



The Dakota Cipher

William Dietrich

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“*The Dakota Cipher* is a supple, elegant thriller that carries the reader triumphantly from one exciting climax to the next.”

—Steve Berry, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Jefferson Key*

Ethan Gage is a fearless adventurer who has crossed paths (and, sometimes, swords) with the likes of Napoleon Bonaparte and Benjamin Franklin—and whose unabashed derring do puts even Indiana Jones to shame. Now Gage is back for a third time in William Dietrich’s *The Dakota Cipher*, an ingenious page-turner that carries our hero to the American wilderness in search of an almost unthinkable powerful ancient artifact. No stranger to thrilling action himself, *New York Times* bestseller James Rollins, author of *Black Order*, *The Last Oracle*, and *Altar of Eden*, is a dedicated fan of Dietrich’s Ethan Gage novels, and proclaims that, “*The Dakota Cipher* should be read by anyone who loves adventure at its grandest.”

The Dakota Cipher Details

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From Reader Review The Dakota Cipher for online ebook

Shiela says

This series needs to stop! Unfortunately, Dietrich uses this story to nicely set up the sequel as the book doesn't end! I was totally uninterested throughout the entire book which is in stark contrast to the first two in the series. The secondary characters (with the exception of Pierre who may reappear in the next book) were totally laughable. The action was tepid and believe it or not, the storyline was even more outrageous than the others. I'm not sure if I should continue on with this unsatisfying series.

Michael says

The author's action sequences really kept the pages turning. A fun read.

Christian says

This is a fun historical fiction series, and I have book #4 ready to go, but I have one consistent complaint. As I have mentioned before, I am no prude, but Ethan Gage (the "hero" of these books) is a total man-whore...and his unnecessary sex scenes are borderline porn that stick out in these adventures like a sore thumb. Mr. Dietrich, either write adventure, or commit to a full-on piece of porn...but quit trying to combine the two.

Céline says

[Once again, Ethan Gage is called on another adventure, this time, in North America. Sent by Napoleon to report on the situation of France's Louisiana and sent by newly elected President Jefferson to search for mammoths, Ethan makes the acquaintance of Magnus BloodHammer (what a name!) who is determined to prove the Norse arrived first in America. Believe it or not, Ethan and his new friend from Norway are also searching for a magical hammer with «powers able to change the world».

Alan says

As with Ethan Gage books #1 and #2, you have to suspend your view of reality. Events are just too fantastic. But nevertheless, a good story that is well told.

Alan Smith says

It's never fair to compare artists' work. Saying that such-and-such a singer is "The new Ella Fitzgerald" or

"The British Courtney Love" does neither the established diva nor the newcomer much of a compliment. Therefore I say this with apology but -

For those of us who love George MacDonald Fraser's "Flashman" series, and are lamenting the author's passing, reading William Dietrich's "Ethan Gage" books is a hell of a good way to wean yourself off of old Flashy, may he rest in peace.

This is not to say there's any sign that Dietrich has deliberately set out to copy the Scot's work, or capitalize on his success. Gage is a very different character from Flashman in many ways, with his own quirks, tastes and traits. He's a nicer guy altogether, with at least rudimentary ethics, some conception of honor, and (when there's something to be gained) a willingness to put life and limb on the line.

Nonetheless, given the activities described in the books, there's evidence he could be Flashy's American great great grandad. There's the same ability to bump into every famous person from the period in question (and, if they are a reasonably attractive female, bed them), get himself into all kinds of scrapes - while frankly admitting he's terrified out of his wits - and the same fast-paced, witty and captivating writing.

And as an added bonus, there's all kinds of occult references as well.

This particular book - the third in Gage's memoirs - takes us from the Paris of Napoleon's consulship to the wild frontier of the Louisiana territory (now part of the American West), encountering nymphomaniac incestuous British aristocrats, French canoe navigators, various Native American tribes, a Norwegian freedom fighter with the wonderful name of "Bloodaxe", and various luminaries from Napoleon's court, including of course the pin up girl of the eighteenth century, Pauline Bonaparte herself!

Gage is (half willingly, as usual) in search of Thor's legendary hammer, supposedly hidden in the wilds of the American continent by the Norse voyagers that visited the continent many years before Columbus "discovered" it... it's a fascinating quest, with a truly exciting climax, action all the way, and with some truly great writing. I recommend any reader who likes adventure, suspense or just great witty writing should get to know Ethan Gage as soon as possible.

Verb says

Ethan Gage, while an improbable hero, is as entertaining a character as I've read. He is reminiscent of Fraser's Flashman, but less arrogantly cowardly. The weaving of fact and fiction is adroit, and there's more than enough action to make the Ethan Gage books' pages turning.

