



## The Quest

*Nelson DeMille*

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## **The Quest** Nelson DeMille

### AUTHOR'S NOTE:

An earlier, shorter version of The Quest was published in paperback in 1975. In 2013, I rewrote The Quest and doubled its length, making it, I hope, a far better story than the original, without deviating from the elements that made the story so powerful and compelling when I first wrote it. In other words, what made The Quest worth rewriting remains, and whatever is changed is for the better.

I was happy and excited to have this opportunity to rewrite and republish what I consider my first "big" novel, and I hope you enjoy it as much as I did when I first wrote it.

### BOOK DESCRIPTION:

A sweeping adventure that's equal parts thriller and love story, Nelson DeMille's newest novel takes the reader from the war torn jungles of Ethiopia to the magical city of Rome.

While the Ethiopian Civil War rages, a Catholic priest languishes in prison. Forty years have passed since he last saw daylight. His crime? Claiming to know the true location of Christ's cup from the Last Supper. Then the miraculous happens - a mortar strikes the prison and he is free!

Old, frail, and injured, he escapes to the jungle, where he encounters two Western journalists and a beautiful freelance photographer taking refuge from the carnage. As they tend to his wounds, he relates his incredible story.

Motivated by the sensational tale and their desire to find the location of the holiest of relics, the trio agrees to search for the Grail.

Thus begins an impossible quest that will pit them against murderous tribes, deadly assassins, fanatical monks, and the passions of their own hearts.

THE QUEST is suspenseful, romantic, and filled with heart-pounding action. Nelson DeMille is at the top of his game as he masterfully interprets one of history's greatest mysteries.

## **The Quest Details**

Date : Published September 17th 2013 by Center Street (first published March 1st 1975)

ISBN :

Author : Nelson DeMille

Format : Kindle Edition 458 pages

Genre : Fiction, Thriller, Historical, Historical Fiction, Mystery, Adventure

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## From Reader Review The Quest for online ebook

### Tucker Elliot says

#### “The Quest”

If John Corey and his sarcastic sense of humor had been in Ethiopia looking for the Holy Grail then I admit it would have taken DeMille’s THE QUEST to a whole new level – or at least based on some other reviews I’ve seen it would have been a more enjoyable ride for much of DeMille’s fan base. That being said, I have to admit I really liked it anyway.

I know it’s a rewrite of a book originally written by DeMille four decades ago. That wasn’t a secret and it didn’t bother me – although I understand the frustration by those who read it on the kindle where the formatting skipped over the author’s note at the beginning of the book.

Anyway, a lot of people criticized DeMille for THE GATE HOUSE too and I felt a lot of it was unfair – reader’s who are used to and love John Corey’s wit and sarcasm seem to have a hard time adjusting to any variation of the anti-terrorism (or the old school DeMille Cold War) themes. If you’re a DeMille fan and you’re expecting something on par with NIGHT FALL then you probably will be disappointed, but if you open your mind to reading an adventurous tale that’s set during a civil war in Ethiopia in the 1970s, then this really is an excellent read.

There’s really a lot to like here – there are Indochina and post-World War II Soviet prison camps that play a huge role in the development of the two male protagonists, there’s a mysterious yet beautiful woman who has put herself in harm’s way in war-torn Ethiopia, there’s great description of a terrible yet historically significant time that shows the depravity of human nature, and there’s terrific imagination by DeMille in using the Catholic Church to set in motion a chain of events that lead to a priest being held in captivity for forty years and ultimately to our three protagonists searching for the Holy Grail.

Honestly, when I first read that THE QUEST was about the search for the Holy Grail I rolled my eyes and wasn’t too thrilled to read it – however, I’m a loyal DeMille fan, largely because I met him on Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany where he was doing a NIGHT FALL book tour for military personnel stationed overseas (and he was an incredibly personable guy who spoke openly and candidly about his service in Vietnam), but also for the simple fact that he’s an incredibly gifted writer.

