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Von Don DeLillo

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Von Don DeLillo : Falling Man (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Falling Man (English Edition):

Kurzbeschreibung Falling Man begins on September 11, in the smoke and ash of the burning towers. In the days and the years following, we trace the aftermath of this global tremor in the private lives of a few reticulated individuals. Theirs are lives choreographed by loss, by grief and by the enormous force of history. From these intimate portraits, Don DeLillo shifts to an extrapolated vision: he charts the way the events have reconfigured our emotional landscape, our memory and our perception of the world. Falling Man is an unforgettable novel, at once cathartic and beautiful and heartbreaking.

The defining moment of turn-of-the-21st-century America is perfectly portrayed in National Book Award winner Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*. The book takes its title from the electrifying photograph of the man who jumped or fell from the North Tower on 9/11. It also refers to a performance artist who recreates the picture. The artist straps himself into a harness and in high visibility areas jumps from an elevated structure, such as a railway overpass or a balcony, startling passersby as he hangs in the horrifying pose of the falling man. Keith Neudecker, a lawyer and survivor of the attack, arrives on his estranged wife Lianne's doorstep, covered with soot and blood, carrying someone else's briefcase. In the days and weeks that follow, moments of connection alternate with complete withdrawal from his wife and young son, Justin. He begins a desultory affair with the owner of the briefcase based only on their shared experience of surviving: "the timeless drift of the long spiral down." Justin uses his binoculars to scan the skies with his friends, looking for "Bill Lawton" (a misunderstood version of bin Laden) and more killing planes. Lianne suddenly sees Islam everywhere: in a postcard from a friend, in a neighbor's music--and is frightened and angered by its ubiquity. She is riveted by the Falling Man. Her mother Nina's response is to break up with her long-time German lover over his ancient politics. In short, the old ways and days are gone forever; a new reality has taken over everyone's consciousness. This new way is being tried on, and it doesn't fit. Keith and Lianne weave into reconciliation. Keith becomes a professional poker player and, when questioned by Lianne about the future of this enterprise, he thinks: "There was one final thing, too self-evident to need saying. She wanted to be safe in the world and he did not." DeLillo also tells the story of Hammad, one of the young men in flight training on the Gulf Coast, who says: "We are willing to die, they are not. This is our strength, to love death, to feel the claim of armed martyrdom." He also asks: "But does a man have to kill himself in order to accomplish something in the world?" His answer is that he is one of the hijackers on the plane that strikes the North Tower. At the end of the book, De Lillo takes the reader into the Tower as the plane strikes the building. Through all the terror, fire and smoke, De Lillo's voice is steady as a metronome, recounting exactly what happens to Keith as he sees friends and co-workers maimed and dead, navigates the stairs and, ultimately, is saved. Though several post-9/11 novels have been written, not one of them is as compellingly true, faultlessly conceived, and beautifully written as Don De Lillo's *Falling Man*. --Valerie Ryan