



Edge of Eternity

Ken Follett

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The final book in Ken Follett's #1 *New York Times* bestselling Century Trilogy—following *Winter of the World* and *Fall of Giants*—now in mass market paperback.

Five international families—American, German, Russian, English, and Welsh—come to one of the most tumultuous eras of all: 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 Hoffmann discovers she's been spied on by the Stasi for years....George Jakes, the child of a mixed-race couple, finds himself in the middle of the seminal events of the civil rights battle....Cameron Dewar, the grandson of a senator, jumps at the chance to do some official and unofficial espionage for a cause he believes in....Dimka Dvorkin, a young aide to Krushchev, becomes a prime agent as the United States and the Soviet Union race to the brink of nuclear war, while his twin sister, Tanya, carves out a role that will take her from Moscow to Cuba to Prague to Warsaw—and into history.

Edge of Eternity Details

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Author : Ken Follett

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From Reader Review Edge of Eternity for online ebook

Gasperson says

Review contains SPOILERS. Don't read further if you don't want some plot details spoiled.

Are you a self important baby boomer who leans left in your political views? Well buddy, are you going to have the biggest rager of a boner reading this book. Don't get me wrong, I devoured this book, and it starts off very strong. Most of the characters in the book start off likable. I realized pretty early on that at this point in the story, nearly all the characters are related by either blood or marriage, despite being on 3 different continents. Remember how likable most of the characters in both of the first two books were? The strong women? The men up against these terrible World Wars but still fighting the good fight for their families? Yeah, you sort of get that at the start of the book, but it doesn't last.

As some other reviewers have noted, the book does start off strong, but then sort of just starts jumping from one historic event to the next, all while glossing over or downplaying some important ones. Nixon, Reagan and the one right leaning character in the book are evil cartoon characters. Jimmy Carter is almost completely left out(I wonder why?). Some redeeming qualities are shown for Nixon, just before getting into the things he's known for. None such for the Gipper, but I think part of that is that the story starts to go off the rails a bit in the 80's. Vietnam was pretty glossed over earlier, and I shit you not, there is not a single mention of the Soviet war in Afghanistan, despite there being two POV characters based out of the USSR and the theme of the USSR losing money and status being a central theme of the later chapters. How is that sort of oversight possible? As for Nam, most of the characters in the story are affluent, so they didn't have to fight. One character gets drafted, and it's a bit of a stretch, and he spends all of about 2 pages in Nam. Those are some of the most forced pages in the entire book and of course Follett goes all BABYKILLER for those pages, and no real mention is made of them again. Another character goes over there and pulls a Jane Fonda. The portions about Nam can somewhat be forgiven from a "boots on the ground" POV stance, as Follett is never at his strongest when discussing combat. However, the absolute omission of the Soviet Afghan war is a really glaring mistake.

In the earlier books, Follett's strength was his human characters, and the terrible situations they're thrown in. Despite all odds, they always pull through, usually with the help/support of a strong family. These are families we've read about for 3 generations or more. It seems, that much like in real life, something was lost between the Greatest Generation and the Baby Boomers. This is both a good thing, in that Follett acknowledges that the family did indeed grow weaker in that time period, and a bad thing as most of the characters are terrible people. Remember Maud? How she loved her man so strongly, that she gave up her family and homeland to be with him? She loved him through two world wars, and stayed strong for her new and growing family. Well, her grandson(SPOILERS) becomes a degenerate, drug addicted rockstar, who sleeps with his best friend's girl. His best friend(also his cousin), decides that this girl is fucking marriage material. Cheat on me and not feel bad about it? That's cool. Enable my cousin's heroin addiction? That's also cool, because I love you. Sounds like the kind of gal you'd want your son to marry right? Oh, that wonderful young lady is also a POV character, ha ha.

