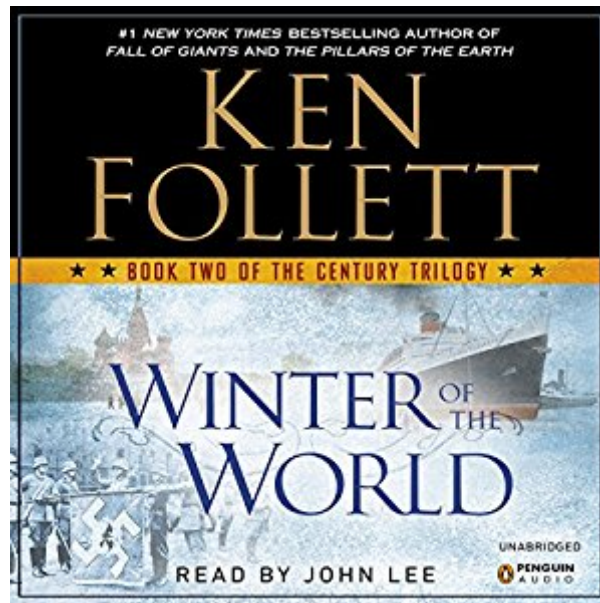




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Winter Of The World: The Century Trilogy, Book 2



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 couldn't put the book down. Several fictional plots are drawn amidst a well defined historical background - fictional characters sometimes meeting, or even working with well-known historical figures, thus highlighting some lesser-known characteristics of and facts about them. As this is the second book of Ken Follett's trilogy, many of the characters were either introduced in his first book, *Fall of the Giants*, or are the offspring of those characters. The story takes place before, during and after World War II and the main characters play out in Germany, Britain, the USA and the Soviet Union. Circumstances, historic, or otherwise, force these characters to gravitate towards each other and the reader senses that they are connected somehow and will inevitably meet. The novel covers a wide range of world events; the rise of Nazism, the ascent of Franco in Spain, the Battle of Moscow, the Blitz, the Normandy landings, the attack on Pearl Harbor, the development of the atom bomb, the fall of Berlin and many more. This was a fun way of brushing up on my history.

When you look at a book like *Winter of the World*, a 940 page book, you wonder how much time it would take you to finish it! However when you start reading, you realize that time flies and you're almost over in no time. It's such a page turner! As in *Fall of Giants*, the book is simply written, without any unnecessary complexities. Characters are alive and have well-developed personalities. However on a personal level, I was more attached to the characters in book 1. They sounded more real, more natural and lovelier than their children. That being said, these characters are also present in book 2 and their personalities have evolved over the years based on the circumstances that they have encountered. This book and its prequel, are strongly related, this is why I would recommend starting with *Fall of Giants* before reading *Winter of the World*. However if you decide against this advice, you will be able to come up to speed with the previous events in some time. The book excellently portrays the societies in Europe

and the United States during the 30s and the 40s (before, during and after the war). Some good descriptions include the brown shirts Nazi and the opposing parties in Berlin, the high society in Buffalo, the secret police and the corruption under dictatorships. It also dives into the evolution of communism throughout the years and into socialism across Europe. The description helps explain part of why the world is as we see it today. I believe that the author was also successful in stating and answering the following questions:

“Can we generalize a belief or a system to a whole country? Does human nature always seek power? And do causes justify the means?” The book is also objective to a great extent with few flaws that I will mention below. It shows the evils associated with fascism from its discrimination, to its ultimate race, and to its cruelty towards human beings who hold different ideologies and beliefs. But in many cases the book also presents the wrong doings of the allies (USA, Britain and Russia) politically and militarily. The war part contains a lot of thrillers which can make your heart pump faster due to its intense events and vivid descriptions. On the other hand, there are too many coincident and meeting points throughout the book. It is as if all characters live in one small city. I understand that the author intends to tell history by following the journey of the main characters, but all these intersections make the story less cohesive. Also some tragedies could have had a more intense reaction from the characters* (Example below to avoid spoilers). Finally having a Japanese family as part of the story could have enriched the book even further. Actually I was disappointed that the Japanese society was never mentioned. Also I believe that Hiroshima and Nagasaki should have been mentioned with more than just a few words!!! I am giving this book a rating of 4 minus, but I would certainly recommend it and I am looking forward to reading the last book of the trilogy.*the reaction of Eth to Dave's death.

I love Follett and always learn so much surprising history.....It's wonderful how he continues with his characters: this is the second of the Century Trilogy. I was enthralled by the characters in *Fall of Giants* and so happy to meet them again. Yes, I learned so very much (and do hope that my trust in his research and scholarship is earned). But, I was truly disappointed in the writing, this time. There were bursts of great prose, especially in the second half, but I almost felt that the first half had been ghost written.....Well, I wouldn't blame him for hiring a little help....he certainly writes a lot. But as a writer myself, the technique is important to me and I did find this one (compared to all the others of his I've read) a bit disappointing, in the prose aspect only....Great story, great characters, great information. Caveat. Don't take it on a plane like I did....Just too heavy.

This book continues the story from Fall of Giants. That book looked at the world events leading up to and including WW I and includes the Russian Revolution. This book starts up with events leading to and including WW II. The characters and their children continue from book one. The action occurs in the U.S., Great Britain, Germany, and Russia. The stories move between each character and the world events affecting them. It is not great literature, but it is great story telling. I found it to be a real page turner. Don't be turned off by its length. It is over 1000 pages long, but once you get caught up in the story the pages carry you on until the end. I've read the complete trilogy. It is entertaining and a great history lesson.

There's nothing pretty about this plot. World War II breaks out and deprivation, hardship and heartbreak affect each family. What makes this novel so compelling is the incredible attention to detail. The bombing of Pearl Harbor reads like a news account and the horror of the German/Russian battles are difficult to read. Nonetheless I couldn't put this book down; I read it in less time than many books half its length. Surprisingly, even though it's book two of a trilogy, it is very much a stand alone story. I read the first book "Fall of Giants" several years ago and remember little about that book other than I liked it. This book is special and I'm considering tackling the last in the series shortly.

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