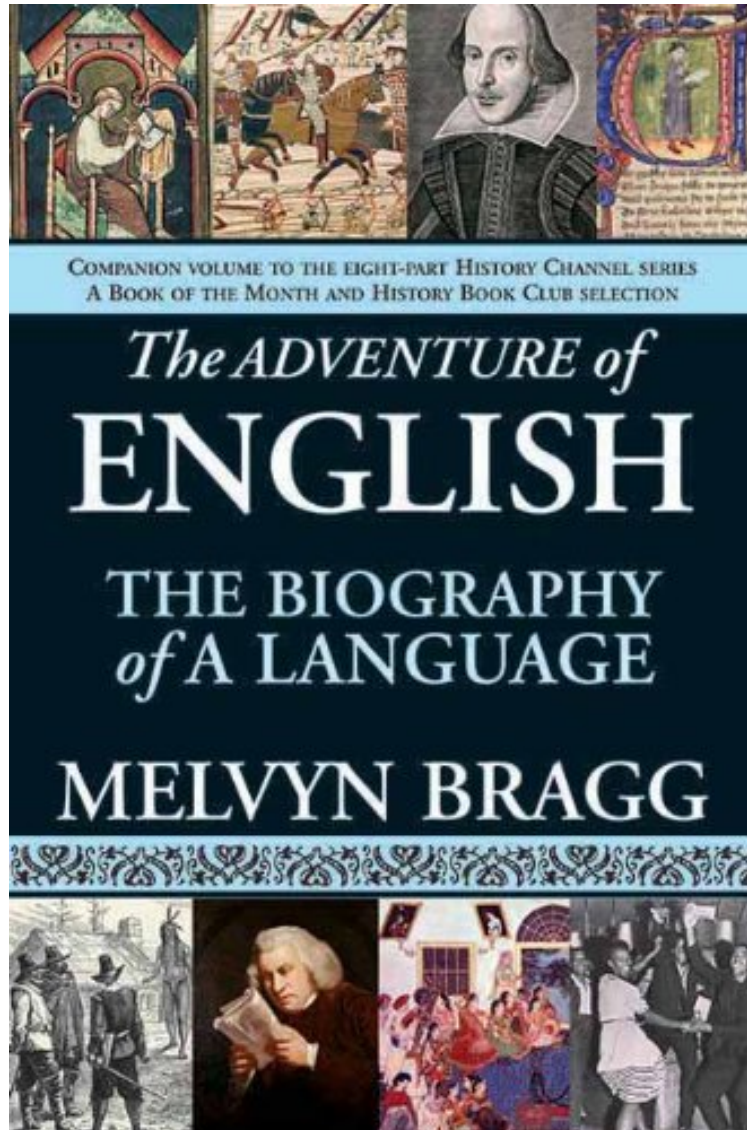


(Get free) The Adventure of English: The Biography of a Language

The Adventure of English: The Biography of a Language

Melvyn Bragg

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Melvyn Bragg : The Adventure of English: The Biography of a Language before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Adventure of English: The Biography of a Language:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting background for how English came to be By Music Book Fan I have always had an interest of where words came from and had a similar book on the story of English from a PBS series from the the late 1980's that I've always enjoyed. This goes more in-depth than my other book and found this one enjoyable with more examples of all types of "English" that now exists and the how the English language has

grown and survived from foreign language invasions. It does have its slow areas but overall I think that helps anyone who reads it a better idea of English, no matter which one they speak and how it is changing into the future. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. it is hard to imagine that you would not love this book By Edward B. I first saw this as a mini series and was so fascinated that I had to buy the book. If you are a lover of the English language, or languages in general, it is hard to imagine that you would not love this book. I like having it as an ebook, so that when I travel I can access it via my smartphone, tablet or pc. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Living history By Bookworm A surprise in education, words come alive with all the trapping of their origin, placing our language on panoramic display. Mr. Bragg instills in each chapter the magic of desire, a compulsion to digest the next, and the next, until, like all good things, his treatise concludes in a spell of wonderment at how we communicate as well as we do. Given the author's convincing dissection of English, our language morphs into a sponge swiped across our spinning globe, absorbing the utilitarian, the romantic, the Argo of science and the rudiments of survival. A work that entertains as it enlightens.

