

The Testari Scrolls

L.C. Laird

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Lindy Guilles is a European-raised American Egyptologist in her mid-twenties languishing in a failed marriage to a deceitful CIA agent. The daughter of an emotionally distant archeologist Lindy suffers successive shocks when he passes away and she's injured by a bomb which may also have killed her husband. A mysterious artifact entrusted to Lindy's care causes the nervous man who gave it to her to be gruesomely murdered. The only safe haven then is the Swiss home of a close family friend named Father Mike.

Father Mike reveals himself to be the leader of an organization called The Testari. More often called The Savitar this international scholarly collective similar to Anne Rice's Talamasca safeguards artifacts and manuscripts of secret knowledge at their fortified mountain Citadel in Switzerland. Vigilant for centuries they are fixated on the Biblical calendar which inexplicably ends with the winter equinox of 2012 AD. Several other geographically scattered cultures have ominous predictions featuring a similar date.

The author's judicious foreshadowing gives readers the chance to feel like they're pulling slightly ahead of the main character in putting the pieces together. The future fate of the world is here locked up in understanding major changes in the past. Father Mike methodically leads Lindy's thinking one strand at a time. "Since antiquity and before there has always been an Earth goddess overseeing the harvest an Earth mother if you will in every culture. Isis Hera Mithra priestesses all the goddesses of old." He asks "When did we forget our goddesses?" Legends of great floods common to many oral traditions seem to play a role in realigned worship practices."

The Savitar are countered by a powerful outfit known as The Trinity (a.k.a. The Nahasha) who tortures information from its victims and kills in a ritualistic manner. Secret knowledge is steadily parceled out largely through Father Mike's explanations of the order's central task and long history which is tied up with the tragic past of Lindy's family. Once Lindy is on the Citadel's grounds she doesn't leave for the remainder of the book except in flashback while secondary characters venture out to recover a kidnapped member and attempt to bring down the evil Nahasha. The swiftly rising action is blunted by interminable training in mathematics and ancient astronomy. Readers learn all non-engineers ever need to know about the applications of Pi but not the bad guys' motivation and not their real leaders' shocking identities. Lindy's chance to act heroically is strikingly curtailed. Backstory involving her mother and the antagonists suggests a possible direction for a prequel.

Author L.C. Laird is a newspaper columnist and photographer who has worked on archeological digs. Her first novel contains an intriguing body of facts (some of them clarified by helpful diagrams) and serious scientific speculation. Those interested in learning more or assessing the plausibility of the theories proposed in the text can begin further research with a visit to testaricalendar.com and thetestarimap.com.

TODD MERCER (August 1, 2008)

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