

Inferno (Robert Langdon) Study Guide

Inferno (Robert Langdon) by Dan Brown

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Contents

Inferno (Robert Langdon) Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Prologue and Chapters 1-6.....	4
Chapters 7-15.....	9
Chapters 16-22.....	15
Chapters 23-29.....	20
Chapters 30-38.....	24
Chapters 39-45.....	28
Chapters 46-53.....	33
Chapters 54-60.....	38
Chapters 61-67.....	42
Chapters 68-74.....	46
Chapters 75-79.....	50
Chapters 80-86.....	54
Chapters 87-94.....	59
Chapter 95-Epilogue.....	63
Characters.....	68
Symbols and Symbolism.....	73
Settings.....	75
Themes and Motifs.....	77
Styles.....	82
Quotes.....	84

Plot Summary

NOTE: All citations in this guide refer to the Kindle version of *Inferno*, by Dan Brown, published May 14, 2013.

In the novel *Inferno* by Dan Brown, Harvard professor Robert Langdon is recruited by the World Health Organization (WHO) to help locate a deadly pathogen. The virus is believed to have been created by Bertrand Zobrist, a Transhumanist who thought that the world was in danger of collapse because of overpopulation. Zobrist had led Elizabeth Sinskey, director of the WHO, to believe he had created a plague to cull the population. Sinskey hoped to find and contain the contagion before it had tragic effects.

Sinskey's plan for Langdon to help locate the pathogen was quickly derailed when he was detained by the provost, a man who had provided a sanctuary in which Zobrist could work. The provost and his people wiped Langdon's memory. They told him that he had retrograde amnesia caused by a gunshot wound to his scalp, and they provided an altered form of reality in which they convinced Langdon that the people sent by Sinskey to find him were trying to kill him.

Using cryptic clues that Dante enthusiast Zobrist has left, Langdon and his new friend Sienna Brooks tracked the virus to the city of Istanbul. Before they could travel to that city, Langdon and Sienna were separated when Langdon was captured by the men working with Sinskey. Sinskey and the provost, who had begun working together after the provost showed Sinskey a chilling video Zobrist had requested to be released to the media, convinced Langdon that no one was trying to kill him and that they were all on the same side, with the exception, perhaps, of Sienna.

Langdon learned the shocking reality that Sienna had actually been Zobrist's lover and disciple. Believing that Sienna had wanted to find the plague so she could keep Sinskey's men from containing it, Langdon and the others discover the place where Zobrist left his virus — a cistern in Istanbul that had become a tourist attraction. Zobrist had sponsored a symphony orchestra to play the Dante Symphony, a musical rendition of Dante's *Inferno*, at that cistern for a period of one week, in order to draw the maximum number of tourists. After encountering Sienna on her way out of the cistern, one of the disease control workers discovered the bag containing the plague had already ruptured. Langdon followed Sienna because he believed that she had intentionally ruptured the bag.

When Sienna finally stopped running from Langdon, she told Langdon the bag had already burst when she arrived. She had known what type virus Zobrist had made and had wanted to stop it from being released. Seeing that she was sincere, Langdon coaxed Sienna to work with Sinskey and the WHO to help them understand and deal with the aftermath of the virus Zobrist had created.



Prologue and Chapters 1-6

Summary

In the Prologue, a man whom people believe to be mad jumps to his death to keep from showing those who are hunting him the place where he believes a gift to mankind is hidden. Just before he jumps he sees a person whom he loves standing in the crowd. He jumps even though he knows that person is watching.

In Chapter 1, Robert Langdon saw a woman with long silver hair wearing an amulet around her neck. The amulet is decorated with the likeness of a single snake coiled around a staff. The woman asked Langdon to seek and find and told him that his help was needed. Bodies of people who were killed in terrible ways were at her feet. When the woman lifted her veil, Langdon sensed he knew her and trusted her, even though he could not bring her name to mind. The woman pointed to a pair of legs with the initial "R" on them. Langdon asked if that was him. She told him again to "seek and find" (11). Then, her body began glowing with white light. When the woman exploded in white light, Langdon woke.

Slowly, Langdon realized he was in a hospital. His head was hurting as he located a line of stitches on his scalp. He could not remember what had happened to him. Dr. Marconi saw that Langdon was awake. Since Dr. Marconi spoke little English, he sent for Dr. Sienna Brooks, Sienna told Langdon he had been screaming when he woke. Langdon described his nightmare to her. When she asked about his memory, all he could remember was walking across the campus at Harvard earlier that day. The doctors played a recording for him of a phrase he had been mumbling repeatedly when he was admitted to the hospital. They all believed it sounded like he was saying "very sorry" (15). Langdon said he did not know of anything for which he needed to be sorry.

Langdon felt a surge of anxiety as if they were in danger. Sienna made him lie back down when he tried to sit up. Dr. Marconi gave him a sedative in his IV. It had begun to get light outside Langdon's window. When he saw the buildings, he realized he was thousands of miles from Harvard.

Meanwhile, a woman with spiked hair got off a motorcycle outside Langdon's hospital. She had a mission that had gone wrong because a dove had cooed at the wrong time. She intended to finish her job that night.

In Chapter 2, Langdon called his doctors back when he realized he was in Florence, Italy. He demanded to know what had happened to him. Sienna tried to comfort him, telling him that he had retrograde amnesia. Sienna finally told Langdon that he had come into the emergency room by himself, bleeding from the head. The doctors were interrupted by a voice on the intercom telling them that Langdon had a visitor.



Langdon was happy because he thought that the visitor might know what had happened to him. The doctors were not so sure about letting the visitor see Langdon because Langdon was not yet a registered patient. Since it was not visiting hours, Dr. Marconi went to see what the person wanted. Sienna decided to tell Langdon what happened to him so he could understand why they were being so careful. She told him that his injury had not been caused by an accident. It was a gunshot wound.

There were angry voices. Then, Langdon saw a woman with spiked hair burst into the hospital corridor. Dr. Marconi tried to make the woman stop, but she pulled a gun and shot him in the chest.

Meanwhile, in Chapter 3, off the coast of Italy a cruise ship converted into a floating office building and command center was making its way through the water. The ship was named The Mendacium. It was reinforced with lead-lined walls and had dedicated satellite links with a staff of technicians and analysts as well as military trained soldiers. The man in charge of the boat and the services provided by the boat was known only as the provost. He allowed his clients the ability to “pursue their ambitions and desires without consequence” (22). The provost believed it was not his responsibility if people did things that were immoral or illegal while using his services.

On this particular day, the provost faced a problem that had never bothered him before. He had provided services for a person who had caused problems for his company. He had sent a specialist, Vayentha, to get control of the situation. Vayentha had never failed him, but she had made a mistake, which she blamed on the coo of a dove. Now, Vayentha had been sent out to correct her mistake.

In Chapter 4, back in the hospital, the woman aimed her gun at Langdon’s head. Just as she was about to fire, Sienna banged the door between them shut. She grabbed Langdon and ran from the room with him. Outside they got into a taxi just before the woman with the spiked hair stepped out and took a shot at them. The back window on the taxi broke. It was at that point that Langdon realized someone was trying to kill him.

In Chapter 5, Vayentha called the provost with an update. She said that Langdon had escaped and that he had the item with him. The provost suspected that Langdon would soon contact the authorities.

In an office below deck, Laurence Knowlton thought about their precarious situation. He knew that the man for whom they were working had killed himself by jumping to his death in Florence. There were still several jobs the company had been hired to finish for him, including sending a video the man had made to the media. Knowlton got the memory stick on which the video was stored and began watching it. He saw what appeared to be the interior of a cave with an underground lake. The light had a red hue. The camera focused on an underwater plaque with the inscription “IN THIS PLACE, ON THIS DATE, THE WORLD WAS CHANGED FOREVER” (31). The client’s name and the next day’s date were engraved on the plaque as well.



In Chapter 6, as Sienna helped him from the taxi at an apartment building, Langdon's felt that his mind was groggy and his body was heavy. They went into a building where they rode upstairs in an elevator. When Langdon closed his eyes, he saw the image of the silver-haired woman and the dying bodies. He had the feeling that he had to save her and all of the people around her. Langdon gasped when the woman suddenly turned into a pillar of fire. When Sienna asked what was wrong, he described his hallucinations to her.

In the apartment, Sienna gave Langdon several capsules of No-Doze, telling him to chew and swallow them. When Sienna took Langdon to the bathroom with instructions to clean himself up, he noticed that his Mickey Mouse watch was missing. It had been a gift from his parents. Sienna remembered nothing about it. She told him that while she was gone next door to get some clothes from her neighbor for him, he should try to come up with some reason why people were trying to kill him.

Analysis

Although a good deal of the meaning behind the action in the Prologue is not immediately understood, this section sets up the atmosphere for the rest of the novel. The Prologue is written in the present tense from the first person point of view of a man who turns out to be Bertrand Zobrist, a genetic engineer. Bertrand kills himself in this section of the novel, but his actions prior to his death jump start the book.

If the title of the novel, *Inferno*, did not give away the fact the story line will feature Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*, lines in the prologue should clinch that fact. The opening lines of the Prologue are not a quote from the epic poem, but they are written in the style of Dante. There are hints that Zobrist identifies with Dante. The Prologue is set in Dante's home city of Florence. Zobrist feels "exiled" (8), just as Dante was exiled in his lifetime. The difference lies in the fact that Dante was exiled from Florence, while Zobrist seeks refuge in that city. The exile that Zobrist feels is exile from the scientific community because of what he had created.

Through the course of the Prologue, there is a variety of imagery that brings to mind the *Divine Comedy*. These images primarily come from the *Inferno* portion of that play where the author descends into the nine circles of hell. Zobrist describes being forced to labor beneath the earth as he climbs the stairs of the tower from which he plans to jump. He also sees visions of "the lustful bodies writhing in fiery rain, the gluttonous souls floating in excrement, the treacherous villains frozen in Satan's icy grasp" (8). Also reminiscent of the *Divine Comedy*, the character here seeks a "direct path to salvation" (7). He elicits Virgil, the Roman poet who helped Dante through hell and purgatory in Dante's poem to "Guide me, dear Virgil, across the void" (8).

The man jumps because he feels misunderstood. He appears to have created something called *Inferno*, which the people of the world hope to find and destroy. He believes *Inferno* is a great gift to mankind. He finds in the crowd only one person who understands what he is doing and why he is doing it. As the man rants to himself, the



reader wonders if the Prologue is just the rantings of a mad man or if he has created some sort of gift that will benefit the world in some unusual way.

Appearance is important in this novel, especially the premise that things may not be the way they appear. Langdon suffers amnesia due to a head injury. He is given the idea that people are trying to kill him. From this point forward, because the idea that there are people who are trying to kill him has been planted in his mind, he reacts to the situations around him as if he were being hunted like prey.

Langdon is also haunted by an image of a silver-haired woman telling him “seek and ye shall find” (13). Although he cannot put a name with her face, Langdon gets the feeling that he knows the woman and that there is something he needs to be doing in order to save mankind. Meanwhile, the images in Langdon’s visions are very reminiscent of Dante’s description of the people in hell because some of the means of punishment included in Langdon’s visions are also included in Dante’s description of hell. These include the people covered in feces, being burned to death and buried headfirst.

As Sienna tries to explain to Langdon why he is having hallucinations, she explains to him some of the workings of a brain that has been injured. She tells him that until he heals “your memories will be muddled and uncataloged — past, present, and imagination

all mixed together” (33). This indicates there is some reality in the visions that Langdon is having.

Meanwhile a second plot line is developed involving the provost and the spike-haired girl. This provost has sent this girl, Vayentha, to take care of a mistake that she made in dealing with Langdon. The claim that Langdon was shot and the fact this woman is carrying a gun and shooting people makes Langdon believe that Vayentha is the one who is trying to kill him. Notice that when Vayentha calls the provost to tell him that Langdon had escaped and that he had “the object” (28) the author indicates that she had to work hard to sound professional. The reader assumes that she is trying hard to sound professional because she is afraid she will lose her job since she let Langdon escape. The provost’s silence after she tells him about Langdon’s escape seems to back up the assumption that Vayentha failed her mission.

In this section the reader learns that the provost has made his money by creating circumstances that allow people to live their dreams and desires. He is not concerned with the morality of the actions of these people, only if he allows them to live their dreams. As the provost thinks about this particular job, which has spun out of control, the provost thinks to himself that he “agreed to provide services to the wrong man” (23).

One of the employees of the provost, Knowlton, gives more information about what his boss is facing. Laurence thinks about how their client killed himself several days ago. Since the mode of death and location of the death fits that of the green eyed man in the “Prologue” it is assumed these men are the same one. Knowlton previews a video the man had asked the provost’s company to send to the media. At the end of it is the



warning that at the location in which the man is making his video, the world will be changed forever. The date of that change is the following day, the day the video is supposed to be released. This video and promise that sounds very much like a threat is a foreshadowing that something terrible will happen in that spot that will negatively affect human kind.

Significant objects in this section of the novel include the green eyes of the man who narrates the “Prologue.” It is only by his eye color that he will be identified for more than one-third of the novel. Dante’s *Divine Comedy* is also an important object through the novel as it is upon this poem that the hunt for this object that the man with the green eyes has hidden will focus. Langdon’s Mickey Mouse watch, a gift from his parents when he was a child, is also an important symbol because it represents Langdon as a whole person. Without it, Langdon feels disoriented and not himself. The amulet worn by the woman in Langdon’s visions is also a significant symbol that is introduced in this section of the novel.

Discussion Question 1

Why do you think Brown decided to write the Prologue in a different tense and point of view?

Discussion Question 2

How does the author continue to work images of Dante’s poem into the work even after the Prologue? How do these images impact the tone of the novel?

Discussion Question 3

Without having his own memories to guide him, Langdon must depend on what others tell him in order to determine how to act in his situation. How is this lack of memory a disadvantage to him? Are there any ways in which it is a benefit?

Vocabulary

cajoling, veneration, traverse, protruded, lissome, sabbatical, covert, meticulous, debacle, viscous, ubiquitous, incredulous



Chapters 7-15

Summary

In Chapter 7, Langdon wandered into what appeared to be a study in Sienna's apartment. He looked out the window and wondered why he was in Florence. Although he loved Florence and visited often, he could not think of a trip he had planned to the city. He wondered what he had done that had caused Dr. Marconi to be killed. He turned on Sienna's computer and searched his own name on the Internet looking for clues. He also checked his email at Harvard. Neither the Internet search nor his email gave him any idea why he might have made the trip. The only thing he was able to find was an article about a city official who had died of a heart attack in the city. No name had been released, yet.

Making him feel even more guilty was the picture of Sienna and Dr. Marconi laughing together in a hospital hallway. Langdon had found the photo on Sienna's desk. Langdon also discovered a playbill that showed Sienna had played Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Newspaper articles credited her with being a child genius. The article said she had an IQ of 208, "was a virtuoso violinist, could master a new language in a month, and was teaching herself anatomy and physiology" (42). Another article centered on the isolation that Sienna faced because she was more intelligent than other children.

As he closed the playbill and tried to gather up the clippings, he had another vision triggered by the Comedy and Tragedy masks on the front of the playbill. In this vision, the silver-haired woman called out to Langdon that she represented life. She begged his help as a Black Plague mask rose behind her. The voice behind the mask announced that he represented death.

In Chapter 8, as Langdon tried to shake off the dream, he heard Sienna's phone ringing. The woman on the line, who said she was from the hospital, left a message for Sienna saying that police were looking for her and they had taken her employee file. When Sienna returned, she gave Langdon the clothes she had found. She asked him to come to the kitchen and talk to her when he was finished dressing.

Meanwhile, in the bathroom, Sienna pulled the wig from her head. Underneath the wig, she was bald. She felt as if her life had suddenly veered out of control. Although she did not often fall back on self-pity she cried for the mentor she lost, her loneliness and her future, which seemed uncertain.

In Chapter 9, on the boat, Knowlton pondered what he should do about the video he was supposed to upload. It was company policy that they do what the client asked with no questions but Knowlton felt uncomfortable about the video. He watched the video again. Next to the plaque, underwater, was a balloon filled with some sort of liquid. A man wearing a Black Death mask appeared. He called himself the Shade. He spoke in



veiled language about the gift he believed he had created for the universe. He indicated that he believed Inferno was the gift of tomorrow.

In Chapter 10, Sienna tested Langdon's memory and discovered it was improving. He told her about his latest vision, along with the man wearing the plague mask. When he told Sienna the woman in his vision kept asking him to seek and find, she indicated she believed she knew what it was he was supposed to locate. Inside a secret pocket of his jacket, a pocket Langdon had never seen before, Sienna pulled an object, which she told him she thought was the reason people were trying to kill him.

Meanwhile, Knowlton tried to decide if he wanted to upload the video as their client had requested or if he dared show it to the provost and ask a second opinion. He watched again a section of the video in which the man seemed to be threatening that he was going to unleash a new plague on the world. He referred also to the silver-haired woman who called him a monster. He claimed that what he had unleashed, no one would be able to stop.

In Chapter 11, Langdon studied the object that Sienna had handed him. She pointed out a symbol on the side, advising him not to handle it too roughly. When he saw the symbol for bio-hazard, he put the cylinder on the table. It was a tube for carrying highly dangerous substances. Before he had woken, Sienna had discovered that only Langdon's thumbprint could open the device. Langdon denied he had ever been around the object before then, but when he put his thumb on the sensor, the vial clicked open.

Langdon wanted to call the consulate, but Sienna encouraged him to see what was inside the tube first. She told him that if he chose to call the authorities, she would have to leave him because of her immigration status. She gave him a plan, and he followed the plan as he talked to the consulate. Langdon was surprised when the man on the phone said they had been looking for him.

In Chapter 12, the man on the phone told Langdon they needed to talk right away in person. Langdon followed the script that Sienna had lined out for him. Before they hung up, the man verified that Langdon was still in possession of the object. Since he knew they were about to split up, Langdon apologized to Sienna for her friend's death and for the upheaval he had caused in her life.

As they waited for the consulate to arrive, Sienna thought about her attraction to the American professor. She reconsidered though, believing that he would not want her because she was damaged. Interrupting her thoughts was a motorcycle from which a woman with spiked hair dismounted. She told Langdon that she believed the U.S. government had just sent someone to kill him.

In Chapter 13, Sienna told Langdon that if the woman's words that the U.S. government was trying to kill him were true, Langdon and she were not safe to stay there. She told him he had to open the bio-tube to see if there was any information that would tell them why the government was chasing him. Instead of a test tube, an object made of bone was concealed inside the tube. There was an engraving of Satan on the object as well,



as the letters of a Latin mnemonic intended to help Christians of the Middle Age remember the identities of the seven deadly sins. Langdon noticed there was something inside the object that rattled when he turned the object over. As Langdon continued to turn the object over, he examined it. The object began to glow.

In Chapter 14, Langdon realized the item was a Faraday pointer, a laser pointer that could be activated by being shaken. He pointed the light at a wall; but, instead of seeing a single dot, they were surprised to see a photograph that included images of death and hell. Langdon recognized what he was seeing as *La Mappa dell'Inferno*, or the Map of Hell, painted by Botticelli. Langdon believed he had seen this picture before and that it was what had begun his hallucinations. He also knew this painting had been inspired by the Inferno portion of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Meanwhile, Vayentha set up in a concealed spot across from the location where she knew Langdon was hiding. She waited for him to make the next move.

At the same time the provost was thinking about how Vayentha's actions had put his whole job at risk. Because he needed her to clean up the mess she had made, he continued to work with her. An analyst came to the provost with new information. They had learned that Langdon had accessed his email, an action that allowed them to pinpoint his location. The provost was also told that the Surveillance and Response Support (SRS) team was two miles away from Langdon.

In Chapter 15, in the beginning of this chapter the narrator describes Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The narration goes on to describe the way that Botticelli painted his Map of Hell to coincide with the nine levels of hell described in Dante's epic poem. As Sienna looked at the image of this painting, she pointed out to Langdon that there were a pair of legs sticking up, notated with the letter "R" just like in Langdon's visions. Langdon knew that letter was not in the original painting. Sienna pointed out more and more letters, solidifying Langdon's belief that the painting had been modified. The letters included C-A-T-R-O-V-A-C-E-R, letters that neither Sienna nor Langdon could form into any familiar word. Sienna additionally noticed a man wearing a plague mask, another item not in Botticelli's original. There was no signature on the manipulated copy of the painting, only a phrase that stated: "The truth can be glimpsed only through the eyes of death" (77). Langdon could not imagine who might have made the strange adaptations of the painting or why he could be carrying the pointer that displayed the photograph.

They heard tires screeching and doors slamming outside. Sienna looked to see a group of men in black uniforms with a green medallions getting out of the van and dashing to the entrance of the apartment building. Agent Christoph Brüder, who was in charge of the men, worked for SRS. He and his men were generally only activated when a situation reached a crisis level. He radioed to let someone know that they had tracked Langdon and would radio back when they had him in custody.

Meanwhile, Vayentha wondered what the men were doing there. She knew their presence meant that it was over for her. When she radioed the provost, he told her she was being disavowed.