Here is the riveting story of the English language, from its humble beginnings as a regional dialect to its current preeminence as the one global language, spoken by more than two billion people worldwide. In this groundbreaking book, Melvyn Bragg shows how English conquered the world. It is a magnificent adventure, full of jealousy, intrigue, and war against a hoard of invaders, all armed with their own conquering languages, which bit by bit, the speakers of English absorbed and made their own. Along the way, its colorful story takes in a host of remarkable people, places, and events: the Norman invasion of England in 1066; the arrival of The Canterbury Tales and a coarse playwright named William Shakespeare, who added 2,000 words to the language; the songs of slaves; the words of Davy Crockett; and the Lewis and Clark expedition, which led to hundreds of new words as the explorers discovered unknown flora and fauna. The Adventure of English is an enthralling story not only of power, religion, and trade, but also of a people and how they changed the world.

From Publishers Weekly This compelling and charmingly personal companion to an eight-part television documentary (scheduled for the fall) makes for an idiosyncratic rival to PBS's bestselling blockbuster The Story of English, by Robert McCrum et al. Titling a history of the evolution and expansion of a language an "adventure" presupposes a hero, with such obvious choices as Alfred the Great, for defeating the Danes; Chaucer, for his Canterbury Tales; Shakespeare, for his poetic inventiveness; or Samuel Johnson, for his groundbreaking dictionary. Bragg, a British TV and radio personality and novelist (The Soldier's Return), gives all their contributions their due, but English itself, with its "deep obstinacy" and "astonishing flexibility," emerges as his favorite character. Bragg's enthusiasm for his subject-hero, whether the Old English of Beowulf or the new "Text English" of the Internet, makes up for his shortcomings as a linguist: his sources, unfootnoted, are at times at variance with the OED or Webster's Third. For instance, Bragg furnishes only one putative origin for the disputed "real McCoy." Moreover "candy" does not seem to have Anglo-Indian origins (it's from the Arabic "qandi"), and the first recorded use of "vast" is not from Shakespeare (the OED cites Archbishop Edwin Sandys). Nevertheless, this "biography" succeeds in its broad, sweeping narrative, carrying the reader from the origins of Anglo-Saxon through the Viking and Norman invasions to the consolidation of "British" English and outward to America, Australia, India, the West Indies and beyond. After some 1,500 years, with one billion speakers now worldwide, according to Bragg, the English language has displayed an amazing ability to repair and reinvent itself, as Bragg ably shows. 32 pages of color illus. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Why do Americans say fall when the British say autumn? How was English altered by the Black Death? What is Singlish and how has it evolved? Novelist Bragg explores these and other questions in his look at the English language's long march from obscure Sanskrit origins to a global lingua franca. Along the way, he examines the roles played by the Viking invasions, the Norman Conquest, the Tyndale Bible, the writings of Chaucer and Shakespeare, and the Industrial Revolution. He also traces English's journey across the globe in the wake of British imperialism, following it to America, India, Australia, and elsewhere. Several chapters are devoted to American English and how it has been transformed by influences as diverse as the journals of Lewis and Clark and the African dialects that were transported with the slaves. Looking ahead, the book considers how standard language will be shaped by "other Englishes" employed by those for whom English is a second tongue. It is Bragg's contention that the prevalence of English can be explained in part by such inherent virtues as "astonishing precision and flexibility," and whether one agrees with him or not, he is the ideal tour guide here, both entertaining and informative. Mary Ellen Quinn Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Superb. . . . Inspiring. (Newsday) A captivating history. (The Daily Telegraph) A thorough and incredibly enjoyable trip down a linguistic memory lane. (Bloomsbury)