

ForeWord

M A G A Z I N E

BOOK REVIEW

A Secret of the Universe: A Story of Love, Loss, and the Discovery of an Eternal Truth
by: Stephen L. Gibson

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Lifelong friends Ian and Bill begin down the path of Midwestern middle class marriage, family, jobs, and neighborhoods. Then, tragic events push Bill deep into the comfort zone of his family and Christian fundamentalism, while Ian takes off on a quest for truth, examining all beliefs through the lens of reason. A rift in the friendship grows into a chasm as Ian delves into an endeavor that may detonate the foundation of Christianity.

Through his employer, Ian meets a group of scholars who open a door to knowledge that both stuns and captivates. This path of inquiry is hidden in plain sight, known by some historians and biblical scholars, yet concealed from the public by academic reluctance to spotlight such a provocative theory without comprehensive proof. It is Ian who spearheads the task of bringing together scientists and theologians to assemble proof for the theory that one character describes as “revealing a secret of the universe.”

Ian’s questions, however, lead him to reveal just how out of step he is with his Midwestern community. “At some point, I just need to stop letting people believe I’m still the guy they’ve always known,” he says. Though the cost of Ian’s quest is apparent to others (“These guys must have a death wish”) he is not self-reflective, driving himself to see the project through to the end. The bonds of friendship and community draw the two friends together again when the shadow side of faith sends the world into chaos, and an even deeper secret emerges.

Author Gibson takes the hard questions head-on and weaves multiple points of view, including the omniscient storyteller, allowing the reader enough distance to step out of the story and dig into the references in the back of the book. In fact, several characters are actual researchers and theologians, set in fiction. Fans of Gibson’s nonfiction release, *Truth-Driven Thinking*, will recognize the author’s dedication to the quest for truth, and many readers who delight in a well-researched cautionary tale might find themselves dog-eared pages and taking notes as they enjoy the story.

Review by: Carol Lynn Stewart