Analysis

The issue of whom Langdon should trust is a major issue that develops in this section of the novel. Because she saved his life, Langdon believes he can trust Sienna. There are hints given that Sienna has already been less than truthful with him. First, she thinks to herself that Langdon would not be interested in having a relationship with her because she considers herself “damaged” (63). The reader knows that Sienna is bald and wonders if the disease that caused her hair to fall out is part of the reason she believes she is damaged. Sienna also admits to Langdon that her immigration status is questionable. When the woman leaves the message on Sienna's phone it appears that Sienna may have more problems than just her immigration status.

Langdon also believes he has found someone who can help him when he gets in touch with the U.S. Consulate and believes he learns that workers there are looking for him. As Sienna keeps watch over the street below, she sees Vayentha ride up on her motorbike. She tells Langdon that the U.S. government has sent someone to kill him. Langdon believes her.

Meanwhile, another team of frightening looking men arrives that even scares Vayentha and causes the provost to disavow her, meaning that she has been cut off from the business. If she is arrested or questioned about her actions the provost will claim that he has no part in what she is doing. Since these people have pinpointed Langdon's location and storm into the apartment building after him, it must mean these men are not affiliated with the U.S. government though it is unsure what agency they are associated with. The only information given about this group is that it is the Surveillance and Response Support (SRS) division.

Along with questioning his trust in those around him, Langdon also should question his trust in himself. It is later learned that his act of checking his email on Sienna's computer is what led the men in black uniforms directly to his location.

The author plays up the idea that a deadly disease has been or will be unleashed on the world's population by this green-eyed man who had killed himself. As Knowlton watched the video that Zobrist, the green-eyed man, wanted sent to the media, there are various references to plagues and the way these plagues worked in favor of the world once the dying ended. In the video the man refers to Black Death as “God's lightning strike — the spark that would finally ignite the fire that would rage across the land and clear the deadwood, once again bringing sunshine to the healthy roots” (55). This image of clearing a forest is used to describe the way that Black Death killed such a large portion of the population that when it had run its course, those people who remained alive had better lives because the problem of overcrowding had been relieved. The man also uses phrases that bring the reader's thoughts to the Divine Comedy: “To reach Paradise, man must pass through Inferno” (55). The reader has learned that the man refers to his discovery as Inferno. Here he tells his audience that in order to reach Paradise, heaven, or in this case probably a better, less crowded world, the population will have to suffer whatever it is he has created to cull the population. The phrase also

refers to the way that in *The Divine Comedy*, Dante had to pass through the Inferno, hell, to reach Paradise, heaven.

The plague mask is an often used symbol in this section of the novel. It appears in Langdon's vision as he sees a man wearing this mask rise up behind the silver haired woman and announce that he is death. In the video that Knowlton watches, the man who narrates the video is wearing one of these plague masks. Also when Sienna and Langdon inspect the photograph of the Map of Hell displayed by the Faraday pointer, they see a man there in a plague mask. Langdon explained to Sienna this mask was particularly a symbol of Black Death because doctors had worn these types of masks in an attempt to keep doctors from breathing in whatever was causing the disease. The continual reappearance of this image of death and the plague keeps the idea that the man in the "Prologue" might have unleashed a plague on the earth in the forefront of the reader's mind and the characters' minds.

Another image of death appears on the Faraday pointer that Langdon has in his possession. The carvings on bone create a picture of Satan eating three men. Langdon tells Sienna this image is also one that was associated with Black Death. Langdon says, "The three gnashing mouths are symbolic of how efficiently the plague ate through the population" (68).

The Botticelli painting is another image of death and despair. It is based on the picture of hell that Dante provides in the *Divine Comedy*. The author attempts to lighten the dark tone of the novel with Langdon's comment about Dante's work: "Dante's Inferno, Langdon thought. Inspiring foreboding pieces of art since 1330" (77). As Sienna and Langdon study the copy of Botticelli's painting projected by the Faraday pointer, they notice the painting has been changed. It is just before they spot Vayentha and the men in the black van that they begin trying to discover what the artist meant by the changes he made to the work.

Notice that the silver-haired woman whom Langdon sees in his visions is also mentioned in the video made by the green-eyed man. He describes this woman as calling him a madman and referring to him as ignorant. Notice that the man compares himself to Copernicus. Many people believed Copernicus was mad when he first suggested the universe rotated around the sun instead of the earth. This green-eyed man seems to believe his discovery is on the same level as that of Copernicus, implying that forward-thinking is seen as madness.

Things to remember in this section include the news blurb that Langdon noticed on the computer about a Florence city official who died of a heart attack the night before. This will be significant to Langdon and Sienna later on in the novel. Note also that it is noted that Sienna "cried for the mentor who had died before her eyes" (47). It is assumed this mentor who died before Sienna's eyes was Dr. Marconi. Keep in mind that much of the basis for the plot line so far has been based on assumptions.



Discussion Question 1

Why do you think that the woman in Langdon's visions is referred to as a silver-haired woman? Why is she not a gray-haired woman? What difference in connotation do these color descriptions make?

Discussion Question 2

Why do you think the Botticelli painting has been altered?

Discussion Question 3

Who do you think made the Faraday pointer and altered the painting? Give reasons to support your answer.

Vocabulary

phalanx, peripheral, prodigy, putrid, absolve, precocious, visceral, trilateral, incongruous, cryptic, rendezvous, riveted, sanctioned, rudimentary, cuneiform, kinetic, emanated, macabre, provenance, visceral, penultimate, disavowal



Chapters 16-22

Summary

In Chapter 16, as Langdon and Sienna tried to escape her apartment building without being seen by the soldiers, Langdon tried to figure out what the strange letters in the projection meant. Sienna led him to a garage where she reeved a Trike, and they rode away. A soldier saw them and fired a shot, which bounced off the back fender.

When a black van similar to the one from which the soldiers had unloaded came around a corner toward them, Sienna hid the Trike by driving behind a panel truck. Langdon was able to see a woman with silver hair in the back of the van. She was sitting between two soldiers. She appeared to have been drugged. Langdon was shocked by the sight because she was the woman he had seen in his visions.

In Chapter 17, the provost began drinking again when he heard what had transpired at the apartment building where Langdon had been. He noticed a book on his bookshelf, a gift from the man he wished he had never met. The man, who had piercing green eyes, had asked only for an opportunity to become invisible so he could work on a project. Things had gone well until two weeks ago when the client had come to the provost complaining that a silver-haired woman was getting closer to him every day. The provost noticed changes in the man and thought he had gone mad. The man had made the provost promise that if anything happened to him that his wishes would still be carried out as he had been promised. He gave the provost an item that he wanted given to the silver-haired woman on a particular date. At the same time, he gave the provost the memory stick with the video to be sent to the media that same date.

Before the date the green-eyed man had indicated, there had been a variety of bad things that had happened in Florence. Although the provost had tried to handle the things that were happening, the green-eyed man ultimately killed himself. The provost continued to follow the man's plans, but when he sent Vayentha to get the item from the safe deposit box to give to the silver-haired woman, it was discovered that item was already gone. The silver-haired woman had gotten it too soon and had signed warrants to arrest anyone who came looking for that box.

Meanwhile, in his own office, Knowlton continued to worry about the video that Zobrist had left with them. He tried to put it out of his mind and go ahead with his work.

In Chapter 18, knowing that the mystery of the silver-haired woman was somehow connected to Dante, Langdon suggested that he and Sienna pay a visit to the part of Old Florence where Dante had spent most of his life. On the trip there, Langdon thought about Dante and the symbols of hell included in his work. Langdon remembered giving a lecture in which he had compared Botticelli's painting to Dante's description of hell. The screech of tires brought Langdon back to reality. Sienna pointed to the gates of Old Florence and told Langdon they had a problem.



In Chapter 19, at the same time that Sienna was pointing to the gates, Brüder was searching Sienna's apartment. He was surprised to learn her identity. He called back to his boss telling him that he was not going to believe who was working with Langdon.

In Chapter 20, Langdon noticed ahead of them that traffic was stopped. Officers who were going from car to car, apparently asking questions. Sienna seemed terrified when they heard sirens behind them. She and Langdon slipped behind a portable toilet, the only place they could find to hide. As Langdon hid there behind the toilet, he realized that in the projector's photograph of the levels of hell, the levels were in the wrong order. He also realized that the letters, when rearranged according to the correct levels of hell, point to a specific place he was supposed to go.

In Chapter 21, pretending to be sibling tourists, Sienna and Langdon mixed in with a group of students walking to the Art Institute. The narrator includes a description of the Institute and its history. As Langdon walked, he could see over a high wall into the Boboli Gardens. He believed that if he and Sienna could get into the garden they could make their way into Old Florence without having to go through the gates of the city. Although the students at first said there was no way to get into the garden from campus, Sienna challenged them. They told her and Langdon how they could climb up onto a shed and over the wall from there.

In Chapter 22, the silver-haired woman was feeling sick from the drugs she had been given. Even though she thought she needed medical attention, the guard had orders to ignore her needs until their task was completed. The woman, identified as Elizabeth Sinskey remembered two years ago in Geneva when she had been speaking at a conference as the new director of the World Health Organization. A man from the UN had told her there was a man from the Council on Foreign Relations who wanted to talk to her. As director of WHO, Sinskey had once been identified as "The face of world health" (116) on a magazine cover. She thought that was ironic because she had severe asthma as a child. Treatment with an experimental glucocorticoid had left her unable to have children.

The man who wanted to speak to her did not introduce himself once she entered the office where they met. He kept the lights low as he explained to her that the world was headed toward certain demise because of the rapidity at which the population was growing. Because the world was being asked to support such huge numbers of people, natural resources were being depleted. He wanted to know why the WHO was not dealing with the problem head on. He told Sinskey that he had brought her there with the intent of working with her on an answer to the problem of overpopulation.

Sinskey was shocked when the man said it was a pity that the WHO kept coming up with ways to stop pandemics and prevent future ones. He explained that if the population could not be culled that they would see a version of Dante's hell, here on earth, even in America.



Analysis

More information in this section gives the reader a clearer idea of the exact nature of the conflict in this novel. It appears that this green-eyed man, who has yet to be named, arranged a meeting with the silver-haired woman, who has finally been identified as Elizabeth Sinskey, the director of the World Health Organization.

The green-eyed man expressed the concern that the world would be destroyed by over-population. He suggested that he and Sinskey should try to work together to find a way to cull the population. Sinskey was not receptive to his ideas since he suggested that the WHO's work in keeping pandemics in check were actually working against what the world needed most. The man's continued references to pandemics and plagues strengthen the reader's idea that he plans to unleash some sort of disease that will thin the population.

In his conversation with Sinskey, the man often mentions Dante. In fact, he uses a depiction of Dante's version of hell, portrayed by Dore, as an opening image when he tries to talk to Sinskey. Also because of his affection for Dante, the green-eyed man gave the provost a copy of Dante's *The Divine Comedy* as a gift. Notice that the green-eyed man believed the book was written for him. He suggested to the provost: "It will help you understand all I have done" (90). Also in connection with Dante, Langdon realizes that the levels of hell as portrayed in the photograph of Botticelli's painting of the Map of Hell are different from the ones in the original painting. Remember that at this point Langdon has yet to reference a copy of the *Divine Comedy*. This speaks to how familiar the professor is with Dante and his work.

Sienna continues to be a questionable character. Through the shooting of her friend and her rescue of Langdon from the hospital, Sienna does not seem to be scared. Perhaps, she covers her fear well. After the arrival of the men in the black van, however, Langdon is able to sense that Sienna is scared for the first time. "Brooks had managed the morning's substantial stress with a kind of detached poise, but now her calm demeanor had grown taut with an emotion Langdon had yet to see in her — true fear" (80). It is possible that Sienna just reached a point at which she could no longer pretend to be calm. There are other questions surrounding Sienna such as why the soldiers in the black van seem to know her. She presents herself as a simple doctor trying to avoid getting deported because she does not have her immigration papers all in order. It is strange that someone who is trying to fly under the radar would be known by a group with such obvious military power. Notice also that those men are surprised when they learn that it is Sienna with whom Langdon has escaped. They seem to think the two make an odd pair.

A character only seen before in Langdon's visions turns out to be a real person in this section. Langdon spots the silver-haired woman in one of the black vans. The woman is sitting between two soldiers. Based on what Langdon knows of the situation, he makes the decision that she is in trouble. At this point, all he knows about her is that in his hallucinations the woman has been calling out to him to save her. When he sees her



with the men in the black vans, Langdon believes that she has been taken captive by them. Because her head appears to be bobbing and she is tucked in between two soldiers, as if they are guarding her, he believes that she has been drugged and captured.

When Brown describes the situation from Sinskey's point of view — that the drugs the soldiers had been giving her were making her sick and that it had been ordered she not be given medical attention until the crisis had been taken care of — the information still points to the idea that the director of WHO is being held against her will. Remember, however, that this is a novel based on appearances and the manipulation of appearances.

Again, the author incorporates humor into his work as Langdon sees the irony of projecting Botticelli's work on the back of a portable toilet. "Botticelli on a chemical toilet, Langdon thought, ashamed. This had to be the least elegant place a Botticelli had ever been displayed" (108-109).

A final significant fact to note in this section is the fact that the video that the green-eyed man made to release to the media is exactly nine minutes long. This is significant because in Dante's version of hell there were nine levels. Later in the novel, Langdon will point out that the number nine was a recurring number in Dante's work. It appears this enthusiast of Dante also decided to follow Dante's fad when he put together his video.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss Sinskey's meeting with the green-eyed man. In what ways does he fail to properly convey his message? Does Sinskey appear to be receptive of the message? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

What is the tone in this section of the novel? How does the author create this tone?

Discussion Question 3

In his writing, Brown does a good deal of describing of notable landmarks in Florence. Why do you think he adds these long descriptive passages? Do you think his descriptions are beneficial or detrimental to the plot of the novel?

Vocabulary

tome, acquiesced, feral, calamitous, purloined, serpentine, trepidation, subjunctive, rapport, salient, vernacular, erudite, codification, austere, cached, consummate,



converge, provocatively, recumbent, putrid, emblazoned, incredulous, fraudulent,
precise, enigmatic, citadel, patronizing, surreal, affluent, myopic, antagonism,
precipitously, canonized, cloying



Chapters 23-29

Summary

In Chapter 23, it was Langdon's idea that he and Sienna could walk to the Palazzo Pitti where they could blend in with the tourists. Once there he believed they would easily be able to walk out of the palace into the old part of Florence. In order for him to explain to Sienna where they were going and why, they ducked into an enclosed hollow in the landscape where they had more cover. He activated the projector and described to Sienna how the levels of hell had been shuffled around. When they were in the correct order the letters spelled out the words "cerca trova" (127). These words mean seek and ye shall find, the same words Langdon heard the silver-haired woman in his visions say to him.

He went on to explain that in the Hall of Five Hundred in the Palazzo Vecchio there was a mural by Vasari in which those words had been painted in tiny letters. He thought that mural might spark some idea where Zobrist had hidden the pathogen. While Langdon spoke, he and Sienna heard the whine of an engine and saw what they believed was a toy helicopter fly over them. When it turned and flew back, Sienna told Langdon she believed it was not a toy but a drone, sending video information back to someone. They decided to move on, but Langdon suddenly stopped and told Sienna he believed he was innocent. He pointed out that they had believed he was apologizing for something when he arrived at the emergency room. In this different light, Langdon now believes that he was saying the name of the artist Vasari.

In Chapter 24, when Vayentha was stopped from going into the old city because of the roadblocks, she saw that the men in the black vans were participating in those roadblocks. She believed that meant that Langdon had gotten past the SRS agents at the apartment building. If she could bring Langdon in before the SRS caught him, she thought that she might be able to regain her position with the provost. Vayentha thought she had an advantage over Brüder and his men because she had an idea where Langdon might be going.

In Chapter 25, Sienna believed that because Langdon had been saying the artist's name when he walked into the emergency room, it meant he had seen the projector before and already knew that he needed to find a piece of work by that artist. Langdon decided for sure that there must be answers at the Palazzo Vecchio where the mural was hung. He felt as if he were a free diver who had swum down a tunnel to a point where they no longer had the breath to swim back to the beginning but instead must go on and hope to find an escape.

When Langdon suggested that he should turn himself in, Sienna decided to share with Langdon that he had said another phrase when he first came into the emergency room. According to her he had said "I hold the key to finding it ... if I fail, then all is death" (136). She also reminded him how determined the people seemed to be to kill him, it



might not be a good idea for him to turn himself in. He told Sienna that the situation did not make sense to him, but he did feel that he needed to help the silver-haired woman. Sienna encouraged him to follow his feelings.

Meanwhile, Brüder was shown pictures of Sienna and Langdon taken from the drone. Because the gardens were surrounded by high walls, he believed the two would never be able to get out of the garden alive. Brüder looked at the van and saw the silver-haired woman. He noticed that despite how dull her senses were by the drugs they had given her, she still looked unhappy. She looked like she was afraid and that she knew exactly what was happening to her.

In Chapter 26, when Sienna and Langdon reached the Pitti Palace, they believed that they could blend in with a group of tourists. Langdon noticed there was a backlog of tourists trying to get into the palace. He saw that there was a group of police officers moving toward the entrances of the palace.

In Chapter 27, Sienna and Langdon tried to run, only to discover more officers. Langdon told Sienna that he thought there might be a way for them to get out of the garden without being captured. They made their way to a path that Langdon pointed out. He led her into what Sienna thought was a dead end, until Sienna saw a set of steps to their right. Down those steps was a cave carved molded in the concrete wall. Langdon turned toward a wooden door that Sienna had not noticed before. To his disappointment, the door could not be opened from the outside. To make matters worse, Sienna and Langdon began hearing the sound of the drone again. They ducked into the cave to avoid being seen.

In Chapter 28, Vayentha waited on the pedestrian walkway between Pitti Palace and the old city. They were waiting to spot Langdon and Sienna. When Vayentha noticed the drone, she thought it was a good thing because it meant that the police were still searching for Langdon and Sienna.

In Chapter 29, Langdon and Sierra saw the drone as it dove down to search the area in which they were hiding. Langdon looked around trying to determine another exit. He heard the noise of the helicopter stop and saw that it had landed in the courtyard. Three soldiers were coming down the stairs in their direction. Langdon and Sienna moved further back into the cave. They saw one of the soldiers crouch down and look into the cave. Instead of coming into the cave, the soldier stood back up and began knocking on the wooden door.

The security guard, Ernesto Russo, tried to ignore the knocking. However, when it turned into banging, he went to the door. He was surprised to see a soldier standing there. The soldier asked him if anyone had come through that way that day. Ernesto told him no. The soldier ordered him not to let anyone through.



Analysis

Evidence also begins to build that Langdon had already done some studying on the meaning of the image projected by the Faraday pointer. More and more of the things they discover about that image relate to things in Langdon's hallucinations or things he said just as he arrived at the emergency room. For instance, when he reorders the circles of hell and their corresponding letters, he discovers a Latin word that means "seek and ye shall find" (127). This is the same phrase that Langdon heard the silver-haired woman saying to him in his visions. Langdon also realizes that when he first came to the hospital he was probably not apologizing for something but instead saying the name of the artist, Vasari, whose work included that Latin phrase.

Notice Sienna's strange reaction when Langdon suggests that he should stop running from the authorities. It is not until this point that she tells Langdon that he had also said when he first came to the emergency room "I hold the key to finding it ... if I fail, then all is death" (136). Although Sienna considers herself an "innocent bystander" (136) she encourages Langdon to go ahead with his search for the meaning of the photo on the projector. She points out to him that surrender probably is not a good idea since the people who are coming after them are shooting at them and not seeming to want to talk to them or negotiate with them.

As Sienna and Langdon decide to move forward through the Boboli Gardens, he compares their situation to that of the early Grecian free divers. Just like these divers would sometimes swim so far into a tunnel they no longer had the option to turn around and swim back out because they did not have enough breath left. They had to keep swimming and hope they could find an exit. In the same way, Langdon believed he and Sienna had gotten so far into researching the strange message that Zobrist left them that they no longer had to opportunity to turn themselves in, they had to keep going.

Humor appears in this section as Langdon and Sienna's stress rises to the breaking point when they hide in the caves, waiting for the soldiers to leave the area. The SRS men appeared to be using a drone to track the location of Sienna and Langdon. The drone is described as looking like a child's toy when the two first see it. As Langdon and Sienna hide in the cave, the drone hovers outside, trapping them where they are. Langdon and Sienna wait to see if the drone will move on or if it has spotted them.

Brown continues to use wording to make the reader think that the SRS men really intend to kill Langdon. For instance when Brüder

realizes that Sienna and Langdon are in the Boboli gardens, Brüder thinks to himself that the walls around the garden make a "natural killbox" (139). This way of thinking about the area indicates that Brüder seems to be considering the validity of killing Langdon in the enclosed area. When Langdon first sees Brüder he describes him in this way: "Their muscular lead man had vacant eyes that reminded Langdon of the plague mask in his visions. I am death" (152). Thus far, Brüder has been portrayed as a very cold, forceful character.



In this section there is a mention of Langdon glancing down at his watch only to remember he no longer had it. This watch, a collector's item because it is an antique Mickey Mouse watch, seems to symbolize part of Langdon's core identity, as he does not seem to feel himself without it.

