

FROM THE AUTHOR OF THE WORLDWIDE
BESTSELLING EPIC, THE PILLARS OF THE EARTH

KEN FOLLETT



EYE OF THE NEEDLE

A WORLD WAR TWO SUSPENSE THRILLER

KEN
FOLLETT

EYE OF THE
NEEDLE

PAN BOOKS



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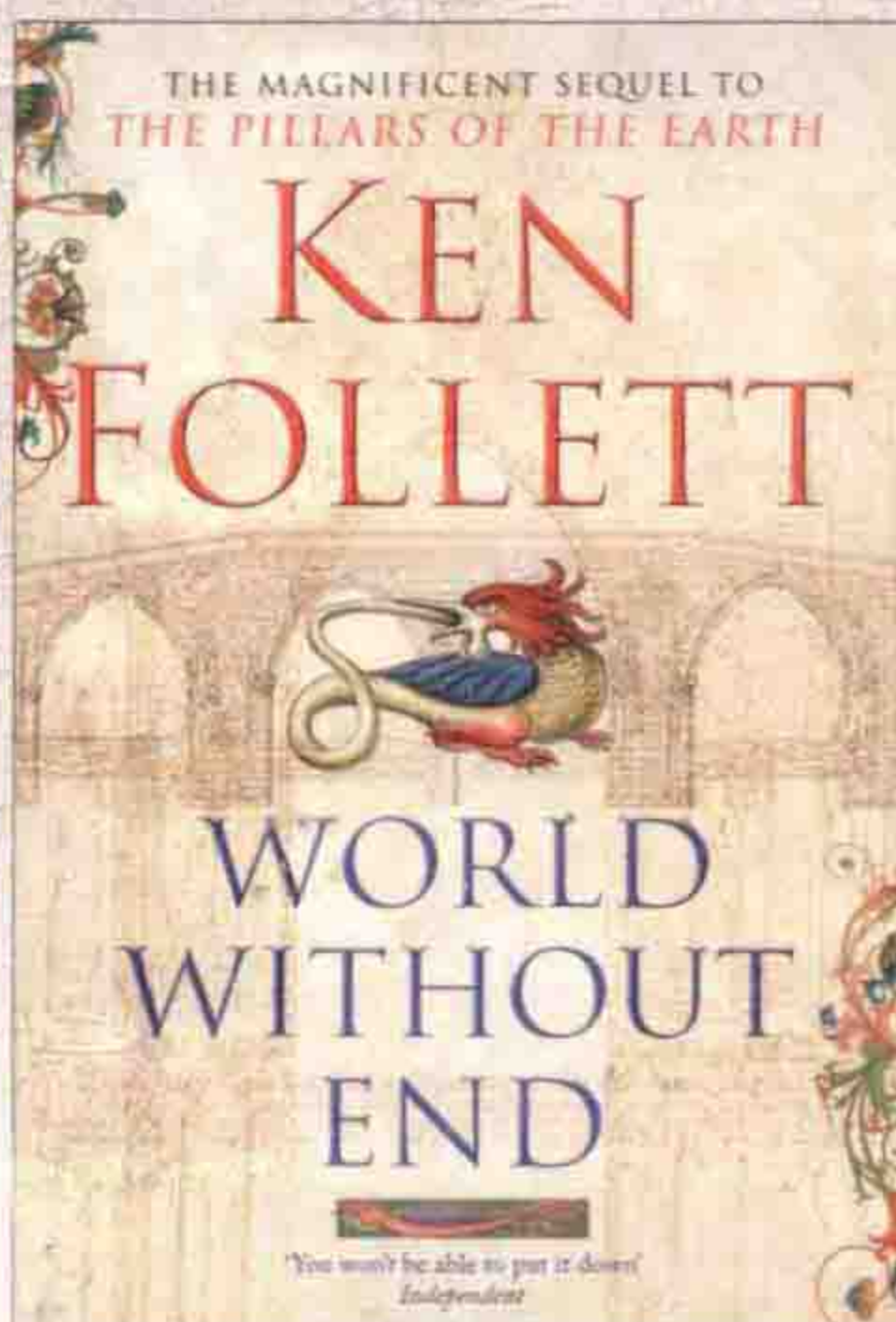
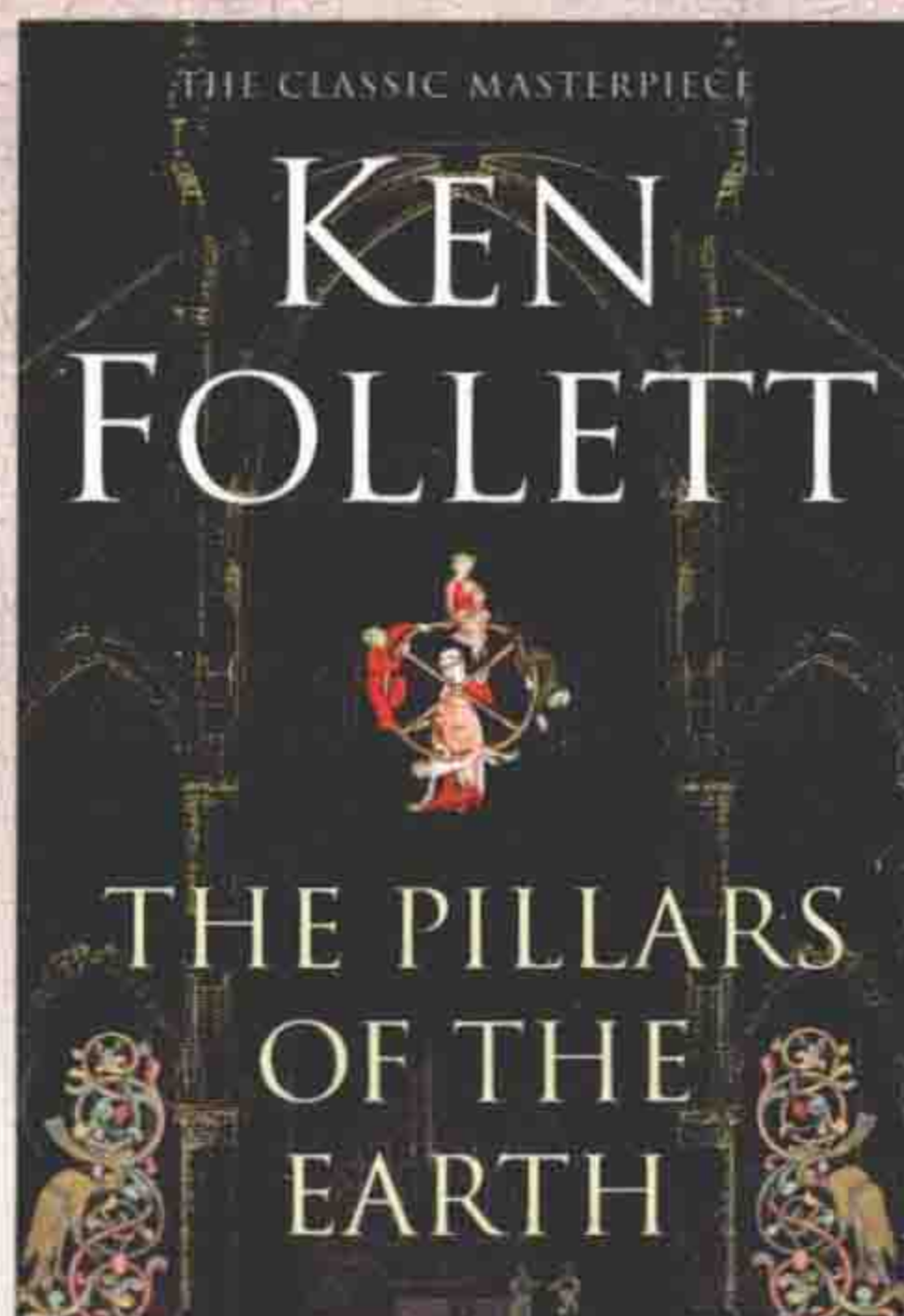
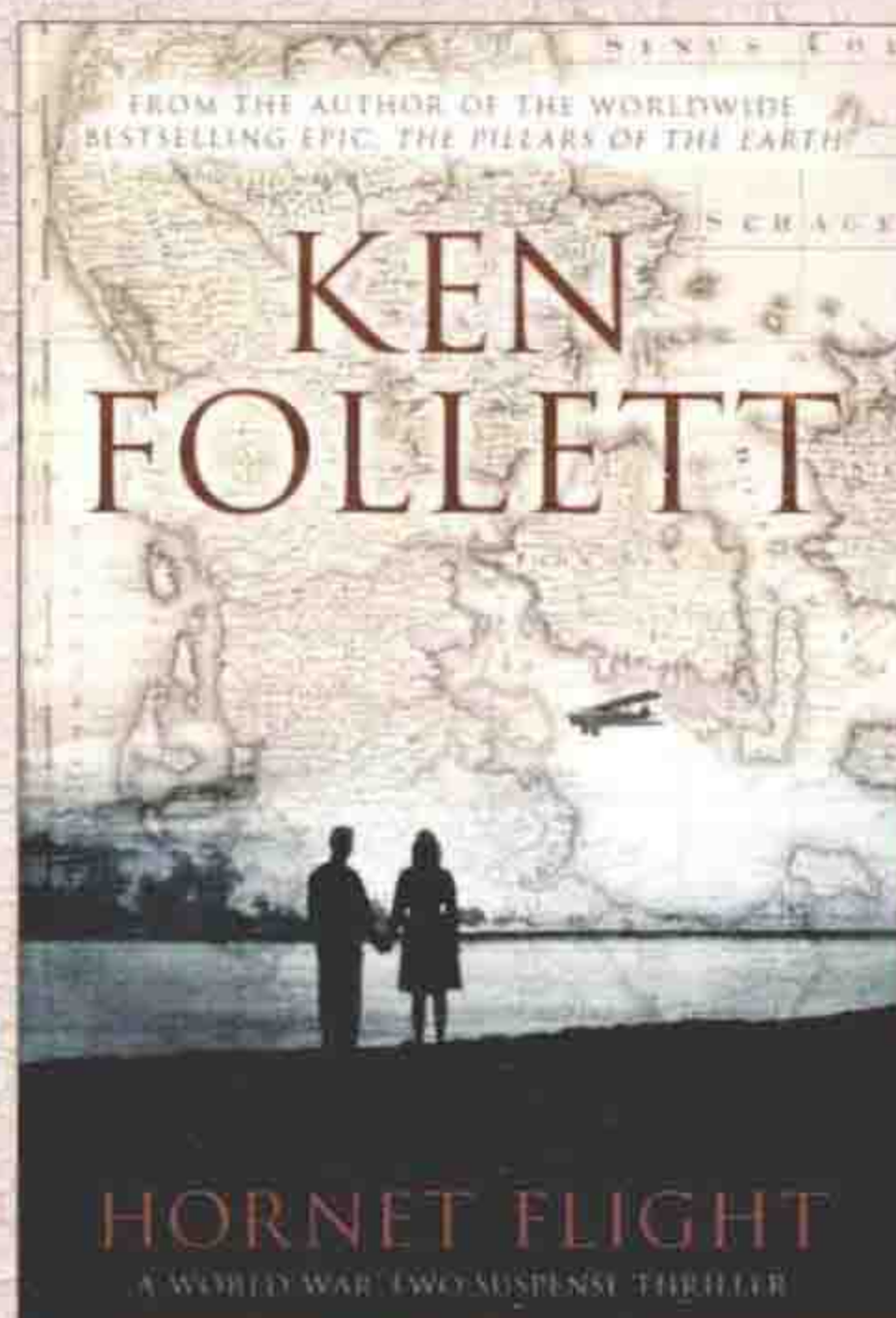
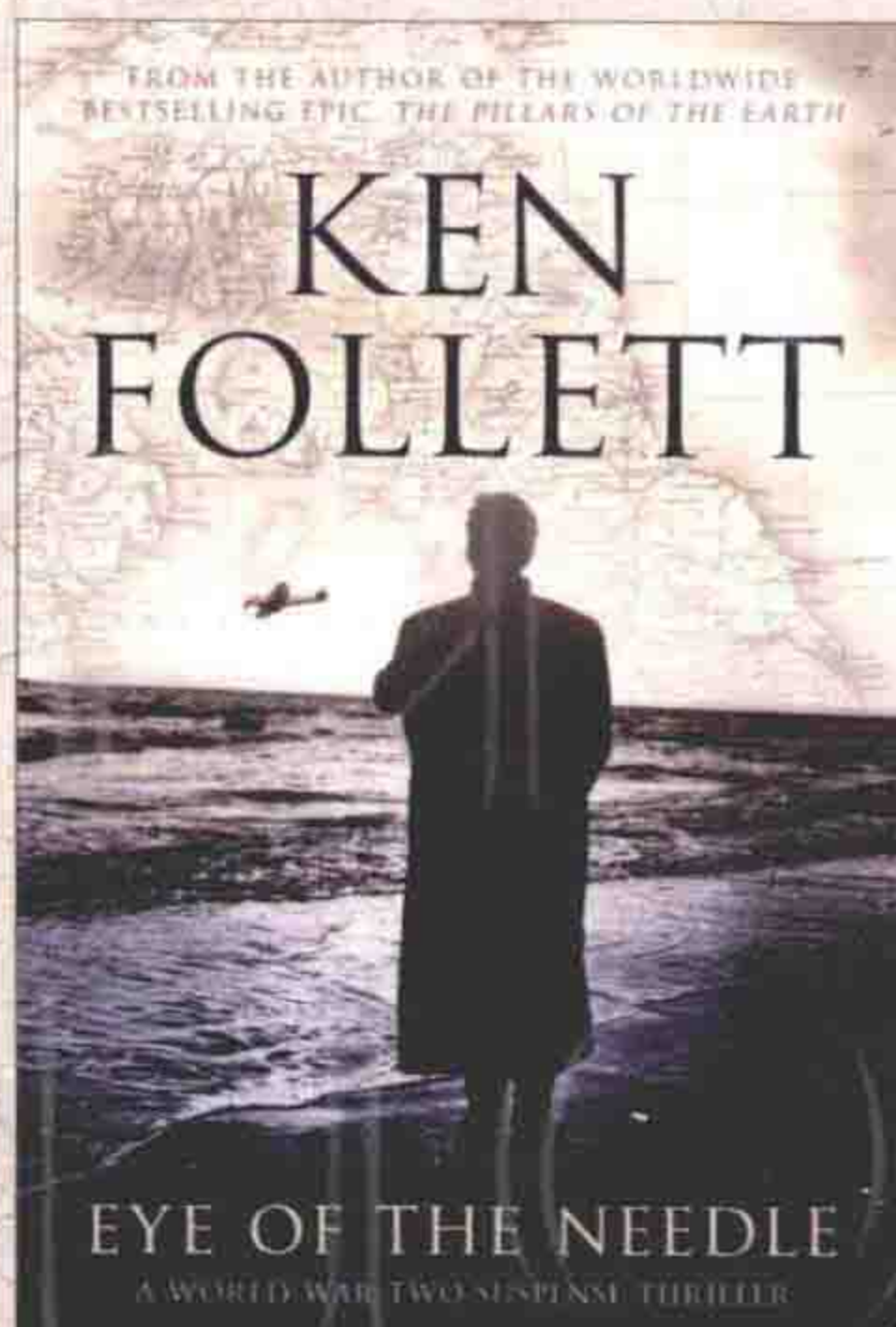
