



Smart New Suspense Novel Seamlessly Weaves Fascinating Historical and Academic Detail in Skillfully Written Thriller

[THE SECRET SCROLL](#)

A Novel

Ronald Cutler

In *THE SECRET SCROLL* (Beaufort Books; \$24.95 hardcover; February 13, 2008), an original and exciting debut novel, visionary radio entrepreneur Ronald Cutler steeps readers in an unforgettable read that is equal parts modern-day thriller, historical mystery, and love story. Set in Jerusalem, a city where ancient religious conflicts weigh as heavily as the desert sun, Cutler paints a rich and electric portrait of the city that safeguards both the ancient secrets and important holy sites of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim worshippers.

When university politics and professional disappointment prompt Josh Cohan, a work-obsessed American archaeologist to take a long overdue sabbatical in Jerusalem, the experience proves to be less than restorative. Powerful dreams and disturbing visions compel Josh to seek out a hauntingly familiar cave near the Dead Sea. There he makes a near miraculous discovery: a jar similar to those which housed the Dead Sea Scrolls containing a scroll upon which a cryptic text has been written in Aramaic, a mostly forgotten language once spoken in the region, from the Second Temple period.

An adept scholar, Josh quickly realizes that the author of the ancient scroll may be Yehoshua ben Yosef, the man known today as Jesus Christ. Eager to maintain a significant role in the authentication and translation of the single most important find in Christian history - the first physical evidence of the existence of the historical Jesus - Josh must contend with Israel Antiquities Authority, one of the world's leading organizations in Biblical archaeological discoveries and advancement.

When a sinister organization called The Guardians, an extreme religious sect whose astonishing brutality is remarkable even in a city where violence and terrorism are commonplace, also proves eager to get their hands on the scroll, Josh quickly realizes that more than his reputation may be at stake. Drawing on two years of research and some seventy-five books, dozens of interviews and a wide variety of resources, Cutler's fascinating portrait of The Guardians is based on an actual early Christian sect that existed for two hundred years and preached extreme hatred and intolerance.

Working with a team of archeologists from the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA), Josh falls under the spell of Danielle, the fiery daughter of his initial IAA contact. When a friend is found murdered in a horrendous and ritualistic assassination and Danielle goes missing, Josh wonders if even the most important discovery mankind has ever beheld really matters if he must give up all he loves most in order to attain it.

A trail of kidnappings and assassinations lures readers deeper into a labyrinth at whose heart lays the enigma of The Guardians and even more questions about the true identities of both Josh and Danielle. The scroll's tantalizing promise to reveal the true identity and message of Jesus sets the ancient and modern worlds on a collision course.

"Faith is not an excuse to kill or do harm to your fellow man or woman," translates Josh. Cutler's timely message of a faith that abhors violence rings throughout this compelling novel. His Web site, www.TheSecretScroll.com, offers readers an opportunity to explore these fascinating historical mysteries even further.

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