Discussion Question 1

Why is it significant the Vayentha continues to try to catch Langdon even though she has been disavowed? What does this say about her?

Discussion Question 2

Do you think Langdon and Sienna's decision to cut across the Boboli Gardens to get into Old Florence was a good decision? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss Langdon's knowledge of The Divine Comedy. How does his knowledge prove to be helpful to him and Sienna?

Vocabulary

aesthetic, parlance, eliding, aphorism, lenient, seminal, tangible, leverage, foliage, rusticated, apertures, escarpment, phalanx, marauding, portentously, amorphous, ominously, pilfered



Chapters 30-38

Summary

In Chapter 30, Langdon and Sienna heard one soldier tell the others that he would be searching the caves. That soldier, Brüder, talked on the phone as he wandered through the caves. Sienna learned from the man's conversation that it was through her computer, when Langdon checked his email, that she and Langdon had been located. When the soldier finally moved away, Sienna criticized Langdon for having used her computer to check her email. After she came to terms with the fact the men knew her identity, Sienna told Langdon they would leave the palace through the wooden door. She insisted she could be very persuasive when she wanted to be.

When the man in the office opened the door for them, Sienna tricked him by holding out a piece of paper. When he reached out to take it she used Chinese pressure points on him to immobilize him. He woke to the sounds of Sienna and Langdon running down the hallway. He had been dragged into his office and bound with his own shoelaces.

In Chapter 31, the noise of a soldier's radio woke Sinskey. She had been dreaming about her meeting with the green-eyed man. In the particular part of the discussion she had dreamed about, the green-eyed man had accused the WHO of being in denial of the problem of over population. He pointed out that all of the issues the WHO had indicated were having the greatest impact on global health were all caused by overpopulation. He had asked her to work with him to find an answer to the problem. Instead she had called him crazy and had threatened to report him as a terrorist. Sinskey had quickly snapped a picture of him with her phone and told him he would be put on watch lists as a bioterrorist.

In Chapter 32, Langdon and Sienna made their way down the Vasari Corridor away from the Pitti Palace and the soldiers pursuing them. Meanwhile, Vayentha waited on the pedestrian bridge with no idea that Langdon and Sienna had safely passed above her.

In Chapter 33, despite his feeling he needed to ignore the strange video that Zobrist had produced, Knowlton went back to reviewing it. He researched the name of a mathematician mentioned in the rant and learned that mathematician was obsessed with overpopulation and its affect on the earth.

In Chapter 34, the Vasari Corridor led directly into the Palazzo Vecchio. Sienna's acting skills helped get them past some government employees having their first coffee of the day. Langdon pretended to have to go to the bathroom to get them past a janitor in the tourist area of the building even though the area was not yet open.

In Chapter 35, once inside the Hall of the Five Hundred, Langdon quickly found the mural for which they were looking, Vasari's Battle of Marciano. As Langdon looked at



the mural he wondered why he had been told “The truth can be glimpsed only through the eyes of death” (181). He looked for any unusual dead eyes on the canvas that might give a hint as to what he was looking for.

Brüder was angry when he learned that Langdon and Sienna had apparently slipped out of what he had believed was a flawless containment area. He made a call to the person in charge telling that person he had several serious problems.

In Chapter 36, as Sienna looked at the Vasari mural she thought of the childhood rhyme Ring Around the Rosie and its connection to the Black Plague. Those infected would develop rose-colored pustules on their skin and would often pack their pockets with flowers to cover up the scent of their decaying bodies. Sienna’s thoughts were interrupted by Langdon suddenly saying For the Love of God, another piece of artwork on display at the museum. He looked through the glass door at the entryway to that display area, which was still closed. Langdon explained that For the Love of God was a skull, a piece of modern art. As Langdon peered through the glass door separating the Hall of Five Hundred from the place where the skull was displayed, he was interrupted by a female employee who told him the area was not open. When she saw who he was, she apologized and welcomed him back. She even called him by name. Langdon froze because he did not recognize her at all.

In Chapter 37, Sienna played along when the woman asked if Il Duomino, a nickname for Ignazio Busoni,

had let them inside. Sienna said he had but had a meeting to attend. She introduced herself, making the woman tell her name, which turned out to be Marta Alvarez. Marta suggested that Langdon was perhaps back to show his sister what he and Ignazio had looked at for so long the night before. Langdon wondered what it was that he had been there last night looking at. Langdon requested Marta tell Sienna about the time they were going to see. She began her description of the death mask. It was at that point that Langdon realized it was Dante’s death mask they were going to see.

In Chapter 38, the provost received a call from Knowlton. Knowlton tried to tell the provost about the unusual content of the film that their client wanted them to circulate, but the provost stopped him, telling him if it did not mention their company personally, they had no business editing it in any way.

Meanwhile, Vayentha had just about given up on being able to find Langdon when she heard the whine of the drone. She believed its appearance could mean only that Langdon was still on the loose. Sinskey was also confused she heard the drone again. She was afraid because she felt she was running out of time.

At the time of her first meeting with the man, she had looked at the cell phone photo of the man and had recognized him. He was a genius, but could also be dangerous. When Sinskey had arrived at the airport after her meeting with the man she was given a note from a man who fit the green-eyed man’s description. It was a quote from Dante. “The



darkest places in hell are reserved for those who maintain their neutrality in times of moral crisis" (193).

Analysis

The green-eyed man raises an important issue — the issue of overpopulation of the earth — with Sinskey and then accuses her of being in denial when she does not respond to his arguments in the way he had hoped. His approach to the problem appears to be one that many believe is unethical. Although he says nothing about creating a disease to wipe out the population this is what is on the reader's mind as he considers the idea that in order to save the earth, nearly half of the population should be destroyed. Logically, it makes perfect sense, emotionally and morally it is, as Sinskey tells him, a crime. Note that even Sinskey realizes what bad shape the world is in. Although she wishes she could have conceived a child, she also had considered any child she might have had would have faced a world with a questionable future.

Although Sinskey appears to be appalled that the man has contacted her at all, he seems to honestly desire her input on the problem. "I called you here specifically because I was hoping that you — a sage voice at the World Health Organization — might be willing to work with me and explore a possible solution" (166) the man says to Sinskey. She seems to think that he is attempting to abuse her power to come up with an extermination scheme and does not seem to consider that she wants his input on a real solution. It is no wonder that the man felt Sinskey was a threat to him. After she took his picture, she told him "you will be on the watch lists at the WHO, the CDC, and the ECDC as a potential bioterrorist. We will have people on you day and night. If you try to purchase materials, we will know about it. If you build a lab, we will know about it. There is nowhere you can hide" (167). Sinskey makes these threats before she even knows for sure who the man is. When she recognizes him from his picture, the reader knows that she has the authority to carry through with these threats.

Even as Sienna and Langdon are pursued through Florence, Langdon's mind focuses not only on the mystery at hand but also on this city where Dante lived. As they cross into the old city using the Vasari Corridor, Langdon thinks of a spot as they pass over that was mentioned in *The Divine Comedy*. That quote "O Buondelmonte, through another's counsel, you fled your wedding pledge, and brought such evil!" (p. 169-170) The decision of that man, Buondelmonte, to break his arranged marriage brought about the political rift in Florence that eventually led to Dante's exile from that city. The green-eyed man also borrows an idea from Dante's *Inferno* that those who remain neutral are not saved from hell by their lack of indecision.

An important object introduced in this section of the novel is Dante's death mask. Langdon and Sienna learn that it is perhaps this mask that refers to the fact the things they need to know can only be seen through the eyes of the dead. In an eerie twist, Langdon learns that he has already seen this mask once, the same night that he appeared at the emergency room.



Personal responsibility is an idea that is introduced in this section of the novel. Like the directors of most companies, the provost simply offered services with the assumption that those services would be implemented within the framework of the law. He felt he was not responsible for any crime committed when a person was under his protection. He rationalized “After all, Volvo had no responsibility to ensure that soccer moms didn’t speed through school zones, any more than Dell would be held responsible if someone used one of their computers to hack into a bank account” (189).

Knowlton also struggles with the idea of personal responsibility as he views the video that Zobrist sent them to release to the media. He has a feeling that they need to reconsider their promise to air it, especially based on its disturbing content. Against his better judgment, he asked the provost to view the video. As he had expected, the provost refused to preview the video, telling Knowlton that as long as the content of the video did not refer to their company or their services, he was to distribute it as he had been asked to do.

Discussion Question 1

Do you think Knowlton made the right decision when he tried to talk to the provost about the video? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

If Sinskey had been more diplomatic with the green-eyed man when they had their original meeting do you think they might have been able to work together? Did Sinskey make the right decision in threatening him? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

How does the author use language not only to build the plot but also to build the suspense as Langdon and Sienna try to solve the mystery they face?

Vocabulary

ensconced, parabolic, delineating, sage, quintessential, rancid, ominously, mutilated, trepidation, soliloquy, subsistence, phalluses, jovial, demure, portly, behest, reverent, austere, plethora, juxtaposition, implemented, blatant



Chapters 39-45

Summary

In Chapter 39, Marta, the museum employee, told Sienna and Langdon that the mask was kept at the Palazzo Vecchio. Keeping it there made it seem as though Dante had finally been allowed to come home. Marta continued to be surprised by the things that Langdon had forgotten about their discussion the night before. Langdon had forgotten that he had told Marta that he was claustrophobic. He had also forgotten that there was an original copy of *The Divine Comedy* on display in the museum. Marta was also befuddled by Langdon's and Sienna's desire to see only the mask and none of the other treasures in the museum.

When they finally stepped in front of the display case in which the mask was kept, Sienna reacted in horror, which Marta had expected. She thought Langdon was only being dramatic when he, too, looked surprised. When Marta stepped in, she saw that there was no mask there. The display case was empty.

In Chapter 40, the two security guards went into action by starting a review of the video surveillance footage and calling the police. Meanwhile, Vayentha heard on a police radio the call to the museum to take a report of theft. The location of the museum had been near where she had botched her job involving Langdon so badly. When she heard the name Dante, she believed the call had to relate to Langdon in some way.

In Chapter 41, Langdon and Sienna watched the video playback with Marta and the guards. After closing that evening, Langdon saw proof that he had been there. He was wearing his own clothes, and he could even see his Mickey Mouse watch on his wrist. Ignazio Busoni, the director of the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, was with him. As they watch the video, Langdon noticed a point where he had stepped over the stanchion to get a closer look at the mask. Marta had motioned him back. She explained to him in the control room that the owner of the mask was very particular with it and would not even allow the employees of the museum to remove it from the case if he was not there.

Sienna pushed to know who it was who owned the mask. Marta told her that it was Bertrand Zobrist, a Swiss billionaire, who owned it. Sienna appeared shaken when she heard the name and grabbed Langdon's arm. She described Zobrist's ideas about the need to cull the population and his belief that the Black Death was the best thing that had ever happened to Europe. Sienna's comment brought the death mask to Langdon's mind along with the ideas that other people had suggested that the Black Death had actually been responsible for bringing about the Renaissance in Europe. He wondered if Zobrist was responsible for creating the Faraday pointed that projected the Map of Hell.

His thoughts returned to the screen where Marta disappeared from the video picture. In the control room, she explained she had gone to the restroom. While she was gone, the video showed Langdon and Ignazio removed the mask from its case. A guard pointed a



gun at Langdon while Marta chastised him. Langdon tried to claim he had only taken the mask out for a moment but the video continued, showing Langdon putting the mask in a Ziploc bag he pulled from his pocket. Langdon noticed that before they had taken the mask, the two men had been absorbed as they looked at something on the back of it. Langdon changed his story and suggested he and Ignazio had permission to take the mask. Sienna spoke up and told Langdon that was impossible because Zobrist had killed himself six days ago.

In Chapter 42, Vayentha made her way to the Palazzo Vecchio and the Hall of the Five Hundred. A guard told Vayentha the museum would be late opening that day but did not say why. She looked out a window, trying to appear inconspicuous and noticed the drone headed for the museum. She knew that if the drone was headed toward the museum it meant that Brüder knew about the theft at the museum.

Meanwhile, Knowlton regretted having tried to bring the content of the video to the provost's attention. Although he wondered at first if the media would even release the video because it was so strange, he knew that they would because of its strangeness. He knew the video would go viral quickly.

In Chapter 43, Marta called Ignazio's office intending to chastise him. When his secretary, Eugenia, answered she sobbed that Ignazio had died of a heart attack the night before. Marta told Eugenia what was happening at the museum. When Eugenia learned that Marta was with Langdon, she told Marta she needed to talk to him.

When Marta entered the room, Langdon could hear the buzz of the drone again. He was surprised when Marta gave him the cell phone. Eugenia played a message that Ignazio had left for Langdon, asking that Eugenia play the message for Langdon. Part of the message included: "Robert, listen carefully. What you seek is safely hidden. The gates are open to you, but you must hurry. Paradise Twenty-five" (220). Langdon assumed the strange message had something to do with the mask and the location where it was safely hidden. At this point, Sienna stepped in and told Marta that they had not been truthful with her. Her first admission was that she was not Langdon's sister.

In Chapter 44, Sienna explained to Marta that Langdon was suffering amnesia because of a gunshot to the head. Langdon went on to tell Marta that he had no idea why he had taken the mask the night before but that he would return it if Marta would let him go so that he could locate it. Meanwhile, Marta was looking out the window where she saw a pair of black vans and line of police cars headed toward the museum. She was scared when she saw soldiers jump from the vans and saw the drone hovering outside the window as if looking in at her. She noticed a cylinder on the front of the drone and yelled out, believing the helicopter was going to shoot at them. While the others were distracted, Sienna and Langdon ran. Langdon took off toward a room filled with maps. He told Sienna he was taking her through Armenia. Meanwhile, the police sealed the building trapping Vayentha, Langdon and Sienna inside.

In Chapter 45, Langdon told Sienna they needed to find the map of Armenia. He remembered something about the map from a former tour he had taken of secret



passages in this museum. When they found that particular map, Langdon swung the frame on which it was hanging toward him and the two were able to disappear into a hidden space behind it. Langdon headed for a stairway even though it was marked that it was not an exit. Sienna warned him, but he was only getting the stanchions as a way to brace closed the door into the secret passageway.

When Brüder and his men discovered the door to the secret passageway and opened it, they found themselves in a hallway leading to an outdoor terrace. There appears to be no exit. In his frustration, Brüder bellowed in rage.

Meanwhile, Sienna and Langdon had headed up the staircase, even though Sienna suggested to him that they wanted to go down, not up. He reminded her of Satan's navel in *The Divine Comedy* where Dante and his guide had reached a place where gravity shifted. He told Sienna there was a secret staircase on the opposite side of the building they could use to escape. He showed her the way through a cupboard that opened into a black void.

Analysis

The green-eyed man is given a name in this section of the book. It turns out that Bertrand Zobrist is the man who killed himself by jumping off the Badia tower, he is also the man who asked Sinskey about helping him come up with a way to control the population, and the man who gave the provost's company the disturbing video in which he appeared as a plague doctor to upload to the media.

Not surprisingly, Sienna and Langdon learn in this section that Zobrist is the man who personally owns Dante's death mask. From all of the information he has gotten about Zobrist so far, Langdon reasons that Zobrist is also the man who altered the Map of Hell and delivered it in the biohazard case. It turns out the Zobrist is a Swiss billionaire who is well known in the field of biomedics. When Zobrist is mentioned, the author begins to build in the reader's mind that Zobrist wanted to create some sort of disease that would thin the population when Sienna points out that Zobrist was of the idea that doctors needed to create disease in order to limit the growth of the population. Zobrist also warned modern young people if they were to have children, their children would more than likely see the end of the world.

Dante and his work continue to be central to the clues being given to Langdon about the item that Zobrist has hidden. The clue that the man, whom Langdon now believes is named Bertrand Zobrist, gave in the picture projected by the Faraday pointer, pointed Langdon and Sienna to Dante's death mask. "The truth can be glimpsed only through the eyes of death" (180) refer to this mask though Langdon does not yet know what he is intended to learn from the mask since it is missing.

Langdon thought he had been disoriented before but he really feels as if he is outside his body when he sees himself, Marta and Ignazio looking at the Dante mask, but has no memory of their visit. Marta believes Langdon is acting oddly, especially when she



learns that the mask is missing. When they see Langdon and Ignazio put the mask in a bag and hide it in Langdon's coat, neither Marta nor Langdon can believe what they are seeing.

Just like Zobrist gave his clues masked in references to Dante so does Ignazio in his directions to Langdon about how to go about finding Dante's death mask. The clue includes a reference to a specific canto in Dante's poem in which Langdon can find the mask. Notice that Langdon also uses a reference to Dante when he explains to Sienna why they are going up a set of stairs when they want to go down. He compares what they are doing to Satan's navel, a place where gravity reversed and one had to go up in order to get down.

Notice in this section that the author combines both Italian and English phrases. For instance, when Marta sees how Langdon reacts to Dante's death mask even though he has seen it before she thinks to herself "che esagerato" (201) indicating that she believes Langdon is exaggerating his reaction. When she sees the mask is gone, she thinks to herself "Oh mio Dio!" (201). Both of these phrases can be translated based on context clues. Later in the novel the reader will notice that the author uses these foreign phrases for a different purpose.

One of the things to notice in this section is the unusual reaction that Sienna has when she hears the name of the man who owns the Dante mask. "Who is he?' Sienna demanded, her casual tone laced with urgency" (209). It appears that Sienna is trying to remain calm, but she cannot help but allow the fact she needed to know the man's identity from leaking out. When she did hear the name of the man who owned the mask "Sienna grabbed Langdon's arm and squeezed it hard, looking as if she'd seen a ghost" (209).

This reaction is unusual since Sienna claims not to know the man.

Brüder is again characterized in a negative light as the bellow that he lets out when he learns that Sienna and Langdon have escaped the guards at the museum is described as being like that of a wild animal. When he learns the news, Brüder is in a small study from which the people in the Hall of the Five Hundred can hear what is happening, but they cannot see who is in the room. It was once the secret study used by a duchess. When the people in the Hall of the Five Hundred hear Brüder's bellow they wonder if the study "was now being used to cage a wild animal" (230).

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the video footage that Langdon sees of himself stealing Dante's death mask. Does it make sense that he is as confused as Marta is when he sees himself take the mask?



Discussion Question 2

Why is it significant that the green-eyed man is finally given a name in this section of the novel? Why do you think Sienna reacts as she does when she hears his name?

Discussion Question 3

Why is Brüder described in ways that make him seem cold, strict and unapproachable? How does his personality emphasize the idea that Langdon is in serious danger?

Vocabulary

morbidly, debilitating, sufficed, maniacal, amiably, perplexed, stanchions, visage, debacle, fiasco, basilica, philanthropic, spate, provocative, proponent, incredulous, recoiled, lugubrious, queue, ominously, resonated, nonplussed, clandestine, traverse, placard, covertly, quarry



Chapters 46-53

Summary

In Chapter 46, Langdon and Sienna were in the attic of the Hall of the Five Hundred. The trusses were too far apart for them to step from one to another so they had to walk on unsteady boards from one truss to the next until they could reach a viewing platform in the middle of the attic. As they moved across the attic, they discussed the message Ignazio had left for Langdon and the next steps they needed to take. They had almost made it to the platform when Langdon made a misstep and knocked a board down, stranding Sienna.

Below them, Vayentha heard the board hit the mural above her. Another tourist joked about rats in the attic. Vayentha could also hear Brüder's voice asking where Langdon and Sienna had gone. Hoping to get to them before Brüder did, Vayentha slipped into the museum through the unlocked door.

In Chapter 47, a man was watching the confusion outside the museum. He had a rash of itchy pustules that had developed overnight. When he scratched them, they began bleeding. He noticed the black vans including the one with the silver-haired woman inside. He noticed the soldier in the van appeared to be giving the woman an injection. Meanwhile, after the soldier had given Sinskey her injection, she saw the man was the rash looking at her. She thought she recognized him.

In Chapter 48, Sienna decided she could walk along the edge of the mural frame at the attic edge in order to get to the next strut. She had just about reached the strut on which Langdon was standing when Langdon heard a door bang and foot steps head their direction. He directed Sienna to keep going along the wall while he distracted the person so she could get away.

As Langdon stood below the viewing platform, he was blinded by a light from the person who had entered the attic. That person then began moving the flashlight around, apparently looking for someone else. Langdon could tell from the person's silhouette that it was a woman. He imagined it was the woman with the spiked hair, coming back to kill him off. She asked Langdon where his friend was. Langdon hoped Sienna was making her way toward the exit door but Langdon saw Sienna behind Vayentha. As Langdon watched Sienna sneak up behind the woman, the woman was telling him how she had been dismissed from her mission, leaving her and Langdon on the same team.

Vayentha spoke to Sienna, telling her that she did not want to be captured by Brüder and his team as they would not be lenient. Langdon argued against Vayentha and Vayentha knew he was doing so to convince Sienna to run. She decided to stop talking and pull out her handgun. When Sienna saw the gun she attacked Vayentha, pushing her hard enough she fell over the railing. Vayentha was caught for a second by the Apotheosis mural but when it ripped she fell to the floor below. Sienna mouthed to



Langdon she had not meant to kill the woman. Langdon guided her away from the railing of the platform as he told her that they needed to keep moving.

