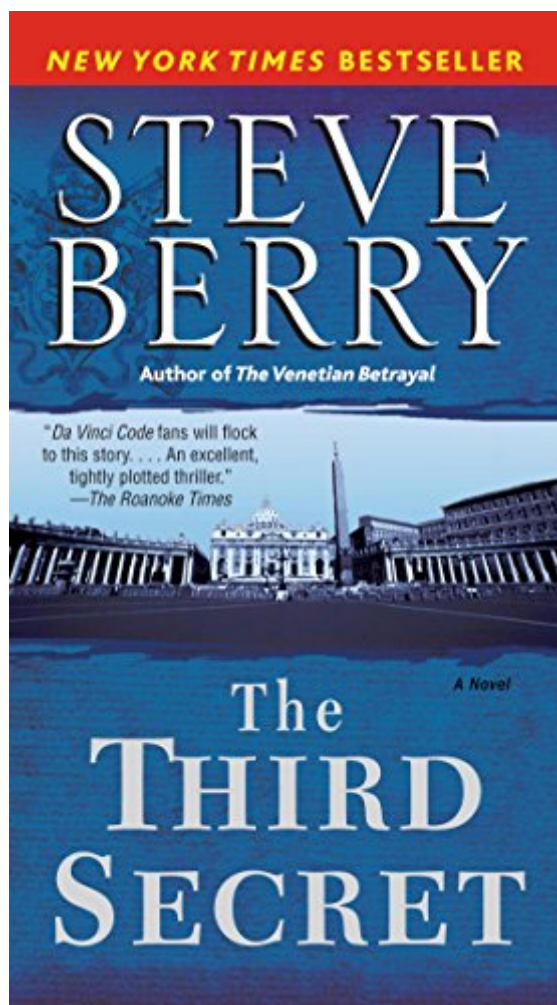


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The Third Secret: A Novel Of Suspense



Synopsis

BONUS: This edition contains an excerpt from Steve Berry's The Columbus Affair.

Explosive in both its pace and its revelations, *The Third Secret* is a remarkable international thriller.

Bestselling author Steve Berry tackles some of the most controversial ideas of our time in a breakneck journey through the history of the Church and the future of religion. Fatima, Portugal, 1917: The Virgin Mary appears to three peasant children, sharing with them three secrets, two of which are soon revealed to the world. The third secret is sealed away in the Vatican, read only by popes, and not disclosed until the year 2000. When revealed, its quizzical tone and anticlimactic nature leave many faithful wondering if the Church has truly unveiled all of the Virgin

Mary's words or if a message far more important has been left in the shadows.

Vatican City, present day: Papal secretary Father Colin Michener is concerned for the Pope. Night after restless night, Pope Clement XV enters the Vatican's Riserva, the special archive open only to popes, where the Church's most clandestine and controversial documents are stored. Though unsure of the details, Michener knows that the Pope's distress stems from the revelations of Fatima. Equally concerned, but not out of any sense of compassion, is Alberto Cardinal Valendrea, the Vatican's Secretary of State. Valendrea desperately covets the papacy, having narrowly lost out to Clement at the last conclave. Now the Pope's interest in Fatima threatens to uncover a shocking ancient truth that Valendrea has kept to himself for many years. When Pope Clement sends Michener to the Romanian highlands, then to a Bosnian holy site, in search of a priest—possibly one of the last people on Earth who knows Mary's true message—a perilous set of events unfolds. Michener finds himself embroiled in murder, suspicion, suicide, deceit, and his forbidden passion for a beloved woman. In a desperate search for answers, he travels to Pope Clement's birthplace in Germany, where he learns that the third secret of Fatima may dictate the very fate of the Church—a fate now lying in Michener's own hands.

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Customer Reviews

A very interesting insight into today's problems with the clergy. I, a staunch Roman Catholic, cannot fathom why the church would demand celibacy from its priests. The Apostles were married. God made Adam and Eve. Other Christian religious are married. Yes, I understand there may be a problem for a priest with a curious wife, but I think more men would be happy and satisfied with a loving and respectful wife, as God intended us. Today, especially, it seems too lonely a life for anyone to lead. It's not exactly what God foresaw. At least I don't think so, otherwise, why would he create Eve? Back in the 15th, 16th, 17th century, there were some vile Popes. In my opinion, the Church, meaning well but also with the intent of keeping females as "second-class citizens," did its best to keep males, albeit single males, in supremacy. And, yes, I devoutly believe in apparitions of the BVM. Just as I use her as an intercessor when I desire something but don't receive a favor when I want it, she is using us as intercessors to achieve world peace through prayer. Prayer is powerful! Belief is powerful! They can both work!

This was one of Berry's first novels. It is an extremely well researched suspense novel similar (but better) than his more recent books. Religious dogma is questioned and related to several philosophical and moral issues. Character development is outstanding as is the introspection involving personal relationships. We won't give away the plot except to say that rarely have we encountered a novel that we couldn't put aside. We burned the midnight oil on this one!

Love the factual history that Steve Berry puts in all his books. Although the plot conclusion makes an impressive reasonable resolution for a fiction story, it surprised me that it would go that direction. This author is a master of weaving a fiction story into the accurate and DETAILED facts of history. I find myself stopping and going to google to learn more about the fascinating places, items and events he is describing. Although in a couple of his books, I distinctly disagree with the fictional way he concluded his subject matter, I accept that that is his writers privilege. Even at that the pieces of his story fit so smoothly and agreeably that it makes an excellent read. Also what an exciting way to learn about so much.

I love all Berry's books, but this one was better than some, and a little different. The hero was not a trained agent of some kind (those are good too). It's a bit hard to say much without spoiling the plot. I could not put it down and enjoyed the philosophical discussion as much as the action.

An exceptional story that incorporates a wealth of facts and challenges you to consider many things. Highly recommended for those with an open and curious mind.

Like Mr. Berrys other works, his ability to weave facts and explanation into a complex storyline is masterfully done. Every exposition woven seamlessly into the novel: and you never feel as if the story pauses so you can be educated. It just works. Given the self-contained nature of this story-line, it does not lend itself to a sequel. That is unfortunate because Mr. Berry has once again created characters (ie Cotton Mallone etc.) with depth which we get to meet and would like to see again.

Truly believable characters enmeshed in controversy and intrigue in a setting where neither should exist. The veneer of piety is thin indeed in an institution of religion created and maintained by Man, who seems more dedicated to preservation of power and control rather than basic concern for the welfare of His people.

Mr Berry claims to be Catholic educated but it is not evident. It is Castel Gondolfo not Castle. The characters would have been at home in the Godfather novels.

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