



Winter of the World

Discussion guide for book groups and students

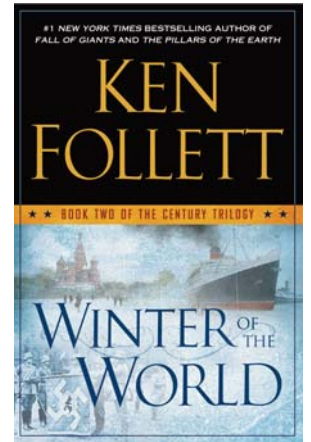


About the author

Ken Follett is the author of twenty bestsellers, from the groundbreaking *Eye of the Needle* to *The Pillars of the Earth* – his bestselling book – and *World Without End*.

About the book

Winter of the World, the sequel to *Fall of Giants*, is the second novel in Ken's 'Century' trilogy. It follows five families – American, German, Russian, English and Welsh – as they enter a time of enormous turmoil, beginning with the rise of the Third Reich, through the Spanish Civil War and World War II, to the Cold War.



- ❖ Before reading *Winter of the World* what did you know about World War II and the rise of fascism in Germany? Did you learn anything new upon finishing the novel?
- ❖ Why do you think Ken opened *Winter of the World* with that short period of a few days when Hitler came to absolute power? What does that do to draw you into the story?
- ❖ Do you think Ken accurately depicted his characters situations and feelings while Hitler rose to power? What is the best example of that?
- ❖ Ken's big scene about the Holocaust focuses on the extermination of the mentally handicapped. Why do you think he chose to do that?
- ❖ Which families and characters do you identify with the most? Why?
- ❖ Is there a custom or practice from the book's time period that you wish existed in our modern day? What would it be, and why do you think it should have a place in today's world?
- ❖ Talk about the historical figures that appear throughout *Winter of the World*, What did you think of Ken's depiction of them? Do you like seeing notable people such as these come alive in fiction, or do you prefer reading about them in a strictly historical context?
- ❖ Do you enjoy reading epic novels such as this one? What makes them so appealing to readers, in your opinion?
- ❖ Ken populates this novel with several strong female characters. Compare/contrast some of them; who was your favorite? Which one did you like least? Apply the same question to the book's male figures. When considering those of different backgrounds and social classes, were any of the male figures similar to one another?
- ❖ Discuss Woody and Chuck's relationship.

- ❖ Discuss Lloyd Williams and Boy Fitzherbert. How are they similar, despite their many differences?
- ❖ What did you think of Daisy Peshkov? Did your opinion of her change from your initial impression of her?
- ❖ Think about the ways the main characters' lives intersected throughout the book. Were there any characters that didn't meet over the entirety of the novel that you wished did? Who, and why?
- ❖ Consider the book's title. Does *Winter of the World* capture the atmosphere of the book?
- ❖ What did you think of the book's ending? Did the author succeed in wrapping up the many threads and strands in *Winter of the World*?
- ❖ Which of the characters in *Winter of the World* do you expect to be reading about in book three of the 'Century' trilogy?

