

Shrouded: The Story

ORIGIN STORY: If memory serves, the inspiration for *Shrouded* came one day on the front porch when a fly landed too close to Dixie's gin and tonic. Sue grabbed a 1962 *Life* magazine from a pile destined for recycle, rolled it up, and tried to shoo the fly away. She missed the fly but hit the gin. While cleaning up the mess the ladies noticed the magazine cover featuring the lead story: "Scientists Close in on The Secret of Life." Well, a gin or two later and the rest is history.

INSPIRATION: This story takes place in 2000, when the world was leaping from one millennium to another. Our young protagonist comes to Rome to advance her academic career but is soon confronted with questions of faith, trust, the boundaries of scientific frontiers and technology colliding with a human understanding of the secret of life. The Vatican is once again at the center of an international plot of intrigue. This time, however, it is a young woman who will lead the reader on her personal journey to unravel the threads of deceit.

PLOT SUMMARY: Three murders, the disappearance of a young nun who is a girlhood friend and theft of the Shroud of Turn are just some of the mysteries that entangle Crispin Leads within days of her arrival in Rome. An NYU graduate student, Crispin fights relapse into her youthful stress relief disorder of self-harm as she applies her considerable mental powers to try to find her friend and the killers behind the theft. She teams up with a young priest even though she is not sure she can trust him. They make a run for it, evading police and a mysterious stalker. In the days that follow they escape death and torture as they unravel the secrets of an unholy plot. The wild chase takes them to Spain and, finally, Paris, where the fearful truth waits for them.

WHO WILL LOVE THIS BOOK: Anyone who craves a good thriller with a complex plot and a female lead character who can hold her own against personal demons and institutional authority. Readers who can't get enough of exotic locations and international intrigue, with just a hint of scientific shenanigans, will also enjoy *Shrouded*.