All that to say this: rid your mind of having a John Corey-esque experience with THE QUEST and then sit back and enjoy it.

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### Chris Bauer says

I've read a great many books by Nelson DeMille and have largely enjoyed them all.

Until now. I actually feel guilty about not enjoying the work more; DeMille is a great writer and I've recommended his other works time and time again.

His latest book "The Quest" was, in my opinion, a complete misfire. The plot was promising and complete

with interesting twists and turns. The setting was absolutely fascinating and I'm determined to make some time to learn a little more about the storied past of Ethiopia and the early Coptic religion.

But a vivid, interesting backdrop and solid "hook" in the plot are not enough to make me rate this book higher than 2 stars.

The characters are described well, but just end up very flat. Even 3/4 of the way through the book I STILL could not keep straight who was who and why they were actually doing certain actions. They were simply not compelling enough for me to remain interested. The overall structure of the plot was interesting, but again, not very intriguing. Truth be told, the entire first 25% of the book was fascinating descriptions and history of the setting with little else going for it.

And one aspect of those first chapters had me incredulously turning the pages just to see how it ended. I won't put any spoilers here, but "The Quest" does feature one of the most interesting "death" scenes I've ever read. Puts the "I'm not quite dead yet" skit from Monty Python to shame.

Another reason I feel guilt about writing this is the information provided by the author in the beginning of the book. The original manuscript was written over three decades ago and DeMille worked with his editor to revise, rewrite and release the book. I get the feeling that the story is something very close to his heart and has been for quite some time.

I'm afraid it just isn't a book for me.

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### **Patrice Hoffman says**

I have wanted to read a book by Nelson DeMille for a long time now. I occasionally see his books are I peruse the shelves at my favorite bookstore. When I was approved a review copy by Netgalley I did a happy dance like none other. Sadly, that happy dance turned into me ripping my hair out and screaming ARGH! to the top of my lungs.

Let's begin with an overview of The Quest. An old priest who's been incarcerated in an Ethiopian prison for 40 years is minutes from his death by guard when the walls of his cell explode and he is free but wounded. Frank Purcell, Henry Mercado, and Vivian find this old man in the jungle and try to assist him. He insists he's dying so he tells them a tale like no other. He's seen the Holy Grail. Purcell and Mercado being the journalist they are try to get as much information from him as possible before he dies. His story begins their journey to finding the Holy Grail.

Nelson DeMille is definitely a good writer. Although I have some gripes with this novel, I really could not put it down. Of course it's natural to want to see their journey to the end, but I was completely drawn in by the writing style and the well researched historic details provided. Although this novel was written in the 70s, it isn't dated. Sure there's no cell phones but c'mon... it's only attached to our hips. Why not take a minute to enjoy a novel that doesn't have to deal with those pesky things. Overall, an interesting plot and odd setting makes for a great adventure...kinda. Walking around lost in a jungle for five days is not that interesting.

My biggest gripe with this novel is that it's based in war-torn Ethiopia yet there doesn't seem to be an

imminent threat of danger. Sure you're probably thinking the danger is assumed since it's all around them but I say no! This is supposed to be a historical thriller of sorts. The blurbs suggested that they were being hunted specifically by Coptic Monks, "shadowy assassins", and crazed madmen. I never felt they were in danger. They barely ran anywhere this whole novel. If there's no running there's no danger.

My final gripe with this novel is our main characters journalists Mercado and Purcell, and their beautiful photographer Vivian. These three have to be the most insanely ambitious people ever to go off of the word of a priest they know nothing about in hopes of finding something no one before them ever has. Not to mention the danger they face in doing so. They enlist the help of a soldier Gann who's just as whacked as they are. Plus, the love triangle between Mercado, Purcell, and Vivian becomes frustrating and so unnecessary.