In Chapter 49, Brüder saw the woman laying on the floor of the Hall of Five Hundred and saw the tear in the canvas. He demanded to Marta to tell him how they could get up to the area from which the woman fell. Meanwhile, Langdon and Sienna made their way out of the attic and down the staircase to the exit. Sienna surprised Langdon by pulling the wig from her head. She put it on Langdon as a disguise since the police were looking for a blonde woman and dark-haired man, not a bald woman and man with long blond hair.

Despite their disguises, the man with the skin rash spotted them and continued to follow them. He was only able to keep up with them for a few blocks before he was short of breath and had to stop. He felt like he had been hit in the chest.

In Chapter 50, as they walked, Sienna told Langdon more of what she knew about Zobrist from an essay she had read on line. He was concerned with the over population of the earth and believed if there was not some catastrophic event, humans would possibly not survive another century. Although his ideas were supported by scientific data, authorities from health organizations, as well as politicians and clergy had spoken out against Zobrist and his claims. He had actually suggested that diseases should be introduced to the community that medicine was unable to cure. Sienna indicated it was sad that he had killed himself because his ideas were probably right. When Langdon commented that it was unthinkable that the population should be killed off, as Zobrist suggested, Sienna told him he, like much of the rest of the world, was in denial. When she said she was a fan of the truth, that the population would fail if something was not done to curb the overcrowding, Langdon tried to understand her point of view.

As they continued to walk, Sienna pointed out to Langdon the place she was pretty sure was the place from which Zobrist had jumped. She noted he had wished that he could undo some of the research he had earlier completed dealing with lengthening life spans. She mentions an article that Zobrist had written titled "Who Needs Agathusia?". Agathusia is a term for benevolent suicide. She said the title was a hit at Sinskey because she did not support population control yet had been the leader of the WHO for so long. Read as a statement instead of a question, his indication was that Sinskey needed to kill herself so there could be fresh blood in the organization.

When Langdon suggested that if Zobrist had planted the beginnings of a plague somewhere on the planet it seemed like everyone would be able to work together in order to see that it was located and negated. Sienna argued that Zobrist had enough fans that the men in the black vans could be people who were fighting in favor of the plague being released. Langdon still could not wrap his head around the idea that anyone would fight in favor of a plague begin released. Sienna posed to him a hypothetical question that Zobrist had posed in his essay. "Would you kill half the population today in order to save our species from extinction?"



(261). When he refused to answer the question, pointing out instead that they had reached their location, she accused him of being in denial.

In Chapter 51, Langdon hoped he and Sienna would be able to look at a copy of Dante's *The Divine Comedy* in the gift shop of a museum dedicated to that writer. Because it was Monday, the museum was closed. Langdon had another option, a church where many Dante devotees gathered. Meanwhile, the man with the rash stopped to catch his breath. The rash on his face was getting worse.

Back in the museum, Marta told Brüder that Langdon was claiming to have amnesia. Brüder called his boss to pass along information. On *The Mendacium*, the provost thought about the work he had done for Zobrist including the way that Sinskey had somehow discovered Zobrist's location and had begun to terrorize him during the last week of Zobrist's contract with the provost. After Zobrist's death, Sinskey had gotten the item from the safe deposit box leaving the provost in a battle to get that item back. He thought about the call he had gotten from Knowlton requesting that he look at the video that Zobrist had made. The provost poured himself another glass of scotch and settled in to make a decision.

In Chapter 52, Langdon believed that he and Sienna could find someone who had a copy of *The Divine Comedy* at the Church of Dante. Before they entered the tiny chapel, Langdon and Sienna returned to their regular appearances. Although no one had a copy of the book, Langdon convinced a woman with a smart phone to allow him to access the text of the book for a short time using her phone. Langdon picked up on the reference to Dante's baptismal font in Canto 25 of the poem and realized it had to be that place to which Ignazio was trying to direct him.

In Chapter 53, Langdon and Sienna made their way to the Baptistry of San Giovanni. After his exile, Dante had always hoped to return to this spot as an exulted poet. In reality, he never returned; but, Langdon hoped that his death mask had made it safely there in Dante's stead.

Analysis

In keeping with the use of Dante as a central figure in the hide and seek game featured in this novel, the canto of Dante's *Paradise* indicated by Ignazio in his message to Langdon states: "By then with other voice, with other fleece, / I shall return as poet and put on, / at my baptismal font, the laurel crown" (273). From this passage, Langdon interprets that Ignazio hid the death mask at the spot where Dante was baptized. It was the same place that poet had hoped to be able to return to in his city when his exile was over and he was thought of as a victor or a pride of his city instead of a disgrace. As it turned out, Langdon and Sienna were close to the Baptistry of San Giovanni, the place where Dante had been baptized.

In several places, Dante's death mask is used as a substitute for Dante. For instance, Marta explains to Sienna that the death mask is kept at the Palazzo Vecchio because



they feel it symbolizes that Dante has been allowed to return to his loved city of Florence. In the same way, Langdon believes that the return of Dante's death mask to the place where he was baptized, is somehow a consolation prize since Dante was not able to return there while he was still alive as a victor.

Note also that while the story of Sienna and Langdon is fictional, the places they visit in Florence and the things they see are very real. The Hall of Five Hundred is located in the Palazzo Vecchio and is lined with the murals that Sienna and Langdon see. Dante's real death mask is even displayed in this building. Also a real place is the Baptistery of San Giovanni. It is historically the place where Dante was baptized.

On a much darker note, Sienna talks to Langdon about the ideas she read on the Internet that Zobrist supported. His concern about the world was that it was overpopulated. If something were not done, Zobrist believed it was possible the human race would not survive another century. As they talk Sienna poses to Langdon a paradox: "Would you kill half the population today in order to save our species from extinction?"

(261). It is a question that is difficult to answer or even think about. Even though logic says that doing nothing is not an answer; killing, even if it leads to the survival of the species, is not morally justified or acceptable. Sienna tries to help Langdon, and the reader, understand Zobrist's feelings of isolation when she explains the he had scientific facts to back up the claims that he made, yet no one, from the medical fields or elsewhere, was willing to even try to have a conversation about the facts of the matter. They instead ostracized him and his work.

Denial as an escape mechanism is another topic related to overpopulation that Sienna and Langdon discuss. "The human mind has a primitive ego defense mechanism that negates all realities that produce too much stress for the brain to handle. It's called denial," (255) she tells Langdon. Sienna went on to explain that Zobrist had attacked the officials with the WHO by accusing them of being in denial, an accusation that offended them. Sienna also points out that while there were many people who were not in favor of Zobrist and his ideas about the population, there were many other people who saw the sense in what he said and were willing to die for the cause of maintaining the human population. She suggested the men in the black vans might even be soldiers on Zobrist's side trying to keep Langdon from getting the virus and destroying so that Zobrist's wishes could be carried through.

Langdon makes a point in which the idea of denial and Dante are connected. When Sienna is talking about denial Langdon points out that according to mythology, "a hero in denial is the ultimate manifestation of hubris and pride" (255). In this instance pride was demonstrated by the hero's belief that nothing bad could happen to him. Langdon continues that "Dante clearly agreed, denouncing pride as the worst of the seven deadly sins ... and punished the prideful in the deepest ring of the inferno" (255). In this example it is the prideful, those who were in denial that they were just as likely to be undone by the world as anyone else, whom Dante believes should be placed in the deepest parts of hell.



Another yet unidentified character is introduced in this section. Remember in Chapter 36 when the nursery rhyme Ring Around the Rosie suddenly flashed through Sienna's mind. She had thought about how the childhood song was actually a reminder of how to identify someone who was suffering with the plague. One of the main signs that a person was infected was a rash of pustules with red rings around them. The man who follows Sienna and Robert through the streets definitely does not appear to be healthy. In fact the itchy pustules on his skin lead the reader to wonder if he is infected with some sort of plague and has been sent, perhaps by Zobrist, to spread the disease. After all, Sienna had just finished explaining to Langdon how some supporters of Zobrist would even be willing to sacrifice themselves in order to help their cause. Not only does the man have these itchy red pustules, he is also having trouble breathing to the point he struggles to keep up with Sienna and Langdon.

Discussion Question 1

Consider the question that Sienna poses to Langdon. Would you consider killing off half the population if it meant the survival of the human species? Justify your answer.

Discussion Question 2

Discuss ideas that have been introduced in an attempt to slow population growth, such as the one child rule in China. Have any of these ideas been successful in population control?

Discussion Question 3

Consider the man with the pustules who follows Sienna and Langdon. Who is he? What do you think is wrong with him?

Vocabulary

rudimentary, dexterity, cryptic, allusion, emanated, treacherous, terminated, lenient, brandishing, flailed, melancholy, recoiled, ruse, catastrophic, precipitously, exacerbating, derided, umbrage, anathema, jettison, austere, paradoxical, longevity, benevolent, palatable, averted, pariah, hypothetical, transpired, diverged, facilitator, pivotal, lore, inconspicuous, antithesis, kitschy, intervene, solicitation, proliferation, oblique, edifice, flamboyant, aesthetic



Chapters 54-60

Summary

In Chapter 54, Langdon noticed by the Gates of Paradise leading to the Baptistry of San Giovanni there was a plaque dedicating the gates to God because the city of Florence had survived the Black Plague. Sienna noticed that the gate to a wrought iron fence surrounding the Gates of Paradise was unlocked. As Langdon was wondering how he and Sienna would sneak in without anyone noticing, a woman, who turned out to be Sienna, began screaming that a man was going to jump from a bell tower. While the tourists were distracted, she and Langdon slipped through the gates. The man watched as they slipped inside. His rash was getting worse and his chest throbbed.

In Chapter 55, Langdon explained to Sienna that the original baptismal font had been covered over but led her to the new font. He removed the cover of this font and was surprised to see Dante's face staring up at him.

In Chapter 56, on the back of the mask, Langdon and Sienna at first saw nothing of interest. Langdon carefully removed the mask from the Ziploc bag and laid it face down on towels on an altar type table. Sienna noticed the back of the mask looked whiter than the front. Langdon explained it was because the front had aged more from exposure to light. Looking at the mask in the light, they noticed a faint line of letters. Langdon believed Zobrist had perhaps written the letters there since no one else seemed aware of them and Zobrist was the only one with access to the mask. Sienna and Langdon were both frustrated because the text on the back of the mask was simply a line consisting of seven letter P's. Langdon told Sienna those letters were a message that anyone who had read Dante should understand. Meanwhile, the man with the rash dabbed at the blood coming from his sores. The Baptistry of San Giovanni was still closed to tourists but he bribed the guard to let him in early.

In Chapter 57, Langdon's thoughts returned to the lecture he had given about the symbols in Dante's poem. In the poem in the section about purgatory, an angel wrote the letter P seven times on the foreheads of the people at the foot of the mountain. As they atoned for each of the seven deadly sins, represented by the P's, these letters were wiped from their forehead. Langdon guessed the letters were a sign that they should wipe those letters off the back of the mask. He explained to Sienna he now believed gesso might have been used to cover up whatever was originally on the back of the mask. When Langdon had finished dissolving and wiping off the gesso, there was a word displayed there.

In Chapter 58, neither Sienna nor Langdon understood why the word "possessed" had been written on the mask. Sienna took the mask from him and noticed it appeared there were other words on either side of the word "possessed." Although Langdon criticized her technique she cleaned the entire inside of the mask and uncovered words written in a circular pattern that covered the back of the mask. There were nine lines of circling



text. While the beginning of the verse was quoted from Dante, Langdon said the rest was written by someone else in Dante's style. It gave hints that Langdon and Sienna believed pointed them to Venice.

The guard let the man with the rash inside the baptistry. He did not see Langdon and Sienna immediately because they had quickly crouched behind the altar. Langdon heard one set of footsteps moving toward the altar. The man called Langdon by his first name and ordered Langdon to "Get the hell out here and explain yourself" (307).

In Chapter 59, although Langdon sensed the man's voice and eyes were familiar, he could not bring to mind who the man might be. When Langdon demanded to know the man's name, the man claimed he was Jonathan Ferris of the WHO. He said he had been the one who had picked Langdon up and had flown with him to Italy. Sienna explained to Ferris that Langdon had amnesia and that she was helping him. Jonathan explained to Langdon they had been afraid that he had switched sides because he had not called in with any information. Sienna described the hallucinations Langdon had been having about the silver-haired woman. Ferris identified the woman as Sinskey, the director of the WHO, the woman who had involved Langdon in the crisis.

When Sienna mentioned to Ferris that Sinskey appeared to be in trouble, Ferris said nothing. He did tell Sienna the rash on his face was caused by using a soy-based soap. When Sienna asked him if he was familiar with Zobrist, the man froze. She began to tell the man about the mask but Langdon stopped her. He was suspicious of the strange man and asked how he had found them. He said he had been tailing them trying to figure out what they were doing. When they had gone into the baptistry he decided the time had come to confront them. He told them they had to get out of Florence and on their way to Venice as the clues on the mask suggested. When Langdon asked who the men in black were, Ferris said only that it was a long story that he would explain on the way.

Langdon pulled Sienna aside and asked her if she trusted the man. She said that she did and even discouraged the idea that the man's rash was more than just a rash. When they returned to Ferris, he had just finished a phone call. He claimed he had called his driver to pick them up. He exclaimed in surprise when he saw the death mask. Langdon told him it was a long story that he would explain later.

In Chapter 60, Langdon called his publisher for permission to use his corporate NetJets account. The publisher, Jonas Faulkman, arranged a flight for Langdon from Florence to Geneva. As the woman entered the flight details, a red alert came up on Langdon. The operator called the authorities. When he heard about Langdon's flight plans, Brüder arranged for his soldiers to cut Langdon off at the airport. Meanwhile, Sienna and Langdon were headed to the train station. They had set up the flight as a distraction.



Analysis

Zobrist provides another clever clue based on the writings of Dante on the back of Dante's death mask. Again, Langdon's knowledge of *The Divine Comedy* comes in handy as he connects the seven letter P's with the acts of the angels washing these letters off the foreheads of the penitents when they atone for each of the seven sins. When Langdon washes off the seven P's he reveals more text underneath. In keeping with Dante's tradition of using nine as a symbolic number, the lines on the back of the mask are written in a series of nine revolutions. Significant also is the fact that the writer ends his poem with the word "stars" the same word with which Dante ended all three portions of *The Divine Comedy*. Words and phrases in the verses that catch Langdon and Sienna's attention include the reference to Venice. Because this country is included in the verse they believe that is where they should go to look for the virus. Other phrases of interest include on page 303 include a reference to "bloodred waters," "the chthonic monster," "the sunken palace," and "the treacherous doge."

Meanwhile, Langdon and Sienna are joined by the man who appears to be suffering some sort of plague. He claims to be the man who got Langdon involved in the Zobrist issue to begin with by picking him up at Harvard and bringing him to Florence. Langdon notices the man's eyes and voice seem familiar but he cannot place him. He claims to be Jonathan Ferris, a man from the WHO. He says to Langdon, "We thought you had switched sides ... that maybe they had paid you off ... or threatened you ... We just didn't know!"

(309). Although Sienna has been very distrustful of other people the whole time she has been with Langdon, she quickly embraces Ferris' offer to join them in their search for the mask. Sienna has shown some strange behavior before and this quickness to accept Ferris and share with him information they have collected is unusual. The reader has to wonder if perhaps Ferris and Sienna know one another.

Langdon is continued to be reminded of the fact they may be dealing with a plague when he reads the dedication plaque on the Gates of Paradise. It appears these gates were designed and built as a thank offering to God when the city of Florence survived the Black Plague.

The author builds the idea that Zobrist is evil when he describes how Ferris reacted to the mention of Zobrist's name. "The man froze, looking as if he'd just come face-to-face with the three-headed devil" (310). Earlier in this section Langdon had thought to himself about the significance of the three-headed devil that was pictured on one of the murals on the ceiling of the baptistry. "On his head he had three faces ... his three chins gushing a bloody froth ... his three mouths used as grinders ... gnashing sinners three at once. That Satan's evil was threefold, Langdon knew, was fraught with symbolic meaning because it placed him in perfect balance with the threefold glory of the Holy Trinity" (287). Brown's description of the look on Ferris' face brings to mind this image that Dante used as a basis for his description of the devil in *The Divine Comedy*.



Notice that Brown again incorporates humor into the section of the novel as Langdon and Sienna clean the gesso off the back of the death mask. While Langdon has handled this priceless artifact carefully, Sienna is more interested in protecting the mask. Instead of dabbing a damp towel on the back of the mask to clean off the new layer of gesso, she “barely wrung it out before placing the soggy cloth in the center of the mask and swishing it around as if she were cleaning a soup bowl” (302-303). This description of the way that Sienna cleaned the back of the mask is a simile, comparing the way Sienna cleaned the artifact to the cleaning of a soup bowl. Another simile included in this section compares the way Langdon laid out the mask on the table being like “the head of an anesthetized patient on an operating table” (292). Another example of humor is when Brown has Langdon say the words of a baptism service as he washes the gesso off the inside of the death mask.

Discussion Question 1

Why do Sienna and Langdon decide that they should go to Venice? Do you think they are going to the right place? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

What is your opinion of Sienna’s quick decision to trust Ferris? Why do you think she disregards his physical symptoms so quickly?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the way that Sienna and Langdon go about discovering the lines on the back of Dante’s mask. How does Langdon’s knowledge of Dante help with this process?

Vocabulary

consensus, mundane, docent, ambiguously, ambience, despondent, levitation, plinth, craggy, concave, unsheathed, emphatic, florid, imminent, divulged, avarice, penances, atone, pious, resonated, emblazoned, obscure, verbatim, proclivity, collaborating, doge, stanchions, incredulous



Chapters 61-67

Summary

In Chapter 61, Sinskey tried to think of a good reason why Langdon would be going to Geneva. As she thought of all the strange things he was doing, she wondered on whose side he was actually working. She remembered when she had met him four nights prior. He had first noticed her amulet. She had referred to it by the wrong name, wanting to see if Langdon would correct her. He did not right away. She showed him the photo projected by the Faraday pointer and told him that she wanted him to help them with the symbolism incorporated in that photo. She was pleased how quickly he noticed the photo had been altered. In less than ten minutes, Langdon told her the letters on the painting spelled out the words *cerca trova*. He added there was no specific location for her to begin her search, but suggested she try Florence, Italy. She questioned his pause when she had told him the name of her amulet. When he told her the correct name for the piece she told him she had asked him as a way of testing his honesty. She warns him that he must be truthful if they are going to work together.

In Chapter 62, on the train to Venice, Ferris told Langdon it was probably better that he not waste too much energy on trying to figure out what had happened to him over the days his memory was missing. Langdon began to get angry. Sienna calmed him and told him it might trigger more hallucinations if he were to begin remembering things too quickly. Although he felt he had woken up into a nightmare, Langdon turned his attention from his missing memories to Dante's death mask. Meanwhile, on *The Mendacium* the provost went to Knowlton's cubicle. He told his employee that he wanted to see the video that Zobrist had given them to send to the media.

In Chapter 63, Langdon, Sienna and Ferris begin to try to translate the passage that Zobrist left for them on the back of the mask. They are told to "Seek the treacherous doge of Venice who severed the heads from horses ... and plucked up the bones of the blind" (330). They cannot immediately put a finger on a doge who fit this description but are able to identify "the gilded mouseion of holy wisdom" (332) as St. Mark's Basilica. They also decide that the "chthonic monster" to whom the message refers must be the plague. Langdon also pointed out similarities between Zobrist's lines and those of *The Divine Comedy*.

In Chapter 64, Knowlton was pleased when the provost asked to see the video because he felt he would be relieved of the responsibility for it. The provost was just as shocked by the video as Knowlton had been. In fact, he requested the video be stopped even before it was over. The provost indicated they needed to contact FS-2080. FS-2080 was the code for the client who had referred Zobrist to the provost and his business. Meanwhile, on the train, Ferris' phone began to ring. He said it was his sick mother but took the call outside the cabin. It was the provost.



In Chapter 65, after Ferris hung up the phone he thought to himself that the people he had thought were his friends were actually his enemies. He looked at his rash in the mirror and then unbuttoned his shirt to see the black area on his chest was getting bigger. He tried to calm himself, knowing he needed to continue to deceive Sienna and Langdon.

Back on The Mendacium the provost decided that they needed to show the video to Sinskey. He wanted that woman to personally view the video on board their ship so that there would be no chance that the content would get leaked through a hacker.

In Chapter 66, FS-2080 sat in the train compartment and thought about Zobrist. The narrative switches to the first person point of view and the present tense to describe the night that FS-2080 and Zobrist met. It had snowed the night that Zobrist is supposed to talk so few people show up. Zobrist invites them to a bar. After the group talks for hours it is finally just Zobrist and FS-2080 left. He invites FS-2080 back to his room. The two became lovers and FS-2080 became Zobrist's dedicated disciple. FS-2080 also remembers seeing Zobrist jump from the tower.

