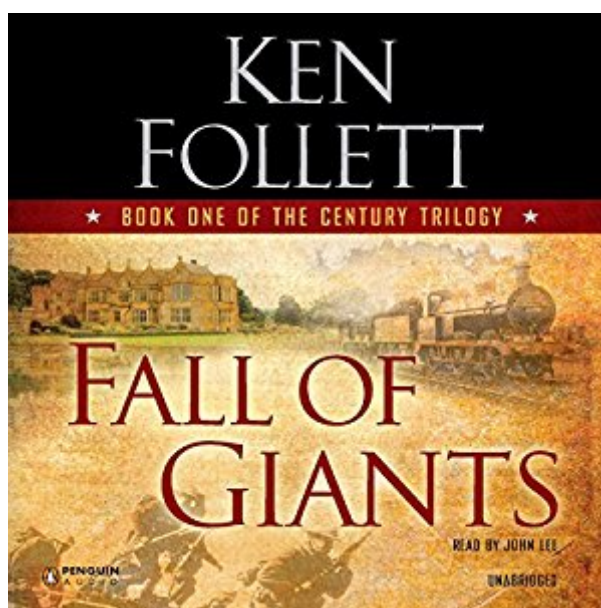


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Fall Of Giants: The Century Trilogy, Book 1



Synopsis

Fall of Giants is Ken Follett's magnificent new historical epic. The first novel in The Century Trilogy, it follows the fates of five interrelated families-American, German, Russian, English, and Welsh-as they move through the world-shaking dramas of the First World War, the Russian Revolution, and the struggle for women's suffrage. Thirteen-year-old Billy Williams enters a man's world in the Welsh mining pits.... Gus Dewar, an American law student rejected in love, finds a surprising new career in Woodrow Wilson's White House.... Two orphaned Russian brothers, Grigori and Lev Peshkov, embark on radically different paths half a world apart when their plan to emigrate to America falls afoul of war, conscription, and revolution.... Billy's sister, Ethel, a housekeeper for the aristocratic Fitzherberts, takes a fateful step above her station, while Lady Maud Fitzherbert herself crosses deep into forbidden territory when she falls in love with Walter von Ulrich, a spy at the German embassy in London.... These characters and many others find their lives inextricably entangled as, in a saga of unfolding drama and intriguing complexity, Fall of Giants moves seamlessly from Washington to St. Petersburg, from the dirt and danger of a coal mine to the glittering chandeliers of a palace, from the corridors of power to the bedrooms of the mighty. As always with Ken Follett, the historical background is brilliantly researched and rendered, the action fast-moving, the characters rich in nuance and emotion. It is destined to be a new classic. In future volumes of The Century Trilogy, subsequent generations of the same families will travel through the great events of the rest of the 20th century, changing themselves-and the century itself. With passion and the hand of a master, Follett brings us into a world we thought we knew, but now will never seem the same again.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I thoroughly enjoyed Ken Follett's epics, "Pillars of the Earth" and "World Without End". Though they are hefty tomes, the pages flew. Thus I jumped at the chance to read and review Follett's latest epic, "Fall of Giants" which promises to be the first in The Century Trilogy. When it arrived from at ~1000 pages and 4 inches thick, I found myself contemplating one of the advantages of having a slim Kindle (I don't). When the thing comes out in hardback in September it could be used as a murder weapon! But we all know that size doesn't matter when you've got an expert storyteller weaving an enthralling tale. I became so engrossed that I'd look up and 100 pages would have flown by. What is it that makes Follett so consistently "readable"? In "Fall of Giants" it's because the book is so well researched about the period (early 20th century especially WWI) with information on coal mining, trade unions, women's suffrage, protocols and manners of the minor royalty, politics, government, revolution and war. The story flows from this rich period but the riveting characters are at the forefront. Even the largely unsympathetic characters, such as the Earl, are made at least understandable because Follett thoughtfully portrays their motivations. There are few totally good or evil characters here, as it should be. (Though Follett seems none too fond of Russians and priests - be they Catholic, Anglican or Orthodox!) In past reviews I have criticized authors that I believe would benefit from more editing (e.g., Steven King, John Irving) so why don't I find Follett's book to be too long? Because there are no slow spots, no political point pushing, and no self-indulgent purple prose. I learned a great deal about WWI reading this novel, what led up to it and how it set the stage for WWII, which I hope is the subject of the next volume. It was fascinating to read about how the media and the governments of all the countries involved, lied to their people about how bad it was. One other thing that I believe readers should know going in: as mentioned, this is Part One of a promised trilogy but, like "Pillars" and "World" it is a stand-alone novel. The reader is not left gripping a cliff at the end. I recently very much enjoyed Connie Willis' "Blackout" which DOES end with a cliff hanger and I am glad I knew that going in; some readers didn't and felt cheated. You will not feel at all cheated at the end of "Fall of Giants". Enjoy!

A lovely historical read. As a self proclaimed history buff I enjoy Follett's fictional tales that not only entertain but educate in an informative and entertaining way. He paints such a vivid picture of what life was probably like in the period and I find that fascinating. I loved the story and characters. I was

hooked and even when it got a little tedious I was able to hang on to the characters. Can't wait to dive into the next one in the set.

This book (and the trilogy) is a 20th century 'War And Peace' on steroids! There are fewer Russian names and nicknames, so I can generally keep the characters sorted better until the third generation of characters grows up. It's interesting to view world events from various characters' point of view over a long period. I've read Ken Follett in the past and those books* are also historical dramas whose characters move in real events and they interact with historical characters. I like the format, learning details from the time period and the real quotes from the historical characters. This is what keeps me interested, rather than the fictional characters and their travails themselves I depend on him to relay the events as truthfully as possible. I know he strives for historical accuracy, but in one episode in the second book (Winter Of The World), the events portrayed differed from the actual events. It does not detract from the novel, but I was disappointed that historical accuracy was sacrificed. However, I wondered if some other events might have been "adjusted."** Jackdaws, Man from St Petersburg, Eye of the Needle, and Hornet Flight

"Fall of Giants" was recommended to us by a member of my Toastmasters Club. Out of curiosity I got it (Kindle Format) and then found out it's the first book of a gigantic trilogy. Obviously the author put a lot of research into this. This first book (seen through the eyes of three families living in four different countries) shows how a political crisis escalated into a gigantic war which wasn't expected, wanted and understood, and lead to the fall of the (long over-lived and outdated) aristocratic regent system in Europe. This is history written how it should be, IMHO: not dates, facts and scholastic explanations but real people in a real world. Very recommended.

It is understandable how many reviewers found it hard to "get into" the book. It starts slowly but builds as foundations are being formed for the characters that take you through this important time in history. I didn't know a lot about WWI aside from what I studied in college. But this book takes you into the world of most of the countries involved in WWI and why they felt the need to go to war. It also describes the shift in thinking of the citizens of many European countries that knew their government had to be changed after realizing the inequities on a greater scale during the war. Along with that, Ken Follett has devised interesting storylines and characters that make this journey even more intriguing. I am looking forward to the second book in the series. Ken Follett is fantastic writer.

What a novel! All about WW1, the Russian Revolution and the struggle for women's suffrage. Starting with a 13 year old going to work in a Welsh coal mine in 1911, this is the hook that got me interested. It then establishes families of haves and have nots. Different themes are introduced including causes of WW1, the collapse of Imperial Russia and the rise of Hitler.

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