

# DA VINCI CODE

Dan Brown



# Chapter 104

Rosslyn Chapel—often called the Cathedral of Codes—stands seven miles south of Edinburgh, Scotland, on the site of an ancient Mithraic temple. Built by the Knights Templar in 1446, the chapel is engraved with a mind-boggling array of symbols from the Jewish, Christian, Egyptian, Masonic, and pagan traditions.

The chapel's geographic coordinates fall precisely on the north-south meridian that runs through Glastonbury. This longitudinal Rose Line is the traditional marker of King Arthur's Isle of Avalon and is considered the central pillar of Britain's sacred geometry. It is from this hallowed Rose Line that Rosslyn—originally spelled Roslin—takes its name.

Rosslyn's rugged spires were casting long evening shadows as Robert Langdon and Sophie Neveu pulled their rental car into the grassy parking area at the foot of the bluff on which the chapel stood. Their short flight from London to Edinburgh had been restful, although neither of them had slept for the anticipation of what lay ahead. Gazing up at the stark edifice framed against a cloud-swept sky, Langdon felt like Alice falling headlong into the rabbit hole. This must be a dream. And yet he knew the text of Saunière's final message could not have been more specific.

The Holy Grail 'neath ancient Roslin waits.

Langdon had fantasized that Saunière's "Grail map" would be a diagram—a drawing with an X- marks-the-spot—and yet the Priory's final secret had been unveiled in the same way Saunière had spoken to them from the beginning. Simple verse. Four explicit lines that pointed without a doubt to this very spot. In addition to identifying Rosslyn by name, the verse made reference to several of the chapel's renowned architectural features.



This carving appears on the outside wall of the Chapel, near the entrance door. It tells us of the farming community which was based around Rosslyn in the fifteenth century.

1. Farmers wife rescuing a goose from the jaws of a fox  
A typical rural scene



William is said to have brought a portion of the True Cross or 'Holy Rood' to Scotland. An alternative theory is that the figure holding a cross behind the knight may represent Queen Margaret whom William escorted from Hungary to marry Malcolm Canmore, King of Scotland, in 1070.

2. Knight on horseback  
A possible representation of William 'the Seemly' St Clair, the first of the St Clairs to settle in Scotland

Despite the clarity of Saunière's final revelation, Langdon had been left feeling more off balance than enlightened. To him, Rosslyn Chapel seemed far too obvious a location. For centuries, this stone chapel had echoed with whispers of the Holy Grail's presence. The whispers had turned to shouts in recent decades when ground-penetrating radar revealed the presence of an astonishing structure beneath the chapel—a massive subterranean chamber. Not only did this deep vault dwarf the chapel atop it, but it appeared to have no entrance or exit. Archaeologists petitioned to begin blasting through the bedrock to reach the mysterious chamber, but the Rosslyn Trust expressly forbade any excavation of the sacred site. Of course, this only fueled the fires of speculation. What was the Rosslyn Trust trying to hide?

Rosslyn had now become a pilgrimage site for mystery seekers. Some claimed they were drawn here by the powerful magnetic field that emanated inexplicably from these coordinates, some claimed they came to search the hillside for a hidden entrance to the vault, but most admitted they had come simply to wander the grounds and absorb the lore of the Holy Grail.

Although Langdon had never been to Rosslyn before now, he always chuckled when he heard the chapel described as the current home of the Holy Grail. Admittedly, Rosslyn once might have been home to the Grail, long ago... but certainly no longer. Far too much attention had been drawn to Rosslyn in past decades, and sooner or later someone would find a way to break into the vault.

True Grail academics agreed that Rosslyn was a decoy—one of the devious dead ends the Priory crafted so convincingly. Tonight, however, with the Priory's keystone offering a verse that pointed directly to this spot, Langdon no longer felt so smug. A perplexing question had been running through his mind all day:

*Why would Saunière go to such effort to guide us to so obvious a location?*



Hanging upside down and bound with rope, this is the fallen angel Lucifer. It is one of the depictions of angels in unusual positions in the Chapel which are significant in the rites of Freemasonry.

3. Lucifer  
One of the many Masonic carvings in the Chapel



This hanging boss encompasses the eight-pointed Star of Bethlehem carved with figures of the nativity. Clockwise around its sides are the Virgin and child; the manger; the three wise men; and three shepherds.

4. The Star of Bethlehem and the Nativity  
Representation of the birth of Christ

There seemed only one logical answer.

*There is something about Rosslyn we have yet to understand.*

"Robert?" Sophie was standing outside the car, looking back at him. "Are you coming?" She was holding the rosewood box, which Captain Fache had returned to them. Inside, both cryptexes had been reassembled and nested as they had been found. The papyrus verse was locked safely at its core—minus the shattered vial of vinegar.

Making their way up the long gravel path, Langdon and Sophie passed the famous west wall of the chapel. Casual visitors assumed this oddly protruding wall was a section of the chapel that had not been finished. The truth, Langdon recalled, was far more intriguing.

*The west wall of Solomon's Temple.*

The Knights Templar had designed Rosslyn Chapel as an exact architectural blueprint of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem—complete with a west wall, a narrow rectangular sanctuary, and a subterranean vault like the Holy of Holies, in which the original nine knights had first unearthed their priceless treasure. Langdon had to admit, there existed an intriguing symmetry in the idea of the Templars building a modern Grail repository that echoed the Grail's original hiding place.

Rosslyn Chapel's entrance was more modest than Langdon expected. The small wooden door had two iron hinges and a simple, oak sign.