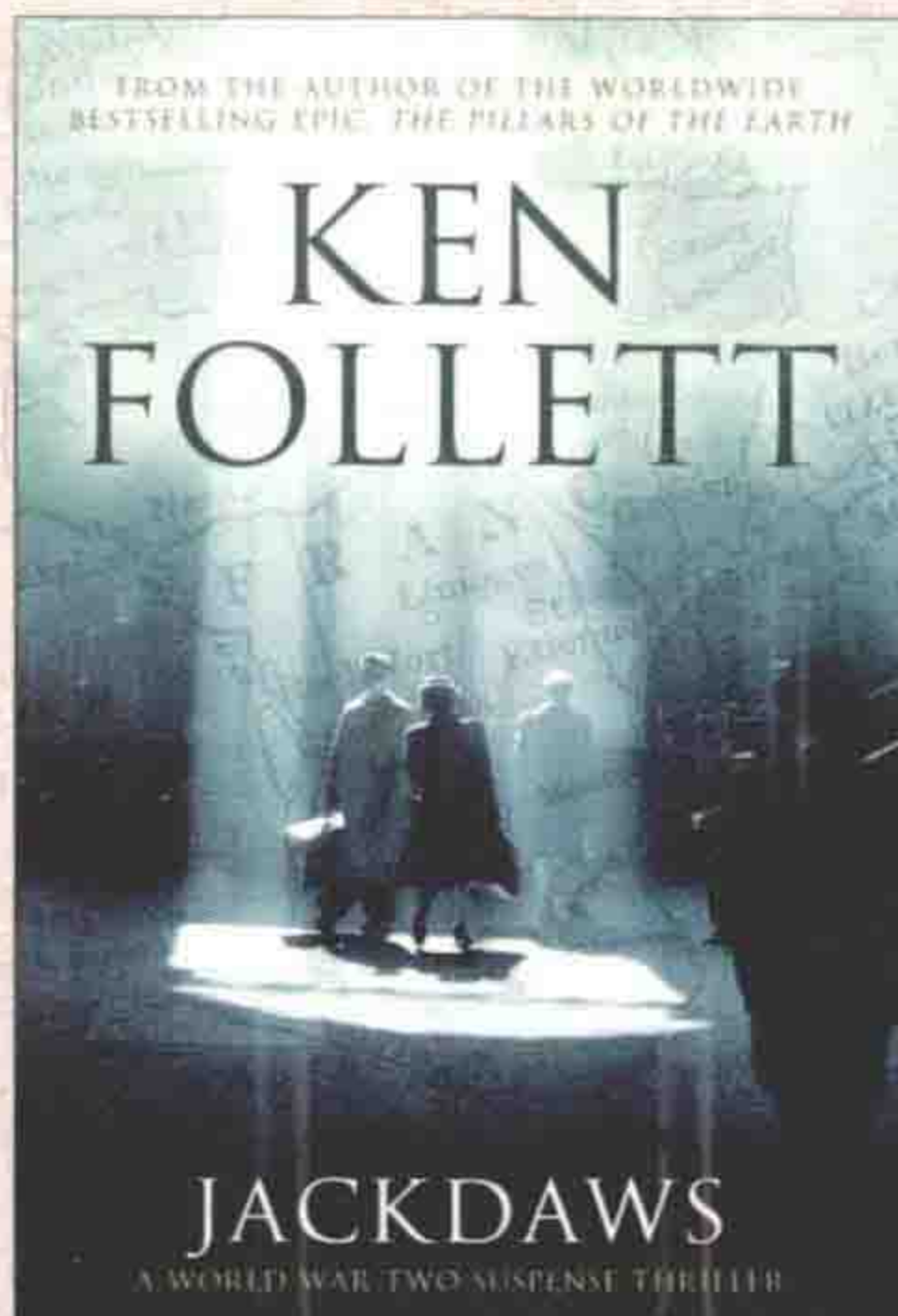
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EYE OF THE NEEDLE

