billion. Kathleen, brilliant as she is, doesn't even consider this, and even when it is pointed out to her, she doesn't really get it. Then, as the plot races to its conclusion other brilliant characters get unexplained cases of stupid. An expert assassin double parks a hot car, not for just a minute or two, but potentially for hours. That causes him a minor problem which he easily fixes. It doesn't change what he does next, nor does it impact the outcome of his actions. All it does is add to the word count and

make one wonder how such a smart man could make that kind of goof. Then there is a chase involving other really intelligent characters. The chaser makes a stupid, sophomore mistake and loses the person he is chasing. In an unexplained way, the chaser finds the person and begins the chase anew. But in only moments, the chaser makes the exact same stupid mistake with the exact, totally predictable, same result. If the chaser was going to lose the object of the chase, some more plausible thing should have happened, and for sure, the mistake should not have been repeated. That only added to the word count at the expense of my believing the chaser was even of average intelligence.

However, because everything else was so good, I still give it five stars – nobody is perfect.

Victoria says

Unfortunately, I found this book to be rather disappointing. It started off simply, but with a rather intriguing premise revolving around our main character, a geneticist studying the longevity gene discovers that her parents were murdered in an archaeological dig in Iraq. A friend of the family passed down not only the important information, but also an artifact that she uses in her own research to make a startling discovery. This early half of the novel, with its flashbacks and more genuine excitement, was a lot stronger. But soon, the repetitive nature of the book and the constant (and often redundant) discussion on the effects of longevity bogged the latter half of the book down into a dull, slow-moving wreck. Rather than develop with the story, the characters actually became more two-dimensional and flat as the novel progressed toward the end. By the end, the fate of the characters, as well as that of science, really did not matter at all to me.

For a more interesting read on a similar topic, I would check out Tom Knox's *The Genesis Secret*. It is a lot more exciting and the writing is more consistent and entertaining.

Susan says

James Barney's debut thriller leads him deep into some controversial but very contemporary issues. Dr. Kathleen Sainsberry's research into the INDY (I'm not dead yet) gene in fruit flies has caught the eye of several agencies that have concerns about human genetic engineering. Just as she is on the verge of losing her financial backing or major discovery, an interview about her research is published in the newspaper. Kathleen's life takes an interesting turn as the various groups who are watching her move into action implementing elaborate plans to protect her or try to thwart her research. Her first shock is a phone call from a Dr. Sargon, who was a friend of her parents. Kathleen had known only that her parents were killed under mysterious circumstances as they were studying a ziggurat in Tell-Fara, Iraq. Suddenly Kathleen doesn't know who is her friend and who is out to harm her.

The basic science of the INDY gene and *Drosophila* fruit fly is documented in publications. The possibility of moving that science into human genetics is far more troubling. Yet it makes for interesting fiction.

I, personally, wanted more archaeology and history in the story. I read Mr. Barney's website before I read the book and I had gotten the idea he was going to take us on an interesting story into the past. Instead this aspect is done with in the early pages of the book. I found the story to be somewhat confusing due to the introduction to a number of agencies and characters who were after Kathleen. Too many characters were

introduced without much development and along with this too many acronyms and agencies. Really, character development in the entire novel was lacking.

Overall, I enjoyed this book with a few disappointments. This is basically a typical thriller with a very interesting thesis to make the story go. I think Barney has great potential and I look forward to future thrillers from his pen. He is not yet Michael Crichton, but maybe someday he can get there.

Chibineko says

I started this book with only medium sized hopes. With stories of this nature I know that they usually end up being very good or very bad. This book started out strong but ended up getting a little disappointing towards the end.

One thing I want to address about this book is that the focus of the book is more genetic than archaeological. On a scale of similar authors, this falls solidly between Michael Crichton & Steve Berry, having elements similar to both but being nowhere near as focused in either genetics or archaeology. I didn't take off any stars for this. I'm really only mentioning it so you the reader can get a better feel for the type of novel this is. The description made it seem like it'd be something like a Berry book, so I figure others might get the same impression.