That's a theme among the male characters in this book. All of them, without fail, are fucking chumps. Almost all of them are either cheated on, cheat themselves, or end up making some choices that require a bit of a leap on the readers part. For instance (SPOILERS), a male character digs one of the female POV characters, but she falls for none other Jack Kennedy. He's such a fucking dreamboat that the bitch doesn't get married until she's 60, withered up, and a literal cat lady. The Kennedy clan in general are portrayed as the polar

opposites to the cartoonish Nixon and Reagan. Very little mention is made of Ted, the fat drunk Kennedy, I guess Follett couldn't quite whitewash him into a completely flattering light.

Another character(more SPOILERS), one of the more redeeming ones, decides to cheat on her disabled husband with another man. Her poor disabled, mostly impotent husband say it's all good. Why? Because it's 60's MAAAAAAAANNNNNNNNN. She just as quickly ends the affair. It's almost as if Follett put that in there to ruin the one completely likable character in the story.

So, you're probably thinking that I really disliked this book from that review, but that's untrue. It was an entertaining read, and a page turner. It starts off very strongly and I had hoped it would be as enjoyable at the first two, but the enjoyment I got from the middle and end portions of the book came more from Follett's obvious bias and the reverse-Jamie Lannister character arcs of the POV characters. If you have read the first two books, definitely read this one to see how it ends, but I must warn you...the ending is terrible. I mean, I groaned as soon as I saw the date posted at the top of the page. I'll put another spoiler tag below and then discuss it, because it's the funniest, most ironic bit for me.

ENDING SPOILERS

So, as I mentioned earlier, Follett spends some time building all of the right leaning characters into these evil cartoon characters. Early in the story it's(and rightfully so) the segregationists, then Nixon, and lastly Reagan. Now, for Reagan, he asserts that he's even worse than Tricky Dick, and that he got away with murdering innocents during the Iran-Contra affair. So what does Follett end on? You guessed it, the 2008 Barack Obama acceptance speech. For the scene, Follett has all of the black characters, who have fought so hard for civil rights throughout the first part of the book, all in one room watching the whole thing. Never mind that only Jacky and her son George are the only characters you care about in the room. They have reached the top of the mountain! I guess Follett wanted to stop it there and not have the parts where Obama wins the Nobel peace prize, and then murders innocents with drones. Hey, he'll get away with it though, the Gipper would be proud!

Edit: I would also like to add another glaring omission from a book that tried to hit all the big moments of the 60's-80's. The moon landing! The entire space race was barely mentioned, but one of the biggest "Where were you at" moments, and arguably one of the greatest achievements in the history of mankind, the FUCKING MOON LANDING, was not even in the books. Not even a fucking mention!

Kelly Hubbard says

I can't wait to read this book! Fall of Giants and Winter of the World were so good I could hardly put them down.

Liviu says

very strong first part covering roughly 1961 - 1963 (Berlin wall, fight for Civil Rights, the Cuban missile crisis), but then the novel starts scattering and after a while becomes almost an encyclopedia like recital of

what happens as it follows the diverse group of characters until 1989

there are strong moments here and there but they read more like snippets than like a novel, while the political biases of the author start becoming way too visible and detract from the book (there is a ton about Nixon and later Reagan and how bad they and their entourage were and outrage as how Nixon got punished but Reagan "got away" with it, while nothing about the disastrous Carter years, very little about the disastrous Johnson Vietnam War, nothing about how Margaret Thatcher reinvigorated Britain for a generation etc); also there is nothing about Japan or China and any historical fiction that wants to cover the later part of the 20th century in the comprehensive way this book seems to be intended and basically resumes itself at the USA-USSR cold war is already failing there

overall a page turner one reads to find out what happens, but which after the first excellent maybe third, devolves into self-indulgence, lack of cohesion and political bias that becomes more and more annoying

Greg says

Bleh... I hated this book! What a load of liberal revisionist history.

I can summarize it for you this way: Liberals are brilliant, dashing, successful, all-knowing, always wise and prescient. Conservatives are stumbling, bumbling blockheads, who must visit prostitutes to get any action because who would want a conservative lover?

Want more? Jimmy Carter almost ended the cold war with his brilliant moves regarding Poland. Reagan gave a silly speech telling Gorbachev to "tear down this wall", which apparently had nothing whatsoever to do with the wall a few years thereafter being torn down... and, by the way, he was a mass murderer. In fact, it turned out that Gorbachev himself pretty much unilaterally killed the Soviet Union... on purpose. Who knew?

