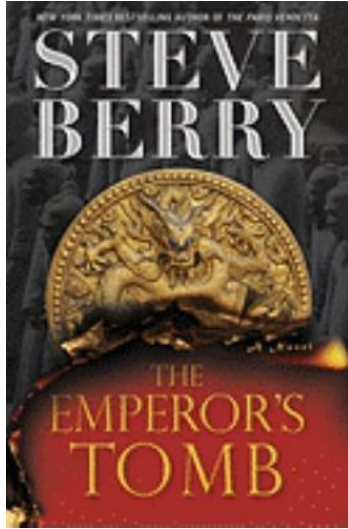


**“The Emperor’s Tomb” by Steve Berry.  
Ballantine Books, 2010. \$26.00, 428 pages.**

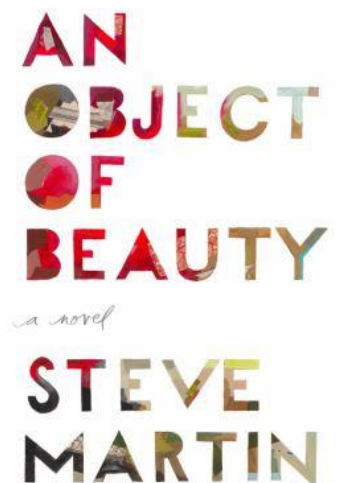


Steve Berry has written another spellbinding action novel bringing back character Cotton Malone. Malone, a former Justice Department operative now a Danish bookseller, has received a note bearing a website address. The website is a live video of Cassiopeia Vitt being tortured by waterboard method. Malone is swept into a mysterious search for an artifact Cassiopeia asked him to keep safe. The problem being she has not given him anything for safekeeping. The hunt is on to figure out the puzzle and save the dame in distress. The storyline leads him from Denmark to Belgium, Vietnam, and finally China. If you like novels based on history, this one delivers. In China, the tomb of the first Chinese Emperor has remained sealed for more than 2,000 years and the government has forbidden archeologists from opening the tomb. Malone, is told to bring the item to Tivoli Gardens at 2:00 pm. Malone takes a book off the shelf for the drop hoping to stall for more time. He is not aware that Cassiopeia stole a dragon lamp from Pau Wen in Belgium. Everyone is now searching for the dragon

lamp...including Chinese Ministers Ni Yong and Karl Tong both contenders for the premiership and presidency. Malone is perplexed on how to save her, but he owes Cassiopeia his life and he hopes to return the favor. The novel is well written and action moves back and forth from Malone to the Chinese ministers creating suspense. The historical research is impeccable. Add Berry to your list of books to read. It is worth a sleepless night to see how the story turns out. His other books include “the Amber Room,” “Romanov Prophecy,” and the Third Secret.” Steve Berry lives in St. Augustine, Florida and has a foundation named History Matters.

**“An Object of Beauty” by Steve Martin.  
Grand Central Printing, 2010, \$26.99, 292 pages.**

Character Daniel Franks is a writer who is compelled to write a novel about Lacey Yeager. Lacey, a mover and shaker in the art world, was groomed at Sotheby’s. She aspires to quickly rise from a cataloger to a gallery owner and is willing to do what it takes to assure her ascent to the top of the art field. Martin documents the art business in the time period 1990 to present day. The book contains 22 full color art reproductions. The novel portrays the American art world in a definitive way and captures the personas associated with that business. Martin’s writing skills are mirrored in protagonist’s Franks abilities and demonstrate a clear compassionate view of art society in the United States. Some of the language is earthly but typical of that urban artistic lifestyle. The reader feels drawn into the story as Lacey wants success so badly she uses Franks to artificially raise prices at an art auction of a painting of her grandmother she purloined. Lacey learns that fortune and misfortune are closely related by more than prefix and there can be a literal downside to making it to the top. Steve Martin best known as an actor and screenwriter, has also written “Shopgirl” and “the Pleasure of My Company.” In 2010 he was awarded a Grammy for Best Bluegrass album.



Susan Benning is the Head Librarian at May Memorial Library. Visit us on the web at [www.alamancelibraries.org](http://www.alamancelibraries.org) .