Contrary to what my review may suggest I'm not giving up on Nelson DeMille. I'm sure one day I will find the perfect DeMille novel for me. The Quest wasn't that novel. I hope his die-hard fans don't stone me for this review since it is to them I recommend this title. Although I didn't love this novel I am still on a quest to find MY perfect Nelson DeMille novel.

2.5/5

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### **Bettie? says**

Description: *Nelson DeMille is at the absolute peak of his powers in "The Quest" an epic tale that's broad in both scope and vision, harkening back to his earlier masterworks such as "The Charm School" and "By the Rivers of Babylon" as it brings the action in Africa of the mid-1970s. That's where an old priest named Father Armando emerges from a bombed-out prison after decades in captivity with the location of nothing less than the Holy Grail tucked in his mind.*

*From there, staged against the backdrop of the endless Ethiopian civil war, the quest of the title begins in search of it, undertaken by a trio of intrepid journalists (well, two plus a photographer), including the hard-bitten and hard-driving Frank Purcell, who's standing in for DeMille's redoubtable John Corey this time out. Purcell becomes our Robert Langdon as the book takes on the texture and feel of Dan Brown at his level best, chock full of mysticism, murderous monks, deadly assassins, and vengeful natives all on a quest to either find the Grail or make sure its secrets remain hidden forever.*

I love the setting for this. Vatican tries to steal The Holy Grail from the Copts.

3\* Plum Island

3\* The Quest

1\* The Charm School

3\* The Lions Game

2\* Night Fall

TR Wild Fire

2\* Spencerville

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## **Ed Armstrong says**

This novel is not worthy of Nelson DeMille. It was so boring I stopped Reading it - so bad it doesn't even warrant a star.

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## **Kemper says**

(I received a free copy of this from NetGalley in exchange for a review.)

Apparently Nelson DeMille wrote the first version of this book back in 1975, and it's about people having an adventure while trying to find the Holy Grail. Even though I've been reading DeMille since the '80s, I'd never even heard of it. So despite his best-selling career writing thrillers about cops, spies and terrorists, I'm gonna assume that the success of Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* really chapped DeMille's ass, and that he decided to rewrite and rerelease this to get in on that gravy train.

Set during the mid-1970s, three reporters are in Ethiopia trying to cover the civil war. Henry Mercado is an older British gent who spent several years in a Soviet gulag and credits his survival to his finding faith in Jesus while there. Henry is accompanied by the much younger and beautiful Vivian Smith, a Swiss photojournalist, and they invited veteran American correspondent Frank Purcell along to get a first-hand look at the fighting. Purcell is wary of dangerous situations thanks to a year spent in a Cambodian prison camp, but a few too many cocktails at the hotel bar and a long look at Vivian convinced him to go along.

While spending the night in the ruins of a spa, a wounded Italian priest staggers out of the jungle with an incredible story to tell of how he has spent 40 years imprisoned after coming across a mysterious monastery in the jungle that he claims housed the Holy Grail. The priest's info gives the three journalists a starting point to try and locate the monastery, but traveling in Ethiopia during a war is a dangerous undertaking.

If you read the official summary of this it states:

*"Thus begins an impossible quest that will pit them against murderous tribes, deadly assassins, fanatical monks, and the passions of their own hearts."*

That is a complete lie that is trying to market this as a rollicking adventure such as other stories about looking for the Holy Grail like Brown's book or *Indiana Jones & The Last Crusade*. It's false advertising that seems to be biting the publishers in the ass based on the reviews from DeMille fans I've read.

While there is danger to the group, it mostly comes in the form of one crazy Marxist general, a badly maintained airplane and the Ethiopian jungle. The murderous tribes are much discussed but never seen. The fanatical monks are just a bit of stage dressing, and as for 'deadly assassins', I don't know what they're talking about there.

Like a lot of DeMille's work, there's a lot of talk and discussion about potential dangers, but the actual moments of the heroes in jeopardy are few and far between. A long interlude in the middle of the book revolves around doing research at the Vatican where the biggest threat is the love triangle that could end the

quest. There are no ninja monks shooting poison darts or albino assassins running around killing people. Mainly they eat a lot of meals and drink a lot of wine and talk about what they're going to do.