Lindsey says

These books are always entertaining with such colorful characters, such as Ethan Gage, leading the way. Gage is like Indiana Jones who just happens to fall into these mythical quests while trying to get into bed with every beautiful woman who passes by. In this case, he is roped into exploring the remote Louisiana territory for Napoleon while also scouting for the existence of mammoths and helping a crazy Norwegian find Thor's mythical hammer. For me, I enjoyed this unlikely story of Ethan and Magnus' backwoods adventures with the frequent exasperation at his inability to stop thinking only with lust in mind-until the

end. The conclusion of their quest literally blew up with craziness and unnecessarily graphic violence. I was ready to put the book down after Lady Somerset's murderous rage with the axe.

Rachel Parham says

Oh, Ethan Gage, you are so predictably fun. Whether you're chasing after the legendary Book of Thoth as you did in Books 1 and 2, or the even more iconic Hammer of Thor as you do in *The Dakota Cipher*, I can always count on you to keep me laughing.

And that is what Ethan Gage does in this third installment – keep us laughing. The book opens with Gage firmly back on the French side (well, as firmly as Gage can be on anyone's side) even though he was nearly executed by Napoleon at Jaffa and he electrocuted hundreds of French soldiers at the Battle of Acre during Bonaparte's failed invasion of the Holy Land. All water under the bridge, of course, and never one to turn down an opportunity that will save his own skin, Gage now negotiates treaties with fellow European powers on behalf of Napoleon himself. But can Gage stay out of trouble? Of course not! And when he is caught in flagrante delicto with none other than Bonaparte's sister, Pauline, and nearly incinerated during a fireworks display, Gage finds himself on the run yet again, and with the Norse treasure seeker, Magnus Bloodhammer by his side.

Bloodhammer believes Thor's legendary hammer was carried out of Europe by displaced Templars following their mass execution in 1307, and buried in the wilds of the American frontier by these self-same dispossessed knights, who reached the American continent almost 200 years before Columbus. So Bloodhammer solicits the rather reluctant Gage in an expedition to the Great Plains to find the hammer and use it to win Norse freedom from the Danes. Meeting an extraordinary cast of historic characters along the way – including the explorers Lewis and Clark and the president Thomas Jefferson (who agrees to support Gage's campaign in the hopes the latter will find evidence that prehistoric elephants once roamed the continent!) – Gage and Bloodhammer are in a race for the relic and for their lives. Because while Bloodhammer believes his own enemies were the force behind the attack on Gage at the fireworks display, there are those pesky followers of the evil Alessandro Silano, who met his end at Gage's hand in *The Rosetta Key*, and who might just be seeking revenge for their fallen leader. Is the alluring and enigmatic Aurora Somerset, the plucky-yet-refined British lady who throws herself in to Gage's expedition, one of them?

So, yes, another wildly adventurous and vividly entertaining romp through history in this installment with a whole new environment and cast of characters to keep Gage busy. And as has been the case with Books 1 and 2, my favorite parts of Book 3 are 1) the real life history in which Gage always manages to immerse himself, and 2) Ethan Gage. Gage is such a fun character to follow with his sarcastic sense of humor and his cynical outlook on his reluctant adventures. All he wants to do is retire, but will he ever turn down the chance to find his fortune in historic relics? Nope! When all of his friends warn the roguish ladies man that pursuing a conquest, be it Pauline Bonaparte or Aurora Somerset, might not be the best idea, does Gage listen? Nope! And that's one of many things that makes Gage so entertaining.

So yeah, while you have to suspend belief when you read Ethan Gage's adventures – as you have to do with any escapist entertainment – at least you're putting it aside for a good time!

Marie says

These Ethan Gage books have really grown on me! This is book #3, and it's still way over the top, but I've kind of grown fond of Ethan, even if he is narcissistic and misogynistic. (That sentence just looks so wrong to me... I really shouldn't be saying that I care at all for a character who's misogynistic! But I do! So weird!)

I counted this book as my "roadtrip" book for the 2016 PopSugar Reading Challenge, because in it, Ethan goes on a "roadtrip" through the northern part of the Louisiana Purchase. He's on a mission for President Jefferson, and he's traveling with some random Norwegian guy. Along the way on his mission he meets some French people and frontiersman and Native Americans... all of which are nearly outlandish stereotypes.

The big mystery in this book involves Freemasonry, so be prepared for the reinforcement of stereotypes, myths, and misconceptions related to that. It's almost a trope at this point, isn't it? We all read all about them in Dan Brown's books.

There's also a woman, of course, who is good for nothing (in Ethan's eyes) except his pleasure. However, I saw a bit of hidden inner strength in her. I liked it! She could dish it out to him as well as he could dish it at her!

