



The Shroud Key

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WINNER: BEST "POTBOILER" NOVEL for 2013 by CrimeFictionBook Blog: Chase Baker is a true Renaissance Man. He's also a man who knows how to find trouble. A part-time resident of Florence, Italy, his resume reads like a modern day Da Vinci or Casanova. Writer, private investigator, tour guide, historian, treasure hunter, adventurer, and even archaeological sandhog, Chase is also a prolific lover. Unfortunately for him, his dangerous liaisons all too often make him the target of a jealous husband. Now, at the direct request of the Florence police, he finds himself on the trail of an archaeologist by the name of Dr. Andre Manion who's gone missing from his teaching post at the American University. But having worked for the archaeologist several years ago as a sandhog on a secret but failed dig just outside the Great Pyramids in the Giza Plateau, Chase smells a renewed opportunity to uncover what just might be the most prized archaeological treasure in the world: The mortal remains of Jesus. But how will Chase Baker go about finding both the archaeologist and the Jesus Remains? With the help of Manion's beautiful ex-wife, Chase will manage to secure an up-close and personal examination of the Shroud of Turin, not only to view the famous image of the crucified Christ, but to unlock the relic's greatest secret which is none other than a map, or a key, detailing the precise location of Jesus's body.

The Shroud Key Details

Date : Published September 3rd 2013 by Bear Media

ISBN :

Author : Vincent Zandri

Format : Kindle Edition 241 pages

Genre : Adventure, Mystery, Thriller, Action, Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction

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From Reader Review The Shroud Key for online ebook

Benjamin Sobieck says

In The Shroud Key, thriller writer/sandhog/treasure hunter/private investigator (more about all those slashes later) Chase Baker is on the hunt for the physical bones of Jesus Christ. Or, more accurately, he's looking for a missing archeologist whom was kidnapped to find the bones. The key to finding both is encoded on the Shroud of Turin. Baker heads to an Egypt still adjusting to an Islamic revolution and gets to work.

Without reading anything more than the previous paragraph, readers will inevitably be making mental comparisons between The Shroud Key and The Da Vinci Code. That's only apropos; Dan Brown put this sub-genre on the map with Code.

But don't be dismissive of The Shroud Key given how close it hovers to Code on the bookshelf. The Shroud Key is worth the read for three reasons.

First, there's a hammy hubris to Dan Brown's writing that turns some readers off. There are no knowing winks. No sardonic nudges. Nothing to indicate Brown is rolling his eyes along with readers. Thankfully, that's all missing in The Shroud Key. Author Vincent Zandri knows what this is: a slice of alternative history served on a plate of gun battles, car chases, wise cracks, booby traps and explosions, with a cold beer to wash it all down.

Second, the hunt for the bones of Jesus is a compelling mystery anyway. The theory goes that Jesus actually survived crucifixion by swapping in someone else to die on the cross. Finding the mortal remains of Jesus would prove the Resurrection, the singular event at the heart of Christianity, never happened. Zandri wraps the mystery of The Shroud Key around this theory. But he doesn't overwhelm the reader with minutiae. He pokes at the theory just enough to compel readers to Google images of the Shroud of Turin as they work through The Shroud Key.

Third, Zandri did his research. Against the advice of the U.S. State Department, he traveled to Egypt while the Muslim Brotherhood was in power. The experience clearly shows through in the writing. While Zandri gives the reader plenty of thrills and spills to hold attention into the next chapter, he also inserts details that give The Shroud Key a real sense of place. Egypt, both past and present, are on full display, as is Zandri's journalistic tone.

So it should be obvious where the character of Chase Baker originated. Baker is Zandri. Both commute between New York and Italy. Both write best-selling thrillers. Both spent time exploring Egypt. And both wear bush jackets in the field.

