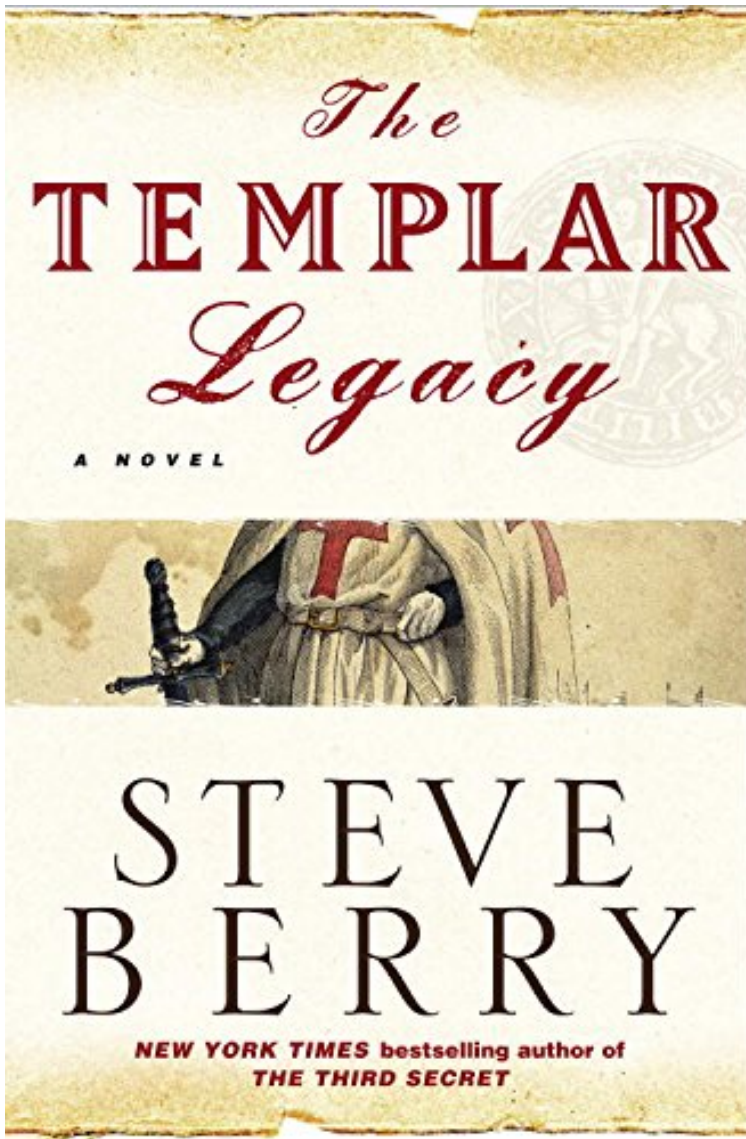


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The Templar Legacy: A Novel



Par Steve Berry
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(Read and download) The Templar Legacy: A Novel

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurBONUS: This edition contains an excerpt from Steve Berrys The King's Deception and a Cotton Malone dossier. The ancient order of the Knights Templar possessed untold wealth and absolute power over kings and popes . . . until the Inquisition, when they were wiped from the face of the earth, their hidden riches lost. But now two forces vying for the treasure have learned that it is not at all what they thought it wasand its true nature could change the modern world. Cotton Malone, one-time top operative for the U.S. Justice Department, is enjoying his quiet new life as an antiquarian book dealer in Copenhagen when an unexpected call to action reawakens his hair-trigger instinctsand plunges him back into the cloak-and-dagger world he thought hed left behind. It begins with a violent robbery attempt on Cottons former supervisor, Stephanie Nelle, who s far from home on a mission that has nothing to do with national

security. Armed with vital clues to a series of centuries-old puzzles scattered across Europe, she means to crack a mystery that has tantalized scholars and fortune-hunters through the ages by finding the legendary cache of wealth and forbidden knowledge thought to have been lost forever when the order of the Knights Templar was exterminated in the fourteenth century. But she's not alone. Competing for the historic prize and desperate for the crucial information Stephanie possesses is Raymond de Roquefort, a shadowy zealot with an army of assassins at his command. Welcome or not, Cotton seeks to even the odds in the perilous race. But the more he learns about the ancient conspiracy surrounding the Knights Templar, the more he realizes that even more than lives are at stake. At the end of a lethal game of conquest, rife with intrigue, treachery, and craven lust for power, lies a shattering discovery that could rock the civilized world and, in the wrong hands, bring it to its knees.