That being said, this book started off rather well. There's a nice mix of science & history, although at times the book was a little slow at times. Barney has a good way with descriptions & employs an nice readable style here. I did like that the lead heroine wasn't the passive sort & I enjoyed how the first 2/3rds of the novel unfolded.

The following could be considered a minuscule spoiler.

Then came the final part of the book & I have to admit that this is where I felt the book was at its weakest. The idea of a gene that would enable people to live longer & healthier lives (as in 200-300 years age span) would bring many problems, some of which would involve the fact that our ecosystem would be unable to feed & sustain so many lives, especially since they'd be able to reproduce for a longer period of time. At one point something along these lines was discussed (it was more financially driven, but the idea is still the same) & Kathleen refuses to believe that it could happen. I felt really disappointed that Barney wouldn't have had his character think about this and/or shown that she was so caught up in her ideas that she was being just as bad as the bad guys in her own way. This just made parts of the book fall flat since it was a sorely, sorely under-explored part of the book & I felt that it might have been because the author was afraid to have his heroine be anything other than that: a heroine that's in the right.

This is still a good first book & while it's not going to be something I'll keep forever & ever, I'm still curious to read Barney's future works. He's got a lot of potential. Even so, this is solidly a beach read fare for when you want something fun but not all that serious.

(ARC provided by Amazon Vine)

Jackleen says

The Genesis Key is an action packed thriller with a very thoughtful insight into the advances of modern science. A mysterious archaeologist dig in Iraq, biblical passages regarding the Nephilim, the hidden secrets of our own human DNA, ancient history of the Mesopotamian region including a great flood as portrayed by Noah in the bible, the covert Washington DARPA agency, a secret conglomerate of billionaires and cutting edge science that may extend human life to two or three hundred years, all intersect with a bang in James Barney's debut novel. Barney's novel is both entertaining and thought provoking; the pages nearly turn themselves.

Dr. Kathleen Sainsbury has been raised by her grandparents since the age of 7. In 1979, her parents, while on an archaeological dig in Tell-Fara, Iraq, are killed during Saddam Hussein's take over of the country. Now at the age of 39, Dr. Kathleen Sainsbury is a brilliant biologist working to discover the hidden secrets of human DNA to offset the damaging effects of aging by Alzheimer's and dementia in her small start up company, Quantum life Sciences, in Washington. Her own grandfather is suffering from Alzheimer's and no longer recognizes his own grandchild. The stress of finding a cure for her beloved grandfather is compounded by the pressure of her investors who impatiently demand results from their investment. However, science takes time. Burning fast through the initial funding, Kathleen agrees to a newspaper interview highlighting new bio-companies in Washington. The resulting interview shakes the crazies out of the trees, as attention is drawn to both Kathleen and her research. And, unfortunately, Kathleen attracts the attention of unscrupulous persons with hidden agendas willing to do violence to achieve their ends.

Kathleen has few memories of her parents and no knowledge of their research. This changes when she is called out in the night to meet with an old Iraqi friend of her parents who has read about her research in the newspaper. He urgently needs to explain the deaths of her parents, which she had been led to believe was accidental, as well as, to discuss the amazing discovery that they made at Tell-Fara. Kathleen, a scientist to the core, is put off by the elderly gentleman's repeated reference to God's will and unwilling accepts an ancient artifact that was discovered at her parents dig. When this artifact is found to contain very special ancient DNA, it becomes apparent to Kathleen that what her parents discovered in Iraq will advance her own research by years. Kathleen soon finds herself involved in a life or death hunt for truth and an amazing scientific discovery that predates the biblical flood of Noah.

Old friends and new acquaintances come along to Kathleen's aid, but when you have the medical cure for aging, and all that this entails, it is difficult to know friend from foe. And, Kathleen soon finds out that there are many who would wish her harm, and will stop at nothing to steal her research.

The Genesis Key is an excellent thriller that combines action, new science and ancient history in a well written story. A good fun read that also examines the ethics of scientific research in a world where money and wealth can determine quality of life, as well as, life itself. If you like James Rollins novels, this is a book for you.

Denise says

3.0 out of 5 stars -- If science can do it -- should we use it?

