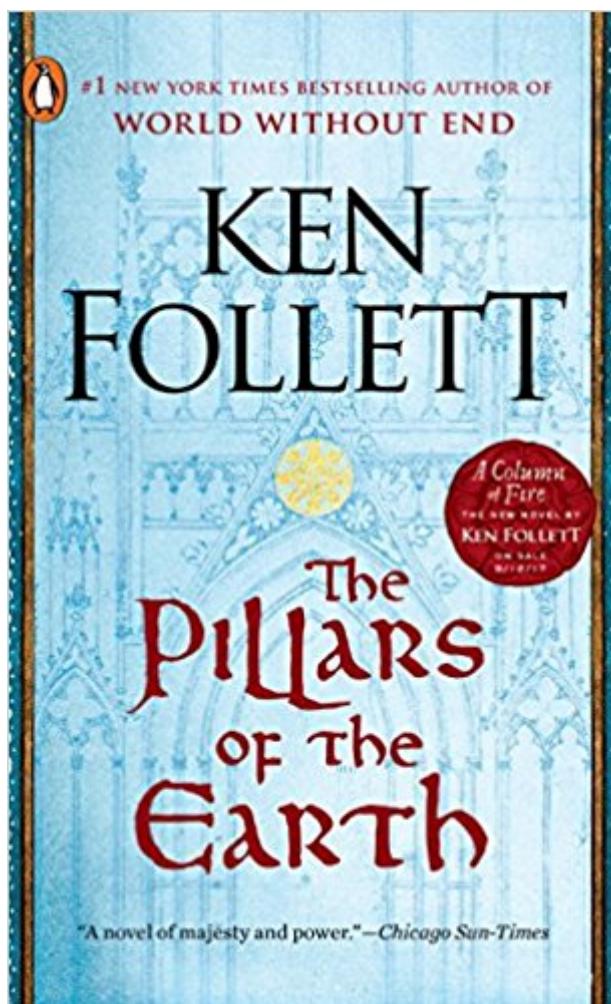


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The Pillars Of The Earth: A Novel (Kingsbridge)



Synopsis

View our Ken Follett feature page. Learn more about The Pillars of the Earth miniseries on Starz. A departure for the bestselling thriller writer, this historical epic—a twelfth-century tale of the building of a mighty Gothic cathedral—stunned readers and critics alike with its ambitious scope and gripping humanity

Book Information

Series: Kingsbridge

Mass Market Paperback: 983 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 5,413 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,772 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #45 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Historical > Thrillers #92 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Family Saga #168 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers & Suspense > Spies & Politics

Customer Reviews

Set in 12th-century England, the narrative concerns the building of a cathedral in the fictional town of Kingsbridge. The ambitions of three men merge, conflict and collide through 40 years of social and political upheaval as internal church politics affect the progress of the cathedral and the fortunes of the protagonists. "Follett has written a novel that entertains, instructs and satisfies on a grand scale," judged PW. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc.

A radical departure from Follett's novels of international suspense and intrigue, this chronicles the vicissitudes of a prior, his master builder, and their community as they struggle to build a cathedral and protect themselves during the tumultuous 12th century, when the empress Maud and Stephen are fighting for the crown of England after the death of Henry I. The plot is less tightly controlled than those in Follett's contemporary works, and despite the wealth of historical detail, especially concerning architecture and construction, much of the language as well as the psychology of the characters and their relationships remains firmly rooted in the 20th century. This will appeal more to

lovers of exciting adventure stories than true devotees of historical fiction. Literary Guild dual main selection.- Cynthia Johnson Whealler, Cary Memorial Lib., Lexington, Mass. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I once read an interview by one of my favorite indie authors, Matt Schiariti, and he listed this book as his all time favorite. I bought this book later on this year, but put off reading it because IT IS OVER 1000 PAGES - OH MAI GAWD! But, wanting to look cool I decided to give it a try. Honestly, it didn't sound like anything I'd be interested in... so I didn't have any expectations. And then I started it, and whoa man. I got sucked in. There's so much drama in this book. Right when you think one thing is resolved, something else pops up. Oh, and I cried. I don't even know how many times. I also lost a lot of sleep. Despite the amount of pages, I flew through this book. This takes place over an amount of decades with lots of characters. But they're all written so well, even the ones that only show up for a couple pages, that they are all distinctive. And there are so many intertwined stories, but there wasn't any times where I was confused about what was going on. After finishing it, I brought it to my dad and told him he has to read it. I very rarely make recommendations to my father. (This is the second book I've told him to read in the last five years.) Major thing to point out - the woman in this story are ah-may-zing. Yes, it's historical and things were different back then. But they were all written as strong, independent, and Ellen was totally the most sane character in the entire book. My only complaint is that there wasn't enough focus on her. I highly recommend this book to anyone who likes drama and has any interest on 12th century England.