Extrait ONE Copenhagen, Denmark Thursday, June 22, The Present 2:50 pm

Cotton Malone spotted the knife at the same time he saw Stephanie Nelle. He was sitting at a table outside the Caf Nikolaj, comfortable in a white lattice chair. The sunny afternoon was pleasant and Hjbro Plads, the popular Danish square that spanned out before him, bristled with people. The caf was doing its usual brisk business; the mood feverish and for the past half hour he'd been waiting for Stephanie. She was a petite woman, in her sixties, though she never confirmed her age and the Justice Department personnel records that Malone once saw contained only a winking n/a in the space reserved for date of birth. Her dark hair was streaked with waves of silver, and her brown eyes offered both the compassionate look of a liberal and the fiery glint of a prosecutor. Two presidents had tried to make her attorney general, but she'd turned both offers down. One attorney general had lobbied hard to fire her especially after she was enlisted by the FBI to investigate him but the White House nixed the idea since, among other things, Stephanie Nelle was scrupulously honest. In contrast, the man with the knife was short and stout, with narrow features and brush-cut hair. Something haunted loomed on his East European face a forlornness that worried Malone more than the glistening blade and he was dressed casually in denim pants and a blood-red jacket. Malone rose from his seat but kept his eyes trained on Stephanie. He thought of shouting a warning, but she was too far away and there was too much noise between them. His view of her was momentarily blocked by one of the modernistic sculptures that dotted Hjbro Plads this one of an obscenely obese woman, lying naked on her belly, her obtrusive buttocks rounded like windswept mountains. When Stephanie appeared from the other side of the cast bronze, the man with the knife had moved closer and Malone watched as he severed a strap that draped her left shoulder, jerked a leather bag free, then shoved Stephanie to the flagstones. A woman screamed and commotion erupted at the sight of a purse snatcher brandishing a knife. Red Jacket rushed ahead, Stephanie's bag in hand, and shouldered people out of his way. A few pushed back. The thief angled left, around another of the bronzed sculptures, and finally broke into a run. His route seemed aimed at Kbmagergade, a pedestrian-only lane that twisted north, out of Hjbro Plads, deeper into the city's shopping district. Malone bounded from the table, determined to cut off the assailant before he could turn the corner, but a cluster of bicycles blocked his way. He circled the cycles and sprinted forward, partially orbiting a fountain before tackling his prey. They slammed into hard stone, Red Jacket taking most of the impact, and Malone immediately noticed that his opponent was muscular. Red Jacket, undaunted by the attack, rolled once, then brought a knee into Malone's stomach. The breath left him in a rush and his guts churned. Red Jacket sprang to his feet and raced up Kbmagergade. Malone stood, but instantly crouched over and sucked a couple of shallow breaths. Damn. He was out of practice. He caught hold of himself and resumed pursuit, his quarry now possessing a fifty-foot head start. Malone had not seen the knife during their struggle, but as he plowed up the street between shops he saw that the man still grasped the leather bag. His chest burned, but he was closing the gap. Red Jacket wrenched a flower cart away from a scraggly old man, one of many carts that lined both Hjbro Plads and Kbmagergade. Malone hated the vendors, who enjoyed blocking his bookshop, especially on Saturdays. Red Jacket flung the cart down the cobbles in Malone's direction. He could not let the cart run free too many people on the street, including children so he darted right, grasped hold, and twisted it to a stop. He glanced back and saw Stephanie round the corner onto Kbmagergade, along with a policeman. They were half a football field away, and he had no time to wait. Malone dashed ahead, wondering where the man was heading. Perhaps he'd left a vehicle, or a driver was waiting where Kbmagergade emptied into another of Copenhagen's busy squares, Hauser Plads. He hoped not. That place was a nightmare of congestion, beyond the web of people-only lanes that formed the shoppers' mecca known as Strget. His thighs ached from the unexpected workout, the muscles barely recalling his days with the Navy and the Justice Department. After a year of voluntary retirement, his exercise regimen would not impress his former employer. Ahead loomed the Round Tower, nestled firmly against the Trinity Church

