



Cathedral of the Sea: A Novel

By Ildefonso Falcones

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The “riveting”(*The Washington Post*) #1 international bestseller—now in paperback in the U.S.

In the tradition of Ken Follett’s *The Pillars of the Earth*, here is a thrilling historical novel of friendship and revenge, plague and hope, love and war, set in the golden age of 14th-century Barcelona. Arnau Estanyol arrives in Barcelona and joins the powerful guild of stone-workers building the magnificent cathedral of Santa Maria del Mar, while his adoptive brother Joan studies to become a priest. As Arnau prospers, he secretly falls in love with a forbidden woman. When he is betrayed and hauled before the Inquisitor, he finds himself face-to-face with his own brother. Will he lose his life just as his beloved cathedral is finally completed, or will his brother spare him?

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Medieval Spain's caste system can't keep a good man down in this absorbing epic, a Spanish-language bestseller. Arnau Estanyol, son of a fugitive peasant, starts out in 14th-century Barcelona as a lowly porter who carries stone blocks to a cathedral construction site and ends up a rich moneylender who saves the city from pillaging and frees the serfs of a barony he acquires by marriage. Alas, his dizzying social ascent and defiance of the feudal order provoke enraged aristocrats—his status-obsessed wife included—into siccing the Inquisition on him. Arnau is a kindhearted, somewhat passive figure who combines piety, industry and cosmopolitanism to challenge a corrupt, dogmatic church and a parasitic nobility. The plot features thwarted romance, war, plague, immolations and self-immolations, set in a Machiavellian world ruled by privilege, cronyism and brute force. The melodrama is sometimes laid on thick, but Falcones's rich portrait of medieval society is fascinating. (Apr.)

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Review

aWith "Cathedral of the Sea," Ildefonso Falcones dethrones Eduardo Mendoza and Arturo Perez Reverte . . . and has become Spain's new Dan Brown.a

a"El Mundo"

aBelievable and enthralling...so beautifully structured that the last sixty pages detonate like a string of firecrackers.a

a"The Washington Post"

aAn absorbing epic...Falcones's rich portrait of medieval society is fascinating.a

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About the Author

Ildefonso Falcones is a well-known attorney who lives in Barcelona. He found fame when his novel *Il Catedral del Mar* sold over a million copies and has been #1 on the Spanish bestseller lists for ten months. In Spain, he is often compared to Ken Follett and his book has drawn numerous comparisons to Follett's masterpiece *The Pillars of the Earth*. Falcones has also been called "the new Dan Brown" by *El Mundo*. Now, Dutton brings this giant international bestseller to an American audience.

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