I know that because Zandri wrote an article about staying safe overseas for the magazine I work for full-time, Living Ready. He's since contributed to Living Ready in many other ways. I mention it here to drive home the point that Zandri's skills as a journalist benefit The Shroud Key. It would've been easy for a plot hinging on a complicated religious history theory set against the complexities of post-revolutionary Egypt to cannibalize readers' attention spans. But as any good journalist knows, the solution is to boil complex issues into simple, digestible pieces.

That's why The Shroud Key works. At its core, it's a treatise on the destabilizing effects that political chaos in Egypt is bringing to its priceless antiquities. But on its surface, it's an entertaining read with all the bells

and whistles readers expect from a thriller.

Dan Brown should take note. This is how to do it right.

D.J. Weaver says

Chase Baker is exactly what he appears to be... a womanizing, 'Indiana Jones', without the degrees, who thrives on adventure and excitement. Add one damsel in distress, a missing professor, and a mysterious set of bones, and you have one more thrilling read from the masterful pen of International Best Selling author, Vincent Zandri.

The beautiful ex-wife of Chase's former partner, Professor Andre Manion, enlists his aid in finding the kidnapped professor. Chase discovers that the professor could have vital information as to the location of the most important archeological discovery of modern times... the bones of Jesus Christ. He sets off on a search to recover the professor and locate the bones, before someone beats him to it or kills him first.

Zandri has brought back that wonderful 'quest' story that keeps the reader alert and pinging with anticipation from beginning to end. His 'Chase Baker' character is cocky, smart, and multi-talented, but with that brotherly quality that reminds you of a best friend in school. These are the types of characters we remember and follow, and Zandri does them with flair, along with non-stop action and a surprise ending. What thriller reader could not love that?

THE SHROUD KEY is well worth every minute.

DJ Weaver

Kimberly says

Rubbish! Purchased ASIN: B00EZABN8E ** from amazon and I swear that there was no editing involved in this book. It went quickly from 1 typo a page to multiple errors on every page. Misspelled words, missing words, repeated words (which made no sense as written), multiple tenses used in one sentence (again making no sense) and just about anything and everything else you can think of. So much so that it became a distraction. I finally gave up about half way through and can only say "kept your money and save save you times!" :)

** I included the ASIN number so that if a different version is available and you want to attempt reading this to see if there's something to all the good reviews this book has gotten, you have that option.

Mercedes says

Action-packed and another great read from Mr. Zandri that does not disappoint. Plenty of surprises throughout, and every late-night minute you're up is worth getting to the end. No matter your walk of faith or religion, anyone can appreciate this story. And personally, I loved the 'hero' at the end.

Sandra says

I'm having a difficult time rating this book. I felt it was a mediocre read with 3 points of brilliance, the final being that conundrum. The first bright point was a little past the half-way mark, It was an action sequence that had me on the edge of my seat. The second was near the end of the book, exceptionally well written...and then...at the crucial moment he uses the word "sick" in lieu of the command word "sic". Now I know "sick" is allowed as a second spelling, grudgingly, and I know I'm being a wee bit anal, but a writer should know. He's suppose to be a wordsmith. While it didn't ruin it for me, it tried to tug me out of total immersion and THAT annoyed me. I knew what was going to happen, it was no surprise to me, in fact, I was waiting for it... that perfect pause and then..."sick...". Did he just write "sick"?? Ah crap!

Other than the powerful ending, I felt this read was fun at times, predictable at others, The character development was shaky and cartoon-ish, just this side of cliché, but I like a good cartoon. In under 300 pages it's hard to flesh-out many characters. There was one inconsistency in the plot when one of the main characters announced never having killed anyone when forty pages prior, that character indeed had. Three paragraphs later, that was confirmed in a back-handed way.

The conundrum here is, should a brilliant ending earn 3 or 4 stars when the rest of the book, except for two other places, was a 2-star "meh... it was okay"? I give it 3 stars and let you figure it out for yourself.

