

The Grail Conspiracy

Author: Lynn Sholes and Joe Moore

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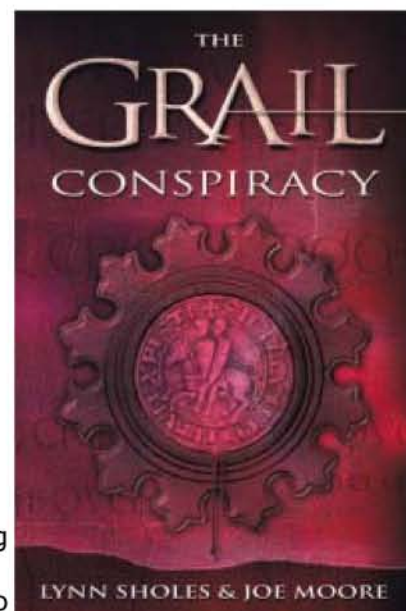
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Reviewer: Sharyn McGinty

Rating: 9  Gargoyles



SNN reporter, Cotton Stone was in trouble and it was her own fault. Hoping to gain some emotional distance from her relationship with married co-worker Thornton Graham, she'd convinced her boss to let her journey to Iraq and document how US sanctions were effecting the innocent, women and children. She was in taxi on her way to the airport when the driver suddenly stopped, threw her out of the car and left her in the middle of the desert. After waiting for someone to show, Cotton decided what she had to take and started walking. By some miracle, she found an archeological dig and everyone was packing up to leave. One of the drivers agrees to take her with him if she'll go fetch Dr. Jonathon Archer from out of the tomb.

Cotton heads into the tomb in time to see an Arab wrestling with Dr. Archer over a small wooden box. In the scuffle, the Arab is killed by his own gun and Archer collapses of a heart attack. Moments before his death, he hands the box to Cotton and tells her she is the only one and must stop the dawn. Tells her this in the language she shared with her dead twin sister. Spooked, Cotton leaves the tomb and heads back home, smuggling the box. Wanting to know more about Dr. Archer, she looks into past news footage and finds references to a John Tyler. In an effort to discover what could be in the box, she consults with Tyler and learns Archer was searching for the Holy Grail.

It's only when Cotton finds someone has entered her apartment, does she consider the Grail might be in the box Archer gave her. She takes the box to Tyler and after he looks through a book on medieval puzzles, opens the box. Inside was a cup, wrapped in a silk cloth embroidered with Templar symbols. The two immediately book a flight to Rome, handing the supposed Grail to the Vatican for authenticating. When the Grail is authenticated, events are set in motion by an unknown group to bring about the Second Coming. But will Cotton be able to discover who the group is and stop their plans before it is too late?

As people close to her begin dying and Cotton's accounts are frozen, she turns to Tyler for assistance. He listens to her story and looks for answers within the Bible. Drawing on the scriptures, he's able to present a good theory about why the Grail was stolen and why people keep saying Cotton is "the only one". The only question remains, is Cotton strong enough to do what needs to be done?

Absolutely amazing! **The Grail Conspiracy** is one of the most intriguing books I've read this year. Sholes and Moore have created a story that pulls the reader in from page one and doesn't let go until the last. Adventure, secrets, betrayals, archeology, Biblical theology and ethical concerns come together and send heroine Cotton Stone on journey she'll never forget and reveal the truth of her father's past and it's effect on her.

The emotion in this story is very real, very tangible. Cotton isn't an untried schoolgirl. She's a grown woman, involved in an affair with a married co-worker and falling in love with John Tyler. Throughout the entire book, she acts emotionally, showing a humanness not often found in novels. I, for one, was glad to see this as it made the storyline much more believable. When faced with everything Cotton undergoes, who is going to stop and think things out rationally every single time?

Fun, unforgettable and undeniably spectacular, **The Grail Conspiracy** is a must read.