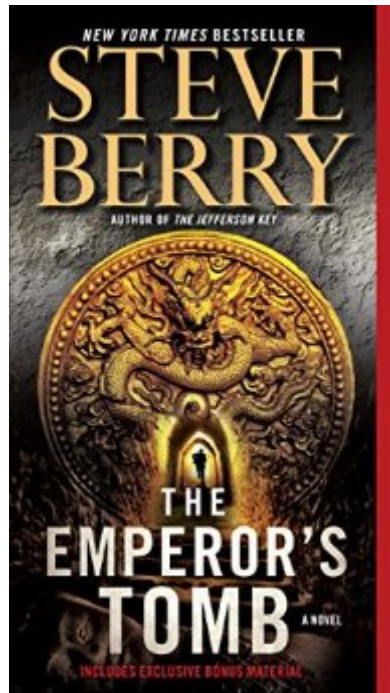


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The Emperor's Tomb (with Bonus Short Story The Balkan Escape): A Novel (Cotton Malone Book 6)



Synopsis

BONUS: This edition contains a Cotton Malone Dossier, an excerpt from Steve Berry's *The Columbus Affair*, and a short story by Steve Berry, *The Balkan Escape*. **NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER** Former Justice Department operative Cotton Malone has received an anonymous note carrying an unfamiliar Web address. Logging on, he's shocked to see Cassiopeia Vitt, a woman who's saved his life more than once, being tortured at the hands of a mysterious man who has a single demand: Bring me the artifact she's asked you to keep safe. The only problem is, Malone doesn't have a clue what the man is talking about, since Cassiopeia has left nothing with him. So begins Malone's most harrowing adventure to date—one that offers up astounding historical revelations, pits him against a ruthless ancient brotherhood, and sends him from Denmark to Belgium to Vietnam then on to one of the greatest archaeological sites in the world: the tomb of China's First Emperor, guarded by an underground army of terra-cotta warriors, which has inexplicably remained sealed for more than two thousand years—its mysteries about to be revealed.

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Customer Reviews

I'm not going to lie to you, if you're hoping that this book will see the return of a story devoted to tracking down valuable & historically important treasures, you'll be disappointed. They're in here, but they are very much a backdrop to what is ultimately a political thriller. I do however, hope that you still give this book a chance. There's still enough here to like. It was going to be a normal day for Cotton until he got a message containing a web address. He didn't know what to expect from it, but he certainly wasn't expecting to see his old friend Cassiopeia Vitt being tortured. Cotton is given an ultimatum- give them what Cassiopeia left him or she dies. Only problem? He hasn't seen her in quite a while, let alone received anything from her. Unable to leave his friend (and possibly more) to die, Cotton meets up with one of the people involved in her capture, only to end up involved in something bigger than he ever expected. Not only is his & Cassiopeia's lives at stake, but also the future of China itself. While there is a wonderful amount of history & ancient mystery to this book, that wasn't the main plot point of the book. At its heart this book was ultimately a fast paced political thriller, which I did enjoy for the most part. I do miss the old days of Cotton Indiana Jonesing his way through the story, but Berry seems to be exploring a new & untapped facet of this series that is pretty intriguing. Unfortunately the book isn't completely perfect. There were times where the action laden scenes did seem to get a little bogged down under their own weight & I found myself really wishing the story would just move past that, especially when Cotton kept going on about how he didn't trust Viktor.

This is one of series of books featuring Cotton Malone and Cassiopeia Vitt. Generally I have found that most series authors find ways to introduce recurring characters so that you know something about them. In this case there was only a bit of personal history given which at times made you feel at a disadvantage although the book can be read as a stand alone book in the series. I have never read this author before and the copy I was reading was the uncorrected proof which I hope will go on to get some major flaws repaired before actual publication. I found the story interesting and there was a lot of history about China that I enjoyed learning about, but I found many scenes in the book to be totally implausible. The biggest scene that I had trouble believing in was a shoot out in a museum in Antwerp. Several different factions were chasing each other, shooting each other, and fighting each other in a closed museum at night. Oh, and by the way, the building was on fire. I have always heard and believed that when a building is burning it is hard to see as everything is dark and smoky, it is hard to breath unless you are down near the floor, the atmosphere is hot and nasty and a normal person's instinct is to get out of a burning building as quickly as possible. Not these guys.

They were all so committed to their cause that they all kept fighting, shooting, etc. while the building and room all around them was going up in flames. Apparently the normal problems associated with a fire did not bother these folks except of course for the one guy that burned up in front of them. Come on, get your characters fighting in a way that is believable! Even the premise of the book at the beginning was hard to believe.

The Emperor's Tomb A Tedious Thriller When Steve Berry exploded on the publishing scene, he did so with *The Amber Room*, *The Romanov Prophecy*, and *The Templar Legacy*, three well-plotted and well-written thrillers, using a unique blend of history and excitement. Slowly, the novels have become tedious and just plain dull. Cotton Malone, the treasure hunter--a la Indiana Jones--has become the hero of increasingly bloated tomes which are dragged down by excessive details, poor structure, and mediocre writing, and in *The Emperor's Tomb*, a political lecture. We also see unnecessary creeping into recent novels of details from Malone's private life. There is the son fathered by someone other than Malone's ex-wife, a mentor who was inexplicably killed off, Malone agonizing over a lost-father, and a tedious and growing love affair between Malone and the now supporting heroine, Cassiopeia Vitt. Vitt, who has appeared in earlier Berry novels as someone with an extraordinary background, is one of Berry's unique creations. Her exotic history, highly refined martial arts skills, and wealth from her deceased father are the usual elements almost required for an independent super heroine. Her interest in building a 14th Century French castle using the technology of that time period, as well as her desire to help those in desperate straits make her stand above the usual cardboard cutouts. Unfortunately, *The Emperor's Tomb* does little to show her complex nature. Instead, she is a run-of-the-mill heroine who survives many threats: water boarding; a fall of more than ninety feet into a frigid, boulder-lined torrential river; beatings; and the death of a lover.

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