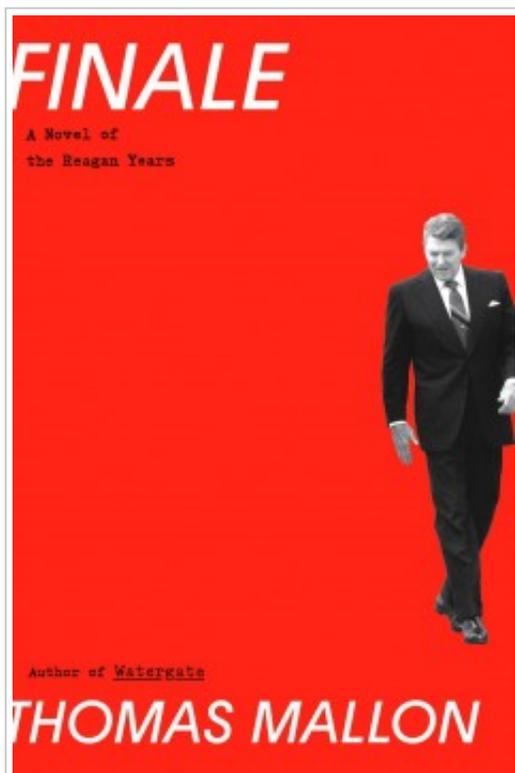


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Finale

by Thomas Mallon

Price: \$27.95(Hardcover)

Published: September 15, 2015

Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

From the Publisher: Adding to a fiction chronicle that has already spanned American history from the Lincoln assassination to the Watergate scandal, Thomas Mallon now brings to life the tumultuous administration of the most consequential and enigmatic president in modern times.

Finale captures the crusading ideologies, blunders, and glamour of the still-hotly-debated Reagan years, taking readers to the political gridiron of Washington, the wealthiest enclaves of Southern California, and the volcanic landscape of Iceland, where the president engages in two almost apocalyptic days of negotiation with Mikhail Gorbachev.

Along with Soviet dissidents, illegal-arms traders, and antinuclear activists, the novel's memorable characters include Margaret Thatcher, Jimmy Carter, Pamela Harriman, John W. Hinckley, Jr. (Reagan's would-be assassin), and...

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What We Say

Writer Thomas Mallon's novels are so smoothly entertaining, it's almost a surprise they've been taken seriously. But from his first book to his most recent ("Watergate"), critical acclaim has been steady and strong. That trend will continue with "Finale," a sure-footed exploration of the Reagan years, especially those brief hours when the Gipper and Gorbachev almost made an historic disarmament agreement before it all came tumbling down. Iran-Contra, AIDS, Nancy Reagan's astrologer, Daniel Patrick Moynihan's grudge against Pamela Harriman -- it's all here. Mallon uses a kaleidoscopic approach to events, leaping from Bette Davis at a DC event to would-be assassin John W. Hinckley Jr. under lock and key to Margaret Thatcher trying to stiffen Reagan's spine and the First Lady living in fear of any and all threats to both Reagan the man and Reagan the legacy, all of it utterly convincing. It's not mimicry but something deeper. Everyone from Richard Nixon to the seductive journalist Christopher Hitchens (a friend of Mallon's) to a sexually confused young cog in the machine of the NSA is presented with empathy and complexity. At the center of it all is the unknowable Reagan, the Rorschach test, the amiable enigma, the soothing and mirror-like leader that puzzles one and all. Mallon deftly captures the frustration that Reagan engendered even (especially?) among his most fervent supporters. Luckily, supporters of Mallon have yet to suffer the same fate even once. -- Michael Giltz

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What Others Say

The New York Times Book Review

"Mallon is a poised storyteller who traffics in history's ironic creases. His novels don't upend conventional wisdom so much as remind us that history is a rickety architecture of human endeavor—that today's statues commemorate yesterday's frail and fumbling mortals . . . Finale represents Mallon's most audacious and important work yet . . . Mallon's portrayal of the first lady is humane, thoroughly convincing and counts as one of the book's triumphs. So is his presentation of Richard Nixon, with whom "Finale" opens, rather unexpectedly . . . As in his previous novels, Mallon works deftly with an ensemble cast, employing both real-life and fictitious characters . . . [a] galloping narrative."

Wall Street Journal

"Thomas Mallon has carved an impressive place for himself in the art of 'historical fiction,' a genre whose august forerunners include Tolstoy's 'War and Peace' and Lampedusa's 'The Leopard' . . . Mr. Mallon has cautioned, in the author's note to his earlier novel 'Dewey Defeats Truman' (1997): 'Nouns trump adjectives, and in the phrase "historical fiction" it is important to remember which of the two...

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