



## Bella Poldark

*Winston Graham*

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## **Bella Poldark** Winston Graham

Cornwall 1818. We continue the tale of Ross and Demelza; of the wayward Valentine Warleggan, whose existence keeps open the old wounds of the feud between Ross and George; of Bella, the Poldarks' youngest daughter, whose precocious talent as a singer is encouraged by her old flame, Christopher Havergal, and by a distinguished French conductor, who has more in mind than Bella's music; of Clowance, the Poldarks' widowed daughter, who considers remarriage to one of two rival suitors; and of a murderer who stalks the villages of west Cornwall.

Bella Poldark is the twelfth and final novel in Winston Graham's sweeping series of Cornwall, Poldark.

## **Bella Poldark Details**

Date : Published August 19th 2011 by Pan Books (first published May 1st 2002)

ISBN :

Author : Winston Graham

Format : Kindle Edition 710 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Romance

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## From Reader Review Bella Poldark for online ebook

### Jodi says

It isn't that the book is a 5 star book, though it was great. It's that the series was amazing. I started reading this series when I was 12. I watched the two seasons on Masterpiece Theatre and fell in love. When we went to Toronto I bought all the books with the Masterpiece Theatre covers. I practiced my British accent and fell in love with Cornwall. When my parents took us to England when I was about 19, my request was that we go to Cornwall and it was everything I could have imagined. I didn't realize he had continued the series but I bought the other books as soon as I knew. (Probably on that trip to England because none of my copies have American publishers) But this final book, which was published in 2002 and which I probably found out about in 2003 when he passed away (and ordered from Canada). But didn't read it until this week. He published book one, Ross Poldark, in 1945. Bella Poldark, the concluding novel, was published in 2002. But no time had passed. The writing style was as engaging as it had ever been. It felt like I was coming home. And unlike other saga-style novels, the central couple, Ross and Demelza, remain a happily-ever after couple. They are no longer young, Ross is almost 60, Demelza nearing 50, but they have endured for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, through richer or poorer and at the end of this book, death had not yet parted them. Every character, every place, was as familiar as when I first read the novels. I noticed one actual mistake (not typos but a character error) but that's not bad for a series that took 57 years to complete. His memory for facts and events were not only accurate but felt true for the characters as they aged from early 20s to early 60s over the course of the series. This book focuses on the youngest Poldark daughter Bella but it also resolves the Valentine controversy or at least sets it to rest but also showed the damage parents do their children when they are too wrapped up in their own insecurities. All the great endorphins you are supposed to get from exercise I got from this book, all the happiness and pleasure and a book that ended on a promise, not of more but merely of future happiness.

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### Gretta says

Cannot believe this was written by Winston Graham - a book that almost destroys his legacy of the superb POLDARK books. It is flat and contrived and has none of the magical small details that bring the other books alive and made them such a success.

So much so that I suspect either an editor or a ghost writer must have written it under his name - after all he was 92 when he was supposed to have written it.

Too much of this ghostwriting using a famous name is going on in publishing today and it is nothing less than a con on the readers.

Winston Graham had superb talent, whoever wrote this has none.

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### Tasha says

The best in the series! It feels like Graham really mastered this story and his writing by this ending. So much going on with a dose of suspense! A fond farewell my Poldark friends, I'll be watching you one day (the tv series) when I feel like I've forgotten enough to want to revisit with you all. :)

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## **Christina says**

I thought this was the weakest of the Poldark novels, and definitely a disappointing finale. Far too many new characters were introduced (looking at you, Prideaux and Essie) to no real purpose, and then there was the ludicrous and completely unnecessary Jack the Ripper-esque subplot. Not to mention that I honestly did not care one whit about Bella's singing career, and just skimmed over all those chapters. Still a fairly enjoyable reads, but I guess I expected the last novel to wow me and this just didn't do it for me.

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## **Sara says**

The twelfth and last book of the Poldark series, Bella Poldark is a fitting and satisfying end to a saga that has spanned several decades and multiple generations of the Poldarks of Cornwall. Packed with story lines all its own, it still manages to tie up all the central characters and give one a sense that things have come to a completion. At the same time, there is a sense that life, as it always does, goes on.

Near the end, Demelza (perhaps my favorite character among all those I have loved in this series) states “I have only one regret--and that is that time just goes too fast.” It struck me that this echoes my feelings about this series of books....they just went too fast. I am not ready to relinquish either the characters or the story. I dare say I will be thinking about them for some time to come.