If you lean liberal and need to have your fantasy world upheld by books where liberals can do no wrong and conservatives can do nothing but, this is definitely the book for you. It will confirm all your most devout beliefs about your world view.

I found it awful... bleh

Ric says

I read an advance copy of the third in the Century Trilogy Follett who is probably best known for his thrillers is also a great writer of historical fiction--Pillars of the Earth may be the best piece of historical fiction I ever read. Edge of Eternity is not far behind. It is the monumental (1100 pages in my copy) of a monumental time --1961 to 1989. The book was like reading a movie (I mean that in a good way), story flowed, the characters flowed, it just worked. Granted lots of literary license to have his various families in the center of all that was happening, but how else could the story be told. All in all it was a great read

Shlomo says

First off, I cannot review this book without spoilers, so please, please read at your own risk.

SPOILERS AHEAD

I was disappointed by this book. Maybe as a standalone version it would have been better received, but as the third of what had been a superb trilogy I was let down.

First:

Why drop so many characters we were invested in the first two books and which in the closing of the second made it look like we should look forward to what happens to them? The second book ends with Erik (Carla's brother) being enthusiastic with an East German uniform (similar to how he had joined the Nazi Army before) yet no mention of him, even in passing is made here.

The second book ends with Volodya showing his scientist wife a Sears catalog. Nothing comes of that, and the book focuses on the fraternal twins of Volodya's sister (whose marriage no one was thrilled about).

What about Billy Williams and his family? The second book ends with him being a leading Labor MP and him digging up Ty Gwyn's gardens for coal.

Second:

No payoffs for many of the characters we do get to follow,

More than once Natalya keeps mentioning that she would like to escape to the West and that Vasilii (her author friend) deserves to get the recognition he deserves. Would it have cost too much for Follett to add a 2 page chapter where he receives some accolades (or maybe a fictional Nobel Prize of sorts) once the Soviet Union has been dissolved?

Maud dies, Grigory is visited on his death bed, what about the rest of the characters we loved and hated?

Third:

A heavy political agenda.

Basically liberals are good, conservatives are bad. Reagan should have been punished but wasn't, Bush 41 was clueless. After a point I did not like it at all. Follett made one character conservative and made him a heavy cartoon of one.

Fourth:

Many people complained before me, too much pointless sex. Does he really have to tell us that a brother and sister do not mind seeing each other naked? Hiding in a women's lingerie store was a great idea for two women looking not to be followed, but comparing breasts? And that "if I was a lesbian" line? Seriously? Plus the whole thing about Walli shaking hands with Karoly's husband and "seeing something" then Lilli

remembering it was absurd.

Those are the things that disappointed me in a book I was so looking forward to read. Sorry Ken, this one gets only 3 stars.

And BTW just a passing mention (twice) of how Ty Gwyn is now a College with no explanation?

cindy stenzel says

so many world events took place during the time period of this book that it felt like the characters were forced into the story rather than the story being built around the characters.

Brittina says

Sadly not nearly as well written as the previous books in this trilogy. The first third was as we're used to, descriptive and captivating. The rest seemed like he was in a hurry to finish, and is rushed and padded with a lot of clumsy sex. Very sad, I was so excited for the at installment and was left wanting better.

Terry Fazio says

Thought it was adolescent. I have read other books of Follett's and this one read as if someone else wrote it. Perhaps it is because I lived through this era, that there was a knowing of the linear plot, but I just don't think it was well written. Sorry. No recommendations here.

Mohammed Arabey says

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First 2017 Read, as the last 2 years...KEN FOLLETT & The Century Trilogy.

Because who doesn't read History..won't notice how determinedly it repeat itself.

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Cindy Ward says

Long, long long and boooooring. I would say the first of this trilogy was the best...the second was only ok, and this one was not very good. I just didn't care about the characters, what happened, etc. It was not suspenseful or engaging. Sorry Ken Follett, I love you but not this book!