In Chapter 67, the men had stopped giving Sinskey the injections and she was already feeling clearer as their plane took off toward Venice. She remembered Brüder's strange look when he had given her the phone earlier that day. It was the provost telling her that it was his business that had been hiding Zobrist for the past year. He told her that he believed Zobrist had done something terrible and he wanted her to view. He said that she could trust him because he could tell her where Langdon was and why he was acting as he was. When she heard what he had to say, Sinskey believed she had no choice but to do as he asked. The man had told her that Langdon was traveling with a dangerous person, one of Zobrist's most trusted friends, and that they were going to Venice.

Sinskey remembered a conference that Zobrist had hosted at the campus at Harvard. She told Langdon the symbol H+ was one used by the Transhumanism movement, a group of people who believed humans should begin bioengineering themselves. They believed that humans were obligated to use the tools they were given to create a better species. Sinskey disagreed with their desire to make rapid changes in humans as it was uncertain what their genetic manipulations might do to other parts of the human body. Transhumanists wanted to create a superhuman, a process that Langdon compared to ethnic cleansing.

Although Zobrist had unusual ideas about humans, particularly about population control, Sinskey said the man had a following. There were disciples who considered him a martyr after he died. He warned Langdon that they needed to be careful in Florence and not let anyone know what it was they were looking for. Langdon mentioned that his friend Ignazio could let him see the painting in the Palazzo Vecchio. Sinskey then put the Faraday pointed in a biohazard tube and encoded it with Langdon's thumbprint. It was she who sewed the secret pocket into Langdon's coat to conceal the pointer.



Analysis

In this section the reader learns how Langdon actually came to be in Florence. It appears he did not come with Ferris but instead came with Sinskey. This is why he remembers her and perhaps it is his memories of the short time they were together working on the meaning of Zobrist's manipulation of the Map of Hell that sparked the hallucinations that he had. The reader also learns that it was because Langdon was with Sinskey when she gave him the Faraday pointer that it ended up in the biohazard tube. It was the only way that Sinskey had to protect the bone item and make sure no one but Langdon could get to it. Sinskey was also the one who sewed the secret pocket in Langdon's jacket so that he had a secure place to keep the biohazard tube in which the bone pointer was enclosed.

The amulet is an important symbol in this section because Sinskey uses it as a way to test Langdon. When Langdon notices her amulet she purposefully calls it by the wrong name. Langdon knows the real name of the symbol but does not correct her at first. When she questions him about his pause when they were talking about the piece of jewelry, he tells her about her mistake. It is at this point that Sinskey tells Langdon she had been testing him to see if he would tell her the truth even if he thought it would hurt her feelings.

Sienna and Ferris seem to be backing each other up and taking the other's side against Langdon. Not only does Sienna back Ferris up when he tells Langdon that he is not sick, only suffering from an allergic reaction but she also backs him up when he tells Langdon that he should not stress too much about recovering his lost memories. "I'm sure it's unsettling not to remember what happened, but medically speaking ...' He glanced over at Sienna for confirmation and then continued. 'I strongly recommend you not expend energy trying to recall specifics you can't remember'" (326). It seems strange that these two strangers should back each other up so firmly when it appears they do not know each other all that well.

As Sinskey is weaned off the drugs given to her to help with her vertigo, her situation becomes clearer. It appears she is not being held captive by the soldiers in the black vans. Instead, she is working with them to get back in contact with Langdon. While Langdon believes the soldiers are enemies, Sinskey has developed the thought that perhaps Langdon was paid off to work for Zobrist and his operatives. "The American professor's bizarre travel destination was yet another entry in the growing list of his inexplicable behaviors that began last night, and despite her best efforts, Sinskey was having a very hard time coming up with any rational explanation for them. Whose side is he on?" (317-318). Notice that while Sinskey's concern about what side Langdon is operating on mirrors Ferris' concern when he finally caught up with Langdon and Sienna at Dante's baptismal font, it is clear that Ferris and Sinskey are not on the same side of the fight.

Again, keep in mind that the author is manipulating the reader's assumptions in this section of the novel. The provost tells Sinskey that Langdon is traveling with one of



Zobrist's trusted companions. When the provost makes his phone call right after he has talked about getting in touch with FS-2080, it is Ferris' cell phone that rings. His feelings that the people who were once his friends have become his enemies adds to the suspicion that Ferris realizes he is no longer trusted by the provost and his company. At this point the reader already has the suspicion that Ferris is Zobrist's lover and that perhaps he has agreed to carry some deadly, communicable disease concocted by Zobrist in order to kill of the population. When the scene that is told in the first person point of view and the present tense appears, the reader assumes these thoughts are those of Ferris. Note that because this section is told in the first person point of view, there is no reference to gender. This section is written this way intentionally to throw the reader off course.

Discussion Question 1

Why is Knowlton so relieved when the provost comes to view the tape made by Zobrist? Why does he object when the provost suggests they should share it with Sinskey?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss Transhumanism. How are that group and the group's beliefs significant in this novel?

Discussion Question 3

Why does the author use a different point of view and tense in the section of the novel where FS-2080 thinks about meeting Zobrist?

Vocabulary

rogue, urbane, caduceus, celibate, overtly, nemesis, deluge, imperative, admonition, replete, veritable, undulating, imbued, ramifications, charismatic, unfettered, stupefied, ominously, transcend, inherent, eugenics, epitomized, defaced



Chapters 68-74

Summary

In Chapter 68 after Langdon, Sienna and Ferris arrived in Venice, Langdon left Dante's mask in a self-service locker at the train station. He had a copy of the verses in his pocket. Ferris arranged for a water limousine to take them to St. Mark's Square. As they passed the Church of San Geremia, Langdon whispered to himself "the bones of the blind" (359). The man driving their boat recalled how Saint Lucia's bones were scattered at different churches because she was so beloved. Powerful people had also believed her bones had the power to prevent aging and death. They wondered if it was to St. Lucia that the poem referred. As they passed under the Rialto Bridge, Langdon was chilled when he spotted a tourist wearing a plague mask standing on that bridge.

In Chapter 69, as the boat approached St. Mark's, Langdon and Sienna were shocked to see how the area was thronged with people.

In Chapter 70, Sinskey, Brüder and his men were riding in a boat provided by the provost to get them quickly to the provost's boat. As she saw the city of Venice, she felt as if she had come full circle. It was this city where she had finally told her fiancé that she was unable to have children. He had broken the engagement, giving her the amulet she wore as a parting gift.

Once they were on board the provost's ship, he said that he wanted to speak to Sinskey alone. When Sinskey asked why he had been harboring Zobrist even though he was being pursued by the WHO, the provost suggested the focus on the future, not the past. He showed Sinskey the video that Zobrist had left for them to share with the media. Meanwhile, on the shore of Venice, FS-2080 saw the Mendacium and realized that time was running out.

In Chapter 71, Sienna split the difference between Langdon and Ferris as they walked to St. Mark's. Ferris motioned her not to wait for him so she went on ahead. She felt there was something odd about Ferris' behavior and circled back to spy on him. She noticed he was typing on his phone even though he had told her that it had a dead battery when she had asked to use it. Knowing that he had lied to her she tried to catch up with Langdon to tell him not to reveal anything else to Ferris. She headed toward the building but was soon stopped by a strong hand on her sweater. She turned to face Ferris who looked as if he was hiding something from her.

Langdon reached the church first. He looked at the four horses that were considered Venice's greatest treasure. As Langdon looked at the horses, a Gypsy woman with a pole covered in masks, including a plague mask, asked Langdon if he wished to buy a mask. He refused. When he looked back at the horses of St. Mark's, he was hit by a sudden revelation.



In Chapter 72, Langdon remembered a celebrity wedding he attended where part of the entertainment was a performance by an equine theatrical group. Langdon had researched the horses and found the breed was the same one replicated by St. Mark's horses. He thought of the long history of the four copper horses that had been stolen various times by leaders of different countries. At one time the horses' heads were cut off in order to transport them. The decorative collars the horses wore had been added to cover the cut marks. He heard Sienna calling him and yelled out that he had figured out the reference to the horses whose heads had been cut off.

In Chapter 73, Sinskey was chilled by Zobrist's video. She was especially surprised that he even included the quote that he had left for her at the airport after their meeting "The darkest places in hell are reserved for those who maintain their neutrality in times of moral crisis" (385). At the end of his video Zobrist declared his love for all of mankind as well as for one person in particular. The provost told Sinskey they did not recognize the location of the place where the video had been made but believed Zobrist's lover went by the code name FS-2080. Sinksey explained it was a Transhumanism code name with the letters corresponding to the person's first and middle names and the numbers to the year the person would turn 100. The provost told Sinskey that he knew who FS-2080 was.

In Chapter 74, Langdon hoped to find some reference inside the museum at St. Mark's that would give tell him the name of the doge who had the heads of the horses cut off. He had noticed that Sienna had been trying to catch his eye but he could not understand what she was trying to say to him before Ferris joined them.

Langdon asked a worker at the museum permission to speak to Ettore Vio, the curator of the museum, a man with whom he was friends. Langdon had to ask Ettore several times before the man would agree to tell him which doge it was who had cut off the horses' heads. Ettore told him that this doge had brought the bones of St. Lucia back to Venice. He had loved that saint because he, too, was blind. Langdon finally realized who that doge was. It was Enrico Dandolo. Ettore said that the doge was not buried at St. Mark's. Ettore was called away by something happening in the lower levels of the museum. Langdon, Sienna and Ferris noticed soldiers in black entering the main entrance of the museum. Meanwhile, Sienna called for Langdon to help her. She was kneeling over Ferris, who had collapsed.

Analysis

The amulet that Sinskey wears continues to be a significant symbol in this section of the novel. The reader learns how Sinskey came to have the amulet and why she wears it all of the time. It was given to her as a parting gift from the man to whom she had been engaged. That man had broken off their engagement when he learned that Sinskey could not have children because of the medicine she had been given for her childhood asthma. In some cultures, the snake is a symbol of healing. To make matters worse for Sinskey, it was in Venice, the city near which the Mendacium, the boat to which they are



going to view Zobrist's video, that her fiancé broke off their engagement and gave her the amulet.

Meanwhile, Sienna turns on Ferris, the man whom she had so willingly supported earlier. Although she had begun to suspect Ferris was acting strangely after his phone call on the train, she decided once and for all that Ferris was no longer trustworthy when she saw him making a phone call even though he had claimed his cell phone was dead. Remember the scene in which Sienna claims that Ferris suddenly passed out. The reader will learn there is more to this scene than originally thought. It can be assumed since the soldiers of the SRS arrive shortly after Ferris talked to the provost on the phone that it was Ferris who let those soldiers know where they were going.

Interestingly it is in this section that Sinskey and the provost join sides. It is a strange companionship since the provost was once trying to protect Zobrist from Sinskey. Now he has decided to show Zobrist's video to Sinskey. After viewing the video, which frightens Sinskey but really does not give her any more information than she already had about Zobrist's plans, the provost tells Sinskey that he knows the identity of FS-2080, the person said to be Zobrist's lover and disciple.

While the other characters who were at first unnamed at the beginning of this book, the provost is one who continues to be referred to only by his title. He insists on being called the provost and says that his name is not necessary. After years of keeping the business of other people private, it appears that the provost intends to keep his own life, and even his identity a secret.

In this section, notice the impact that Venice had on Dante. As Langdon looks at the buildings on the shoreline of Venice he identifies the shipbuilding yards where boiling tree sap had once been used to plug holes in boats. "Allegedly it had been a visit to these very shipyards that had inspired Dante Alighieri to include rivers of boiling pitch as a torture device in his *Inferno*" (367). It appears that Dante used the things he encountered in his everyday life as images in his epic poem.

Discussion Question 1

Why do you think the provost is never given a name? What does this signify?

Discussion Question 2

What does it mean to Langdon, Sienna, and Ferris that the tomb of the treacherous doge for whom they are looking is not located in Venice?

Discussion Question 3

Why do you think that Sienna decides that Ferris is acting as a traitor to she and Langdon? Is this surprising since she seemed to trust him so much when they first met?



Vocabulary

devoid, turgid, eclectic, egregiously, ardent, luffed, perilous, austere, asymmetrical, promenade, quarantine, stealth, repute, ubiquitous, apocryphal, pillage, visceral, blatantly, surfeit, ingress, whimsical, averted, concise, facilitate, eluded, repulsion, militant, faction, ambience, averted, viable, transept, verdigris



Chapters 75-79

Summary

In Chapter 75, Sienna pulled open Ferris' shirt to reveal a bluish-black discoloration. As Sienna stood over Ferris she accused him of lying to them. She took his cell phone and wallet. An Italian woman said something to Sienna and made a motion with her fist on her chest. Sienna told the woman CPR would kill Ferris. She told Langdon that Ferris was not having a heart attack. She added they needed to leave.

The museum was surrounded by soldiers so Langdon and Sienna had no choice but to go downstairs to an underground crypt. Inside the crypt, Langdon hit his head on the low ceiling in the crypt. As he knelt on the floor in pain, he noticed an inscription in Latin. It was at that point he realized the doge who brought glory to the Roman Empire would have been buried under his Roman name, Henricus Dandolo. When he thought of that name he realized he had seen it before. He realized they were not only in the wrong museum, but also in the wrong country.

In Chapter 76, the gypsy woman selling masks watched as Sienna and Langdon tried to make their way out of the crypt through the light well that surrounded it. There was a commotion behind them and the gypsy woman heard angry shouting. The man hoisted the girl up out of the shaft. He was drug back into the crypt by the shouting men. The girl had tears in her eyes as she apologized to the man, and then ran off in to the city.

In Chapter 77, Langdon woke lying on a mattress in an infirmary on a boat. He remembered the soldiers ordering him to stop fighting them. When he would not stop and cried out for help, they had used pressure on his carotid to make him pass out. He worried because he had never had a chance to tell Sienna where they should have gone to locate the virus planted by Zobrist.

A man with ice-cold eyes came into the room. He countered Langdon's claims that he had tried to kill him. He tried to explain instead he was under orders to make contact with Langdon. Two more soldiers walked into the room along with the woman from Langdon's visions. Sinskey told Langdon that Brüder and his men were not trying to hurt him, only trying to get in touch with him. Langdon learns from Sinskey that the men are part of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and that they were working for her. When Langdon stopped communicating with Sinskey about his findings, she thought he had been convinced to switch sides in the search for the contagion.

Sinskey explained she had appeared drugged when Langdon saw her in the van because she was suffering paroxysmal positional vertigo and had asked the soldiers to give her drugs to help with her nausea. Although they had wanted to take her to a hospital, she had refused, preferring to run the operations from the back of the van by phone.



Langdon paused when Sinskey asked him if he knew where Zobrist had hidden the contagion. Brüder snapped at Langdon but Sinskey hushed him. It was at that point the provost walked into the room. He asked if Langdon was able to stand. He said he had something to show him that would convince Langdon they were all on the same side.

In Chapter 78, the provost led the group into a conference room in the bowels of the ship. He began playing the video, which he explained to Langdon had been created by Zobrist. Langdon realized that the bag in the video held Zobrist's plague. Sinskey explained that the bag was made of water-soluble plastic. After the video was finished, Sinskey explained to Langdon that because no reports of illness had been made, they assumed the bag had not yet completely dissolved. When they asked Langdon if he knew where the bag might be located he told them they were half a world away. Langdon also heard the soldiers discussing using force to bring Sienna Brooks in. Langdon told them Sienna was not involved in the crisis, but Brüder corrected him and told him there were some things he did not know about Sienna.

In Chapter 79, as Sienna ran, she knew that the soldiers in black would soon tell Langdon everything about her. She missed Langdon and thought about all the lonely years she had spent. As a young child she had diagnosed herself as having depression. The psychiatrist her doctor sent her to helped her learn to think about her life differently. Instead of feeling sorry for herself, she should put her energy into helping others. However, during a humanitarian trip to the Philippines, Sienna was almost raped by natives. An old woman stopped the attack when she drove a knife into the back of the man who was on top of Sienna.

Back at home, Sienna did not tell anyone what had happened to her. She learned martial arts, but she still suffered depression and could not sleep. Her hair began falling out. She finally shaved her head and bought a wig. She believed she was damaged goods but still decided to pursue a medical degree. She believed as a doctor she would feel as if she were doing some good in the world. During college she had a part time job as an actor, a job where she could pretend she was someone else. All her life she had been trying to be someone else. She even went by her middle name, Sienna, instead of her first name, Felicity.

Her trip to the Philippines had not only given her the stress-related symptoms, it also gave her a concern about the ballooning population. She began to read about Zobrist and his ideas for population control. Zobrist believed it was each individual person's responsibility to do what he or she could to save the world. When she heard he had a speaking engagement near her, she attended. She recalled the evening when the two had become lovers. Eventually, she became his disciple as well.

Analysis

Revelations begin in this section of the novel. There are two plot twists in this section. First, Sienna was Zobrist's lover and disciple. Also, the soldiers in black who had been following Langdon and Sienna were never attempting to hurt Langdon. Comments



made earlier in the book now make better sense to the reader. These include Brüder's words to his boss in Chapter 51 that his discovery that Langdon had amnesia "changes everything" (263). The knowledge that Langdon had amnesia changed everything because it told the SRS that Langdon was not working for someone else because he had been offered money. He appeared to be working for the other side because he did not remember his meetings with Sinskey. It also helps the reader understand a comment made early on in the novel when Brüder told his boss that she was not going to believe whom Langdon was with. Although Langdon believed Sienna was only a doctor and of no danger, she was actually the lover of the man who had produced the strange video threatening the world with a plague.

The realization that Sienna is FS-2080 changes things, too. Remember the formula by which these disciples of Zobrist came about with their code names. It was the first letter of their first and middle names. Since the reader learns in this section that Sienna is actually Felicity Sienna, her code name fits. Notice that the section of text in the first person point of view and the present tense from Chapter 66 is repeated almost verbatim in Chapter 79. The author had given the reader the impression that FS-2080 was Ferris in Chapter 66.

One strange incident in this section is Sienna's quick decision to turn on Ferris. She was the one who decided that she and Langdon should trust Ferris, almost before she even knew who he was. She also encouraged Langdon to trust Ferris' diagnosis of Langdon's amnesia and not ask too many questions even though Langdon did not fully trust Ferris and wanted to know under what circumstances they had met. Notice that the turning point for Sienna seems to be when Ferris takes a private phone call and then pretends that his phone battery is dead. Later, after they reach Venice, Sienna sees Ferris talking on his phone even though he has not had a chance to charge it. It is at this point that she turns completely against him.

In her sudden distrust of Ferris, Sienna even seems to change her mind about Ferris' illness. When she opens his shirt and sees the bleeding under his skin on his chest, she backs away from him. This reaction, combined with the similarity of Ferris' symptoms to the Black Plague had contributed to the reader's decision that Ferris might have been carrying a communicable disease in order to carry out Zobrist's wishes to start an epidemic that would cull the population. After the reader learns that it is Sienna and not Ferris who was Zobrist's lover, this explanation no longer makes sense.

Remember through the course of the novel, the author has been describing things in such a way that it appeared to fit Langdon's perception of his situation. For instance, he believed Sinskey was in trouble. When he saw her in the van with the soldiers, he assumed that they were holding her prisoner. This idea, of course, caused Langdon to believe that he, also, was in danger and that the soldiers were the cause of some danger for him.

The reader learns in this section that Sinskey's situation was not as Langdon had first believed. She had been given drugs by the soldiers, but she was given those drugs because she asked for them. It was also she who commanded the soldiers not to



provide her with medical care until they could reach some conclusion in the crisis they were facing. While Langdon had believed the soldiers in black were holding Sinskey captive, they were actually working under her command.

Brown injects comic relief into this section to relieve some of the suspense and drama. In these chapters, it is the gypsy woman's viewpoint of Sienna and Langdon's peculiar predicament in the light well that serves as this comic relief. As far as Brown's timing, it is shortly after this moment of levity that Langdon is taken captive by the soldiers in black.

Zobrist's obsession with Dante continues to be obvious in this section as Langdon notices the many references to *The Divine Comedy* in the video that Zobrist made. "The soliloquy of Bertrand Zobrist — delivered in the guise of the plague doctor — was laden with references to Dante's *Inferno*." (419-420). Langdon points out that the ending of Zobrist's message was eerie in its similarity to the ending of the *Inferno* in *The Divine Comedy*. Especially significant is the way that Zobrist makes sure to end his speech with the word "stars" the same word on which Dante ends all of his three parts of *The Divine Comedy*.

Discussion Question 1

How does it change your opinion of Sienna now that you know she is FS-2080? Did you suspect this before the author made the revelation? What clues, if any, foreshadow Sienna's real relation to Zobrist and his cause?

Discussion Question 2

Why do you think that Sienna so quickly turns against Ferris? Do you think there is a relation between the two?

Discussion Question 3

Notice how Langdon interpreted the situation with Sinskey as he had been programmed to interpret it. He thought she was in danger so he used cues in her situation to prove this to himself. How does the truth about Sinskey's situation show that appearances can be deceiving, especially if a person has a preconceived notion of what is happening?