It's not a terrible read. I find DeMille's stuff generally enjoyable even in ones where not a helluva lot happens at times other than his protagonist sitting around being suspicious of the motives of others. The early stuff with the priests and the journalists being caught up in the Ethiopian civil war was exciting and compelling, and the third act with the actual hunt for the Grail wasn't bad. I also learned a lot of interesting stuff about Ethiopia that I didn't know.

But the middle section is almost entirely dialogue about research, relationships and faith which killed a lot of momentum and went on far too long. Overall, this didn't provide much excitement for a book marketed as a thrilling adventure about the hunt for a religious artifact. Indiana Jones made it look like a lot more fun when he did it.

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### **Richard says**

This is the only novel you ever need to read about the quest for the Holy Grail.

Told from a single point of view, the primary cast is pretty small and includes a skeptic and a young woman who cannot decide which of the men she wants to be with..and ironically, she becomes the faith leader discovering the hidden path.

Mr. DeMille's descriptions of danger and sudden death are very realistic. He includes enough detail and avoids unnecessary comments to make this a very easy, breezy read,

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### **Sue says**

Oh my, this was a major disappointment. Characters that you really didn't care about, riddled with inconsistencies, and the world's cheesiest ending. Mr. DeMille, are you really this desperate for cash? Did you have a pressing contract? I just don't understand this insulting slap in your loyal readers' faces. If you're a DeMille fan, skip this.

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### **Jeanne Ledden says**

I have been a huge Nelson DeMille fan for many years, and generally have enjoyed his books. Most of them have been hard to put down and very captivating. It seems like quite a few years since he has written a book and I was looking forward to this one. However, I was very disappointed in this and actually have decided to stop reading it - something I rarely do with any book. First of all, the topic has been addressed in a number of other books, and it seems to be an overdone topic at this point. But secondly, after reading for well over 100 pages, I am still not getting to the gist of what I thought the book was about.

I hope that the next book will be more in line with what I expect from this author. Maybe he should go back to the basics and write the way that has generally worked for him in the past.

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### **Nancy says**

Love DeMille, hated this. I truly feel cheated. Didn't like the characters, dialog, plot, nothing.

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### **Drew says**

An awful book, just awful. Tortuously slow, and with all the excitement of a wet funeral. I am a newcomer to the work of Mr. DeMille, and after reading this book it will be a longtime before I pick up another of his titles.

I simply cannot fathom the point of either this book, originally written in the 70s, or of its contemporary re-publication. It has zero thrills, zero adventure and zero plot - it seems to be an attempt at a 'Heart Of Darkness'-type journey into the soul of a group of intrepid journalists caught up in a Grail hunt, but it comes off as an extremely tiresome plod through a historic warzone with little or no ultimate outcome. That our 'heroes' eventually uncover the Grail after almost 450 pages, only for them to be back in Rome without it some three paragraphs later tells you everything you need to know. Oh, and this book also has the singularly most inaccurate blurb description on the dust jacket I have ever read - 'a break-neck adventure'?? No, it isn't. It really isn't.

Trust me - if you are after a 'break-neck adventure' linked to the Holy Grail, stick with 'The Da Vinci Code' and give 'The Quest' an almighty body-swerve. No stars.

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### **Lee Lipps says**

To my surprise, I still had my copy of DeMille's original version of The Quest in a 1975 paperback. It has been quite interesting, fun actually, to compare his original with his re-written version. Today's version is substantially revised, most notably by punching up the humor and sarcasm a bit. He also tones down the introspection in this newer version, but not enough for my taste. It still borders more closely to bathos rather than pathos.

