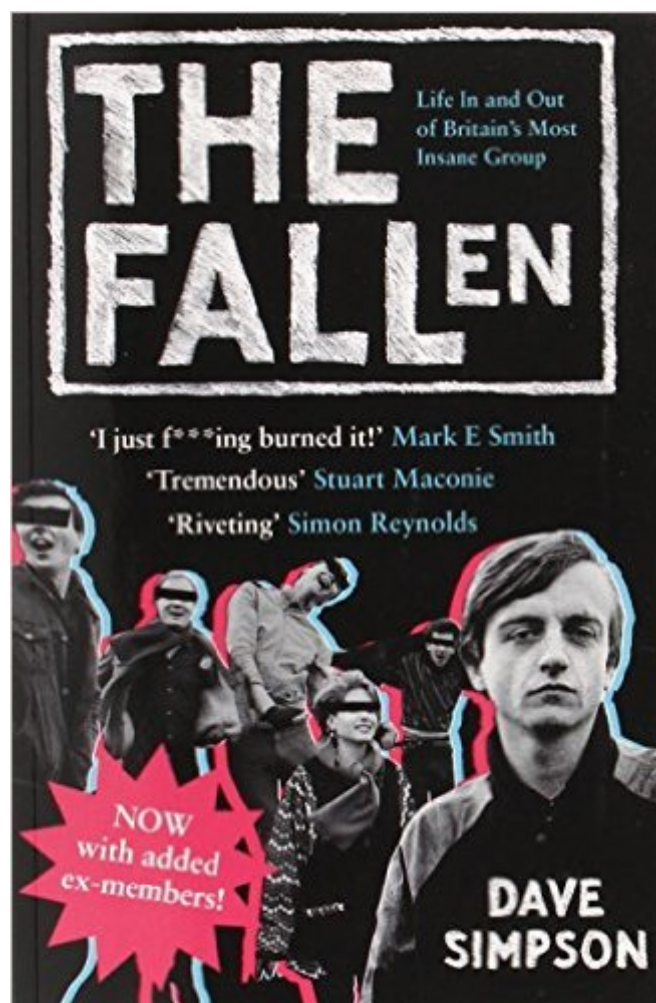


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The Fallen: Life In And Out Of Britain's Most Insane Group



Synopsis

The Fall is one of the world's most iconic groups, led for the last 30 years by the inimitable and enigmatic Mark E. Smith. They have released nearly 30 studio albums, with in excess of 50 musicians passing through their ranks. They are the Fallen; this is their story. Dave Simpson has spent two years of his life tracking down everyone who has ever played in the Fall. The resultant book is full of hilarious and shocking anecdotes about life in one of the most intense and insane bands. It is also a biography in reflection of Mark E. Smith, a man who runs his group like a sports team, for whom no one member is greater than the Fall. Featuring a host of new interviews, this is a fascinating insight for all of the Fall's devoted fanbase, which famously included John Peel, and anyone who has ever been curious about the group, and interested in the postpunk cultural landscape of Britain.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

whenever Mrs Divvey is giving me a hard time, I let her see me reading this book. Less a pop group biog than a strategy for dealing with people close to us. File under relationship counseling.

The only thing to recommend this book is the central conceit that it tells the stories that you never get to hear, those of former members of The Fall. It's been noted already that the Kindle version of this book is entirely in italics, which even the DIY publishers don't do. But beyond that, this book's author has the self-obsession of a blogger, which is an unfortunate characteristic of many British journalists who confuse their access to fascinating people with being fascinating themselves. Maybe

