



## ***Inferno by Dan Brown***

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### **About the author:**

Dan Brown is the author of numerous #1 bestselling novels, including *The Da Vinci Code*, which has become one of the best selling novels of all time as well as the subject of intellectual debate among readers and scholars. Brown's novels are published in 52 languages around the world with 200 million copies in print.

In 2005, Brown was named one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World by TIME Magazine, whose editors credited him with "keeping the publishing industry afloat; renewed interest in Leonardo da Vinci and early Christian history; spiking tourism to Paris and Rome; a growing membership in secret societies; the ire of Cardinals in Rome; eight books denying the claims of the novel and seven guides to read along with it; a flood of historical thrillers; and a major motion picture franchise."

The son of a mathematics teacher and a church organist, Brown was raised on a prep school campus where he developed a fascination with the paradoxical interplay between science and religion. These themes eventually formed the backdrop for his books. He is a graduate of Amherst College and Phillips Exeter Academy, where he later returned to teach English before focusing his attention full time to writing.

Brown is currently at work on a new book as well as the Columbia Pictures film version of his most recent novel.

Source: Author's website (<http://www.danbrown.com/>)

### **About this book:**

In his international blockbusters *The Da Vinci Code*, *Angels & Demons*, and *The Lost Symbol*, Dan Brown masterfully fused history, art, codes, and symbols. In this riveting new thriller, Brown returns to his element and has crafted his highest-stakes novel to date.

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In the heart of Italy, Harvard professor of symbology Robert Langdon is drawn into a harrowing world centered on one of history's most enduring and mysterious literary masterpieces . . . Dante's *Inferno*.

Against this backdrop, Langdon battles a chilling adversary and grapples with an ingenious riddle that pulls him into a landscape of classic art, secret passageways, and futuristic science. Drawing from Dante's dark epic poem, Langdon races to find answers and decide whom to trust . . . before the world is irrevocably altered.

Source: Author's website (<http://www.danbrown.com/>)

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. You might begin a book discussion by providing some background on Dante's *Divine Comedy*—a review of the poem, as well as its historical influence on the development of art and literature.
2. *Follow-up to #2:* Before reading Dan Brown's thriller, how familiar, if at all, were you with the *The Divine Comedy* and its "Inferno" Cantica? Have you come away with a better understanding of the work? What are the ways in which the author uses Dante's great classic as a framework for his thriller?
3. Robert Langdon and Sienna Brooks race to save the world from a crazed scientist who plans to unleash his solution to the world's overpopulation. To what extent, if any, do you (secretly) agree with the Bertrand Zobrist in his desire, if not his methods, to control overpopulation?

How do you feel about this statement by Brooks:

*As a species, humans were like the rabbits that were introduced on certain Pacific islands and allowed to reproduce unchecked to the point that they decimated their ecosystem and finally went extinct.*



To what extent is overpopulation a real-life global problem? You might do a bit of research on overpopulation and look at some of the countervailing predictions, suggesting that the global population will actually begin to collapse after 2050.

4. Talk about the real possibility of a worldwide epidemic. How plausible is the threat as portrayed Brown's book?

5. Talk about Transhumanism. What is it, and does it pose a boon—or a threat—to the future of humanity?

6. *Follow-up to Question 5:* At the end of the book WHO Director Elizabeth Sinskey says, "We're on the verge of new technologies that we can't yet even imagine." Those technologies come with dangers but also with hope.

Sienna Brooks adds this about Transhumanism...

*One of its fundamental tenets is that we as humans have a moral obligation to participate in our evolutionary process...to use our technologies to advance the species, to create better humans—healthier, stronger, with higher-functioning brains. Everything will soon be possible.*

She then says...

*If we don't embrace [these tools], then we are as undeserving of life as the caveman who freezes to death because he's afraid to start a fire.*

What do you think?

7. Have you traveled to any of the three sites of the novel: Florence, Venice, or Istanbul? If so, how accurate is Brown's depiction of these cities? If you haven't been to Italy or Turkey, does the author bring the cities to life? Are they places you would like to visit?

8. Is this book a page-turner? Did you find yourself unable to put it down? If so, what makes it enthralling? If you didn't find *Inferno* an engaging read, what put you off the book?

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9. *Follow-up to Question 8:* Brown uses a 4-part pattern for the episodes in his book: 1) Langdon is presented with a clue he must interpret, 2) he has a "eureka" moment, 3) he is pursued by villains who make a sudden appearance, and 4) he escapes after a hair-raising chase. Try going through the book to identify the pattern in various episodes.

10. What about the book's ending? Do you find it predictable ... surprising ... shocking ... frightening ... satisfying?

11. Have you read other Dan Brown thrillers? If so, how does this compare?

Source: LitLovers (<http://www.litlovers.com/>)

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