As for the plot, it might be well to remember DeMille devised this story well before any of the Indiana Jones movies or any of the similarly themed novels like The DaVinci Code, Katherine Neville's The Eight, and Thomas Gifford's excellent The Assassini. In short, he wrote it before stories about treasure hunting for ancient objects or deciphering medieval mysteries became a cliche.

However, DeMille's best revisions are in his adding more substance to the Kenyan Civil wars, and detail about Coptic Christianity, the Jewish settlements (the Falashas), and the truly barbaric Gallas. He adds depth to my knowledge of the history and culture of Ethiopia that I didn't much pay attention to when I was 25. I greatly enjoy the novels of Richard North Patterson (puhleez, not To be mixed up with the typist, James Patterson) for the same reason.

The most striking distinction between the 1975 version and the 2013 version is the difference of maturity in voice, tone, and plotting. We don't often see an author do a re-write of the same work 40 years later. I wish I had some do-overs in my own personal life. Of course, we would expect a richer voice and more plausible plots from someone who wrote the original work when he was about 32 or 33 years old and is now nearing 70, I think. But that doesn't make it any less interesting in comparison. Heretofore, we've not been able to compare an author's apple to the author's same apple.

In the end, though, I only gave it a 4-star rating because, revisions notwithstanding, there was still a lack of

depth to the plot as well as to the characters. It was compelling reading, but not up to my usual expectations of a DeMille novel.

(This is my first review for Goodreads. When I posted it, some of my sentences were missing so this may be choppy)

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### **Will says**

First of all, I have read all of Nelson DeMille's primary novels and I consider him the American novelist laureate. To put it succinctly, I consider DeMille to be my favorite author. But in this case. Ovid's explanation of 'Love bade me write' does not quite hack it. Not since Night Fall have I seen the end of the book bail out Nelson DeMille the way it did in The Quest. But the rest of Night Fall was supreme, which ranks it far higher than The Quest. As an author myself, I agree that adding the love triangle of sex in The Quest probably made it a much more interesting book than its predecessor, but that still doesn't get the stars when comparing this book against all others. I believe the reason I feel this way is because there was nothing in The Quest I could truly relate to, unlike Up Country which captivated all of the pent up guilt I've felt all these years for being lucky enough to miss out on the terror and sheer horror that was the Vietnam War. I've read at least six other quest-type novels written by other authors that captivated the reader's interest better than The Quest. Will this deter me from reading DeMille's future offerings? Not a chance, because unlike many others, Nelson puts the work into writing a story, and captures the look, feel, smell and touch of where he is. In short, he puts you there with him and that is the objective of every author; if you can do that, then it's the storyline that makes or breaks you. I would not say that DeMille disappointed me with The Quest, as many of his peers have whose recent offerings have reeked of being retirement account padding. The Quest just was not good enough in the composite view of the work to rank more than three stars. By comparison, The Panther was a majestic piece of work that let us know where the armpit of the world was located--Yemen. Let's hope he takes us to another such place of excitement, intrigue and currency in his next offering.

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### **JoAnne Pulcino says**

#### **THE QUEST**

Nelson DeMille

I know every blockbuster spawns multiple copycats but more to the point why do I feel I have to read them? I do know why and it's because when an author I admire writes a book I'm eager to continue my relationship with him. And then I found out that this book was originally written in 1975 when I read it for the first time. Since then the genre has become terribly overloaded.

Dear Mr. DeMille much to my regret I have to say, been there, done that so despite a few good characters, plot and intrigue I was quite underwhelmed.

The Quest is an all right book, but just too similar to so many. But, that won't stop me from continuing to be a loyal fan and reader. I will always love SPENCERVILLE, A MAIDEN'S GRAVE and GARDEN OF BEASTS.

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**StoryTellerShannon says**

Three explorers caught up in a love triangle search for the Holy Grail in Ethiopia amidst violence. The tale takes place over many years.

Kudos to the voice narrator, Scott Brick, who did a great job distinguishing various voices.

**OVERALL GRADE: B.**

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