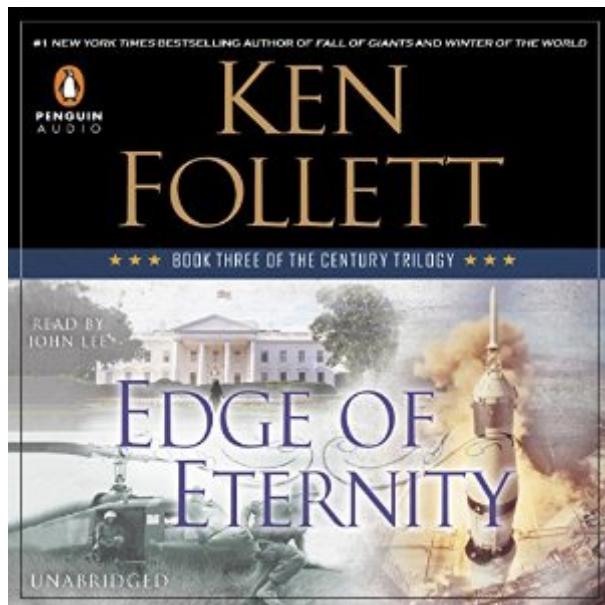


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Edge Of Eternity: The Century Trilogy, Book 3



Synopsis

Edge of Eternity is the sweeping, passionate conclusion to Ken Follett's extraordinary historical epic, The Century Trilogy. Throughout these books, Follett has followed the fortunes of five intertwined families - American, German, Russian, English, and Welsh - as they make their way through the twentieth century. Now they come to one of the most tumultuous eras of all: the enormous social, political, and economic turmoil of the 1960s through the 1980s, from civil rights, assassinations, mass political movements and Vietnam to the Berlin Wall, the Cuban Missile Crisis, presidential impeachment, revolution - and rock and roll. East German teacher Rebecca Hoffman discovers she's been spied on by the Stasi for years and commits an impulsive act that will affect her family for the rest of their lives. George Jakes, the child of a mixed-race couple, bypasses a corporate law career to join Robert F. Kennedy's Justice Department, and finds himself in the middle not only of the seminal events of the civil rights battle, but a much more personal battle of his own. Cameron Dewar, the grandson of a senator, jumps at the chance to do some official and unofficial espionage for a cause he believes in, only to discover that the world is a much more dangerous place than he'd imagined. Dimka Dvorkin, a young aide to Nikita Khrushchev, becomes a prime agent both for good and for ill as the United States and the Soviet Union race to the brink of nuclear war, while his twin sister, Tania, carves out a role that will take her from Moscow to Cuba to Prague to Warsaw - and into history. As always with Follett, the historical background is brilliantly researched and rendered, the action fast-moving, the characters rich in nuance and emotion. With 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 really enjoyed the first two books in the trilogy, and looked forward to this one. About half way through the book, a pattern began to emerge that bothered me, and began to put all the books in a different light. As I read books one and two, I assumed them to be a fairly accurate historical account as told through the eyes of a group of fictional characters. As book three moved into the time period that I have lived through, I saw a definite bias that put the all the earlier depiction of eras into question. As the book moves through the 60's, 70's and 80's, democratic leaders are seen as dedicated, caring, intelligent characters driven by deeply held convictions. However, republican leaders and the military are portrayed as cold, calculating, power hungry individuals with no concern for civil rights and little recognition of the changing world scene. For instance, one of the central story lines concerns the Berlin Wall and impact on the lives of German people on both sides of the wall, with the elation of the eventual fall of the Wall. However, the only mention of President Reagan during this entire cold war era is an accusation that he played a role in the murder of thousands of El Salvadorians, and an offhand conversation between two CIA operatives at the end of the book, regarding how they can make it look like Reagan had a role in opening the wall. I can accept a certain amount of revisionism in a work of fiction, but this was just too over the top for me. Follett, I expected better from you. Bottom line, it's a well told story with interesting characters, but it's a long way from any kind of historical veracity.

