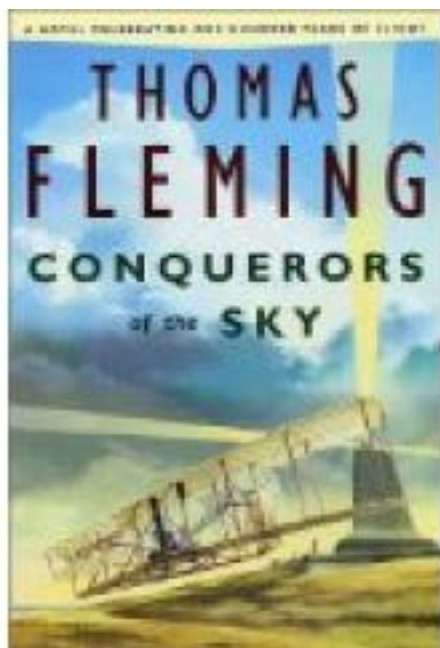


Conquerors Of The Sky



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A novel that crowns Thomas Fleming's forty-year career, *Conquerors of the Sky* takes readers on a gripping insider's journey into the lives and loves, the hopes and heartbreaks of the men and women who make America's planes. When Adrian Van Ness, the enigmatic chairman of Buchanan Aircraft, dies of a heart attack, a struggle for control of the aerospace giant erupts between burly Dick Stone, the tough-talking money man from New York, and Californian Cliff Morris, CEO and supersalesman. Sarah Morris, Cliff's estranged English-born wife, knows all the company's secrets. With her at the controls, *Conquerors of the Sky* becomes a time trip to the early years of the twentieth century, when flight was seen as spiritual ascent and idealistic Frank Buchanan began designing planes. New York aristocrat Adrian Van Ness is equally fascinated by these new machines--as a financial bonanza.

In 1930, Adrian's amoral business genius and Frank's visions of ever swifter sleeker planes form a precarious alliance. Soon Buchanan Aircraft is competing with Lockheed and Boeing and Northrop for contracts to build airliners and bombers and fighters. As corrupt connections between generals and congressmen and presidents multiply, Frank sees some of his greatest planes scuttled by dirty political deals. He watches Adrian grow rich and powerful preaching the gospel of air power in the century's wars. When Dick Stone joins Buchanan he sees Adrian as his American father. But he soon shifts his spiritual allegiance to Frank Buchanan. Cliff Morris's flamboyant style conceals a ruinous moral collapse in the deadly skies over World War II Germany. His fear of discovery is worsened by the sardonic shadow of his stepbrother, Billy McCall, the supreme pilot Cliff will never become. Sarah loves all three men and ultimately has to choose between them, knowing that in the macho world of Buchanan Aircraft, women are objects to be enjoyed -- or used to sell the latest bomber or airliner. For women like Amanda Van Ness, Adrian's wife (and Frank Buchanan's lover), this leads to madness. For Sarah it leads to power -- at a terrible price. Spanning the history of flight from the clumsy fabric planes of 1911 to the whizzing stealth fighters of today, *Conquerors of the Sky* is a page-turning drama of the struggle to mesh aerodynamic visions with the harsh realities of cashflow and profits -- and with the desires and dreams of the men and women who inhabit this unique world. Told by a master of the historical imagination, it is a must-read book that will launch America into the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of flight.

作者介绍:

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