

Discussion Guide: *Dormant Angels* by Fred Oliver

Introduction

- Welcome to the discussion of *Dormant Angels* by Fred Oliver.
- This novel delves into a high-stakes conflict for humanity's soul, blending elements of archaeology, religious mystery, and supernatural thriller.
- The author notes that the book is a work of fiction and takes religious license. Dialogue includes Italian with immediate English translation for authenticity.
- This guide is designed to help facilitate a rich and engaging conversation about the book. There are no right or wrong answers – feel free to share your honest thoughts and interpretations [adapted from 10].

Getting Started: Initial Impressions

- What was your initial reaction to the novel's premise: "Evil exerts a magnetic attraction which has only one goal: to destroy... The Dormant Angels are among us!"? How quickly did the story draw you in?
- The book combines elements of historical archaeology, religious texts, and global crisis. How did this blend of genres work for you?
- Which character did you connect with most initially, and why? (e.g., Professor Albert Whitfield, Father Armando Robles, Jennifer Conley, etc.)

Diving Deeper: Plot, Mystery, and Conflict

- Discuss Professor Whitfield's background as both an archaeologist and former Catholic priest. How does this unique combination of experiences prepare him for the discovery he makes?
- The discovery involves ancient copper tablets and a papyrus found near the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The papyrus is in Aramaic, and the tablets are in Akkadian. What is the significance of these specific ancient languages and their age (at least 2,500 years old)?
- The translated papyrus reveals a prophecy about "dark angels" inhabiting souls and spreading discord. How is this prophecy reflected in the worldwide chaos depicted in the novel?
- The solution presented is the "recitation of the conjuration" (prayer) by "Three holy men, ordained by the celestial forces," at the "seat of Peter, where the earthly and heavenly realms converge". What are your thoughts on this specific requirement and location?
- The tablets are repeatedly stolen throughout the excerpts (from Whitfield at the airport, from the Vatican Bank safe). What does this ongoing theft highlight about the tablets' significance and the forces working against Whitfield's group?
- Discuss the role of the Collector, Adnan Sunil, and his interest in the tablets. What does his willingness to exchange the tablets for the Menorah suggest about his motivations?
- Bishop Lorenzo Baldassare emerges as a significant antagonist, influenced by the Dormant Angels. How does his involvement, including framing Whitfield, highlight the internal conflict within religious institutions?

- The search for the "three holy men" leads to identifying the Pope, Rabbi Akiba Akhtarini, and Imam Malik. What is the significance of these three figures representing Christianity, Judaism, and Islam?
- What challenges do the group face in getting the Pope, Rabbi, and Imam to agree and coordinate for the ritual?
- Discuss the specific, unusual requirements for the ritual: three days of purification by abstinence, being barefoot, and tying their feet together. What might be the symbolic meaning behind these actions?

Characters and Their Journeys

- Trace **Professor Whitfield's** journey from archaeologist/former priest to the leader of this mission. How does his faith evolve throughout the story?
- **Jennifer Conley** is described as adept at research and has a background that connects to the Freemasons. How does her unique skill set and history contribute to the group's efforts?
- **Father Armando Robles** is a key ally for Whitfield. What role does his perspective as an active priest play in interpreting the discoveries and challenges?
- **Cardinal Salvatore** is a figure of significant authority and expertise within the Vatican. How do his initial ambition for power, his subsequent internal conflict over the papyrus translation, and his personal experiences (including his kidnapping and torture and the revelation about his father) shape his journey from a potentially self-serving figure to a "wise and compassionate Cardinal" who becomes a crucial ally and facilitator for the protagonists' mission?
- **The Collector, Adnan Sunil**, is introduced as a shrewd and resourceful figure driven by the acquisition of valuable artifacts, employing "devious methods" to achieve his goals, including the theft of the copper tablets. How does his identity as "The Collector," his motivations, and the later revelation of his paternal relationship with Cardinal Salvatore influence his actions and complex role in the narrative, particularly regarding the possession and eventual return of the crucial tablets?
- Discuss **the Pope's** decision to participate in the ritual and hold the tablets. What does this reveal about his character and the gravity of the situation?
- **Rabbi Akhtarini and Imam Malik** are introduced as potential "holy men". What are their initial reactions to Whitfield's proposal, and what convinces them to join the mission?

Themes and Symbolism

- The central theme is the "battle for humanity's soul". How does the novel portray this battle, both on a global scale (chaos, influencing leaders) and on a personal level (e.g., Cardinal Salvatore's conflict, Bishop Baldassare's allegiance)?
- What is the significance of the Dormant Angels as the manifestation of evil? How do they exert their influence?
- The ritual is described as taking place at the "seat of Peter", interpreted as St. Peter's Basilica, specifically at the feet of St. Peter. What is the symbolic power of this location for confronting evil?

- The requirement for representatives from the three Abrahamic faiths (Christianity, Judaism, Islam) to perform the ritual is crucial. What message does this convey about unity in the face of overwhelming evil?
- How does the novel explore the tension between ancient prophecies/religious texts and modern understanding or disbelief?

The Ritual and Its Aftermath

- Describe the challenges and threats faced by the holy men and their allies leading up to the ritual [e.g., flooding threats, basilica crack, Imam's arrest]. How did these events escalate the tension?
- The ritual is performed on Sunday, October 19, 2025, inside St. Peter's Basilica [Epilogue, 204]. Describe the scene as the Pope, Rabbi, and Imam begin the ritual.
- During the ritual, the Pope collapses and passes away. However, the excerpts explicitly state that the ritual *was* successfully completed and the world began returning to normal [Epilogue]. How do you interpret the success of the ritual despite the Pope's death during its performance? (Based on our conversation history and the final excerpts [206, Epilogue]).
- Given the success of the ritual in beginning to restore normalcy [206, Epilogue], what does this suggest about the nature of the "conjunction" or prayer and the requirements for its completion?

Concluding Thoughts

- What was the most memorable moment or scene for you in these excerpts?
- Did the ending (as presented in the excerpts, confirming the ritual's success and return to normalcy) meet your expectations? [206, Epilogue]
- What questions do you still have about the characters, plot, or world of *Dormant Angels* after reading these excerpts?
- Would you be interested in reading the rest of the novel?

Notes for the Discussion Facilitator (Adapted from "5 Steps...")

- **Format:** This guide uses headings and bullet points to make it easy to scan during discussion [adapted from 5].
- **Flexibility:** Feel free to spend more or less time on sections depending on the group's interest. Allow the conversation to flow naturally while using the questions as a roadmap [adapted from 2, 17].
- **Questioning:** Encourage detailed responses. If a question leads to a brief answer, try follow-up prompts like "Can you tell me more about that?" or "What makes you say that?".
- **Author's Intent:** Remind the group that this is a work of fiction and uses religious license, so discussions can focus on the narrative and thematic elements presented within the story.