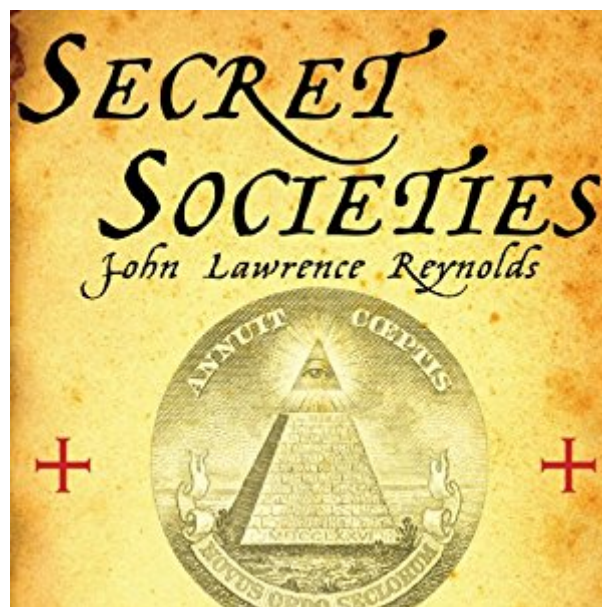




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# Secret Societies: Inside The Freemasons, The Yakuza, Skull And Bones, And The World's Most Notorious Secret Organizations



## Synopsis

Does a sinister cabal actually control international affairs? Were William Shakespeare and Abraham Lincoln secretly involved with a group founded to discover and preserve the principles of alchemy? Has an ancient mystical religion really been reduced to a length of red string that sells for a dollar an inch? Secret societies surround us, yet they often remain a mystery. Their secrecy suggests sacrilege and crime, and their loyalties stand accused of undermining the world's governments. They generate fear, suspicion, and - above all - fascination. From the parched wadis of the Middle East to the crowded boutiques of Beverly Hills, award-winning author John Lawrence Reynolds peels away centuries of speculation and paranoia and shines a brilliant light on organizations that have been shrouded in secrecy for ages, from the Templars and the Mafia to the Priory of Sion and Skull & Bones. He offers a smart and surprising behind-the-scenes exploration of the tales - confirmed and fabricated - that surround the best-known and often least-understood secret societies.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book has some good information, but I found it somewhat shallow in many respects. I was hoping for a more scholarly account. But overall the author covers a lot of territory. The breadth is there, but the depth, not so much. We are not getting "inside" these organizations as the subtitle claims, but we do get a sense of what they are about in a second-hand hearsay fashion. If you know nothing about these organizations then this book is not a bad start.

Early Christians were not admired by Roman politicians - their refusal to worship the emperor was a bit of a problem, and became a much bigger one when Christians began converting others to their point of view. Roman leaders encouraged stories of their scandalous activities, employing them as a weapon to suppress the movement. It didn't help that Christians kept to themselves, did not admit strangers to their ceremonies without the approval of a known member, and demanded new members undergo a test of faith before being admitted. On the other hand, declaring yourself to be a Christian following Christ's crucifixion was akin to signing your own death warrant. Another problem arose from Christians rescuing abandoned Roman infants left outside to die by families unable to feed them - it became assumed that, given their practice of consuming flesh and blood, gathering abandoned babies was a source of raw material for their disgusting ceremonies. That they were cared for and raised as Christians was not considered plausible. 'Incest' became another widely spread rumor about Christians - growing from their practice of referring to each other as "Brother" and "Sister." Using an instrument of torture as a symbol and identity added to Roman's initial view of Christians as a menacing secret society. The underlying precept was 'anything that is good should not be kept secret, and anything kept secret cannot be good.' In 1191, Conrad of Montferrat became King of Jerusalem, appointed by Richard the Lion-Hearted, celebrated hero of the Crusades. Conrad planned to glorify his reign by driving Muslims from the Holy Land forever. Before getting started, however, he was stabbed to death by three Muslims posing as Christian monks. Henry, Count of Champagne, hoped to become Conrad's replacement and almost immediately married Conrad's widow, hoping to inherit the title that had eluded him. Instead he was given an administrative position requiring several trips from Jerusalem into Persia. During one of those journeys, he encountered the source of Conrad's demise - the Assassins. Their actual power lasted little more than 100 years, waning with the advance of the Mongol hordes. Spiritual descendants of that group formed a small secret society that terrorizes the U.S. today - it's called Al Qaeda. The group grew out of a 7th-century schism among Muslims in 632 that produced Shiites and Sunnis. No event in any other religion, even the Christian Reformation, produced the enmity created by this division. Battles between Shiites and Sunnis usually ended in defeat for the Shiites, always outnumbered about ten to one. In the period leading up to the Crusades, individual Shiites living among Sunnis risked death upon discovery. Forced to live in a clandestine manner, they became adept at maintaining secrecy and demanding that members be totally obedient to instructions from their leaders. Two of the most significant splinter groups were the Twelvers and Ismailis. The Twelvers believed only twelve true imams (leaders) existed and the twelfth has