Ken Follett was only twenty-seven when he wrote the award-winning *Eye of the Needle*, which became an international bestseller. He has since written several equally successful novels, including *World Without End*, the long-awaited sequel to the worldwide bestselling *The Pillars of the Earth*, an epic of family drama, violent conflict and vaulting ambition set around the building of a great cathedral. Ken Follett is also the author of the non-fiction bestseller *On Wings of Eagles*. He lives with his family in London and Hertfordshire.

www.ken-follett.com

Also by Ken Follett

The Modigliani Scandal

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The Key to Rebecca

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Night Over Water

A Dangerous Fortune

A Place Called Freedom

The Third Twin

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Code to Zero

Jackdaws

Hornet Flight

Whiteout

World Without End

The Pillars of the Earth

The Germans were almost completely deceived
– only Hitler guessed right, and he hesitated to
back his hunch . . .

A. J. P. Taylor
English History 1914–1945

My thanks to Malcolm Hulke
for invaluable help, generously given.

Preface

Early in 1944 German Intelligence was piecing together evidence of a huge army in south-eastern England. Reconnaissance planes brought back photographs of barracks and airfields and fleets of ships in the Wash; General George S. Patton was seen in his unmistakable pink jodhpurs walking his white bulldog; there were bursts of wireless activity, signals between regiments, in the area; confirming signs were reported by German spies in Britain.

There was no army, of course. The ships were rubber-and-timber fakes, the barracks no more real than a movie set; Patton did not have a single man under his command; the radio signals were meaningless; the spies were double agents.

The object was to fool the enemy into preparing for an invasion via the Pas de Calais, so that on D-Day the Normandy assault would have the advantage of surprise.

