



Quantum: The Trilogy Begins

Dean De Servienti

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Quantum is a fun mystery, and its action-adventure turns are backed by science as well as history.

In *Quantum*, by Dean De Servienti, a strange, 250-million year old cylinder that looks like a walking cane is discovered, setting forth a series of events that may change the history of life on Earth.

Dan Foster and Jodie Stanford are American scientists living in Darfur. A small child gives them the cylinder, and they run tests on it. Then, they disappear—supposedly due to the object's power.

Intelligence agencies and the Vatican are intrigued. They enlist help in strange places, including from an assassin who goes by "Shadow" and from Yoshi, a specialist in seemingly nonexistent or rare items. With the CIA assuming this item is a weapon, it's a chase to track down the unusual object and put it in its rightful place—a notion that depends on who can find it first.

The novel starts rather slowly, taking the time to introduce the massive global conflict at the center. The different organizations and their acronyms become a confusing mix, though, when introduced all at once this way. In addition to this, there are footnotes next to some of the words used that correspond to a key at the bottom, which seems unusual for a novel, and ends up distracting from the writing.

Characters are interesting and well-rounded, particularly the scientists Dan and Jodie. Yoshi is also fascinating, despite his rather disturbing relationship with his sister, Midori. Even the fierce, racist villain Jeff Bradley seems fresh.

The book gives each character equal attention as they chase down the artifact, with threats of assassination or worse hanging over their heads at every turn. The novel's large cast sometimes comes at the expense of development. Still, the motivations of each are made clear.

While the artifact itself is given a good bit of scientific backing and research, it acts as the backdrop over which these people come together, a maguffin on a larger scale.

The drive with which characters chase the object makes *Quantum* an interesting read. While there are no real plot twists, the novel does take many surprising turns, developed in a way that makes for a satisfying conclusion for each character.

Quantum proves to be fun mystery with many surprising and unexpected turns along the way. It is an action-adventure backed by science as well as history.

SONYA LOVY (December 23, 2016)

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