Vocabulary

pandemonium, sarcophagus, synchronize, defiance, apparition, ethereal, auspices, collaborate, daimones, soliloquy, guise, holistic, solace



Chapters 80-86

Summary

In Chapter 80, Langdon struggled to come to terms with the information the provost gave him about Sienna. The provost had told Langdon it was Sienna who had referred Zobrist to the Consortium as a client. The provost had agreed because he trusted Sienna. For that year they had been protecting Zobrist, unaware that he was working on some sort of deadly plague.

It was when Zobrist rented a safe deposit box for the Faraday pointer that he was tagged by facial recognition technology despite the disguise that he wore. After WHO was contacted they found his safe house and discovered he had “created some kind of highly contagious pathogen and hidden it somewhere else” (433). They tried to locate him. When they finally got sight of him, he went to the Badia tower and jumped. Sinskey said Sienna had also been tracking the movements of the WHO and had gotten to the tower in time to see Zobrist jump to his death.

After Zobrist was dead, Sinskey had the safe deposit box opened and discovered the Faraday pointer along with a letter telling Sinskey that the Map of Hell would help her locate where he had put the pathogen. When the provost learned Sinskey had gotten the device early, his men had tried to recover it in accordance with Zobrist’s wishes.

After Langdon’s appointment with Ignazio, Vayentha had tailed Langdon but had revealed her identity too early. When the provost and his men had questioned Langdon he knew nothing about the plague yet. He also told them he would die before he told them anything about the map.

Brüder interrupted the conversation as the ship docked near the airport. He said there were no other response teams any closer than theirs. That meant they were on the own as far as getting to the location of the virus, finding it and containing it. He also told Sinskey no one had located Sienna. Sinskey ordered Sienna was not to be allowed out of Venice as she was probably trying to carry out Zobrist’s plan. Langdon gave them more bad news when he told them that he had given Sienna enough information for her to be able to figure out where the virus was actually hidden.

Langdon suddenly felt ill and told Sinskey that he did not believe he would be able to fly. Sinskey assured him that he would be fine, that he had the toxins in his body. Langdon was at first shocked at thought about Ferris’ rash and black chest. Sinskey promised to explain as soon as they got on the transport plane.

In Chapter 81, Sienna went to her friend Giorgio Venci. Although he preferred his privacy, the man immediately allowed Sienna to be sent up to him when he recognized her Transhumanism code name.



In Chapter 82, once the C-130 transport the WHO used as its mobile office was in the air, the provost sat down opposite Langdon. He told Langdon that he had believed they were protecting their client's privacy when they decided to try to get Langdon to work on their side instead of for WHO. Because Langdon obviously did not trust them, the provost had to use benzodiazepines to wipe Langdon's memory. Although Langdon had said something about a plague, the provost and his people had never thought that Zobrist had actually planted a plague somewhere.

The provost explained to Langdon that even the story about the gunshot was created to make Langdon trust the provost and his people. They had made the incision on his scalp and had sewn it up to mimic a gunshot wound. The provost also explained how Vayentha's shooting of Dr. Marconi at the hospital had been staged. He had also decided to work with Sienna because both she and he shared a desire to protect what Zobrist had created from Sinskey. Langdon was angry when he realized how perfectly Sienna had played him.

The provost told him they had lost control of the situation when Langdon had used Sienna's computer to check his email. It was at that point that officials with WHO had located Langdon and the SRS team had been brought in. When the provost asked Langdon if he was okay, Langdon said he was not even close to okay. The provost considered Langdon's future as well as his own. He was afraid that his Consortium had reached the end of the road.

In Chapter 83, needing to see outside to counter act his claustrophobia, Langdon walked up to the cockpit of the plane. He was startled when he heard a man call his name. He turned around to see Ferris. That man told Langdon that he also worked for the provost. He had been called in to help Langdon and Sienna escape from the SRS team. Ferris explained that the phone call he had taken on the train was the provost calling to tell him about the video. It was at that point that Sienna began to be viewed as the enemy of the provost instead of a trusted client.

Ferris also told Langdon that Sienna had attacked him at St. Mark's. That was the reason that it appeared he was having a heart attack. Ferris had been about to shout out Sienna's location to the SRS soldiers when she hit him in the chest. She had pulled Langdon away before anyone could tell Langdon what had really happened.

Langdon questioned Ferris' rash as well as the bruise on his chest. Ferris said he had played the part of two doctors that day. He had also been Dr. Marconi the first person Langdon had seen when he woke up. Ferris had been severely allergic to the bonding compound they had used to adhere false eyebrows and a beard to his face. Meanwhile the squib on his chest had shifted before Vayentha shot her blank at it. The way it burst caused the bruise and a broken rib.

Sinskey joined Langdon and told him she had just learned that part of the museum where Dandolo's tomb was located was flooded. They believe it is the place where Zobrist filmed his video. At the same time, Sienna was on her way out of Venice on Giorgio Venci's private plane.



In Chapter 84, the faithful of Istanbul were being called to prayer as the WHO's plane began descending for a landing. Langdon had determined that Enrico Dandolo had not been buried in Venice, but instead in Istanbul inside the Hagia Sophia. He and Sinskey believed Zobrist had hidden his contagion there not only because it was below the tomb of Enrico Dandolo but also because people often explored the flooded rooms underneath using boats as well as scuba diving equipment.

Sinskey had admitted to Langdon that they are still not sure what is in the bag but are running tests to try to narrow the possibilities. Langdon was surprised when they were not met at the airport by crowds of biohazard teams. Sinskey said they had decided to keep what they were doing quiet in order to keep from causing a panic. Even though the museum would be closed when they arrived, the group had been allowed a private tour because Langdon was so well known and respected.

In Chapter 85, Langdon continued to wonder if Sienna would really release a pathogen that would kill people. He did not think so but also remembered that he had not known her very well. He also wondered how he had gotten into the position that he was about to go to ground zero of a possible biological hazard. He wondered how he had gotten himself into that position. He thought of how the poem Zobrist had written mirrored that of Dante in many ways. He believed Zobrist had decided to release the plague in Istanbul not only because of the population there but also because it was known as the plague hub during the final years of Black Death.

The progression of the van in which they were riding was slowed down by heavy traffic. The driver said he thought there was a concert scheduled nearby. Sinskey asked that they be allowed to walk from their location. They walked across a park to the Hagia Sophia. Brüder groaned when he saw the size of the building.

In Chapter 86, back at the transport plane, the provost felt he was being held captive. He had thought that working with Sinskey would reflect well upon him but she had apparently taken him into custody. Soldiers were posted outside the plane who would not even let the provost go outside the plane for air. As the provost thought about how Sienna had betrayed him, he heard a WHO agent on the phone. Sienna was already on the ground in Istanbul.

Analysis

Two very distinct sides form in this section of the novel. Information given to help Langdon understand what has happened to him and how he has been used as a pawn also helps the reader to understand what is happening. Because the provost did not really believe that Zobrist would make a pathogen that would wipe out a good deal of the human population, he did not take Zobrist's threats seriously. He also did not take seriously the comments that Langdon made about a plague when he first came to them. For this reason, the provost continued to respect his client's wishes and try to get the Faraday pointer back from Langdon, whom they had learned was in possession of it.



Vayentha was the operative who was sent to get the pointer back from Langdon. Vayentha's role and the fact that Sienna killed Vayentha poses a question. Sienna should have known that Vayentha was part of the manipulated reality that the provost had set up for Langdon. It is understandable that Sienna ran with Langdon when the soldiers in the black vans drove up, it does not make sense that she would fight against Vayentha. Just as she took up quickly with Ferris it seems as if she would have also taken up quickly with Vayentha and tried to convince Langdon that Vayentha was no longer a threat. Instead, Sienna kills her. Langdon suspects the death was accidental.

Remember also it was never the provost's intention to interpret the strange artifact that Zobrist had left. Apparently Sienna was taking out on her own when she decided to get Langdon to look at the photograph displayed by the pointer. She had probably already decided what she wanted to do in terms of her lover's work and putting that plan into action even as the provost's plan to take back control of the pointer was falling apart.

As was mentioned before, there are two clear sides that have formed with Sienna as a rogue agent. The WHO is trying to find the location of Zobrist's plague and stop it. The provost was using Langdon only as a way to get the pointer back. In order to get it from him, the provost and his men used medicines to wipe Langdon's memory. They were aware that if Langdon knew the purpose of the pointer and that he was supposed to be researching it for the WHO he would never have agreed to give it to them. For this reason they gave him a fake gunshot wound and a case of retrograde amnesia.

Other things that were mentioned earlier in the novel become clear in this section. The reader knows that when Sienna cried for her mentor in Chapter 8, she had not been crying for Dr. Marconi, but instead for Zobrist. Sienna had actually caught up to Zobrist just as he jumped from the tower. Sinskey indicated it must have been traumatic for Sienna to "watch her lover and mentor fall to his death" (434).

Although in the past the provost has not felt much responsibility for the things that his clients do with the protection he gives them, the provost feels differently in this case. "Today, in addition to the guilt he felt at seeing firsthand Langdon's bewilderment, the man was burdened by an overwhelming sense of responsibility for the current crisis" (446). Not only has the provost never personally dealt with the fall out from one of his cases, he has never believed any result from his job has been his fault. In this instance he feels responsible for what has happened since he protected Zobrist even though the man was acting strangely and was wanted by a global health organization. Denial, the idea that something bad will not happen, is at the root of the provost's problems. He had never thought that Zobrist would do anything with worldwide consequences while under the protection that the provost and his company provided him. It is like Sienna told Langdon once about denial "just because the human mind can't imagine something happening ... doesn't mean it won't" (256).

Notice how Brown sets up the scene as the plane on which Langdon and Sinskey are traveling approaches Istanbul. Not only are the dedicated believers moving to the mosques to pray, the plane is "descending through a gathering storm front" (454). This storm front refers not only to the physical rain clouds that are gathering but also the



gathering of forces to find Zobrist's pathogen. Since those on board the WHO's transport plane suspect that Sienna is trying to release Zobrist's virus, it is indicated that they may actually have to do battle with her and her dedication to her lover.

Discussion Question 1

What does it mean that Sinskey and the provost have finally come to a point where they have decided to work together?

Discussion Question 2

How does Langdon react to the knowledge that he has been treated as a pawn through the events of the past day?

Discussion Question 3

Why does the provost feel responsible for Zobrist's virus? Why did he not contact anyone about his client's strange behavior earlier?

Vocabulary

mercenaries, fuselage, atelier's, expunged, demeanor, minarets, raucous, sinuous, interred, perverse, karmic, purveyor



Chapters 87-94

Summary

In Chapter 87, Brüder and Langdon were both surprised to learn that Sienna had arrived in Istanbul before them. When they arrived at the Hagia Sophia, the man charged with leading the tour was mystified when Langdon asked specifically to see Dandolo's tomb.

In Chapter 88, at the church it was Brüder who hurried the tour guide on to the tomb. Langdon was surprised when the guide told them it was upstairs.

In Chapter 89, when they reached the tomb, Langdon crossed the barrier and put his ear down to the floor at the tomb. The guide told Langdon the water he heard under the floor went to the city cistern. When Brüder told him they were looking for a place with columns, the guide said that description fit the cistern. Brüder demanded directions to the cistern, which their guide said was called the Yerebatan Saraya. The cistern was only a block away. When Langdon asked the translation of the name, the guide said that it meant sunken palace.

In Chapter 90, the museum guide, Mirsat, led Langdon, Sinskey and Bruder to the city cistern. He was cooperative once Sinskey told him about the health crisis they were facing. Mirsat said the cistern was no longer used for the water supply but was a tourist attraction.

When they arrived at the cistern, Mirsat and the others saw the crowds going into and out of the cistern and told them there was apparently a concert there that night. Outside the structure, Sinskey pointed to a concert poster. It appeared that an unidentified sponsor had arranged the Dante Symphony to be played in the cistern for a week.

Brüder refused a respirator when he entered the cistern. He told Sinskey that biohazard equipment would only cause panic and perhaps a stampede. Langdon insisted on going with Brüder down to the cistern. As the two descended, Langdon could recognize the words being sung by the choir, "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here!" (489) from Dante's poem.

In Chapter 91, inside the cistern both Langdon and Brüder believed Zobrist had probably hidden the balloon as far away from the concert area as possible. They moved to the point they were out of the sight of the crowd. They were trying to decide where they should go next when Langdon saw a sign pointing to a statue of Medusa. He suspected this was the monster that Zobrist had referenced in his poem. When he reached the statue, he saw that Medusa's eyes gazed toward a back corner of the cistern. Langdon felt that was the spot for which they were looking.

In Chapter 92, Brüder dropped into the water to look for the submerged balloon. When Langdon saw Brüder's shadow appear on the wall just like Zobrist's had, they knew he



was getting close. As he stood on the catwalk and looked down, Langdon noticed a pool of red liquid beneath his feet. He saw a trail leading to the puddle at his feet and thought at first someone was injured but soon realized the liquid was not blood but water, and that someone had climbed out of the water there. He noticed a black form in the darkness of the boardwalk. Although it was wearing a burka, when the woman ran in his direction, Langdon recognized the woman as Sienna.

In Chapter 93, Brüder had located the metal plaque that Zobrist had installed. There was no balloon, however, only a limp tether. He realized they had discovered the location too late. Sinskey was able to get only parts of the transaction that Brüder was trying to send her. From his message she was able to understand the contagion had already been released. While it was Sinskey's first reaction to evacuate the area, Brüder told her they needed to seal it off and contain the virus. She wrapped her hand around her amulet as she responded to Brüder that she understood and would follow his command.

It was at that moment that Sinskey noticed a woman in a burka being chased by Langdon. The woman was yelling something that was causing the crowd to panic and run toward the doors. Sinskey screamed to her team to close the doors, but Sienna slipped out before the heavy doors could be completely shut. Her burka jammed the lock, keeping the doors from being secured. In the confusion, Sinskey was pushed down on the stairs. Her amulet broke in half. At the door, Langdon was pushed out by the crowd. He spotted Sienna walking away and looked for help but saw no one. He ran after Sienna on his own. Brüder was horrified when he realized that containment of the area had failed.

In Chapter 94, Langdon lost sight of Sienna and suspected she had gotten on a city bus. Langdon managed to get a man who was wearing a turban to agree to give him a ride to follow the bus. They tailed Sienna to the Spice Bazaar, where she got off the bus.

Analysis

The novel climaxes as Langdon and Brüder walk down the stairs of the cistern to search for the virus. There are signs that their mission will not go well. It is mentioned that Sinskey has a feeling of foreboding. To underscore the sense of possible hopelessness not only for Sinskey, Langdon and Brüder but also all of the people who were attending the concert, as Langdon and Brüder descend the stairs the choir is singing the part of Dante's symphony in which those entering hell are warned "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here!" (489). To make matters worse, as Langdon and Brüder are going down the stairs, there is a man with a cough coming up the stairs. The reader realized that both Brüder and Langdon must wonder if the man is sick and if he is perhaps sick from Zobrist's virus.

Zobrist sets up a place to release his virus that is ideal for a mass contamination. The air is warm and moist, great breeding conditions for viruses and bacteria. The area is also enclosed. Zobrist has also lured people into the cistern with a week of free



presentations of the Dante Symphony. Although Zobrist's name is not listed as the funder of the event, it is obvious that he did arrange the concerts based simply on his love of Dante.

Despite their best efforts, Sienna gets to Zobrist's bag before Brüder and Langdon do. It is assumed that she released the virus since Brüder finds the bag already gone when he arrives. Langdon goes after Sienna when she runs from the cistern.

Symbolic in this section is the breaking of Sinskey's amulet. This symbol of healing breaks in half when Sinskey is pushed down in the confusion near the door of the cistern. It seems to symbolize the idea that health for the people in the cistern is now gone, a sign that Zobrist did release some sort of deadly pathogen that will kill all those exposed.

Although Brüder attempted to have the soldiers confine the virus to the area of the cistern, his attempts failed. He had called for the sealing of the cistern with the idea that Sienna had just punctured the balloon and perhaps the virus or bacteria had not yet had time to spread.

Notice the change in Brüder that has come about since the beginning of the novel. At the beginning he was referred to as a man with ice-cold eyes who acted like a beast. As the book has progressed, it is understood that Brüder is a man who is very serious about his job and determined to protect the public. Not thinking about the risks to himself Brüder goes into the cistern with no protective measures because he does not want to cause a panic. He gets into the water to try to locate the balloon without even thinking that it might have already ruptured. It is only after he discovers the limp tether that he thinks about how he has possibly put himself at risk by getting into the water that had to be heavily contaminated with Zobrist's creation.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the ways in which Langdon and Brüder decide which way to go in the cistern to find the balloon of pathogen.

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the way in which Brüder's character has evolved through the course of the novel.

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the symbolism contained in the scene in which Sinskey's amulet breaks.

Vocabulary

prodigious, tandem, apse, behemoth, ubiquitous, idiosyncratic, ineffable, dissonant, seismic, barrage, turbulence, oscillated, flaccid, viable, cacophony



Chapter 95-Epilogue

Summary

In Chapter 95, the Spice Bazaar was crowded, but Langdon managed to keep up with Sienna. When Langdon questioned why he was chasing her, he realized it was because he wanted answers. She faked a fall, hoping to throw Langdon off her trail. However, he caught up with her as she made her way to the sea. He spotted her appearing to be pleading with the owner of a boat. Although the boat owner denied her passage, she jumped onto his boat just as it was leaving the dock. Sienna managed to toss the owner overboard and took charge of the boat. Suddenly, Langdon stopped hearing the motors of the boat. When the boat's motors did start again, Sienna was maneuvering the craft back to shore. As Langdon looked down at her, she began crying. She told him she was done running.

In Chapter 96, Sinskey and her team entered the cistern wearing bio-hazard suits. Sinskey believed that Sienna had been in the cistern to intentionally break the bag and disperse Zobrist's pathogen.

Meanwhile, Brüder chided himself for getting into water contaminated with the possible pathogen. He stopped when he remembered there had been a need for quick action. He had been considering the lives of others above his own. Like Sinskey, Brüder also believed that Sienna had intentionally punctured the Solublon bag. The only thing that bothered him was the fact that there was no sign of a broken bag anywhere. He hoped the contagion had not spread very far yet. When the machines the technicians had set up began analyzing samples, Brüder was horrified when he saw that all of the detection monitors, even those set up near the entrance, indicated the area was infected.

In Chapter 97, Sienna told Langdon that she had not gone to the cistern to release Zobrist's disease. Instead, she had gone there to steal it so it could not be dispersed or studied by any agency. Sienna said they had all arrived too late and passed Langdon a pamphlet about the concert. The dates showed that that night's concert was the final performance. She believed the date on the plaque was the date that Zobrist believed his virus would have saturated the globe. Langdon immediately accused Sienna of being wrong since no one had shown any signs of being sick. She explained that Zobrist had not released a plague. She believed that he had released something more dangerous.

In Chapter 98, Sinskey and her team also realized that the virus started being released on the first day of the concert. Meanwhile, Brüder was in contact with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Man had tested his own blood and "confirmed the existence of an extremely contagious and never-before-seen viral pathogen" (524). Without Brüder even having to say anything, Sinskey knew that meant the virus had already gone global.



In Chapter 99, Sienna led Langdon to a wooded area in a park to tell him her story. She had latched onto Zobrist because Zobrist told her she could save the world and encouraged her to do what she could to fight the problem of overpopulation. Sienna told Langdon that even though she loved Zobrist and thought his goals were noble, his methods were questionable.

When Langdon questioned her about exactly what Zobrist had released, she told him it was a vector virus that would change a person genetically without any obvious symptoms. In his case, Zobrist had created a plague that would cause a random portion of the population, in this case one-third of the population, to become infertile.

Zobrist had written Sienna a letter telling her how proud he was of his invention. He thought Inferno had been an ideal way to solve the population problem. She explained it was also a permanent solution to the problem. Sienna said she had been so upset by what he had done that she had burned the letter and vowed to find the virus and destroy it. She had not cooperated with the WHO because she was afraid that agency

would find some way to use the virus as a weapon. Langdon tried to convince Sienna to work with WHO because she was the one who knew the most about the virus. He also tried to convince her that she needed to learn to trust someone and that she could start with him.

In Chapter 100, the provost and the pilot were surprised when the Turkish police began banging on the hatch of the WHO's aircraft. The officers claimed they had arrest warrants for Ferris and the provost. Once the car into which Ferris and the provost was out of sight of the aircraft, the men pretending to be police discarded their uniforms and removed the handcuffs from Ferris and the provost. They directed the two men to a van that they claimed had everything they would need in it. Just as the provost was taking a drink of the bottle of single malt liquor his men had left for him, spot lights lit up the van. The provost knew these officers were not his.

In Chapter 101, Langdon visited Sinskey in the emergency operations command center she had set up in the Swiss Consulate building. He shared with Sinskey the information that Sienna had given him about the vector virus. Although Sinskey did not want to work with Sienna at first, Langdon persuaded her that he trusted the girl. He also told her that Sienna had been trying to destroy the virus, not release it. Sinskey was upset because Sienna had destroyed the letter from Zobrist but Langdon tried to convince her that Sienna could remember the details of the letter.