I can positively say that Winston Graham was a writer extraordinaire. How many people could write a series of books that cover this much territory and never make a misstep or get lost? Each of these people has a certain character when we meet them, and while each of them grows and changes, as people do, we never feel that they have become someone we do not recognize or that they have done something impossibly out of keeping with who they are. That is difficult when the writing is contiguous, amazing when you consider that Graham wrote these books over a span of some 70 years, with a gap of 20 years between the fourth and the fifth installment. Boggles the mind.

Having checked, I can see that his other works are hard to come by, but I will be watching and if one of them ever comes within my range, I will snap it up. If you are thinking of reading this series, please dive right in, you will find the water is FINE.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that reading this with my GR friend, Lori, made it all the more special. It was wonderful to know that every time I murmured an “Oh, God, No” or found myself with tears streaking my face, there was a kindred soul out there feeling the same. A treasure shared is a treasure doubled, Lori...you made this experience twice as rich.

I am all pumped for the third season of the PBS series now and will only regret that the story on PBS will end long before the actual story has been told. I do wish they would take it all the way through to the end, but as it is, I will be grateful to have read the entire series and to know the rest of the story that transpires after the credits roll.

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## **Jennifer Hughes says**

What a great ride these Poldark books have been. I typically steer away from long series anymore because I don't have the patience or I get tired of the characters or the author's voice. Not so here! These books were addictive! I never got tired of them. I'm frankly shocked at how fast I've devoured all 12 novels over, I think, less than 3 months! I believe my husband is glad they're finally over so I have to rejoin the world of the living again. Sigh. Reality can be so overrated!

Well, like all great things, my time with the Poldarks must come to an end. I guess it's best that we ended with "Bella," which had its moments but felt like it was continually losing steam the longer I read. Valentine and the ape? Weird. A serial killer loose in Cornwall? Seemed like Graham threw that in because he was bored or just to create a challenge for himself. Bella's career? Yawn. Bella's suitors? Seriously icky.

In my dream ending for this series, it would have been so lovely to have had a big event where everyone came together so we could have a quick peek at what's happened to all of the characters we've come to love over the years. You know, a big send-off like at the end of *Big Fish*. It would have been really easy for Graham to do this with a device like a wedding...maybe Bella's or Ursula's...or funeral...say, Valentine's, or why not kill off George or Ross to end things with a bang? Everyone could come together and Graham could have panned over the crowd, giving us little morsels about each character or family. It would have been appropriate, but I guess Graham wasn't willing to ever close the door on this series completely, even though he was apparently 92 when he wrote "Bella."

Anyway, I'm glad I finished the whole series despite the end with a whimper, and I'm glad I get to continue to enjoy these characters as the new series on Masterpiece spins on (even though the book is always better than the movie!). Local friends, PLEASE borrow my books so I feel somewhat justified in spending so much to get them! You can get the first 3 from the library. I own books 4-12.

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## **Piper says**

Wow!! What a glorious and amazing journey this has been!! From the first book in this Poldark series to the last— twelve installments in all, I remained enraptured and enthralled by the remarkable characters created by Winston Graham. He is a master at weaving stories of love, loss, prosperity, heartache, rivalry, mystery, family, war— I could go on and on.

Centering around the life of Captain Ross Poldark and his beautiful (both inwardly and outwardly) wife, Demelza, the author stirs the reader's soul and induces countless emotions.

The story begins in 1783 when Ross returns home to Cornwall after fighting in the American Revolutionary War. He finds that his father has died.

He also learns upon his return that his love interest, Elizabeth, is engaged to his cousin. This, in itself, leaves him devastated and very angry.

Soon, however, he meets his future wife and thus the story unfolds and continues over the next **37** years.

This series is, for the most part, set in the beautiful countryside of Cornwall, England where mining for copper and tin as well as farming is prevalent. Banking plays a big part in the story throughout as well.

Ross's biggest rival throughout the series is the hideous, arrogant, stuffy, and money hungry George Warleggan. A man whom I loathed from beginning to end!! (Credit to the author for creating such an atrocious character.)

I cannot go without mentioning Dr. Dwight Enys who is not only a respected and skilled physician in the Cornwall area, but also Ross's closest friend. He is near and dear to my heart.

