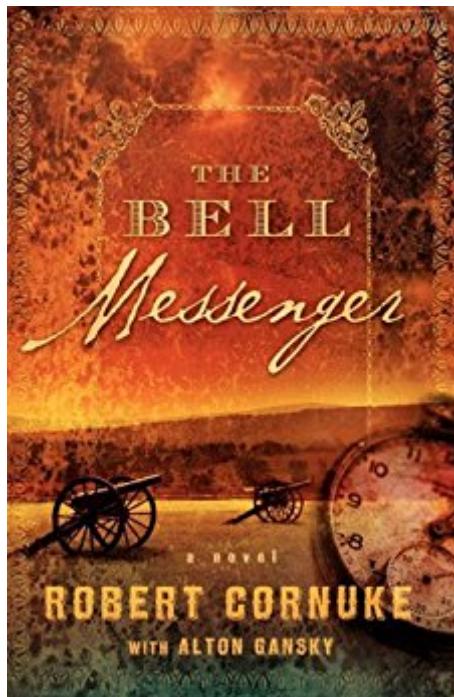


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The Bell Messenger: A Novel



Synopsis

A suspenseful yet touching story of a Civil war Bible that pops up again and again over a century and shapes the very history of the nation. This rich and involving historical and archeological thriller begins as a Union soldier, Tate, shoots a Confederate preacher known as the Bell Messenger and is bequeathed a worn Bible by the dying man. Tate's historical narrative parallels the contemporary story of John Brandon, who has just graduated college in 2000 and received the very same Bible, unearthed in a Saudi Arabian cave, as a gift. The potent history of this book is revealed as Brandon searches for its previous owners, along the way uncovering the existence of a mysterious cache of gold hidden during Old Testament times -- which brings shadowy figures hot on Brandon's heels, hungry for the gold and desperate to learn the new clues he possesses. As the past and present intertwine, the reader learns that this Bible has passed through many hands over the years. From the Civil War to the building of the Central Pacific Railroad, to the gang wars and the holding of Chinese slaves in nineteenth-century California, to the trenches of World War I, Brandon learns of the lives this Bible has saved, the deaths it has caused, and the history it has changed forever.

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Customer Reviews

Cornuke's new book is an exciting page-turner that is a travelogue to exotic places and times. But this is more than a great historic novel with clashing cultures and adventure. The central foil of this story is not a person, but an old Bible which is the vehicle Cornuke uses to explore the lives of people who come in contact with it, starting in the Civil War and ending in our modern day. The story jumps back and forth in time, but is never confusing. Cornuke's casual writing style belies his extensive research and personal on-site experience with the locales and people featured in this riveting new book. His characters come alive as real people with likable personalities who face the kind of moral dilemmas and incremental decisions that transform people into heroes or villains; the small steps which we later recognize as leading to strengthened character or turning points preceding personal decline. A master storyteller, Cornuke is able to add amazing depth to his fictional characters who come across as authentic, probably because they are, in reality, compilations of real people encountered by the author during his years as a police Crime Scene Investigator and SWAT team member in the L.A. area, or more recently as an adventurer in Africa and the Middle East. After leaving police work, Cornuke became the real-life Indiana Jones around the same time that Harrison Ford made the role popular. Cornuke's real archeological adventures rival anything Hollywood imagined for their fictional hero, which makes it possible for Cornuke to develop characters that are plausible, and a storyline that is rife with excitement. I give "The Bell Messenger" a strong two-thumbs-up recommendation. I can't wait for Cornuke's next novel which I understand will be even better than this one - a feat that is hard to imagine since his first effort in this genre is already in the I-couldn't-put-it-down category.

Don't expect to read yourself to sleep with The Bell Messenger.... it kept me awake half the night! I was bleary-eyed in the morning, but it was SO worth it! A compelling work of fiction. I love the authentic historical background behind the story, and already sent a copy to my brother.

This was one of the best books I've read in a long time. I could not put it down. Well researched, well written, and will stick with me for a long time.

Bob Cornuke has exploded into fiction with this book. There's a rather intense history lesson about

the Chinese slave trade, suspense and the high adventure of a treasure-hunt--all intermixed with archeology. It's not what you'd expect (considering that it involves a Bible), since it's far removed from "the typical 'religious'" book. The plot--as it follows the journey of a Civil-War-era Bible and the lives it impacts--is so compelling that it could prove to be the beginning of an exciting series. I found myself wanting more!

The Bell Messenger is a very exciting book. It traces the journey of a Bible given to a soldier during the Civil War, and the lives of people throughout the years that found it. This unique Bible creates and solves a mystery in the lives of everyone with whom it comes in contact. It's a very good discussion book for a book club. Bree Thomas

The mind of Bob Cornuke never ceases to amaze me. His non-fiction works have changed history... now his knowledge of history is changing the world of fiction. I don't know how he does it, but he lives (and now writes) outside of the box and he pulls it off in a way that seems so natural. This is not your normal book. The premise is unique. The plot line takes such unusual twists... Mix that together with masterful story telling instincts and you get the Bell Messenger. My 11 year old son has read it and was quickly absorbed (I'll have him write his own review) I think a few people will hate this (they always do) and the vast majority will love it... but no one will be indifferent, it's just too wild of a ride to not have an opinion.

Great writing, loved the historical aspect and the characters...one could almost believe they were real. I do not have any patience for books that are not well written, as in skill level, so this read definitely made the cut. There were a couple of "fall in place" items that I loved where the author did not spell them out directly which I quite liked. The only thing is I felt the authors could have developed the ending a bit more as I would have liked a bit tidier ending. Maybe there is a second book coming? If there is, I would definitely purchase.

The story begins during the Civil War. Confederate soldiers are hunting a deer to quell their starvation. What they don't realize is that Union soldiers have also spotted the deer and the Confederates. The Confederates unknowingly walk into an open field and seal their fate. Soon the Union soldiers are scavenging anything of value off the dead Confederates. The Union leader, Jeremiah Tate, realizes he has shot a young teenage boy and is racked with guilt. Before dying, the boy presses the Union leader to take his Bible. Thereafter, Jeremiah Tate's life will change, but

in what manner? Flash to the future and see Gary Brandon receive a box with what appears to be some very old, valuable objects as a college graduation gift from his drunken uncle. Gary wonders where his uncle got this stuff and if he got it legally. He finds an old Bible in the box, opens it and reads the letters inside. He immediately senses the Bible is not his to keep and begins searching for family of the last known owner. His search uncovers some very interesting characters and history, but can he find the Bible's true home? This is a very interesting, entertaining and unique story that will hold the reader's interest throughout. The use of flashback to follow the path of the Bible's journey is used effectively. At first, some holders of the Bible believe it to have magic or mystical power, but eventually realize it is not the book itself that has power, but the words inside. The words have the power to change lives, saving lives and giving lives to those who become messengers and share what is inside the Bible. The journey starts with a 14-year-old boy, Elijah Bell, and his willingness to go to war to fight, but his war was fought in the spiritual realm, fighting for the souls of men. To read about the many lives transformed by this one messenger who was willing to obey the call of the Lord was fascinating. How many lives can you change if you're willing to answer the Lord's call?

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