It was a huge, near-impossible deception. Literally thousands of people were involved in perpetrating the trick. It would have been a miracle if none of Hitler's spies ever got to know about it.

Were there any spies? At the time people thought

PREFACE

they were surrounded by what were then called Fifth Columnists. After the war a myth grew up that MI5 had rounded up the lot by Christmas 1939. The truth seems to be that there were very few: MI5 did capture nearly all of them.

But it only needs one . . .

We know that the Germans saw the signs they were meant to see in East Anglia. We also know that they suspected a trick. And we know that they tried very hard to discover the truth.

That much is history, and I have discovered no facts that aren't already in history books. What follows is fiction.

Still and all, I think something like this must have happened . . .

Camberley, Surrey

The Pillars of the Earth

***Critical acclaim for the worldwide bestselling epic
The Pillars of the Earth, voted into the BBC's top 100 of
Britain's favourite novels***

**'Enormous and brilliant . . . this mammoth tale
seems to touch all human emotion – love and hate,
loyalty and treachery, hope and despair. See for
yourself. This is truly a novel to get lost in'**

Cosmopolitan

**'A highly enjoyable tale . . . this book
evokes its period brilliantly'**

Sunday Times

**'A historical saga of such breadth and density . . .
Follett succeeds brilliantly in combining hugeness and
detail to create a novel imbued with the rawness,
violence and blind faith of the era'**

Sunday Express

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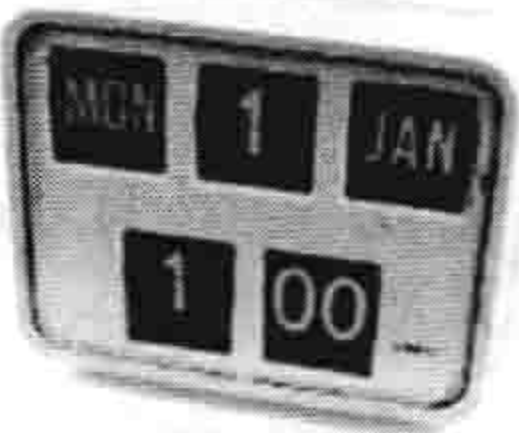
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PART ONE

ONE

It was the coldest winter for forty-five years. Villages in the English countryside were cut off by the snow, and the Thames froze over. One day in January the Glasgow to London train arrived at Euston twenty-four hours late. The snow and the blackout combined to make motoring perilous: road accidents doubled, and people told jokes about how it was more risky to drive an Austin Seven along Piccadilly at night than to take a tank across the Siegfried Line.

Then, when the spring came, it was glorious. Barrage balloons floated majestically in bright blue skies, and soldiers on leave flirted with girls in sleeveless dresses on the streets of London.

The city did not look much like the capital of a nation at war. There were signs, of course; and Henry Faber, cycling from Waterloo Station toward Highgate, noted them: piles of sandbags outside important public buildings, Anderson shelters in suburban gardens, propaganda posters about evacuation and Air Raid Precautions. Faber watched such things – he was considerably more observant than the average railway clerk. He saw crowds of children in the parks, and concluded that evacuation had been a failure. He

marked the number of motor cars on the road, despite petrol rationing; and he read about the new models announced by the motor manufacturers. He knew the significance of night-shift workers pouring into factories where, only months previously, there had been hardly enough work for the day shift. Most of all he monitored the movement of troops around Britain's railway network: all the paperwork passed through his office. One could learn a lot from that paperwork. Today, for example, he had rubber-stamped a batch of forms which led him to believe that a new Expeditionary Force was being gathered. He was fairly sure that it would have a complement of about 100,000 men, and that it was for Finland.

There were signs, yes; but there was something jokey about it all. Radio shows satirised the red tape of wartime regulations, there was community singing in the air-raid shelters, and fashionable women carried their gas masks in couturier-designed containers. They talked about the Bore War. It was at once larger-than-life and trivial, like a moving-picture show. All the air-raid warnings, without exception, had been false alarms.

Faber had a different point of view – but then, he was a different kind of person.

He steered his cycle into Archway Road and leaned forward a little to take the uphill slope, his long legs pumping as tirelessly as the pistons of a railway engine. He was very fit for his age, which was thirty-nine, although he lied about it: he lied about most things, as a safety precaution.