On Goodreads, the book description is simply "GREAT ADVENTURE READ" (caps their's). I totally agree. One review says that it's a "fun historical fiction series... but Ethan Gage is a total man-whore..." I totally agree. Another reviewer compared these books to Indiana Jones. I also agree with that! My advice: don't go into this series expecting anything deep. This is definitely kiddie-pool shallow (but not kiddie appropriate-remember the man-whore comment), and if you go into the book with that knowledge, you can enjoy a fun, fluffy adventure read.

Oh, and the audio portion of the review! (I nearly forgot to include this part!) It was good. Nothing stands out as especially terrific, but it wasn't bad at all. Very steady. I didn't have to think about it at all; I could just enjoy the story, and I like that.

Linda says

I read this book after reading *What is the What*. I knew that this book would just be fluff, but I wanted something light after reading something so serious. I got light alright. The plot was so fanciful that I couldn't believe for even a minute. On the upside, the little Frenchman was a funny character. I'm not going to knock this book too much, because I knew, almost, exactly what I was getting. However, this book wasn't as fun of an experience as the previous one. The main character spent a huge amount of time chasing and lusting after women which was a bore. Also, the formula (plot development) was exactly the same as the previous book. I'm a sucker for these adventure books, so I'm sure that I will eventually read the next one, but not anytime soon.

Mike says

This 3rd volume in the series shares elements with *Flashman*, Mitchner's "Centennial" and "Jubal Sackett". The hero, Ethan Gage, departs France for early 18th century America. He is to perform service for Napoleon

and and the recently elected President Thomas Jefferson. A sort of diplomat without portfolio. His adventures are influenced by the imagined pre-Columbian journey of the Knights Templar to North America. Sometimes the story, which is well told, seems overwhelmed by Freemasonry gobbledygook and conspiracy theories. Gage and his fellow traveller, a Norwegian patriot wanting to prove that his countryman arrived deep into the heartland of America hundreds of years earlier, arrive in New York via sailing ship. They travel to the new nations's capital city and meet with President Jefferson. Jefferson recruits Gage for a scouting mission that takes him to Pittsburgh, Detroit, through the Great Lakes, and the northern Louisiana Territory. Along the way he encounters the French voyageur, renegades of various types, Ojibway, Dakota, buffalo, and extreme weather. I appreciate stories which take me through country with which I am familiar. Their mode of travel and conditions along the way make me appreciate the travails that my antecedents had to contend with. I have visited most of the American locales mentioned. My mode of travel is usually in a comfortable car, driven at high speed over good roads, and in air-conditioned splendor. Needless to say, Ethan's travel experience was much more rudimentary and uncomfortable. The depiction of travel and the places visited are credible and, it seems to me, the story progresses without having to bend the historical facts. One thing stands out, the journey was especially hard on women.

Denise says

Book #3 of the Ethan Gage Trilogy. This book was the most bizarre and unbelievable of the three in the series. I love drama and adventure but this was "over-the-top" in strangeness. I plodded through it just to see what the ending would be. Read it and see if you agree with me.

Daniel Smith says

I love Dietrich's writing style, and the vivid portrayal of the Wild West. Wish he'd spend less ink describing Ethan Gage having sex with different women. Don't care about that aspect of the story very much and it went on a bit longer than necessary at the beginning with Aurora Somerset and Pauline Bonaparte (who, honestly didn't need to be in the book at all as far as I can tell). It pulls me out of the story a bit as I don't read these for the romance.

Benjamin Thomas says

The third book in William Dierich's Ethan Gage historical adventure series will appeal to those who liked the first two and as much as it will annoy those who didn't care for the first two. Of course, if you didn't like the first two books in a series, why would you attempt a third?

Many reviewers compare Ethan Gage to Indiana Jones albeit at an earlier time period. While both characters are rakish adventurers who utilize a knowledge of science and history to further their fortune and glory habits, I would say a better comparison would be to George MacDonald Fraser's Flashman. A large part of both characters' outward personalities is the pursuit of what is most important for themselves, sometimes to the point of being a cad. But in the end, they show remarkable selflessness to save the day.

Ethan's adventures in this volume begin in 1800, just months after the end of *The Rosetta Key*, and while they start in Paris, the action quickly moves to the young United States where Nathan meets and agrees to

perform an exploration for the newly elected president Jefferson. This is 3-4 years before the Lewis and Clark expedition but the similarities of the journey westward are similar. Add to this the idea that the coast of America was visited by the Norse long before Columbus, and in fact, following evidence that these early explorers actually made it far into the inland plains, adds to the intrigue of the novel.

Yes, this is an "historical" novel of sorts in that it takes place in 1800. But there is much literary license taken to ensure a swashbuckling, frolicking adventure story. I suggest reading it as such rather than expecting to gain keen insights into actual historical events.