The author seriously needs to find a proofreader...seriously. An editor might help as well, but sheesh! typos, confusing grammar, and the occasional very strange sentence where I think he was planning to say it one way and then ends it another, forgetting what he had previously written. The author would probably have done himself a huge favor and done more Biblical and archeological research.

Dalene W. says

This was an easy read. It is a mystery that surrounds the Shroud of Turin. There were quite a few grammatical errors in the book. I thought some of the characters were "weak" but it was a good read and had a good twist at the end.

Elyse Major says

To read anything by Vincent Zandri is to be entertained from the get-go. Chase Baker is a charming addition to Zandri's stable of cocky leads with whom anyone would want to share a drink. Filled with locations and cultural flavor described so well you feel you are there, the story will keep you hanging on tight to the very end.

Harold says

For a cookie cutter adventure story it held my interest. It was well crafted and moved along nicely enough. I

have to disagree with the readers that compare it to Dan Brown's work. I can see Dan writing on this subject but his work would contain LOTS more trivia and that's what makes his work interesting to me.

Bob says

Chase Baker is a multi-faceted man, X-soldier, author, sand hog, adventurer, tour guide in Venice and divorced father of a young daughter. He is also a bit of a ladies man and when he is confronted by the husband of a couple he was guiding after she had appeared at his flat the night before, he ends up again in the clutches of the police. He is well acquainted with the chief and is offered jail or helping the x wife of an archeologist who has gone missing. Without much choice, he agrees and is soon dodging various attempts on both his and his employers' life as he tracks down the husband and search for clues to the buried bones of Jesus. (Yep, another Bible based action adventure book) The expected chases, close calls and mixed results ensue as the scene shifts from Italy to Egypt. A fair read to pass the time and escape from the current real life disasters.

Alan Williams says

Vincent Zandri has created the character of Chase Baker, who is somewhere between Robert Langdon and Indiana Jones. In doing so he has created his latest novel which is his best yet. The action moves from Florence, to the Vatican City, to the pyramids of Egypt on a search for a historic artefact that neither Langdon nor Jones could even dream about.

The Shroud Key is a page turner, as is common to Vincent Zandri's other novels the pace is relentless. The short punchy chapters move you onwards with a feeling of breathlessness akin to the fastest action movie. The descriptions are vivid, and as the reader you feel as if you're right there in the thick of the story. The other characters are all believable, and there is no way of telling just how the story is going to play out until the last page. The reader is kept guessing, as the plot turns, and there are surprises along the way, including a couple that I didn't see coming.

The use of historical facts and modern situations make for a very believable tale, blending facts and the fictional story telling of the author seamlessly over the pages. This is done in such a way that you're never quite sure whether fact stops and the imagination of the author takes over, and because the story is moving so fast, there's never time to think about it because you'll be too busy turning the pages to find out what happens next.

I'm expecting more of Chase Baker and could see him developing into a strong series character. If not this novel works well as a stand-alone.

Heath Lowrance says

The Shroud Key is kind of a departure for Vincent Zandri, who, although he's a versatile writer, is more widely known for his dark crime fiction. This one, though, is a straight up, Indiana Jones-style adventure story, and Zandri pulls it off very nicely. His hero, Chase Baker, is an author, tour guide in Italy, and incurable ladies man who gets drawn into a hunt for that most fabled of Biblical archaeological relics-- the bones of Jesus himself.

Dan Brown territory, you might be thinking. Maybe so, but Zandri is a much stronger writer than Brown, and he also has a sense of humor. Although the stakes are high in *The Shroud Key*, I got a nice sense that Zandri was grinning the entire time he was writing it, that he was having a blast.

Chase Baker is a rogue, and a bit of a scoundrel-- he has a fondness for other men's wives, for instance-- and at first you probably won't be sure if you like him. But as the novel moves along at its breakneck clip, more facets of Chase's personality emerge, and you realize there's more to him than what initially meet the eye. He's a flawed but ultimately decent hero. I'm looking forward to his next adventure.

