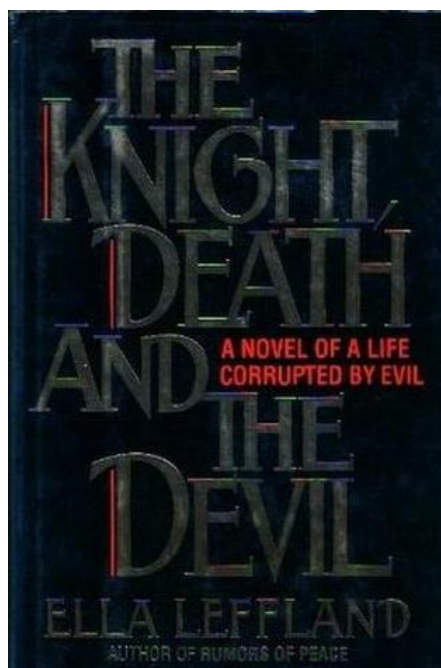




The Knight, Death, and the Devil

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The Knight, Death, and the Devil Ella Leffland

How leading Nazi Hermann Goering could be also a devoted husband, loving father, and charming friend provides the core of a novel that has taken the author a decade to research and write.

The Knight, Death, and the Devil Details

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From Reader Review The Knight, Death, and the Devil for online ebook

Naomi says

I'm still reading it because it has over 700 pages. I literally can not wait to pick this book up and read from where I left off. It not only gives an understanding of how Germany got into WWI but also what happened to Germany afterwards and the rise of Adolph Hitler. It is told through the story of the life of Herman Goring from childhood on. Fascinating book. Fascinating character. Fascinating and scary story about how and why a nation like Germany became what it did at that time.

Nick says

Leftland decided to write a novel on Herman Goring, learned German, virtually locked herself away for seven years. The result is a masterpiece of the novel as a non-fictional device, better than *In Cold Blood*. It's weakness is probably the staying power of the reader, you really need some background on German history to appreciate it.

Julia Simpson-Urrutia says

Ella Leffland is a remarkable writer and she depicts Goring, at the outset of this book, as a 20th century German knight. He was as dashing, heroic and handsome a fighter pilot during World War I, surely, as the Red Baron. He came from an almost aristocratic background, son of the first German governor of southwest Africa, Herr Reichkommissar, a remarkably enlightened man. This father eschewed repressive methods for a policy of rapport with the native chieftains of Southwest Africa, "demanding that the Germans under his jurisdiction treat [the native population] with the same civility they would Europeans."

Such a background speaks volumes for the kind of life Herman Goring might have lived had the devil not got in his path. When Hermann was five years old, he went to live with his beautiful mother and dignified father as well as his four brothers and sisters in the castle fortress of Burg Veldenstein in Nuremburg. The fortress dwelling with its gorgeous estate was owned by the Jewish Count von Epenstein, a personal friend of the family, after whom Hermann was named. Von Epenstein was a secret wooer of Hermann's mother, and though the novel indicates that the last baby in the family may have been his, it was Hermann whom the Count cherished most.

The ironies mount. When a schoolteacher called upon Hermann to write an essay about a German hero, Hermann chose to write about Count von Epenstein. Hermann was punished for having chosen a Jew by being forced to copy out the names of all the people in an almanac of titled German families of Jewish blood from A to E.

The reader doesn't have to read far to realize that Hermann Goring was not bred as a bigot, despite the presence of intolerant teachers. Indeed, the novel shows Hermann saving many Jews from persecution: it was maliciously joked by others, like the Propaganda Minister Goebbels, that the Jews always lined up at Goring's house.

Yet Hermann Goring was responsible for much death, most specifically in the massacre of mutinous German soldiers.

This book is addictive and it is impossible to put down once started. Leffland deserved the Pulitzer prize for writing it. It is a masterpiece.

Ahf says

Excellent fictionalized biography of Herman Gooring. Anatomy of evil and leaves too few answers. But its true. Learned lots about NAZI history and life/war in Germany during WW2

Catherine says

An uncomfortable book. While the author does not excuse Goering's military and career actions, he portrays him as human, with a family, friends, dreams and hobbies. Goering was a vain egotistical man who believed he was above the law and the outcome justified the means. If he had stayed out of the military and had not had access to Germany's and Hitlers resources, he may have just been an art dealer and curator.

We all like to believe the bad guys are bad the whole way through with no redeeming features. But that's crap - they are human and unless they are certifiable psychopaths they are just like us. They just make really really bad decisions.

Johanne says

This is a brilliant book about Herman Goring. It gave me such interesting insight into a man who was so evil and surrounded by such evil.

Kathy says

A fascinating glimpse at one of the leaders of the Third Reich, Sort of a renaissance man who courted Jewish actors and celebrities ???, yet sent countless Jews and others to their deaths. A man surely without a conscience...step into that insane world. A well worked biography by Ella Leffland.

Katherine says

Paperback, own

Ann says

I've read numerous books about the history of the Third Reich, including two of Richard Evans' trilogy. "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich" is also good (surprisingly so, since it was written for the mass market).

However, this book, a novelization of the life of Hermann Goring, gave me something that history books can't give you - a comprehensive and more personal study of what you could call "evil" (or perhaps there's

some psychiatric syndrome that can be applied here).

Leffland takes us from Goring's childhood to his suicide a few hours before his execution in Nuremberg. The novel is rich in minor and major characters, the details of whose lives give the reader a terrific understanding of daily, even hourly life in the Third Reich. And, the details of Goring's life are stunning and chilling. His looted art collection, his enjoyment of French pate fois gras when the bakeries in the cities were empty, his bizarre collection of outfits, the details of his many houses. All of these details are set against such events as the Rohm purge, the passage of the Nuremberg laws, his conduct after Kristallnacht (he proposed that the Jews pay a billion marks penalty for causing Kristallnacht), etc., etc., etc.

The picture of the war and the delusion that fueled it and continued to keep it going, even as it came down to the end - fighting it street by street in Berlin - is terrific.

I highly recommend this, not only for people interested in the Third Reich, but also for people who like a good, long read. At 950 pages, it's satisfyingly long. I awoke every day eager to read more.

Karla says

I read this book awhile ago - must be onwards of 10 years or more - but I have yet to read another biographical novel that is its equal. Leffland does the almost impossible task of taking a historical figure, keeping the story rooted in the facts, and yet turning Goering into a titanic literary creation in a narrative that's not stuffy in the least. It's weirdly beautiful, cozy, and satisfying. From first page to last, peopled by tragic men like Ernst Udet and the banal evil of the Nazi host, Goering's story reads like an opera careening through two wars and a society's descent into madness.
