



## 1922: Scenes from a Turbulent Year

**Nick Rennison**

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Nick Rennison's history text *1922* peers a century into the past, when the world was emerging from a deadly pandemic and facing new kinds of social upheaval. Told via a few dozen short essays about important events around the world, the book is an entertaining retrospective, showing how a single year can move history.

*1922* is organized by month, starting in January with the controversial second murder trial of silent film star Fatty Arbuckle, who probably didn't commit the crime, but who lost his career and reputation amid the scandal nonetheless. It ends in December, with the official formation of the Soviet Union. In between, the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb; the collapse of the Ottoman Empire; and the Teapot Dome scandal of Warren G. Harding. But beyond such global stories, *1922* also includes mentions of a prominent cricket championship tournament in England, the first film directed by Alfred Hitchcock, and a terrible zeppelin crash that presaged the famous Hindenburg fifteen years later.

Many of these stories include quotes and analysis from the time, some of which have not aged well, including predictions that Hitler's antisemitism was not as serious as he made it sound, and dismissive takes about works of art like *Ulysses*. The book makes regular use of hindsight—not only to shame wrong predictions, but to show how events played out in real time, and how they still reverberate a century later. While this approach could work well for any year, Rennison writes, "Of all the years in this dramatic decade, 1922 was the most turbulent. It was a year which altered the map of the world."

The result is an enjoyable biography of an important year that serves as another reminder of how much history just twelve months can contain.

JEFF FLEISCHER (March / April 2022)

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