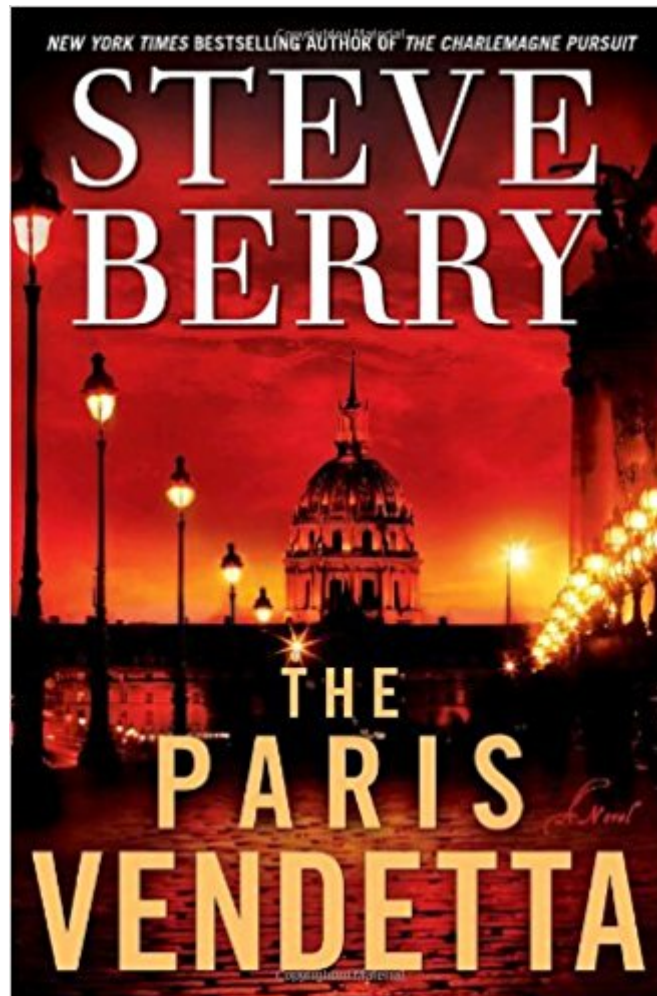




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The Paris Vendetta: A Novel



Synopsis

When Napoleon Bonaparte died in exile in 1821, he took to the grave a powerful secret. As general and emperor, he had stolen immeasurable riches from palaces, national treasuries, and even the Knights of Malta and the Vatican. In his final days, his British captors hoped to learn where the loot lay hidden. But he told them nothing, and in his will he made no mention of the treasure. Or did he? Former Justice Department operative Cotton Malone isn't looking for trouble when it comes knocking at his Copenhagen bookshop. Actually, it breaks and enters in the form of an American Secret Service agent with a pair of assassins on his heels. Malone has his doubts about the anxious young man, but narrowly surviving a ferocious firefight convinces him to follow his unexpected new ally. Their first stop is the secluded estate of Malone's good friend, Henrik Thorvaldsen. The wily Danish tycoon has uncovered the insidious plans of the Paris Club, a cabal of multimillionaires bent on manipulating the global economy. Only by matching wits with a terrorist-for-hire, foiling a catastrophic attack, and plunging into a desperate hunt for Napoleon's legendary lost treasure can Malone hope to avert international financial anarchy. But Thorvaldsen's real objective is much more personal: to avenge the murder of his son by the larcenous aristocrat at the heart of the conspiracy. Thorvaldsen's vendetta places Malone in an impossible quandary—one that forces him to choose between friend and country, past and present. Starting in Denmark, moving to England, and ending up in the storied streets and cathedrals of Paris, Malone plays a breathless game of duplicity and death, all to claim a prize of untold value. But at what cost?

Book Information

Hardcover: 432 pages

Publisher: Ballantine Books; 1st edition (December 1, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0345505476

ISBN-13: 978-0345505477

Product Dimensions: 6.3 x 1.3 x 9.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (248 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #711,398 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #161 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Books & Reading > Booksellers & Bookselling](#) #56702 in [Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers & Suspense](#) #75897 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > United States](#)

Customer Reviews

First, I am a Steve Berry fan, but I rate books in accordance with the capabilities of the author, not some scale comparing all literary works (as other reviewers often do). So, before I blast this one, let me assure you I have enjoyed many of Mr. Berry's other novels. That said, *The Paris Vendetta* is an overly tangled mess of subplots, none of which satisfied me. It was as if Mr. Berry originally thought he'd use the Bilderbergers or the Trilateral Commission (aka The Paris Club here) and then throw in terrorism and back-reference war to add danger to the economic intrigue and manipulation. Sounds like a good start, just one minor problem... seems none of the legendary historical stuff he's known for was in the first draft. What to do? Find something fast and shoehorn it in. Solution? Mr. Berry selects Napoleon Bonaparte, an ancient seer, a prophetic and magical book, an alleged treasure, and a descendant of Pozzo di Borgo (a Count, who Berry describes as "instrumental" in leading to Napoleon's downfall) in order to fill the glaring hole in his novel. And in the Writer's Note section, Mr. Berry describes most of these elements as ones of his own invention. Really? These additions are strikingly similar to those found in *The Secret of Kings*, written by a woman who is truly a descendant of the Count (not the Duke, aka Wellington) most responsible for Napoleon's downfall. I wonder if the real Eliza Larocque received remuneration for so many coincidences? Her work of fiction predates 2008. Next, the idea to bring in new characters, who will no doubt show up in future Steve Berry works, clutters this story. The flashbacks about Sam would have been better saved for his next appearance. (However, I'm guessing Mr.

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