"The Pillars of the Earth" takes the reader on a ground level tour of the early Middle Ages... not only the history of the era, but the lives of the ordinary people, their suffering and difficult lives. Aliena, the heroine, suffers the loss of her family and a horrible trauma as a young woman. Her resilience allows her to rise from this shattered life, not once, but several times, each time struck down once more, seemingly thwarted at every turn. She is an incredibly courageous woman whose perseverance sees her through to the end, and to see the beginning of the end of the savagery from petty rulers and clerics that marked the era. Jack, her lover and eventual husband, finds his mark as a builder, and the reader sees the evolution of the first magnificent cathedrals of the era, the change of style that enabled these magnificent buildings to soar toward unprecedented heights. We also see how these buildings were constructed by a largely illiterate workforce, using only the most rudimentary tools. Philip, the prior, faces the contradictions of a Church that attempts to reconcile a life of faith and humility with the temptations of worldly power and wealth. After the murder of

Thomas a Becket, he leads a continent-wide rebellion against the unchecked power of the royalty. The book pulls no punches on both the good and evil done by the clerical establishment. Our modern ideas of liberty and human rights were born in this grimy, brutal era, and I highly recommend this book to all.

A FUN READ W/ GOOD INFO RE LIFE IN THE 10TH AND 11TH CENTURIES IN ENGLAND AND EUROPE AS WELL AS THE HISTORY AND TECHNIQUE OF CATHEDRAL BUILDING. THERE IS ALSO HISTORICAL INFORMATION REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIPS OF VARIED SOCIETY INCLUDING ROYALTY AND THE CHURCH. THE STORY IS FUN. THE ONLY DOWNSIDE IS THE KIND OF 'BODICE RIPPING', I.E. TALK OF LOINS, FULL LIPS AND VIOLENCE: BUT THAT'S WHAT SELLS, SELLS EVEN HISTORY :) AND KEN FOLLETT HAS HIS EYE ON SELLING BOOKS AND PRODUCING A BEST SELLER (SEE THE PROLOGUE). HE HAS CONSULTED W/ SOLID HISTORIANS ON THE ART AND SCIENCE OF CATHEDRAL BUILDING AND THE BOOK, IN GENERAL (INCLUDING THE NATURAL ARTS, I.E. NATURAL HEALING; SCIENCE IN THE 12TH CENTURY) IS INTERESTING AND THE BOOK IS A FAST PACED FUN READ.

I know this is bizarre given that I gave this 2 stars but it's close to being a 5 star book. It's starts a bit slow but really picks up and became hard to put down. However, that being said once I reached the end I found myself unfulfilled and displeased. My other big problem was the extremely detailed and repeated rape scenes and references. The amount of detail and the sheer number of references to rape really makes me question the author. I would guess that there's a rape scene or reference to rape over a 100 times throughout this book. Another big problem with this book is the almost cartoonish untouchability of the villain (think of the good guys as Wile E. Coyote and the villain as Roadrunner). While I would be more inclined to give this more stars if it were a condensed version I just expected more out of a long, in-depth and time consuming book. When you invest as much time into a book as you will with this one I tend to have higher expectations for it. With this book I felt that once I reached the end it didn't feel like the reward I'd expect.

The pillars of the earth, the book, has stayed with me for about 30 years. It is a sweeping, timeless saga that carves itself into your mind. The story entralls you and the characters become your best friends. You learn about every day struggles of people who lived in the 1100s and 1200s. I've read all of Follett's books, but this is the best one! All high schoolers should be required to read this book

as well as anyone who loves historical novels.-- Nancy Anne

Wow! Much too long and has too many characters, confusing plot lines and intersections, too much interior dialogue, and too much graphic descriptions of sexual encounters. I found myself thinking mid-way through that the book was written for the picture shows and found about midway through, to my satisfaction, that it already has been made into one. I have read most of what this author has written and know that he can do better. This, like some of the pecan trees on my wife's farm, seems to have been conceived of and to have performed as a "money-maker"

(<http://www.caes.uga.edu/commodities/fruits/pecanbreeding/cultivars/moneymaker/moneymaker.html>), and I expect that it was.

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