In Chapter 102, when they talked in person, Sinskey was surprised and disturbed by the things that Sienna told her about Zobrist's virus. She was particularly upset when she learned the virus attacked human fertility. She knew that when she reached Geneva one of the first questions she would be asked would be whether there was a way to counteract the virus. Sinskey asked Sienna her opinions on trying to find a way to reverse the virus. Sienna indicated it would be difficult to find a way to reverse the virus without the possibility of causing other problems. Sienna was surprised when Sinskey suggested they might not want to counteract the virus at all. She was even more



surprised when Sinskey asked her to join her in Geneva to discuss the virus and the best way to handle it. Sinskey added Sienna's input would be appreciated because she had a different way of thinking about the world.

In Chapter 103, Langdon said his goodbyes to Sinskey and Sienna at the airport. As they said goodbye, Sienna was overcome with emotion and kissed Langdon on the lips. Langdon hugged her and told her how much he would miss her. She thanked him for finally giving her a purpose in life.

In Chapter 104, in Florence, after attending Ignazio's funeral, Langdon stopped in front of a painting of Dante displayed in the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore. He wondered how Dante would feel if he knew how Zobrist had used his poem. Back in his hotel, Langdon had a package. Inside the box were Langdon's clothes as well as his Mickey Mouse watch. There was another item that he took with him to the Palazzo Vecchio. He had expected to meet Marta but she was not there. A docent told Langdon that Marta had had her baby.

Having to make a quick decision about what to do with the package he was carrying, Langdon went to the place where the Dante mask had been displayed. He unwrapped the package and replaced the mask on its peg in the display case. He told a docent as he passed that they should turn the lights on over the Dante mask as it was difficult to see. The woman looked confused and hurried to the place where the exhibit was located.

In the Epilogue, in the plane on the way home, Langdon read a copy of Dante's Divine Comedy. As he read it he was reminded of another theme in the poem, that of the ability of the human spirit to endure. Langdon was reminded of Dante's idea that inactivity was the greatest sin. He also thought of Sinskey and Sienna who were actively finding their way into the future.

Analysis

It is in this section that Sienna finally tells Langdon the truth about her relationship with Zobrist. She had wanted to find the virus first because she did not think it was the best way to handle overpopulation. Also, she did not want others to use the technology Zobrist had perfected as a weapon to harm other people. She had intended to get to the virus before anyone else and destroy it so that it could not be studied or replicated. Unfortunately, Zobrist had outsmarted them all and given them a global saturation date instead of a release date for the virus.

Notice Sinskey's reaction to the announcement that the virus was one intended to cause infertility. Her one great regret in her life is that she never got to have children. She knows what it is like to live with the pain of being barren because of a medicine intended to cure another problem. Thoughts go to that one person in every three who will not be able to have children. As they discover their infertility in the future they will probably curse Zobrist. Even though the population may be curbed to the point that the



world will be able to support its people more comfortably, there will still be suffering for those who cannot have children but want them. Sinskey will be able to empathize with these people all too well.

Even though the provost tried to use one of his schemes to help himself and Ferris escape being arrested, both men are caught by the Turkish police in the end. Before his arrest, the provost seems to have had some change of mind about the type of work he does. "For the first time in his life, ignorance no longer felt like the moral high ground. His fingers broke the seal on the bottle of Scotch" (537). He realizes, perhaps, that ignorance no longer justifies his actions. He feels responsible for what happened with Zobrist even though he does not want to admit it. As Dante indicates in his poem "In dangerous times, there is no sin greater than inaction" (559). Dante stresses this through the idea that the deepest places in hell are reserved for those who do nothing in times of moral crisis.

Sinskey's amulet continues to be an important symbol. When Langdon enters Sinskey's improvised office, "the broken talisman now lay on her desk in two fractured halves" (538). Again, this is a sign that something has broken with the world that may never be made right again. Langdon offers hope as he tells Sinskey that there was a way to fix the piece of jewelry. Sinskey indicated she hoped there was a way to fix everything, a reference to the brokenness of the world.

There are two more important symbols in the closing of the novel. One of these items is Langdon's Mickey Mouse watch. When he straps it on his arm, it symbolizes that he is returning to life again. His nightmare is over and he begins to feel like himself.

Also returning home is Dante's death mask. That mask traveled from its resting place in the Palazzo Vecchi to Dante's baptismal font, the place that poet had always hoped he would return as a hero and victor. Langdon, Sienna and Ferris took the mask to Venice, where Dante had died, but left the mask in a train station locker for safekeeping. Sinskey uses her influence to get it returned to Langdon in Florence. Because the museum worker who believed Langdon had stolen the mask was off work because she had had her baby, Langdon decided just to slip the mask back into its place.

The story does end with a message of hope. Langdon reads the entire epic poem written by Dante and realizes the focus of the poem is not just on death, suffering and repentance but also the joys of paradise. He sees a theme emerge in which humans are described as a species that can endure some drastic punishments and setbacks. Despite their struggles, humans are able to endure the challenges that life sends their way and often emerge victorious. A final thing to notice is that Brown ends his story on the word stars, just as the three main portions of *The Divine Comedy* end on the word stars.



Discussion Question 1

If the provost had not been arrested, do you think he would have continued his work? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

Do you think Zobrist's virus will successfully contain the population? Will people find some way to over reproduce despite infertility?

Discussion Question 3

Do you agree with Zobrist's decision to spread the infertility virus? Do you think it was the logical thing to do? Do you think it was morally right?

Vocabulary

burgeoning, eschewing, gesticulating, hermetically, disembodied, fecundity, virility, insidious, overt, endemic, tribunal, leniency, monolith, volition, castigating, ostracized, palpable, notorious



Characters

Robert Langdon

Robert Langdon is a Harvard professor of symbology and art. He is the main character and hero of the novel. He is called by Elizabeth Sinskey to help her translate a strange adaptation of the Map of Hell. She insists that he travel to Florence, Italy, with her to help her avert the crisis.

Once in Florence, Langdon is taken hostage by operatives and made to believe that he has been shot and narrowly missed being killed. He is given medicine to wipe his memories of having agreed to work with Sinskey.

Because Langdon has such a comprehensive knowledge of Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, he is able to work through the clues that lead to Zobrist's creation. Even as he tries to solve the mystery, he struggles to recover the gap of time in his memory.

It is not until Langdon is captured by members of the SRS team and he finally talks to Sinskey that he learns how the provost's men wiped his memory and then set up an allusion in the hopes Langdon would feel as if he were in danger from the people working with the WHO.

In addition to learning how he came to be in Florence, Langdon also learns that Sienna, the girl with whom he had originally been working to solve Zobrist's riddles was actually Zobrist's lover.

Believing that Sienna had wanted to find Zobrist's virus so she could spread it instead of containing it, Langdon followed Sienna when she ran from the cistern just before Bruder discovered the bag containing the virus had already burst.

Langdon got Sienna to tell him that she had not wanted to spread the virus. She had wanted to stop it because she knew that Zobrist had created a virus that would cause a portion of the population to be infertile. Langdon arranged for Sienna to help Sinskey tell the other members of the WHO about the virus, how it worked, and why they should not try to counteract it.

Dr. Elizabeth Sinskey

Dr. Elizabeth Sinskey is the director of the World Health Organization. She is the silver-haired woman whom Langdon sees in his hallucinations when he first wakes in the hospital after being shot.

Sinskey is the official who actually recruited Langdon to help with the Zobrist issue. After Langdon was taken over by the provost and his people wiped Langdon's memory, Langdon had the idea that Sinskey had been kidnapped by the SRS men.



He did see the SRS men giving Sinskey injections, but he later learned it was to help her deal with the symptoms of a type of vertigo she suffered occasionally.

Although Sinskey had been approached by Zobrist about helping him find an answer to the problem of the earth's overpopulation, she thought his ideas were crazy and had him tagged as a possible bioterrorist. It was because Sinskey was chasing him that Zobrist killed himself rather than giving her any information about the virus he had created.

After Zobrist's virus was released and it was learned that it would cause portions of the population to become infertile, Sinskey agreed with Sienna that it would be best not to try to undo what Zobrist had done. She agreed to allow Sienna to help her describe Zobrist's virus to the other WHO officials in Geneva and discuss what the organization should do in response to the virus.

Bertrand Zobrist

Bertrand Zobrist is a geneticist and leader in the Transhumanism movement. He believes that if the population of the earth is not brought under control, the planet will not be able to support all of the people.

Zobrist took his proposal that the human population needed to be culled to Sinskey, but she rejected his ideas and called him crazy. Sinskey's reaction caused Zobrist to pay the provost to keep Zobrist's location a secret so that he could work in private.

While he was working in secret, Zobrist created a vector virus that would cause one-third of the population to become infertile. He put the virus in a plastic bag in the city cistern in Istanbul. In order to make sure that as many people would be exposed to the virus as possible, Zobrist sponsored a week long concert in the cistern.

Zobrist gave away his location when he went to a bank to rent a safe deposit box in which to put the Faraday pointer he wanted Sinskey to have. Facial recognition at the bank recognized Zobrist despite the disguise he was wearing. He had been tagged as a possible bio-terrorist.

Because Zobrist felt that Sinskey was pursuing him in an attempt to learn what sort of pathogen he had created, Zobrist jumped from the Badia Tower and killed himself.

Agent Christoph Brüder

Agent Christoph Brüder is the man in charge of the SRS team attempting to get in touch with Langdon. Most notable about Brüder is the transformation his character makes through the course of the novel. At the beginning of the story he is described as being a man with ice-cold eyes who acts more like an animal than a man.



By the end of the novel, the reader understands that Brüder has acted the part of the strict military leader because he knew how serious the problem was that the world was facing. He desperately wanted to bring the situation to a close but does not understand why Langdon is running from him. He is frustrated because the professor is able to outsmart him so easily.

Brüder shows himself to be a hero when he wades into the water in the cistern in an attempt to help contain the pathogen Zobrist was trying to release. It was only after he realized the virus had already been released that he thought about the danger into which he had put himself. Even at that point, Brüder knew he had a bigger cause than his own safety that had caused him to go in search of the bag of virus.

Dr. Felicity Sienna Brooks aka FS-2080

Sienna Brooks is Zobrist's lover and main disciple. In order to help the provost determine the location where Zobrist hid his plague, Sienna pretends to be a doctor in the hospital where Langdon wakes after being shot.

Although Sienna was a lover of Zobrist, she did not agree with his method of population control. Even after she and Langdon parted ways when Langdon discovered that Sienna was Zobrist's lover, she continued to try to stop the disease he had created.

When it is discovered that Zobrist's virus had already been released, Sienna tells Langdon and Sinskey what the particular virus that Zobrist had created would do to the population. She agreed to work with the WHO to help people understand what had happened and why they should not try to reverse it.

The Provost

The provost is the owner and operator of the Consortium, the business that is centered on the boat called The Mendacium. He is dedicated to preserving the privacy of the people who pay for his services. When he sees the video that Zobrist put together, he realizes that he must do something to stop what that man has planned.

The provost decides to work with Sinksey by helping her to convince Langdon that they were not trying to hurt him. The provost helped Sinskey, but he was still arrested by the Turkish government after it was learned he had harbored Zobrist so that Zobrist could create his infertility virus.

Jonathan Ferris aka Dr. Marconi

Jonathan Ferris also works for the provost. He not only masquerades as Dr. Marconi, the doctor who is "shot" by Vayentha in the beginning of the novel, but he also lies and tells Langdon he was the man who picked Langdon up from Harvard.



Through the course of the novel, the reader suspects that Ferris may be Zobrist's lover and that he may be carrying the plague that Zobrist intended to unleash on the world. At the end of the novel it is learned that Ferris' rash was caused by an allergy to the glue used to secure a beard and bushy eyebrows on Ferris when he played Dr. Marconi. Ferris' breathing trouble was caused by the badly bruised chest and broken rib that he suffered when he was hit by a blank from Vayentha's gun.

Vayentha

Vayentha works for the provost. She is trained to pretend to kill people. She was the one who shot a squib at Ferris, who was also known as Dr. Marconi. Although Langdon had thought Vayentha was trying to kill him, the provost told him that she could not have killed him because her gun only shot blanks.

When Vayentha messed up her mission with Langdon, she was disavowed by the provost. When Vayentha learned that Brüder and his men had not caught Langdon, she continued looking for Langdon because she believed she could save her job.

Vayentha was killed when Sienna accidentally pushed her off the viewing platform above the Hall of the Five Hundred. Sienna pushed Vayentha because she believed Vayentha was going to kill Langdon.

Laurence Knowlton

Laurence Knowlton is an agent who works for the provost. Instead of putting Zobrist's video online for the media to see, Knowlton instead asked the provost to watch the video because he thought it was too strange to be sent out. Knowlton felt that he had been relieved of responsibility for the video when the provost did decide to preview it before it was sent out.

Mirsat

Mirsat is a Turkish worker at the Hagia Sophia who leads a private tour for Langdon, Sinskey, and Brüder. Mirsat is irritated when Langdon insists upon seeing only the tomb of Enrico Dandolo.

Mirsat is more cooperative with Langdon and the others after they tell him that they are looking for the virus. Mirsat leads them to the city cistern, where they believe Zobrist hid the virus he created.

Ignazio Busoni

Ignazio Busoni is the director of the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. He was with Langdon when they stole Dante's death mask from the Palazzo Vecchio. Ignazio had the death



mask when he was separated from Langdon after they left the museum. Ignazio hid the mask in the Baptistery of San Giovanni and left a cryptic message for Langdon. Before having a fatal heart attack, Ignazio gave Langdon instructions on how to locate the mask.

Marta Alvarez

Marta Alvarez is an employee at the Palazzo Vecchio in which the Hall of the Five Hundred is located. She is the one who allowed Langdon and Ignazio into the museum after hours to view Dante's death

Beatrice Portinari

Beatrice Portinari is the woman who was Dante's true love. He dedicated portions of The Divine Comedy to her. She plays the role of the savior who brings Dante out of hell into the Promised Land. She served as Dante's muse for many of his works.

Dante Alighieri

Dante Alighieri is an Italian poet who grew up and spent much of his life in Florence. Among his works was the epic poem The Divine Comedy. Because Dante was on the wrong side of a political dispute, he was evicted from Florence. Dante eventually died in Venice.

Jonas Faukman

Jonas Faukman is Langdon's publicist. Langdon contacts Faukman to arrange a flight for Langdon and Sienna from Florence to Venice. The purpose of the flight is to throw the authorities off Langdon and Sienna's real intentions.

Giorgio Venci

Giorgio Venci is the man to whom Sienna goes in order to get transportation to Istanbul. He is apparently also a disciple of Zobrist because he recognizes Sienna's code name.



Symbols and Symbolism

Mickey Mouse Watch

Langdon's Mickey Mouse watch is a symbol of his real personality and real self. He wakes disoriented and suffering amnesia and realizes he does not have the watch. At several points in the story, Langdon looks for his watch and indicates he does not feel like himself without it. It is only after his watch has been returned and he has it back on his arm that Langdon feels like himself.

Plague Mask

These plague masks that appear at various times in the novel are symbolic of the disease that Langdon and the others fear that Zobrist plans to unleash on the world. They give Langdon a sense of urgency about translating Zobrist's strange messages and locating his plague.

Dante's Death Mask

Zobrist's use of Dante's death mask on which to write lines of poetry cryptically explaining where he had hidden the virus is an example of Zobrist's obsession with Dante.

Green Eyes

Before Zobrist is given a name, references to his green-eyes help to identify him. The green-eyes are a symbol of Zobrist.

Dr. Sinskey's Amulet

This amulet, made of lapis lazuli, represents Sinskey's role in the medical field, her inability to bear a child, and the man she lost when she told him about her infertility.

Dante's Inferno

Dante's Inferno is the part of The Divine Comedy that describes man's journey through hell. Zobrist uses the images from this part of The Divine Comedy to describe what will happen to the earth if the problem of overpopulation is not corrected.



A Drone

This drone represents the lengths to which Brüder and his men are willing to go to locate Langdon and Sienna.

Map of Armenia

This map of Armenia represents an escape route to Langdon and Sienna. They look for this particular map because there is a secret passageway hidden behind it.

The Horses of St. Mark's

The Horses of St. Mark's are the same horses to which Zobrist refers in his cryptic poem about a doge (chief magistrate) who cut the heads off horses.

Solublon Bag

This Solublon Bag is a symbol of the time limit that Langdon and the others have to find Zobrist's virus. Since they do not know the strength of the soluble plastic used to make the one Zobrist used, they do not know exactly how much time they have left.



Settings

The Mendacium

The Mendacium is the name of the boat from which the provost runs his business. Sinskey was brought to The Mendacium to view the video Zobrist had made. Langdon was also brought to this boat after he was captured by the SRS officers. Langdon was one of the few people who realized that The Mendacium was a Latin word referring to the Greek god of deception.

Florence

Florence is the city in Italy where Langdon wakes after he believes that he has narrowly missed being killed by a gunshot. The author chooses Florence as the main city in which the story is set because it is the place where Dante lived for a good deal of his life. It was this city that Dante loved and from which he was exiled.

Palazzo Vecchio

The building in Florence is important because it is where the Hall of the Five Hundred is located, the place where Langdon and Sienna go to see the Vasari's Battle of Marignano, the painting in which the words *cerca trova* are hidden. It is also in the Palazzo Vecchio that Dante's death mask is displayed.

The Badia Tower

The Badia Tower is the tower in Florence from which Zobrist jumped to his death.

The Church of Dante

The Church of Dante is the place to which Langdon and Sienna went to try to find someone who had a copy of Dante's *The Divine Comedy* in order to see what location Ignazio was referring to in his strange message to Langdon just before he died.

The Baptistery of San Giovanni

Langdon and Sienna discovered that Ignazio did indeed hide Dante's death mask near the Baptistery of San Giovanni, the place where Dante was baptized. They use the water from this baptistery to clean the gesso off the back of the mask and uncover the poem that Zobrist had written there.



Venice

Venice is the city where Dante supposedly caught the disease that killed him. Because of this reference, Langdon and Sierra believed it might have been in Venice that Zobrist was going to release the virus.

Istanbul

Because the country of Istanbul was considered the hub of the Black Plague in that area, Zobrist releases his virus in that city.

Yerebatan Sarayi

The Yerebatan Sarayi, which means the sunken palace, is the place where Zobrist filmed his strange announcement for the media. It is also the place to which all of the forces of the SRS and the WHO descend after they determine it was in that place that Zobrist released his virus and then drew thousands of people to that place in order to infect them.



Themes and Motifs

The Challenge of Population Control

The challenge associated with population control is a major theme in this novel as Langdon and others search for a pathogen they believe is intended to cull the population. Geneticist Bertrand Zobrist argues that a good deal of the problems facing the world, like limited natural resources and depletion of the ozone layer, have been caused by too many people. Sinskey and others do not see the problem as logically as Zobrist. They think that his call to limit the population is insane and criminal.

Through scientific research, Zobrist has come up with a single variable that he believes is the cause of a good deal of the earth's problems. He argues that natural resources have been decreased because the world is already over populated. With the population growing rapidly, he forecasts that the world will no longer be able to support all the people in less than a century and the species will die out.

The problem with finding a way to correct the problem of overpopulation is that human emotion interferes with human logic. In Sienna's words when Langdon quotes statistics about the amount of money spent to care for the elderly, "True, and while our brains say, 'This is insane,' our hearts say, 'Keep Grandma alive as long as we can'" (257). We are a community who believes killing, or even not trying our hardest to keep someone alive, is criminal. Sienna poses a question to Langdon: "Would you kill half the population today in order to save our species from extinction?" (261). Langdon is uncomfortable with the question and cannot give her an answer.

While the World Health Organization has tried some methods of population control in other countries, Zobrist notes that these attempts had been negated by the meddling of the church. Sinskey reminds Zobrist how the WHO had spent millions to educate people in Africa about birth control and distribute free condoms. He notes, "an even bigger army of Catholic missionaries marched in on your heels and told the Africans that if they used the condoms, they'd all go to hell," (121). Sinskey was unable to argue against this fact because she knew it was true.

Sinskey feels helpless in light of the scientific information that Zobrist gives her. She argues that the problem is more complex than just the global population. She believes that one cannot get rid of people because the population is too large. She believes intentionally starting a communicable, deadly disease or refusing to treat people is criminal. However, after Zobrist's virus is released and Sinskey realizes that it will help to control the population, she tells Sienna that Zobrist was right about overpopulation. Now that a move has been made, Sinskey believes nothing should be done to counteract the virus. It is as if she is afraid to take the step that would be labeled as insane. Now that it has been made, she believes it can positively impact the human population.



The fear that surrounds Langdon and the others as they search for Zobrist's pathogen is that he has created a sickness, like Black Death, that will kill off a good deal of the population. Langdon is haunted by images of plague doctors and plague masks as he searches for Zobrist's pathogen. The narrator describes how the people died and the way that bodies piled up in the streets because burials could not be completed fast enough. There was sorrow, mourning and grief; but, the world did experience a rebuilding and time of prosperity after the plague.

After they discover that the pathogen has already been released, Sienna explains to Langdon that what Zobrist had created was a vector virus intended to make one-third of the population infertile. The virus would be passed on from generation to generation as a form of permanent population control. "He considered Inferno to be a very elegant and humane resolution of the problem," (530) Sienna told Langdon. Instead of having to deal with deaths and sickness, people would just stop having so many babies. The decrease in babies would eventually thin the population.