I adored Demelza from the very beginning and my admiration and respect for her grew with every single book. Her love of port (at times to the extreme), flowers and singing were endearing additions in every installment. A devoted wife and mother, she loved Ross deeply as she also did her children.

I fell head over heels in love with Ross. Unfortunately, that strong of an emotion also encompasses feelings of anger and resentment at times. Luckily, love triumphs overall!!!

This review is not so much about this twelfth installment as you will have already discerned, but rather of the entire series as a whole. As I read each book, I posted updates and photos that better depict the stories as they unfold. In my feeble mind I am overwhelmed by all that took place throughout this journey, and I find it difficult to paint a picture of the entirety of these books for I am not eloquent in the writing of reviews.

Simply put however,

I laughed. I cried. I was enraged. I mourned. I feared. I loved. **Oh, how I loved!!**

I will NEVER EVER forget these books.

If you would like a taste of what this series has to offer before embarking on the twelve book series, I would recommend watching the 2015 BBC first season tv adaptation starring Aidan Turner and Eleanor Tomlinson. It is in watching this that I began reading the books.

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### **Isabelle says**

I've just finished the Poldark series and at this very instant, I'm wondering how I can get on with a different book or story! Oh, I know I will as I cannot stay without reading. I started slow with Ross Poldark in August and still slow with Demelza in September but I read the next 10 with such a frenzie in less than 2 months. I breathed the Poldark world for every minute of my days. I didn't always give a 5 star to all the books as I found some more compelling than others. I would say that my two favorites were Warleggan and the Twisted Sword. I often felt upset and shocked at Ross's actions, but wondered too if Ross was like that because a man created him and made him more to his image? And I mean by that as a man would think and react which is probably very accurate versus the way a woman author would have made him? I love the whole series so much and I can't believe it took watching the new BBC series to start reading the books! I lived in Cornwall for 3 years which makes the story even more realistic as I know all the places mentioned so well. In all, if I could rate it my own way, I would give the entire series a 10 Star! And I wonder how I can possibly go on tomorrow without opening a book and not being with Ross, Demelza and their world!

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### **Janet says**

This was my least favorite of all 12 books in the series. The serial killer was ridiculous, as was the cigar-smoking ape. Bella's career didn't really interest me, so this one was hard to get through. I was very disappointed and wonder, as someone has suggested, if a ghost writer wrote it.

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### **Marilyn says**

**\*SPOILER ALERT!\***

I finished the series with a tear in my eye. So much enjoyment; so much unfinished business.

Apparently WG announced that this would be the last book (at least he did in the edition I was reading). Maybe he was sick (he died the year after it was written), but I can't understand why he did not want to continue the story. Of Bella we at least get a hint of her future, but what about Harry? What about Selina and little Georgie? What about the increasingly wonderful Harriet, with her amazing ability to bring two bitter enemies at least a little closer than ever? And so many others.

During the fire scene, I first thought "Oh, God, don't let that ape be the end of Valentine!", but that thought was quickly replaced by "Oh God, don't let that ape be the end of Ross, or I'll kill Valentine myself!" Butto was quite the distraction, but Paul Kellow was more so. Unfortunately, I tumbled to his guilt pretty early.

I am at wit's end. What do I read now? How do I follow this absolutely marvelous series? My sincere and grateful thanks to Winston Graham's heirs, for his having created a story and group of characters that thrilled

and enthralled.

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## **``Laurie Henderson says**

I finally finished the 12th and last book in the Poldark series. If real life hadn't dared to interfere I probably would've finished long before now.

After 12 books I've grown so attached to these characters that it will be difficult to leave them behind even though the thought of reading something new and different is a very healing balm.

### **SPOILERS BELOW**

Bella Poldark focuses on the trials and tribulations of Ross and Demelza's youngest daughter. She has inherited her mother's love of music and has her heart set on becoming a famous opera diva.

She's also quite precocious and has men falling in love with her at the tender age of 13.

I wish I could've found Bella's story more interesting but young adults would probably find Bella's story fascinating and entertaining.

The author has once again researched his subject thoroughly and I learned a great deal about the entertainment industry during that era.

I was hoping the final book would tie up a few loose ends and I'm very disappointed that this didn't happen. Surely the villainous George Warleggan deserved to pay for his many sins of omission and commission. I think the Poldark fans deserved to have an appropriate closure concerning George Warleggan. Similar to George R.R. Martin, Graham has the ability to make his most unlikable characters sympathetic to the reader but I still feel cheated where Warleggan is concerned.