like a thermos bound to a lunch pail. The burly cylindrical structure rose nine stories. Denmark's Christian IV had erected it in 1642, and the symbol of his reign gilded and embraced by a c glistened on its somber brick edifice. Five streets intersected where the Round Tower stood, and Red Jacket could choose any one of them for his escape. Police cars appeared. One screeched to a stop on the south side of the Round Tower. Another came from farther down Kbmagergade, blocking any escape to the north. Red Jacket was now contained in the plaza that encircled the Round Tower. His quarry hesitated, seeming to appraise the situation, then scampered right and disappeared inside the Round Tower. What was the fool doing? There was no way out besides the ground-floor portal. But maybe Red Jacket didn't know that. Malone ran to the entrance. He knew the man in the ticket booth. The Norwegian spent many hours in Malone's bookshop, English literature his passion. Arne, where did that man go? he asked in Danish, catching his wind. Ran right by without paying. Anybody up there? An older couple went up a little while ago. No elevator or stairs led to the top. Instead, a spiral causeway wound a path straight to the summit, originally installed so that bulky seventeenth-century astronomical instruments could be wheeled up. The story local tour guides liked to tell was of how Russia's Peter the Great once rode up on horseback while his empress followed in a carriage. Malone could hear footfalls echoing from the flooring above. He shook his head at what he knew awaited him. Tell the police were up there. He started to run. Halfway up the spiraling incline he passed a door leading into the Large Hall. The glassed entrance was locked, the lights off. Ornamented double windows lined the tower's outer walls, but each was iron-barred. He listened again and could still hear running from above. He continued ahead, his breathing growing thick and hampered. He slowed his pace when he passed a medieval planet plotter affixed high on the wall. He knew the exit onto the roof platform was just a few feet away, around the ramps' final bend. He heard no more footsteps. He crept forward and stepped through the archway. An octagonal observatory not from Christian IV's time, but a more recent incarnation rose in the center, with a wide terrace encircling. To his left a decorative iron fence surrounded the observatory, its only entrance chained shut. On his right, intricate wrought-iron latticework lined the tower's outer edge. Beyond the low railing loomed the city's red-tiled rooftops and green spires. He rounded the platform and found an elderly man lying prone. Behind the body, Red Jacket stood with a knife to an older woman's throat, his arm encasing her chest. She seemed to want to scream, but fear quelled her voice. Keep still, Malone said to her in Danish. He studied Red Jacket. The haunted look was still there in the dark, almost mournful eyes. Beads of sweat glistened in the bright sun. Everything signaled that Malone should not step any closer. Footfalls from below signaled that the police would arrive in a few moments. How about you cool down? he asked, trying English. He could see the man understood him, but the knife stayed in place. Red Jacket's gaze kept darting away, off to the sky then back. He seemed unsure of himself and that concerned Malone even more. Desperate people always did desperate things. Put the knife down. The police are coming. There's no way out. Red Jacket looked to the sky again, then refocused on Malone. Indecision stared back at him. What was this? A purse snatcher who flees to the top of a hundred-foot tower with nowhere to go? Footfalls from below grew louder. The police are here. Red Jacket backed closer to the iron railing but kept his grip tight on the elderly woman. Malone sensed the steeliness of an ultimatum forcing some choice, so he made clear again, There's no way out. Red Jacket tightened his grip on the woman's chest, then he staggered back, now firmly against the waist-high outer railing, nothing beyond him and his hostage but air. The eyes lost their panic and a sudden calm swept over the man. He shoved the old woman forward and Malone caught her before she lost her balance. Red Jacket made the sign of the cross and, with Stephanie's bag in hand, pivoted out over the railing, screamed one word because then he slashed the knife across his throat as his body plunged to the street. The woman howled as the police emerged from the portal. Malone let her go and rushed to the rail. Red Jacket lay sprawled on the cobbles one hundred feet below. He turned and looked back to the sky, past the flagpole atop the observatory, the Danish Dannebrog's white cross upon a red banner limp in the still air. What had the man been looking at? And why did he jump? He gazed back down and saw Stephanie elbowing her way through the growing crowd. Her leather bag lay a few feet from the dead man and he watched as she yanked it from the cobbles, then dissolved back into the spectators. He followed her with his gaze as she plowed through the people and scuttled away, down one of the streets that led from the Round Tower, deeper into the busy Strøget, never looking back. He shook his head at her hasty retreat and muttered, What the hell? From the Hardcover edition. From Publishers Weekly Starred . There are times when Corrigan attempts the French accent of this book's arch-villain, Raymond de Roquefort, that he sounds like nothing so much as Peter Sellers's Inspector Clouseau with a bad head cold. Corrigan gamely tackles what so many other readers tiptoe around, imitating each of the voices in Berry's international array of shadowy operators.

While the results are occasionally, unintentionally comic, Corrigan is to be commended: his multivoiced, one-man-band reading makes for a wildly enjoyable listen. Berry's novel follows in the tradition of *The Da Vinci Code*, mingling medieval Christian secrecy and contemporary intelligence-agency intrigue. Corrigan contains multitudes, and his able array of voices show a man who greatly enjoys the opportunity to have the stage of Berry's book all to himself. Having fun with his reading, Corrigan masterfully conveys the entertainment value of Berry's convoluted story. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.