Nicole~ says

4.5 stars

Edge of Eternity is Follett's bookend to his globe-trotting Century trilogy that began with Fall of Giants followed by Winter of the World: a strikingly immense multi-generational saga featuring families from Germany, Russia, Wales, England and America, weaving historical world conflicts of the 20th century.

In this final installment, we see the grandchildren of the epic WWI story course through the remnants of WWII, the Cold War, and the civil rights movement of the 1960's. Follett's undertaking of the political crises of the next 3 decades, steered ahead by the superpowers of the world, range from Communism, Social Democracy, freedom and civil rights, the threat of nuclear annihilation, espionage and government corruption, weaving them with creativity, astute interpretation and insight.

The bulky novel is made highly readable by short chapters ending in enough suspense to drive the reader through a labyrinthine historical journey: a bus tour meandering through the seminal events that shaped the world of today. The most compelling of topics unfolded right here in America with the move for civil rights laws: issues which the Brothers Kennedy initially hesitated on while turning blind eyes to the violence waged on black people in the South.

Follett's mostly plausible characters are involved in real events, interacting with real world leaders; there are unmistakable characters resembling Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, 'Hanoi' Jane Fonda and The Beatles. I say 'mostly plausible' since I had one teeny issue with Maria Summers, JFK's mistress: a strong black woman who was one of the Freedom Riders, who stands firmly for equality for black people, goes to bed and falls hopelessly in love with the white American president who refused to sign the bill for civil rights. I had the impression of the black female captive of a white plantation 'massa'. She stood out as a character *out of character*.

Finally, this epic fact and fiction heavyweight is a story of victory: of freedom and democracy after a century of earth's bloodshed; the realization that was once a Dream - the attainment of civil rights after such violent struggle, culminating into the making of America's first black President; the failure of communism, the fall of corrupt world leaders and - not to be left unmentioned - the triumphant heralding of the birth of Rock and Roll.

All we are saying is give peace a chance.

Let me tell you now

*Ev'rybody's talking about
Revolution, evolution, masturbation,
Flagellation, regulation, integrations,
Meditations, United Nations,
Congratulations.*

- John Lennon

Michael says

The characters in this book unlike characters in his previous books (that I really enjoyed) are caricatures. Follett lets his liberal politics come through with no subtlety - all the blacks are good all whites are evil and bad-intentioned.

I'm sorry to have wasted my time reading this left-wing drivel.

Very disappointing given the talented storyteller Follett can be.

Gary Branson says

It pains me to give a Follett a low rating; however, this just wasn't good. Stock characters against the political background of the last half of the 20th century just made this story too long. And where was England in all of this turmoil? Not one single mention of Margaret Thatcher. Seemed to be forcing a particular political agenda also... As I said about the second book in the trilogy, too broad a canvas to be effective.

Gary says

After reading well over 3,000 pages of material....you feel totally invested in a story. At least this writer does that for me. I cared deeply about these characters. It's funny....when I read a Follett novel.....I dream about the characters while I sleep at night, as if they are real people. That's how powerful this trilogy was for me. And out of the 3 this one I could most relate to, because I was born in 1959, and the things happening in it up to 2008, I saw on the news. I lived it, I experienced it.

The first week this book was first put on the shelves, we drove to Independence, MO to visit my son ,and his new wife, who live there now. We stopped at the local BARNES AND NOBLE, (take that, Amazon!), and I was hot on the trail to purchase this book....while I was deciding which book to actually purchase, (I am anal about the binding, the condition of the book jacket,etc. So I look at several copies, before I decide that this is

the one), I counted 5 people either asking an employee about where the latest Ken Follett novel is, or a couple people discussing how excited they were to read it.

I will admit, this is not War and Peace material, (Matt!), or deserving of the Nobel Peace Prize for Literature, but it's enjoyable ,and engrossing all the same. Start with Fall of Giants, and Winter of the World, and then this one. Follow the families, and their struggles, through wars, political uprising, and family squabbles. Start at the beginning, and take the ride....it's a great one!