Sheila Carsins says

I wasn't quite sure how I would feel if the mortal remains of Jesus truly existed. This was quite the action/adventure story!

Consider the consequences of finding the actual bones of Jesus. Would He be young, as He was when He was crucified? What if His bones or mummy proved that He somehow avoided crucifixion, and lived to a ripe old age with brothers, a wife and children, and grandchildren? Would our salvation obtained by the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ be forfeited? Would everlasting life and the promise of life in Heaven still hold true? Perhaps if the bones were found, it would only negate the resurrection of His entire body, but that His Spirit ascended to Heaven, and sits upon the right side of the Father, waiting to pass judgement on our souls when we die.

It's a bit oversimplified, but when I was a child, I asked my Dad if Santa Claus was real, or simply a fairytale perpetuated by our parents. My Dad sat me down and asked me if Santa Claus were a myth, would their magic of him be diminished, or would I still believe in something bigger than myself, and take it on faith that simply having faith would enable the miracles attributed to Santa Claus every year. And if I ceased to believe, would Christmas miracles and presents be forfeited? I seriously contemplated my Dad's words for a while, trying to decide what was truth, and what was fiction. No matter what I believed in, the miracles for children around the world continued. For them, there was no doubt that Santa did indeed exist. Perhaps the belief was only an ingrained fairytale--in spirit only, but for most kids, they believed in the real Santa, and had faith in the miracles of Christmas and Santa Claus, and his loving, caring, generosity. And that belief was enough to make Santa real whether as a spirit, for magical being. That's when I decided that in some way, shape, or form, Santa most assuredly existed, and that he didn't have to be seen, or touched to be real and perform miracles.

I believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and whether His remains turn up someday or not, He exists, He's real, and He secured mankind a place in Heaven for His followers through His sacrifices and His Love for mankind. It's our belief in God and Jesus, Mary, and Joseph that make them real. And if Jesus Christ did have a female apostle, a wife, and children, it won't matter, because He existed, He performed miracles, and ensured our entry into the Heaven of God, through His sacrifices for us. It's our faith in Jesus Christ that is responsible for our salvation, no matter what.

Paula Howard says

The Shroud Key by Vincent Zandri is an action packed religious thriller. Chase Baker is once again on the hunt for the Bones of Christ. Not only is on the hunt for Christ's bones but he needs to rescue his mentor,

Andre Manion, who has been kidnapped by the Muslim Brotherhood to find the bones of Christ.

The key to where the Vatican buried the bones was found in the Shroud of Turin.

Chase is a character, a womanizer and an excellent treasure hunter. He will live another day to continue his search.

Great book.

Rosemary says

The Shroud Key - a review by Rosemary Kenny

Chase Baker is a younger version of Indiana Jones, but he takes on the role of PI for a new client, the wife of his one-time Biblical archaeologist employer Andre Mannion. Anya's desperate to find her husband who's gone missing in Egypt, having left her and his teaching job at the American University, in Italy without warning. Like Chase, Mannion was looking for the hiding-place of Jesus' mortal remains, only now it seems someone else has the same agenda!

Who else's remains had Mannion discovered previously? What do Chase and Anya go to see in Italy?

What link does this object give to the Great Pyramids of Giza? How do they escape the ambush?

When does Chase use his ancient broken mirror? Where does it lead him and the Mannions?

Who is Detective Frederico Cipriani? Why is he involved in the quest for Jesus' remains?

This thrilling homage to Dan Brown's The Lost Symbol, by Master Adventure-Writer Vincent Zandri, is the first in the Chase Baker series that is sure to satisfy every fan of epic adventures, intrepid heroes saving the day against evil villains and Indiana Jones-type tales of derring-do. The reader is led through this intelligent page-turner that holds you in its spell until the very last page - a real winner!

Jackie says

Unbelievable story that kept me reading until the very end. Chase Baker is looking for the archeologist that was kidnaped. Such a fast paced story that has you gripped.