Denial as an Escape Mechanism

Both Zobrist and Sienna argue at different times in the novel that humans have the habit of denying problems with which they do not want to deal. Population control is one problem that is regularly denied. In this novel, Zobrist compares a person's denial of a problem to Dante's deepest ring of hell, the ring where people were sent who refused to take a stand in times of moral crisis. Zobrist believes the problem with population control has escalated to the point of moral crisis and is frustrated because Sinskey refuses to take a stand.

When Sienna first suggests to Langdon that the world is in denial about population control, Langdon thinks about a Web-tracking study he had read indicating that there was a tendency even among the highly educated to ignore situations or circumstances that caused too much stress. This particular study had found that students in Ivy League colleges would click on a news story about depressing news but often would not stay there long, preferring to look at something more trivial.

Langdon has trouble accepting how easily Sienna talks about Zobrist's point of view, especially when it comes to population control. She tells him that while she is not necessarily a fan of controlling the population, she is a fan of the truth. "Just because the human mind can't imagine something happening ... doesn't mean it won't" (256) Sienna tells Langdon.

Zobrist's main argument with the WHO is that he believes the officials of that organization are denying the realities of overpopulation. Instead of tending to the issue at hand he sees them trying to find alternative sources of fuel and recycling. "How is it that you — a highly educated woman of science — don't see?" (166), Zobrist says to Sinskey. He goes on to tell he how obvious it is that the problems the world faces are the symptoms of the disease, not the disease itself. When Sinskey calls Zobrist mad for



wanting to do something about overpopulation, Zobrist rebuffs her by saying, “Madness is the WHO staring into the abyss and denying it is there” (164).

Dante as a Muse

Though Dante probably never intended it as such, Zobrist uses the pictures he sees of hell in Dante’s *Inferno* as the motivation for the creation of a virus to control the world’s population. Zobrist uses the images that other artists have created in order to depict what the earth will be like if there is no answer found to control the population. In addition, Zobrist also uses clues from Dante’s writing and Dante’s life as a way to lead Langdon and Sinskey to the virus, which he calls *Inferno*, also in honor of Dante.

Zobrist uses images from Dante in various places in the novel in order to try to get his point across about overcrowding of the planet. When he meets with Sinskey, he shows her a picture of the painting by Doré. The painting is an interpretation of the miseries of hell as presented in Dante’s *The Divine Comedy*. Zobrist tells Sinskey that if nothing is done, the conditions in that painting will become a reality for humans. Note also it is the *Dante Symphony* that the orchestra plays during the week long concert that Zobrist funded in an attempt to get as many people into the city cistern as possible to come in contact with his virus.

Zobrist uses clues that relate to Dante and *Inferno* to lead Sinskey to the virus. Langdon is especially good at translating these clues because he is so familiar with *The Divine Comedy*. For instance, it does not take Langdon long to realize that the levels of hell in Botticelli’s *Map of Hell* are in the wrong order. When he re-orders these levels, Langdon is able to discover what Zobrist is really trying to say to him. A second set of clues is written on the back of Dante’s death mask. Notice that Zobrist writes these clues in a form that is similar to Dante’s style and that he formats the clues into a nine-revolution set of lines. This is significant because Dante often used the number nine in his writing. For instance, there were nine levels of hell, purgatory, and paradise.

Finally, Zobrist lives his life much in a way that parallels Dante’s. Because Dante loved the city of Florence so much, it was in Florence that Zobrist decided to live while he was working on his secret project. Just like Dante was exiled because of his association with the wrong political faction, Zobrist felt he was exiled because he embraced the unpopular idea that something needed to be done about population control. Both also had dreams of one day being accepted and lauded by the communities that had treated them so badly.

Dante, for instance, hoped the day would come when he would be able to wear a laurel crown next to the spot of his baptism. The laurel crown would mean Dante had been accepted into the city of Florence and that he was considered a victor by the people who had once exiled him. Likewise, Zobrist believes a day will come when the people who once told him that he was insane will credit him with the continued survival of the human race.



Manipulation of Appearances

Many characters in this novel depend on the manipulation of appearances to achieve their goals. The reader learns that much of the beginning of the novel, in which Langdon believed he had been shot and that people were trying to kill him, was manipulated in order to make him feel as if he were being pursued. Other characters in the novel are not what they appear as they seek the location of Zobrist's virus for their own needs.

The provost's business, for example, is based solely on the ability of people to manipulate factors to present a specific appearance. As the provost considers what he does he thinks: "Whether trying to prop up a stock market, justify a war, win an election, or lure a terrorist out of hiding, the world's power brokers relied on massive disinformation schemes to help shape public perception (467).

It should not surprise reader that the provost and his workers are masters of manipulating appearances since even his ship *The Mendacium*, bears the name of a god who specializes in "falsehoods, lies, and fabrications" (417). The provost is the one who is hired by Zobrist to make him disappear while he tries to create a virus that will curb the population.

Sienna is also a character who changes her appearance in order to get what she wants. She presents herself to Langdon as a doctor who just happens to have done some study on Zobrist's ideas. She does not tell him that she is Zobrist's lover and one of his main disciples. Even when Langdon learns how close Sienna is to Zobrist, he still misjudges her based on the appearance he believes her relationship with Zobrist implies. Sienna must convince Langdon that just because she had loved Zobrist does not mean that she agrees with everything that he taught. In fact, she was trying to destroy the virus he had created because she believed it would fall into the hands of the wrong people and the technology would be misused.

Langdon is a character who falls prey to one of the provost's manipulated realities. With the help of several of his employees, the provost makes Langdon believe that he is being chased by a woman who wants to kill him. Langdon sees this woman shoot a doctor in the hospital where he was recuperating from what he thought was a gunshot wound. He believes Sinskey is being held captive by the men in the black vans and that these men are trying to kidnap him as well. When Sinskey and the provost tell Langdon what is really happening, Langdon is shocked that the provost would go so far to keep Langdon from working with the WHO. He is surprised how real all of the things he experienced were made to appear. It is the provost who tells Langdon that one cannot always believe even what one sees. "That's what you saw,' the provost said evenly, 'but that's not what happened'" (442-443).

Acceptance of Responsibility

Another question raised in this novel is that of the point at which a person should take responsibility for another's actions. The provost, for instance, is a character whose



business manipulates the truth so that clients can live out their dreams. He does not believe he is responsible for what people are doing while using his services. Sienna, however, has a different opinion of her responsibility to human kind.

As the provost often says, he believes he has no more responsibility for what people do while using his services than an automobile company has for what people do when they are driving their cars. Apparently the WHO and the Turkish government has different opinions of this idea of personal responsibility since the provost is facing possible charges of harboring a bioterrorist at the end of the novel. Even after the provost learned that Zobrist was wanted to by the WHO because of the threats he had made, the provost does nothing to let the WHO know he had been in contact with Zobrist. In fact, it was not until it became clear that the provost might be facing some charges for Zobrist's actions, which appeared would affect the world on a global scale, that he began trying to assist the WHO.

Knowlton is another character who struggles with personal responsibility. He was the agent who was assigned to preview the video Zobrist made and make sure there were no references to the consortium in it. When Knowlton saw how disturbing the video was and how it appeared to be a threat, he decided to alert the provost to the strange content of the video. At first, the provost did not want to watch the video, a decision that made Knowlton very uncomfortable that the decision to air the video was being left in his hands. When the provost did decide to preview the video, Knowlton felt the decision had been taken from his hands.

Sienna, on the other hand, quickly makes up her mind about what she should do about a situation, and then carries through. Even though she had loved Zobrist, she did not agree with all of his work, particularly the virus he had created to control the population. Instead of letting others try to take care of the virus, Sienna takes an active role in trying to stop what Zobrist started. She saw the potential that it had for use as a weapon if it were to fall into the wrong hands and wanted to destroy it.



Styles

Point of View

Inferno, by Dan Brown, is told from the point of view of a third person narrator. This narrator is not omniscient. Even though he tells the emotions and thoughts of all the characters in the novel, the narrator knows only what Langdon knows about the situation in which he becomes involved. The narrator does not share with the reader the ways Langdon's perceptions of reality were manipulated until Langdon learns about these manipulations.

In addition to the Prologue, there are two short passages in the story that are told from the first person point of view. One of these is found in Chapter 66 when FS-2080 remembers the night she and Zobrist met in person. This short passage of narrative is told from the first person point of view to keep from giving away the identity of FS-2080. At this point, the reader believes that FS-2080 is Ferris. If the passage had been written from the third person point of view and indicated "she" as a pronoun for the person meeting Zobrist, it would have given away to the reader too early that Sienna was FS-2080. This portion of first person text is included almost verbatim in Chapter 79 when the reader is being led to realize it was Sienna who was Zobrist's lover. The Prologue is told from the first person point of view of Zobrist just moments before he jumps to his death.

Language and Meaning

Perhaps, the most significant aspect of the language in this novel is that the author uses a good deal of foreign phrases. These phrases can be interpreted based on context clues or the phrases are translated in the body of the novel. The reader should note that since the action takes place in foreign countries, most of the characters are speaking in foreign languages. Sometimes, only a portion of a conversation is written in a foreign language. The use of foreign words allows Sienna, who is trying to manipulate the truth, to incorrectly translate other characters' words for both Langdon and the reader. An example of this occurs when Ferris falls out in St. Mark's. A woman tries to accuse Sienna of punching Ferris in the chest, causing his problems. Sienna pretends the woman had been suggesting that Sienna perform CPR on Ferris.

Structure

This 560-page novel includes 104 chapters, a Prologue, and an Epilogue. The Prologue is intended to catch the reader's attention and create questions in his mind that he will want answered. Exposition takes place throughout the entire course of the novel as the author presents plot twists and new information almost up until the end of the novel. The action rises up to the point where Langdon and Brüder enter the city cistern in Istanbul in Chapter 90 to try to locate the balloon full of pathogen that Zobrist hid there. Tension



remains high until Sienna returns to the dock the boat that she stole and agrees to tell Sienna the truth about herself and her relationship with Zobrist. The action does not begin to fall until Sinskey talks to Sienna and realizes that the girl truly did not want Zobrist's virus to be spread. The denouement comes when Langdon is able to return Dante's death mask to its place in the Palazzo Vecchio.

There are several unexpected plot twists that come during the course of the novel. One of these comes when Langdon learns in Chapter 77 that Sienna had been part of a plot to deceive him. He had been working for Sinskey and the WHO when the provost's people abducted him and wiped his memory so he would work for them instead. A second twist in the plot comes in Chapter 79 when the reader learns that Sienna was Zobrist's lover. A third twist comes in Chapter 99 when Sienna tells Langdon that Zobrist's virus was not intended to make anyone sick. It was meant to control human population by rendering one-third of the population infertile.



Quotes

Langdon knew the medieval structure well. / It was unique in the world. / Unfortunately, it was also located four thousand miles from Massachusetts.”

-- Narrator (Chapter 1)

Importance: It was when Langdon saw the Florence skyline that he realized that not only he was not in Massachusetts, he was not even in the United States.

Dr. Brooks spoke steadily but quickly. ‘A bullet grazed the top of your skull and most likely gave you a concussion. You’re very lucky to be alive. An inch lower, and ...’ She shook her head.

-- Sienna Brooks (Chapter 20)

Importance: When Sienna first tells Langdon what happened to him, she indicates it appeared someone had shot at him, grazing his head. Later, it is learned that Langdon was never in danger and had never been injured by a bullet. Sienna’s description of what happened to Langdon was intended to manipulate him into believing that he was in some sort of danger so he would work with the provost and his people instead of the WHO.

A familiar vision materialized — the statuesque, veiled woman with the amulet and silver hair in ringlets. As before, she was on the banks of a bloodred river and surrounded by writhing bodies. She spoke to Langdon, her voice pleading. Seek and ye shall find!”

-- Narrator (Chapter 6)

Importance: After his “head injury,” Langdon had visions in which he saw a silver-haired woman telling him to seek and find something. The vision included images from Dante’s version of hell as pictured in the Inferno portion of The Divine Comedy. It was later determined that Langdon had these visions because he had already been working with Sinskey and had already seen the Faraday pointer.

Robert,’ Sienna whispered, her voice taut with fear. ‘The U.S. government just sent someone to kill you.’”

-- Sienna (Chapter 12)

Importance: When Sienna sees Vayentha arrive at the apartment building after Langdon called the U.S. Consulate, she tells him that it is the United States government who alerted Vayentha to where he was. The reader learns later that this was part of the allusion that Sienna and the provost’s people had created in an attempt to keep Langdon from going to the authorities.

The scene projected out of the carved bone was a grim oil painting of human suffering — thousands of souls undergoing wretched tortures in various levels of hell. The underworld was portrayed as a cutaway cross section of the earth into which plunged a cavernous funnel-shaped pit of unfathomable depth. This pit of hell was divided into



descending terraces of increasing misery, each level populated by tormented sinners of every kind.”

-- Narrator (Chapter 14)

Importance: Sienna finds a strange object made of bone in a biohazard tube in Langdon’s jacket. When they realize it is a Faraday pointer, they see that the pointer displays a copy of Botticelli’s Map of Hell. When he studies the projection further, Langdon realizes the piece of artwork has been altered in order to send a message to the person who sees it.

Dr. Sinskey,’ the man said with a strange laugh, ‘you talk about controlling epidemics as if it’s a good thing.’”

-- Zobrist (Chapter 22)

Importance: During the meeting to which Zobrist invited Sinskey, he gives the idea that he believes that an epidemic would be good for the population because it would help to control unneeded growth. He criticizes Sinskey for saying that the WHO is doing good work by controlling epidemics. Zobrist thinks a plague would be good because it would help to cut the human population on the earth down to the size that the earth could sustain the population.

The disease is overpopulation. And unless we face world population head-on, we are doing nothing more than sticking a Band-Aid on a fast-growing cancerous tumor.”

-- Zobrist (Chapter 31)

Importance: In a simile, Zobrist compares overpopulation to cancer, a comparison that Sinskey finds disturbing.

You were not hired to be a film critic,’ the provost admonished. ‘You were hired to keep promises. Do your job.

-- The provost (Chapter 38)

Importance: Responsibility is a key idea in Knowlton’s decision to show the provost the video that Zobrist sent them to put out to the media. Knowlton has decided that they need to take some responsibility in protecting the world from Zobrist’s strange message while the provost sticks to his previous declaration that the company holds no responsibility for the action of the people for whom they do business.

In the past ten minutes, Marta had learned not only that the Dante death mask had been stolen during her watch, but that the two thieves had been a respected American professor and her trusted Florentine colleague, who was now dead. Furthermore, the young Sienna Brooks, whom Marta had imagined to be the wide-eyed American sister of Robert Langdon, turned out to be a doctor, admitting to a lie ... and doing so in fluent Italian.”

-- Narrator (Chapter 42)



Importance: Marta is shocked by the sudden strange things she learns about Langdon, Sienna, and Ignazio. These are the people she believed she could trust.

He stared at the top of the tower, wondering why Zobrist had jumped and hoped to hell it wasn't because the man had done something terrible and hadn't wanted to face what was coming."

-- Narrator (Chapter 50)

Importance: As Sienna and Langdon move past the place where Zobrist died, Langdon hopes that Zobrist did not kill himself because of what he had done. This quote adds to the other hints in the novel that Zobrist had created some sort of disease to kill some of the population, an idea that the author has been developing in the reader's mind throughout the course of the novel.

Less than a week before the contract was to expire, Sinskey had somehow located Zobrist in Florence and moved in, harassing and chasing him until he committed suicide. For the first time in his career, the provost had failed to provide the protection he had agreed to, and it haunted him ... along with the bizarre circumstances of Zobrist's death."

-- Narrator (Chapter 51)

Importance: This quote assures the reader that Zobrist was not crazy. Sinskey had been moving in on him and threatening him because she believed he was trying to unleash an epidemic on the world. It also shows that the provost does take some responsibility for what has happened with Zobrist's case. He feels bad because he was unable to protect Zobrist from Sinskey as he had promised him.

La peste nera. The phrase meant 'the Black Death.' My God, Langdon thought, it's everywhere I turn! According to the placard, the doors had been commissioned as a 'votive' offering to God — a show of gratitude that Florence had somehow survived the plague."

-- Narrator (Chapter 54)

Importance: Even the gates to the church where Dante's baptismal font was located reminded Langdon of the fact that they were possibly racing against time and an epidemic. The gates were built as a thank offering to God because Florence had survived the Black Death.

I'm fine,' the man said. 'It was the damned hotel soap. I'm deathly allergic to soy, and most of these perfumed Italian soaps are soy-based. Stupid me for not checking.'"

-- Ferris (Chapter 59)

Importance: Although the strange man who joins Sienna and Langdon in their search for information about Zobrist's epidemic appears to be suffering from the Black Plague — he has rose-colored pustules and is having trouble breathing — he tells Sienna and Langdon that he is actually only suffering an allergic reaction.



Her only memento of the heartbreaking trip had been a lapis lazuli amulet. The Rod of Asclepius was a fitting symbol of medicine — bitter medicine in this case — but she had worn it every day since.”

-- Narrator (Chapter 70)

Importance: This quote refers to the meaning behind the amulet that Sinskey wears all the time. It was a parting gift from the man to whom she had been engaged. Her fiancé had broken up with her when she had told him that she could not have children.

I need you to understand that Agent Brüder and his team never tried to harm you. They were under direct orders to reestablish contact with you by whatever means were necessary.

-- Sinskey (Chapter 77)

Importance: When Sinskey and Langdon finally meet, she tries to convince him that Brüder and his men were not trying to hurt him and that they had done nothing to hurt her.

When you woke up,’ the provost said, ‘we wanted you to believe that people were trying to kill you ... that you were in peril.’”

-- The provost (Chapter 82)

Importance: The provost backs up Sinskey’s story as he explains to Langdon that he and his people had created an elaborate illusion to make Langdon believe that he was in danger.

In fact, during the final phase of the Black Death, this very city had been called the ‘plague hub’ of the empire, and the disease was said to have killed more than ten thousand residents a day.

-- Narrator (Chapter 85)

Importance: The author continues to create the idea for the reader that Zobrist is going to be releasing a deadly plague on the world. Istanbul is the place where they believe Zobrist is planning to release the plague.

Tonight, deep within the earth, the Istanbul State Symphony Orchestra was performing one of Franz Liszt’s most famous works — the Dante Symphony — an entire composition inspired by Dante’s descent into and return from hell.”

-- Narrator (Chapter 90)

Importance: Ironically, Zobrist arranges for the country’s orchestra to play the Dante Symphony, a musical suite based on The Divine Comedy, in the place where he was planning to release the virus.

To the left of the plaque, barely visible on the lagoon floor, lay a limp tether.”

-- Narrator (Chapter 93)



Importance: When Brüder and Langdon reach the spot where Zobrist claimed to have left the bag with the virus inside, they find only the tether that had held the bag. The bag is not visible.

The virus has the ability to render the human body ... infertile.' She shifted uncomfortably. "Bertrand created a sterility plague."
-- Sienna (Chapter 99)

Importance: When Langdon confronts Sienna, she tells him that Zobrist did not create some sort of disease that would destroy the human race. Instead, the pathogen would render part of the population sterile, thus limiting the population growth.

When Sienna read Zobrist's description of what he had created, she was horrified. She wanted to stop him. She considered his virus so dangerous that she didn't want anybody to gain access to it, including the World Health Organization. Don't you see? Sienna has been trying to destroy the virus ... not release it."
-- Langdon (Chapter 101)

Importance: Langdon takes Sienna back to Sinskey with him. He tries to get Sinskey to see that instead of working against them, as one might have thought a woman who had dated Zobrist would have done, Sienna was trying to stop him because she thought what he was doing was wrong.

Ms. Brooks, I may disagree with Bertrand's methods, but his assessment of the state of the world is accurate. This planet is facing a serious overpopulation issue. If we manage to neutralize Bertrand's virus without a viable alternate plan ... we are simply back at square one.
-- Sinskey (Chapter 102)

Importance: Sinskey surprises Sienna by agreeing with her that they should not try to reverse the virus that Zobrist released. She tells Sienna that she realizes that Zobrist was right in his speculation about the future of the earth if something is not done to control the population. However, Sinskey does not like the way Zobrist went about solving the problem.

If we don't embrace them,' Sienna replied, 'then we are as undeserving of life as the caveman who freezes to death because he's afraid to start a fire.'
-- Sienna (Chapter 102)

Importance: When Sienna is questioned about her thoughts on genetic engineering, she explains that she believes humans are responsible for doing the things they can to help their species survive, even if these things include activities that are morally questionable. She compares the human population's unwillingness to embrace genetic engineering to a cave man who would allow himself to freeze to death because he would not start a fire.



Dante's poem, Langdon was now reminded, was not so much about the misery of hell as it was about the power of the human spirit to endure any challenge, no matter how daunting."

-- Narrator (Epilogue)

Importance: At the end of the novel, Langdon remembers that *The Divine Comedy* is a story of hell and damnation. It is also the story of the ability of humans to overcome the challenges that face them.