



The Rise & Fall of Great Powers: A Novel

Tom Rachman

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NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY

NPR • *The Seattle Times* • *The Globe and Mail* • *Kirkus Reviews* • *Daily Mail* • *The Vancouver Sun*

For fans of Jennifer Egan, Dave Eggers, and Donna Tartt—the brilliant, intricately woven new novel by Tom Rachman, author of *The Imperfectionists*

Look in the back of the book for a conversation between Tom Rachman and J. R. Moehringer

Following one of the most critically acclaimed fiction debuts in years, *New York Times* bestselling author Tom Rachman returns with a brilliant, intricately woven novel about a young woman who travels the world to make sense of her puzzling past.

Tooly Zylberberg, the American owner of an isolated bookshop in the Welsh countryside, conducts a life full of reading, but with few human beings. Books are safer than people, who might ask awkward questions about her life. She prefers never to mention the strange events of her youth, which mystify and worry her still.

Taken from home as a girl, Tooly found herself spirited away by a group of seductive outsiders, implicated in capers from Asia to Europe to the United States. But who were her abductors? Why did they take her? What did they really want? There was Humphrey, the curmudgeonly Russian with a passion for reading; there was the charming but tempestuous Sarah, who sowed chaos in her wake; and there was Venn, the charismatic leader whose worldview transformed Tooly forever. Until, quite suddenly, he disappeared.

Years later, Tooly believes she will never understand the true story of her own life. Then startling news arrives from a long-lost boyfriend in New York, raising old mysteries and propelling her on a quest around the world in search of answers.

Tom Rachman—an author celebrated for humanity, humor, and wonderful characters—has produced a stunning novel that reveals the tale not just of one woman but of the past quarter-century as well, from the end of the Cold War to the dominance of American empire to the digital revolution of today. Leaping between decades, and from Bangkok to Brooklyn, this is a breathtaking novel about long-buried secrets and how we must choose to make our own place in the world. It will confirm Rachman’s reputation as one of the most exciting young writers we have.

Praise for *The Rise & Fall of Great Powers*

“Ingenious . . . Rachman needs only a few well-drawn characters to fill a large canvas and an impressive swath of history.”—**Janet Maslin, *The New York Times***

“A superb follow-up to 2010’s *The Imperfectionists* . . . ambitious and engaging.”—***The Seattle Times***

“Engaging and inventive . . . full of wonderfully quirky, deeply flawed, but lovable characters . . . On the spectrum of interesting literary childhoods, Tooly Zylberberg—the protagonist of Tom Rachman’s second

novel—would rank somewhere in the vicinity of *Jane Eyre* and *Oliver Twist*.”—*San Francisco Chronicle*

“I found it impossible not to fall in love with shape-shifting Tooly. As an adult, she sports an ironical sense of humor and an attraction to dusty old books. As a child, her straight-faced mirth and wordplay are break-your-heart irresistible.”—**Ron Charles**, *The Washington Post*

“[A] read-it-all-in-one-weekend book.”—*The New Republic*

“A compelling page-turner . . . intricate, sprawling, and almost Dickensian.”—*USA Today*

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