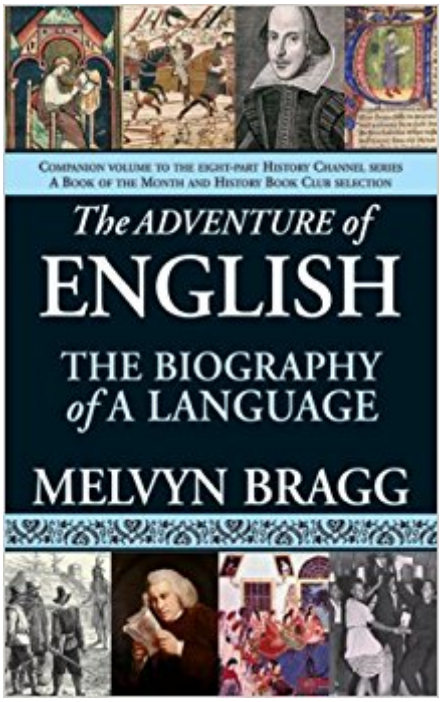
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The Adventure Of English: The Biography Of A Language



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Synopsis

Ã¢â ¬Å“A captivating historyÃ¢â ¬Â• of the worldÃ¢â ¬â„¢s second most widely spoken language, from ancient dialect to digital slang (The Daily Telegraph). Ã Â What role did the Black Death play in the development of the English language? Where did Ã¢â ¬Å“the real McCoyÃ¢â ¬Â• come from? Why is Singlish on the rise? In what ways in language evolving in the age of the internet? How and why did Ã¢â ¬Å“kircÃ¢â ¬Â• become Ã¢â ¬Å“churchÃ¢â ¬Â•? And whatÃ¢â ¬â„¢s the difference between autumn and fall? Ã Â Here is the riveting history of the English language, from its humble beginnings (around 500 AD) as a regional dialect to its current preeminence as a truly global language, estimated to be spoken or understood by as many as two billion people worldwide. Along the way, its colorful story involves a host of remarkable people, places, and events: the Norman invasion of England in 1066; the arrival ofÃ Â The Canterbury TalesÃ Â and a Ã¢â ¬Å“coarseÃ¢â ¬Â• 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. Ã Â In this Ã¢â ¬Å“thorough and incredibly enjoyable trip down a linguistic memory laneÃ¢â ¬Â• (Bloomsbury Review)Ã¢â ¬â •the basis of an eight-part History Channel documentaryÃ¢â ¬â •Melvyn Bragg shows how English conquered the world. It is a magnificent adventure, full of jealousy, intrigue, and warÃ¢â ¬â •against a horde of invaders, all armed with their own conquering languages, which bit by bit, the speakers of English absorbed and made their own.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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.

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.

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.

What a well-researched and fascinating history of the English language! It was so fun reading about the history of words and phrases I've used all my life but had never even thought about the origins. This was truly an eye-opening experience. The passion the author has for the subject leaks through his writing and keeps the reader interested. I never felt that the information got dry or boring, though that may be partly due to my own interest in the subject. I definitely will be recommending this book to others.

Information was OK - not instyle that I was expecting. Very much academic

This is a bit too scholarly for my tastes. I would have preferred something a bit lighter. That's not to say if historical linguistics (if that is a real term) are your interests, you would love it. My interests are a bit less ambitious. It is very well researched. It reads a bit more like a text book for some college course in languages, especially English. I skimmed a lot, but still got a good deal of information...it just didn't hold me in thrall...

Well written but a little bit myopic. For example he missed one of the greatest watershed in "American English." It was brought about by Abraham Lincoln and Samuel Clements. Prior to Lincoln's time the educated people thought that it made them sound wise to use as many word and as complex of words as possible to express an idea. (Do not say in 5 words what you can say in 50 words.) Lincoln learn how to speak to the common man in simple short statements that could be understood, internalized and invoke emotion (e.g., the Gettysburg Address). Samuel Clements took this lead and turned it into an art form that has influenced our speech and writing ever since.

Downright masterful. As a writer I found this book to be one lÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢m glad I didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t miss. For those of us who have spoken English all our lives, this work will make us proud of our mother tongue. English had to overcome the languages brought to the Isles by invaders that insisted on establishing their own languages as the ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“speech of the land.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• The church added additional pressures, asserting Latin in normal communication. English not only survived, it ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“stoleÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• from Latin, Greek, French and others to produce the lexicon so popular throughout the world. Any lover of the language owes a tip of the hat to author Melvyn Bragg.

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