This novel has elements of science, anthropology, religion, archeology, history, mythology, mystery, conspiracy, covert governmental machinations -- and more...whew! And that's part of the problem with this book about the longevity gene (INDY = I'm not dead yet -- a Monty Python reference) and a scientist's experience finding and sequencing it.

Of COURSE everyone wants this new information that sets someone up to make billions of dollars, and the ensuing action in subsequent chapters is filled with scenes of car chases, spying, shootouts, double crosses, murders and the like. Naturally the US government also has an eye out and an interest in this technology. Dr. Kathleen Sainsbury receives a single tooth that was rescued from a sarcophagus deep in a 5000 year old tomb from an old friend of her parents and begins to examine its DNA. When she begins the experiments on that tooth and her lab discovers the gene sequence that allows a human to live well beyond the current life span, chaos ensues.

At this point, when this INDY gene is discovered and sequenced making it potentially useful, is when the narrative turns reflective and ridiculous with its sudden moral and ethical lecturing -- surely any scientist that is delving into the human genome would have thought about the implications of increased life span?? But no, all of a sudden there is conscience and questioning of whether or not science can be stopped or when it goes too far. Indeed, what would happen to the planet if its population suddenly mushroomed and everyone lived for hundreds of years reproducing and consuming resources for much longer periods of time??

Moral and ethical debate aside, the novel was an OK tale perfect for reading without too much analysis of the veracity of the science or the religious references. Enjoy for what it is -- an action-packed read that might give the reader a thing or two to contemplate.

Amazon vine ARC

Eve says

You know when you want something but you don't quite know what it is that you're wanting? That was how I felt before reading *The Genesis Key* by James Barney. Only afterwards, when I felt pleasant satisfaction, did I figure out what it was I wanted - Everything. And *The Genesis Key* delivered.

The Genesis Key has a little bit of everything to keep the reader riveted and actively engaged: cutting edge science and its ethical dilemmas, mythology, archeology, history, Biblical legends, and action, action, action. Not only do I want to be entertained, but I especially love it when a book inspires me to explore subjects further and ask questions of my own. Some of the exciting theories mentioned in *The Genesis Key*, I've come across in science reading material, such as evolution and aging as a mutation. But what fascinates me most are the very pertinent ramifications of longer life spans. I recently read a science article on how humans will soon be having average life spans of 100 - 150 years. That's well and good but what does that mean for the sustainability of our species and the earth?

"Kathleen, you and I both know there's a genetic key to longevity and that, given the pace of research into the human genome, it's just a matter of time before someone else discovers it.... I'm going to put it bluntly. A rapid and widespread change in human life expectancy would create catastrophic problems around the world. It will destroy this country and maybe even humanity itself."

The perfect balance of thought-provoking and fast-paced action aside, I have two quibbles with the The

Genesis Key. One pertains to this frankly ridiculous scene where a scientist maps a DNA sequence overnight. I don't know much about biology but that seems a tad fast. Another thing that didn't quite take with me was the ending. Throughout the book, the author presented these thorny issues regarding Kathleen's research and then in the last chapter seemed to sidestep them completely with an outcome that felt a bit too neat and naive.

Sharon says

James Barney's debut novel was of particular interest to me. As an anthropology student who has also worked in the life sciences industry, I was interested to see how these two disciplines crossed over in his tale.

The book starts in 1970s Iraq, before Saddam Hussein's rise to power, with Daniel and Rebecca Talbot excavating a ziggurat. The two archaeologists are convinced that there is more to this particular mound than has previously been believed -- a suspicion confirmed for the reader when they are killed.

Cut forward to modern times when their daughter, Kathleen Sainsbury (a child of seven at the time her parents passed) is a scientist working on gene therapy issues related to human aging. When a man from her parents' past gives her a mysterious relic from the Iraqi ziggurat where her parents died, the multi-national intrigue begins.

Barney creates multi-dimensional characters, none of whom are quite what they seem. His pacing is outstanding, and I didn't want to put the book down once I'd started it. If you like technothrillers that also tackle questions of ethics (such as gene therapy), you'll enjoy this work.
