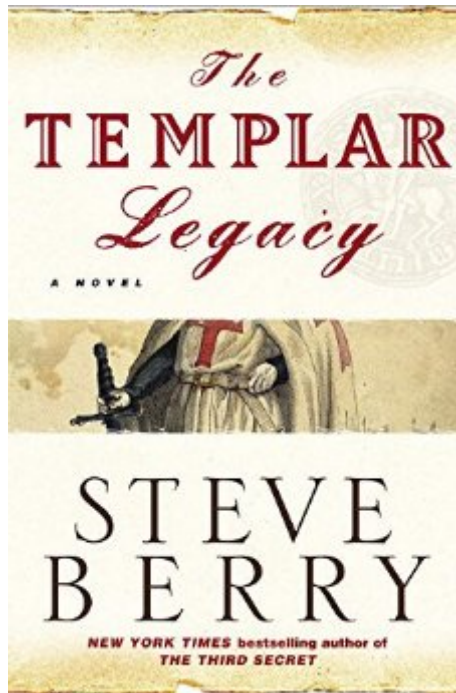


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The Templar Legacy: A Novel (Cotton Malone Book 1)



Synopsis

BONUS: This edition contains an excerpt from Steve Berry's *The King's Deception* and a Cotton Malone dossier. The ancient order of the Knights Templar possessed untold wealth and absolute power over kings and popes . . . until the Inquisition, when they were wiped from the face of the earth, their hidden riches lost. But now two forces vying for the treasure have learned that it is not at all what they thought it was—and its true nature could change the modern world. Cotton Malone, one-time top operative for the U.S. Justice Department, is enjoying his quiet new life as an antiquarian book dealer in Copenhagen when an unexpected call to action reawakens his hair-trigger instincts—and plunges him back into the cloak-and-dagger world he thought he'd left behind. It begins with a violent robbery attempt on Cotton's former supervisor, Stephanie Nelle, who's far from home on a mission that has nothing to do with national security. Armed with vital clues to a series of centuries-old puzzles scattered across Europe, she means to crack a mystery that has tantalized scholars and fortune-hunters through the ages by finding the legendary cache of wealth and forbidden knowledge thought to have been lost forever when the order of the Knights Templar was exterminated in the fourteenth century. But she's not alone. Competing for the historic prize—and desperate for the crucial information Stephanie possesses—is Raymond de Roquefort, a shadowy zealot with an army of assassins at his command. Welcome or not, Cotton seeks to even the odds in the perilous race. But the more he learns about the ancient conspiracy surrounding the Knights Templar, the more he realizes that even more than lives are at stake. At the end of a lethal game of conquest, rife with intrigue, treachery, and craven lust for power, lies a shattering discovery that could rock the civilized world—and, in the wrong hands, bring it to its knees.

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Customer Reviews

Steve Berry has acquired a formidable reputation within the relatively short space of three novels. His latest work, *THE TEMPLAR LEGACY*, introduces readers to Cotton Malone, a former covert agent of the U.S. Justice Department. The history of the rise and fall of the Templars, from a force created for the protection of Christian pilgrims to a society whose wealth and power equaled (and perhaps threatened) that of the Roman Catholic Church that they purportedly served, is fascinating even as it is shrouded in mystery. The primary questions about the Templars that have yet to be answered are: 1) How did the organization manage to acquire the power that it did? and 2) What happened to its much-rumored treasure, which was seemingly lost forever when the Templars experienced a rough disbanding at the hands of an alliance of convenience between church and state? Berry sends Malone on a wild chase to connect the dots in a tale that is equal parts cerebral and cataclysmic. Malone finds himself drawn into the pursuit of the Templar legacy when what was supposed to be a visit with Stephanie Nelle, his former supervisor at Justice, turns into a purse snatching that ends when the perpetrator, after being cornered, commits suicide. It develops that the would-be thief is after a notebook of Nelle's late and estranged husband that has passed into her possession under somewhat mysterious circumstances. Nelle's husband had become famous writing a number of speculative works concerning European mysteries of the 14th century, including the disappearance of the Templar fortune. His notebooks and a seemingly innocuous manuscript appear to hold the key to the ultimate location of the treasure trove.

Once again, this author had me enthralled with his mélange of historical fiction, adventure, and suspense. As I have long had an interest in the Knights Templar, this book had me from the beginning, hook, line, and sinker. I was riveted. The plot is centered on the search for the reputed

missing treasury of the Knights Templar, as well as an ancient Templar archive known as the Great Devise, which may conflict with accepted Christian dogma. While, as with others of the author's books, the plot may seem a bit far-fetched, it does not diminish the entertainment value of this work of fiction. The book's central character, Cotton Malone, is a former operative for the United States government, now retired and living in Copenhagen, Denmark, where he operates a rare book store. When he is visited by his former boss, Stephanie Nelle, Cotton finds himself embroiled in the middle of a mystery that has lain dormant for centuries. It appears that the Knights Templar, long thought to have ceased to exist after they were exterminated in the fourteenth century, are alive and well and headed by a fanatic in pursuit of those clues that will lead them to the Great Devise, as well as the lost treasury of the Knights Templar of old. Ms. Nelle is believed by them to have some of the clues that will lead to that which is being sought. Intermixed with the action and adventure is a good amount of information on the history of the Knights Templar, as well as the contradictions amongst the various Gospels in terms of the Resurrection. As with the author's other books, there are many twists and turns in the tale, which makes for a fast-paced, exciting story that is sure to grip the reader.

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