## ROSLIN

This ancient spelling, Langdon explained to Sophie, derived from the Rose Line meridian on which the chapel sat; or, as Grail academics preferred to believe, from the "Line of Rose"—the ancestral lineage of Mary Magdalene.

The chapel would be closing soon, and as Langdon pulled open the door, a warm puff of air escaped, as if the ancient



Rosslyn is renowned for its many carvings of the Green Man, historically a pagan figure. The vines sprouting from his mouth represent nature's growth and fertility, illustrating the unity between humankind and nature.

5. Green man  
One of the best examples of over 100 'Green Man' carvings in the Chapel



The carved angels in the Lady Chapel are celebrating Christ's birth with music. Bagpipes first appeared in Scotland from the mid-1400s and this is thought to be one of the earliest depictions of the instrument.

6. Angel playing the bagpipes  
One of the many carvings of angels playing musical instruments



edifice were heaving a weary sigh at the end of a long day. Her entry arches burgeoned with carved cinquefoils.

*Roses. The womb of the goddess.*

Entering with Sophie, Langdon felt his eyes reaching across the famous sanctuary and taking it all in. Although he had read accounts of Rosslyn's arrestingly intricate stonework, seeing it in person was an overwhelming encounter.

*Symbology heaven*, one of Langdon's colleagues had called it.

Every surface in the chapel had been carved with symbols—Christian cruciforms, Jewish stars, Masonic seals, Templar crosses, cornucopias, pyramids, astrological signs, plants, vegetables, pentacles, and roses. The Knights Templar had been master stonemasons, erecting Templar churches all over Europe, but Rosslyn was considered their most sublime labor of love and veneration. The master masons had left no stone uncarved. Rosslyn Chapel was a shrine to all faiths... to all traditions... and, above all, to nature and the goddess.

The sanctuary was empty except for a handful of visitors listening to a young man giving the day's last tour. He was leading them in a single-file line along a well-known route on the floor—an invisible pathway linking six key architectural points within the sanctuary. Generations of visitors had walked these straight lines, connecting the points, and their countless footsteps had engraved an enormous symbol on the floor.

*The Star of David*, Langdon thought. *No coincidence there.* Also known as Solomon's Seal, this hexagram had once been the secret symbol of the stargazing priests and was later adopted by the Israelite kings—David and Solomon.

The docent had seen Langdon and Sophie enter, and although it was closing time, offered a pleasant smile and motioned for them to feel free to look around. Langdon nodded his thanks and began to move deeper into the sanctuary. Sophie, however, stood riveted in the entryway, a puzzled look on her face.

"What is it?" Langdon asked.



Characters from all walks of life are each accompanied by a skeleton, Death. The dance springs from the skeletons pushing and pulling the reluctant people off to meet their fate and symbolises death's inevitable triumph over life.

7. The Dance of Death  
A string of figures caught in the 'Dance of Death'

Sophie stared out at the chapel. "I think... I've been here."

Langdon was surprised. "But you said you hadn't even heard of Rosslyn."

"I hadn't..." She scanned the sanctuary, looking uncertain. "My grandfather must have brought me here when I was very young. I don't know. It feels familiar." As her eyes scanned the room, she began nodding with more certainty. "Yes." She pointed to the front of the sanctuary. "Those two pillars... I've seen them."

Langdon looked at the pair of intricately sculpted columns at the far end of the sanctuary. Their white lacework carvings seemed to smolder with a ruddy glow as the last of the day's sunlight streamed in through the west window. The pillars—positioned where the altar would normally stand—were an oddly matched pair. The pillar on the left was carved with simple, vertical lines, while the pillar on the right was embellished with an ornate, flowering spiral.

Sophie was already moving toward them. Langdon hurried after her, and as they reached the pillars, Sophie was nodding with incredulity. "Yes, I'm positive I have seen these!"

"I don't doubt you've seen them," Langdon said, "but it wasn't necessarily *here*."

She turned. "What do you mean?"

"These two pillars are the most duplicated architectural structures in history. Replicas exist all over the world."

"Replicas of Rosslyn?" She looked skeptical.

"No. Of the pillars. Do you remember earlier that I mentioned Rosslyn *itself* is a copy of Solomon's Temple? Those two pillars are exact replicas of the two pillars that stood at the head of Solomon's Temple." Langdon pointed to the pillar on the left. "That's called *Boaz*—or the Mason's Pillar. The other is called *Jachin*—or the Apprentice Pillar." He paused. "In fact, virtually every Masonic temple in the world has two pillars like these."...

Langdon had already explained to her about the Templars' powerful historic ties to the modern Masonic secret societies,



This pillar contains one of the most famous and fascinating riddles of the building. An apprentice mason is said to have carved the pillar, inspired by a dream, in his master's absence. On seeing the magnificent achievement on his return, the master mason flew into a jealous rage and struck the apprentice, killing him outright.

8. Apprentice Pillar  
The most elaborately decorated pillar  
in the Chapel

whose primary degrees—Apprentice Freemason, Fellowcraft Freemason, and Master Mason—harked back to early Templar days. Sophie's grandfather's final verse made direct reference to the Master Masons who adorned Rosslyn with their carved artistic offerings. It also noted Rosslyn's central ceiling, which was covered with carvings of stars and planets. "I've never been in a Masonic temple," Sophie said, still eyeing the pillars. "I am almost positive I saw these *here*." She turned back into the chapel, as if looking for something else to jog her memory...



Arianna Stöckli, 2023

Julie Blanc - Multisupport Publishing with Web Technologies

Images: <https://www.rosslynchapel.com>

