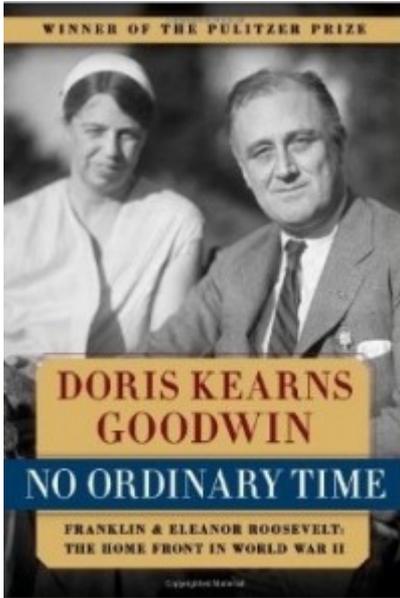


# The line between fascination and boredom



I've been slowly making progress on a monster book (shown here) and it's given me some pause to consider why it's taking me so long to complete it.

I recently mentioned I was a slow reader, but I'm not sure that's totally the case. I think it has something more to do with the *type* of reading I've been doing lately. A lot of it has been out of my "comfort" zone, or, more accurately, what I like to read.

Take the current book, for example. I'm not the biggest biography fan. That's clearly what this book is, set against the backdrop of the Roosevelts before and during the Presidency.

Now, as with most people, my brain is mostly empty. Similar to a hard drive that's barely filled (or, for you yungins, a smartphone with few apps), I have plenty of room for new knowledge. (Yes, you *think* your brain is full, but it's mostly preoccupied, not necessarily filled).

I delight in new knowledge and so the book appeals to me in that it relates information about interesting people and times that I did not have before starting it.

But it's too much. Too much detail on the lives of these interesting people. And too much for me to easily set stock in. Certainly, the author spent extraordinary effort to cull data, interview and research the individuals involved, but how much of it is fact and how much conjecture?

I could contest that all stories are fiction except for autobiographies and eyewitness accounts. No matter how much research is done, can the author escape having to make an intuitive leap or two?

Perhaps that's why I prefer fiction, since I never have to wonder about the veracity of a character's thoughts – they are exactly as the writer creates them. Unlike non-fiction, I am free to speculate and imagine about what happens next. I readily admit that is where I find myself most comfortable as a reader and also where I can sustain my reading for the longest period.

I'll be finishing this book – this month – and be glad for it, but there are any number of times along the way that my reading mind has simply glazed over at the volume of information being provided.

I think my reading difficulty comes not from the size of the book or some late-blooming erosion of my reading skill, but more as a result of a mind too used to wandering and wondering in a book instead of simply absorbing.