Having read most of Follett's earlier works, I anticipated very good things from this third chapter of his 20th century trilogy. The first volume was fascinating and its account of events leading up to WW1 were alone indeed worth the price of admission. Volume 2 was almost as compelling as the first but Mr. Follett's English heritage was obvious as he clearly was unfamiliar with fundamental Americana which would not escape even a high school reviewer's scrutiny. (Hey, there was no such baseball team known as the Washington Nationals back in the 1940s.) Volume three of this comprehensive work must have been rushed to press but perhaps it was simply the culmination of an effort that was simply beyond the talents of a writer to articulate some balance with so evident a leaning toward left wing political persuasions. The 1960s were of course dominated by the Cold War which heightened following the construction of the Berlin wall. Additionally, the 'Cuban Missile Crisis', the Kennedy assassination, Viet Nam, and the civil rights movement in the USA, and events of the Communist eastern bloc were addressed at length. Each of the main characters were well

developed and their personal flaws humanized these persons as they traversed the most tumultuous decade composed of relative world peace in modern history. Follett is clearly obsessed with the failings of American society and his incessant labeling of southern state Americans as racist and hateful does involve painting with a very broad brush. It is an easy matter to criticize racist policies and intolerance of entire regions but change did occur and it was not solely because of intervention by northern Democrats. Au contraire, Follett clearly has no love, respect, nor appreciation of the realities of American politics of those days. If a reader were to consider as gospel this feeble account of cultural events then the Republican Party had virtually no part whatsoever in the implementation of Civil Rights legislation or likely even the abolition of slavery in the USA by extrapolation. Such rewriting of history is unforgivable and clearly the product of an agenda driven product. This book does touch on the evolution of the music and counterculture of the 1960s yet it ignores totally the Berkeley free speech movement of 1964 (despite main characters residing exactly in the neighborhood at the time) and the Woodstock culmination of the decade. Not even a phrase was dedicated toward the technological advancements which saw men walking on the moon which one certainly would have been anticipated by readers looking to gain insights into which that accomplishment obviated, essentially the complete superiority of western society, education, and technology. Nothing whatsoever about the Iranian hostage taking under Carter or the Arab-Israeli wars and the advent of the OPEC major impact, hyper inflation, and the now ever present energy crises in the West. The jump to the Nixon administration demise and the rush through the 70s was indicative of a rush to print for this work which I personally would never have signed off on. A history, even fictional, properly ought not be so completely biased with personal insults and arguable descriptions of influential characters who factored into the narrative. The blatant hatred of Nixon (and later Reagan) was evident and was truly unworthy of a work which initially appeared to have been presented as a historical fiction. It is in fact absolutely classless. The end of the Berlin division of course was completely unrelated to the policies and principles of the Reagan Administration and indeed required some convoluted reconstructing of just what went on following the national rebuke of Carter and the Reagan assertion of the Soviets as an evil empire. In this reality presented, Reagan was ineffective and irrelevant to the fall of the Berlin wall and ultimately, the USSR. Reagan is presented as a mass murderer and guilty of abominable actions in this historical parallel universe. Utter rubbish. Follett had virtually nothing in this concluding volume to contribute concerning the politics of his own country which from here appears to be an endorsement of liberal Socialism that has been in place for decades in the United Kingdom. Those same policies espoused by himself almost resulted in the complete Nazification of Europe and the British Isles

some seven decades ago. Despite pockets of brilliance, this work is largely a disappointment that is quite likely to receive rave reviews from the contemporary left wing media here in the USA and in Europe. The Russian reviewers awaiting translations will undoubtedly applaud once they stop laughing.

Edge of Eternity was massively disappointing: the continuing development of the principal characters lapsed into the political correctness of the author's ultra liberal mantra. Mr. Follett's usual meticulous research came up short in respect to any American conservative president, concentrating character dialog on perceived missteps, while ignoring any and all achievements of such men as Nixon, Reagan, and Bush. According to the author, based on his character's meandering, unconnected, unsubstantiated logic, American presidents and policy positions over 50 years had no impact on the USSR's eventual collapse. The collapse of the Soviet empire was solely due to Gorbachev's heroic liberalization of the USSR; what nonsense. The first two books were well written and researched; Mr. Follett "dropped the ball" on his third and final tome.

So very disappointing. I wish I had borrowed this from the library instead of spending hard earned money. The perspective is distorted, the characters flat and often phoney, lacking depth and realism. The obsession with sex is distasteful and boring. It is hard to believe that the same person wrote this book as wrote World Without End. I found the writer's attitude to the era disconcerting and the details inaccurate, right down to distractions such as using a phrase like "yadda, yadda, yadda", with such strong associations with a tv programme that didn't even begin until just before the wall came down. How did that one get by so many editors and proof readers? In placing his characters in positions so close to the leading figures of the day the author attempts to inject reality but in the end it all lacks credibility. There is an aura of hatred and contempt that makes this book anything but enjoyable. The era this book spans covers much of my life. I can tell you there was much more of positive spirit and optimism in our time than is reflected here. Don't waste your time.

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