remained alive and in hiding for the past thousand years. The Ismailis are further split into various segments including the Seveners and the Nizaris, who insist that the imams will never vanish from the earth and identify the Agha Khan as their imam. While the Twelvers are substantially larger in number than the Ismailis (90% of the current population of Iran and about 60% of Iraqis), the Ismailis have tended to be more violent in response to their minority status within a larger minority. Many secret societies and religious cults tend to be organized at the epicenter of a series of concentric circles, with ultimate power residing somewhere in the hub. From the foot of a pyramid, you can see the summit, but from anywhere within a circular organization you can never accurately measure proximity to authority. Thus, Circular organizations better conceal and protect their leadership more effectively than pyramid structures. Who are the most dangerous members of the various secret societies? According to sources claiming inner knowledge of the group's true purpose, they are Freemasons. When anyone questions this assertion, conspiracy theorists bring out an impressive array of proof, beginning with a recital of influential men through history who were undeniably associated with Masonry - including many signers of the U.S. Declaration of Independence. More recent members include Truman, Ford, Churchill, and Duke Ellington. To a few fanatic historians, almost all Masons, at the root of their achievements is a historic and link with the Knights Templar, who began as Defenders of the Christian Faith, became the bankers of medieval Europe, and succumbed to the machinations of a greedy king and a complicitous pope. The Knights Templar safeguarded pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land and battled Islamic armies for control of Jerusalem. They obeyed rules of chivalry and asceticism, dedicating their lives to the glory of God and the protection of Christian pilgrims. During the period between 800 and 1300, European kings claimed wide authority over lands now known as France, Germany, Britain, but the countryside was effectively ruled by individual lords and barons. The lords dispensed justice, levied taxes and tolls, minted their own currency, and demanded military service from occupying citizens. Many could field larger armies than could the king. Around 1050, making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land was considered a duty for every able Christian as a means of assuaging guilt and appeasing God. In 1096 the first of nine crusades set off. Taking part in a crusade meant at least two years of travel across rugged and often hostile country. Vows of poverty, chastity and obedience not only suited their obligations to chivalrous behavior, they also were assumed to facilitate their entry into Heaven. This evolved into their receiving substantial assets from patrons, as well as booty seized from defeated Muslim fighters.

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Great collection of Secret Societies. From the well known to the little heard of.

Amazing book.....real eye opener.....

Surprisingly good.

great reading if you are in to this area

Just like the theories and history of secret societies, a little bit of truth gets exaggerated into a fish story. This author can't believe his own BS! Boring; repetitive; waste of time. Too much speculation by the author; based on theories about theories, all unsupported.

This books brings out all the grit and secrecy that has given life to these organizations. They are a link to the past but an evidence of the potential of groups willing to have a secret agenda in today's society. Based on fear and shameless promise, there will always be an attraction for some individuals' membership.

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