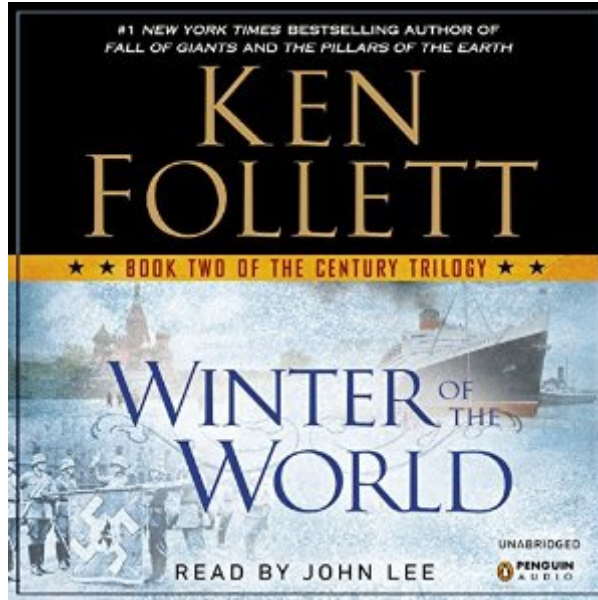


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Winter Of The World: The Century Trilogy, Book 2



Synopsis

Ken Follett here follows up his number-one New York Times best-seller *Fall of Giants* with a brilliant, pause-resistant epic about the heroism and honor of World War II and the dawn of the atomic age. *Fall of Giants*, the first novel in his extraordinary new historical epic, *The Century Trilogy*, was an international sensation, acclaimed as "sweeping and fascinating, a book that will consume you for days or weeks" (*USA Today*) and "grippingly told and readable to the end" (*The New York Times Book Review*). "If the next two volumes are as lively and entertaining as *Fall of Giants*," said *The Washington Post*, "they should be well worth waiting for." *Winter of the World* picks up right where the first book left off, as its five interrelated families - American, German, Russian, English, Welsh - enter a time of enormous social, political, and economic turmoil, beginning with the rise of the Third Reich, through the Spanish Civil War and the great dramas of World War II, up to the explosions of the American and Soviet atomic bombs. Carla von Ulrich, born of German and English parents, finds her life engulfed by the Nazi tide until she commits a deed of great courage and heartbreak.... American brothers Woody and Chuck Dewar, each with a secret, take separate paths to momentous events, one in Washington, the other in the bloody jungles of the Pacific.... English student Lloyd Williams discovers in the crucible of the Spanish Civil War that he must fight Communism just as hard as Fascism.... Daisy Peshkov, a driven American social climber, cares only for popularity and the fast set, until the war transforms her life, not just once but twice, while her cousin Volodya carves out a position in Soviet intelligence that will affect not only this war - but the war to come. These characters and many others find their lives inextricably entangled as their experiences illuminate the cataclysms that marked the century. From the drawing rooms of the rich to the blood and smoke of battle, their lives intertwine, propelling the reader into dramas of ever-increasing complexity. As always with Ken Follett, the historical background is brilliantly researched and rendered, the action fast-moving, the characters rich in nuance and emotion. With passion and the hand of a master, he 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'd like to begin by saying why I was able to read and write a review of a 925 page book on the day of its release. I preordered this book a couple of months ago, when the release date was Sep 11th. I was sent the book, received it on Sep 12th and spent a few days reading it. When I went to post my review, I found the release date had been moved back to Sep 18th and that I couldn't post my review. So, here it is now! I'm rather curious how many other readers also received their book a week early? Anyway, my review...Ken Follett's new novel, "Winter of the World", is the second in the planned three volume set about the history of the 20th century. Beginning in 1933, Follett brings his huge cast of characters along from the years up to the end of the Great War. To talk about the plot of the new book is impossible. Way too many characters and too many plot points. BUT, Follett's such a good writer that he brings the reader up to date with ALL his characters. Follett gives most of his characters enough nuance that few seem like caricatures. The interesting thing about Follett's second book is the breadth of the coverage of the 1930's and 40's (and into the '50's). Everything from the burning of the Reichstag to the T4 Euthanasia program under the Nazis, to the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the battle of Midway to the development of the atomic bomb is covered. Now, in a regular novel, the reader would think, "oh yeah, how can one character or family of characters be present at all these historic events?" But Follett has developed so many characters that what happens is not unlikely. His characters seem to merge with each other and then separate much like the designs in a kaleidoscope.

Follett is my favorite author and I have read all his books. I enjoyed the first installment in this trilogy, "The Fall of Giants" though it was not his best work. That book had a bad habit of following a character leading up to great world events, then cutting to a different character only to return to the previous one sometime after those events. I realize this is ultimately a "character story" but it's also epic historic fiction and it seemed unnecessary. Still, I enjoyed most of the characters, felt I learned

new things about the history of the period and was reasonably engrossed. I gave it 4 stars. "Winter of the World" repeats the same issue but has additional flaws. It picks up about a decade after the previous book. All the major characters that survived the end of the first book are still in this one, but they have been relegated to secondary characters. We never get the story from their first-person POV, like we did in "Giants." Instead, the POV's are now all from their various children. Which would be fine, except I felt these previous major characters had all been reduced to two dimensional archetypes. Fitz is a cliché British lord who you would have thought never had a moment of indiscretion or doubt in his life. Ethel is the wise and matronly Labor politician who seems incapable of mistakes or indiscretion. Maud is basically a straw man for the War's impact on German women, especially those who were not disposed to follow the Fascists. Grigori, who had one of the most interesting stories in the previous book, is now devoid of any interest. He's a whole-hearted functionary of Stalin, nothing more or less. The only character with any interesting backstory development is Lev, though I didn't find it quite credible.

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