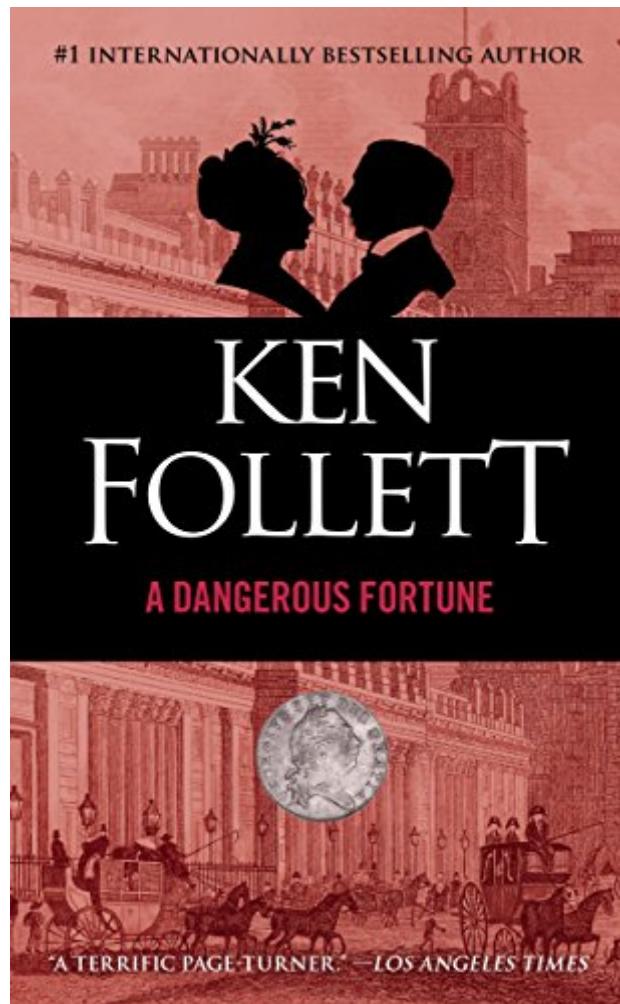


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A Dangerous Fortune



Synopsis

In 1866, tragedy strikes the exclusive Windfield School when a young student drowns in a mysterious accident. His death and its aftermath initiate a spiraling circle of treachery that will span three decades and entwine many lives. From the exclusive men's clubs and brothels that cater to every dark desire of London's upper class to the dazzling ballrooms and mahogany-paneled suites of the manipulators of the world's wealth, one family is splintered by a shared legacy. But greed, fed by the shocking truth of a boy's death, must be stopped, or the dreams of a nation will die. From the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

This story starts off with a group of boys in a private school who are involved in the tragic death of a fellow student. Then it follows the life of a banking family and particular that of Hugh who is taken in by his uncle after his father's bank crashes and his father commits suicide. He is always treated as a poor relation by his conniving and controlling aunt who is bent on protecting her lazy, spoiled son. Hugh is a talented and ethical banking assistant in the family whose primarily goal is to become a

trusted and respected senior partner. He is, however, thwarted at every turn by his scheming aunt. I could not put this book down. Just when you thought things couldn't get any worse they did! . It was a well told tale of the banking industry in the 1800's in London and the lifestyles of the wealthy.

I always enjoy Ken Follett and am so glad to have found A Dangerous Fortune. Spanning about 26 years from mid to late 19th century, the characters grow through various stages of life and fortunes-and misfortunes. Sometimes I cringed, sometimes I cheered. Very well written and flows well. Didn't want to put it down.

I stayed up until after midnight several times, because I just had to know what would happen next. Name the sin, and you will probably find it in this story of corrupt aristocrats, powerful bankers, and the layers of social classes. Greed, pride, adultery, murder, unrequited love, lust: it's all here.

An excellent novel. It will transport you to the Victorian era in London. This is a fiction novel that feels like a true story. All the characters are well developed and it is not a predictable story. A dangerous fortune is a fortune to read.

Twists and turns through each character. The evil characters were very evil. The nice were very nice. Follett created a cast of characters that played with each other quite nicely. Really couldn't guess at the ending. Super read.

The author does an excellent job tying together a complex plot and making it all seem effortless and inevitable. Banking issues turned out to be more topical today than when the book was written. There were four flaws in the book. [spoilers] First, Hugh was too self-righteous in supporting Edward and the bank, even when he knew Edward was incompetent. He should not have put his own fortune, and his family's, at risk: he should have left. (Follett makes the same mistake in *Night Over Water*). Second, similarly, it was unfair for Follett to suggest Augusta was to blame for the failure of the bank. She never knew nor claimed to know how banks operated: it was the bank directors' fault for listening to her. They (including Hugh) were the ones with the fiduciary responsibility to the bank and to its shareholders and customers, and they, not Augusta, violated that responsibility. Third, the business with Micky and Augusta at the end is silly and unconvincing. Follett has a serious problem in his books of getting ridiculous near the end - even *Eye of the Needle* had the ridiculous booby trapped jeep - and the trunk sequence was idiotic. For one thing,

Micky would never have been so candid with Augusta until he knew he was safe, the whole scene was out of character for him. Fourth, the prose was good, but not as good as in Eye of the Needle. That said, the characters were interesting and the plot had some interesting points to it.

Ken Follett's one of my favorite authors and he didn't disappoint with A Dangerous Fortune. The book begins with a mysterious drowning at an all-boys boarding school in England in 1866, and then follows the lives of the boys present at the drowning as well as some other boys from the school as they enter adulthood in London. The novel centers around the Pilaster's, an mostly upper class family that runs one of the largest banks in the city. Cousins Edward and Hugh Pilaster were both present at the drowning as kids and grow up to work at the bank. Hugh is poor, hardworking and a brilliant banker, while Edward is wealthy, lazy and inept, and this causes friction between them and the other Pilaster family members as they both try to become partners at the bank. The other central characters of the novel are Edward's cunning mother Augusta, who is bound and determined to keep her family's status and wealth in tact, and his friend Micky (also present at the drowning), who has a dark side and is trying to climb the social ladder in London and impress his father back home in South America. Of course, there are plenty of women around as well, as in most of Follett's novels, and everyone seems to be lusting after someone other than their husband or wife. And beware, Follett isn't bashful when it comes to sex scenes. What I love most about Follett's writing is the characters he creates. He has the ability to create a large cast of characters, that are either endearing, despicable or somewhere in-between, and then he manages to intertwine their stories in the most engrossing and interesting way. Many of his books are long...but they're also fast-paced page turners and I always wish they were even longer.

as always, Follett spins a yarn with many twists and turns. I always enjoy his books. Hugh and Masie are just two of the characters in this story of growing up and making a success of ones life. But a dark past follows both of them. Many other people come in and out of their lives and each has an influence.

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