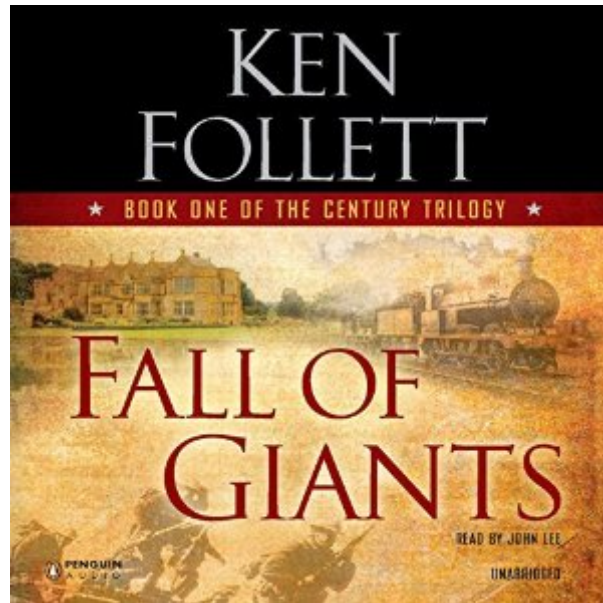


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Fall Of Giants: The Century Trilogy, Book 1



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

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 30 hours and 41 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Penguin Audio

Audible.com Release Date: September 28, 2010

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B0044X81LY

Best Sellers Rank: #23 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Historical > Cultural

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!

This is a fantastic epic, the first in a planned trilogy by the author ofÂ The Pillars of the EarthÂ (now a miniseries) andÂ World Without End. I simply raced through the pages, unable to put this book down even though it was a hefty nearly 1000 pages. The story moves seamlessly and logically,

starting in 1911 and ending in 1925, and has a large cast of characters -- all so beautifully developed that the reader comes to care about each one -- the good and the bad. A helpful CAST OF CHARACTERS is provided at the beginning of the book that may be copied and used as reference, but it is really not needed as the reader is introduced to each and they are so memorable that it's easy to keep them straight. The families are American, English, Scottish, French, German and Austrian, Russian, and Welsh. There are Lords and Ladies, Dukes and Duchesses, Kings, Queens, Earls, Dukes -- even the servants, miners, and other assorted people populate this work of fiction. The author has also inserted real historical figures into the story, and their interaction with Follett's characters is very well done. Book one of the CENTURY TRILOGY is set in Europe before, during and after World War I. From a mining town in Aberowen, South Wales, to the drawing rooms of the privileged aristocracy in Russia, Britain, Germany, and to the War Room in the White House of Woodrow Wilson -- the narrative captivates as it tells the tale of the people involved in the conflict and their lives during this period of change in the world. The story is intriguing and complex, but eminently readable. The violence and gore that were present in Follett's previous works is absent here, and the action is fast and the storytelling fantastic. I have a fondness for historical fiction, and this work does not disappoint as the author has obviously thoroughly researched the era and has rendered it beautifully. I won't provide a detailed synopsis of this book since the product description on this page does that, but will say that it's a drama about life and love during these fateful years and I promise you that this will go down as being one of the best books you've ever read. I cannot recommend it highly enough and can't wait for the sequel! This book, however, has a very satisfying conclusion and can stand alone as you are not left with unanswered questions at the end! Historical fiction at its best.

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