

## The Most Bold and Daring Act of the Age: A Henry Doyle Novel

**E. Thomas Behr**

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*In this cinematic historical work, it is the relentless action that grabs audience attention and sustains interest from beginning to end.*

With *The Most Bold and Daring Act of the Age*, the latest book in his rollicking historical series, E. Thomas Behr sends his adventurous hero Henry Doyle off to fight pirates, marauders, and the steel and sails of the British navy across the Mediterranean Sea.

Doyle is an Errol Flynn–styled adventurer, leaping from a silver screen context to the page and straight into sword and cannon battles. Doyle was raised by Mohawk Native Americans; he fought with valor in the War of 1812 and now reigns as El Habibka, a quasi-chieftain among the Tuareg peoples of North Africa.

By his side is his wife, Dihya, a warrior princess in her own right. Descriptions evoke the royal pair perfectly, from their scars to their physical charms, and are dropped into the narrative at productive times. Doyle's half brother Peter rounds out the leads; he captains a privateer, providing a different and compelling window into the action.

The roster of supporting characters and villains includes famous names as well, including Decatur, an American naval officer, and Talleyrand, a French diplomat. But in this historical work, it is the relentless action that grabs audience attention and sustains interest from beginning to end.

The plot moves quickly, capturing what is essentially a guerrilla struggle for national strategic influence. Action scenes that represent turning points are nicely drawn, from hand-to-hand combat where swords decapitate sailors to sea skirmishes wherein deadly splinters sweep ship decks of life. In such battles, tacking and strategies are three-dimensional sweeps on the page, evincing expert research.

As exciting as the novel is throughout, its narrative arc sometimes seems dependent on its series of connected battles and encounters rather than pulling together a cohesive single story with one consistent thread. It pulls as much entertainment from history as is possible, and does so well; this is a believable peek into the past, with enough detail and thrills to enliven the record.

Prose is consumable, written in colloquial English and without the unnecessary flourishes that seem tempting for the genre—no pirate prattle or imaginatively highbrow Regency-era speech here. Foreign characters add their own flavor seamlessly, their dialogue moving the story naturally along.

*The Most Bold and Daring Act of the Age* makes a cinematic hero come to life, putting him in the midst of many thrilling action scenes, with moments of romance offering pauses along the way.

GARY PRESLEY (January 9, 2018)

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