Another plot thread that I wanted to see resolved was the death of Elizabeth. I wanted to see the quack Dr. punished for his ignorance which led to her death. Both George and Ross deserved to know how and why she died but Dwight Enys kept her deathbed confession to himself.

This series was such a learning experience for me; the author was able to make potentially boring subjects such as tin and copper mining fascinating to the reader. I could almost feel that I was down deep in the mines with the book's characters.

Graham was able to make the Napoleonic wars and the Battle of Waterloo come to life as well and I've thoroughly enjoyed learning about these subjects in a most entertaining way. The action/adventure elements were top notch as well with the intrepid Ross Poldark making an excellent hero.

I thought Graham's greatest achievement was bringing the wild and rugged Cornwall setting to life.

Graham's characters were so believably human and able to face life's hardships as well as their love affairs in a mature manner, so rest assured there's definitely no bodice ripper action in this series.

After finishing this series I treated myself to watching the 1970's BBC version of Poldark which I loved as well.

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## **KOMET says**

In this novel, the lives of the Poldark Family come full circle. As the title suggests, the novel is centered on the youngest daughter, Bella, who has her heart set on becoming an operatic singer.

As in all the preceding 11 novels of the series, Graham brings to life here the feelings and sensibilities of early 19th century Cornwall, and by extension, England and Europe in the immediate post-Napoleonic era. The characters are well-drawn and you find yourself, as you read this novel, wanting to know how they'll fare at journey's end.

While I enjoyed this novel, I felt sad to know that this is the last of the series. (As some of you may already know, Winston Graham passed away at the age of 93 this past July.)

Next to James Clavell, Graham has been able to create characters in the Poldark Series - Ross & Demelza & their children, George Warleggan, Valentine Warleggan, Verity, Geoffrey-Charles, Cuby - who could take on the lives of REAL PEOPLE. Love or hate them, you could never be indifferent about these people while reading any of the Poldark novels.

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## **Lesley says**

I am a die hard fan of the Poldark Novels, indeed, of everything Winston Graham wrote. I first read 'Ross Poldark' aged 16 and was enraptured from the start. The Cornish countryside lovingly described, the characters believable, lovable or hateful, fully recognisable despite the setting of the 18th Century. So it is with dismay that I have to say that this book was ill- conceived. And unnecessary too.

Here is my first problem. Bella Poldark is described, quite a lot in the novels prior to this one, as having black curls, black eyes, and being "the most like Demelza" than any of the other children. How then, did her hair become fair, her eyes, a blue- grey like her Father, Ross? She becomes a completely different person. Secondly, Winston Graham turns Valentine into an absolute parody of himself. He keeps an ape in the house, Butto, and continues to make a mess of his life, but this time, it's less believable and much more tedious. And, to top it all, as Winston Graham clearly hasn't got much more to say about the Poldarks, we now become engaged with a mystery, a murder mystery!

A real shame, because, of course it is still a very readable book, but it becomes hackneyed. Clowance still has suitors galore, every man who looks at her falls in love with her. It worked before, it doesn't now. That's not real life.

I feel that "The Twisted Sword" should have been the last Novel, as originally planned.

Bella Poldark", at best, should be seen as a stand- apart novel.

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## **Jhulbert says**

I have read all 12 volumes of the Poldark series. Kind of sad that is the end of a long fun frivolous run of great indulgent stories. I cannot imagine finding another series that was so much fun. Now to go on reading other apparently more useful stuff - but it won't be the same. If you wonder if you ought to start on the Cornwall saga just be aware you might not get out until you finish 'Bella.'

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**Cynthia Scott says**

Well, after several thousand pages and many, many days immersed in Cornwall and the joys and sorrows, troubles and triumphs of the Poldark clan and their friends and neighbors, I am done. It was a rousing good time throughout. Once into the third book in the series, I was too hooked to stop.

This last book, "Bella Poldark," is not my favorite by far, but is well done. Almost a melodrama, but it brought closure to the many storylines running through the series.

I am amazed at the ability of Winston Graham to write a series of twelve books which held my interest throughout. Some were better constructed than others, but on the whole pretty consistent in spite of having been written over many years, with a gap in the series of several years while he pursued other writing.

I now understand a lot more about the history of the time period and the culture of the people, and I was well entertained throughout.

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