some of them are -- this one is not. Simpson paints himself as being part of the "wonderful and frightening world of the The Fall" not because he ever actually played in the band, but because he decided to neglect his personal life in pursuit of finding anyone who ever shared a stage with Mark E. Smith, even in the most laughably brief of scenarios. That his personal life disintegrates because of his neglect of it is hardly surprising, and not at all what I purchased the book to learn about. If anything, it displays the same damning inability to prioritize that makes the book much less than what it could be. He's careful, for example, to let the reader know that Una Baines has shared more with him than he can share with us. Why mention that at all? Pure wankery and self-aggrandizement. He's an insider, you need to realize. He's practically one of The Fallen himself. Oh, please. In the one area of the book where he has the opportunity to delve into what makes MES tick, he pulls back. He doesn't have the guts to go there. It's just too frightening and he lets the moment pass...and tells the reader about letting it pass. He doesn't even have the sense to edit out his own lack of insight into what he's writing about. And for some reason, he decides to make Karl Burns the elusive big white whale in the story, which turns out to be a pulled punch. He doesn't have the skills to prize much from the truly fascinating people like Kay and Brix, so he zeroes in on people who maybe sat in the same pub with MES and said bless to him when he sneezed and gives all kinds of detail about them, what they're wearing and how they're living. Then he calls these people his heroes after he "honors" them by hijacking their story and inserting himself and his sado history into it to make it all seem a caper, in which he, the put-upon sleuth, has done his best to include everyone and even sacrificed his relationship to do so. Yuck. What this book seems to have done is inspired some of the former members of the Fall to write their own books with humor, insight and grace and do justice to their stories in a way that this ridiculous hack could not. For that I'm grateful. For the book itself? Not so much. I will run in the other direction the next time I see the name Dave Simpson in a byline. And Mr. Simpson, the next time you feel the need to impose personal details about things like when you lost your virginity on the readers of a book about the Fall or any other subject of merit, stop and ask yourself why you feel the need to prove to the world that someone would want to be intimate with you, and why you would use a book about one of the world's most brilliant bands as a platform to do so. Or just go ahead and make an ass of yourself. Again.

I got this book, and before putting it on the shelf to read later, I thought that I'd just skim the beginning, and now days later with my tasks undone I've finished the book. If you are a fan of The Fall, then chances are you're obsessive like all of us including the author -you must read this book. Not only does the author track down and interview the 50 some odd former members of the band

-all interesting folks- he creates a kaleidoscopic portrait of main man Mark. Simpson spends perhaps a little too much time on his own life, but the reason becomes acceptable by the end. If you are reading this review then just buy the book.

I brought this on a vacation and annoyed my wife as I couldn't put this book down. A fascinating journey into the history of the Fall, into the psychosis of MES and all the blokes he's recruited for the band. Ps, to the author-please sell the rights so there can be a movie made about this, I can't wait.

author Dave Simpson attempts to track down and interview all the former members of the Fall. at the time of writing i think this was over 40. probably a dozen or so major players, but this doesn't mean some of the bit players don't offer any valuable insight into the Fall. or perhaps more accurately, founding member, the band's leader, Mark E. Smith and his methods and (apparent) madness.while he isn't able to find quite every past member he damn near comes close. many of the long serving members offer the same kind of assessment as to what makes MES/the Fall work. a few even offer some pretty surprising stories and insights. one of these is from the long serving guitarist, Craig Scanlon, who all but vanishes after his departure from the group. i'm leaving craig in by name because i think it's a selling point here. i don't want to give away too much of the details. everyone Simpson makes contact with is worthy of a mention, pretty much everyone you'd want to hear from is represented save for a few maybe. again, any big fan is going to get a kick out of this.a few critical thoughts: the author i think attempts to merge a personal narrative into the story of tracking down "the Fall-en". this isn't the worst idea but it feels forced. his story is obviously going in a certain direction and you can tell almost from the very start. the two stories (tracking the band down and the personal one) are related but the way he unfolds the personal one is just superfluously graphed into the search for past Fall members. had this story been added to the wrap up of the whole book it may have worked a little better, maybe. i can appreciate how it was important to him but he doesn't offer enough for us to get invested in it. not to mention he's telegraphing the outcome the whole time.at some point the criteria for inclusion seems to get too inclusive. i will say the point where the qualifications go from having been on a recording to shared a stage with MES for any amount of time actually does make a little sense as most of the short run characters appear around the time of the group's grand implosion in 1998. while the book doesn't track necessarily from the founders in a straight line to the most recent ex-members there is a loose chronology to it and that helps a little.all that aside, it's a good read.

As someone else said above, if you're reading this review, buy the book. My comment is regarding the Ebook version - which is inexplicably all in italics. The entire text. Why?

This is the book you want to read about The Fall...lots of great interviews with almost every member they could find.

very entertaining book.

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