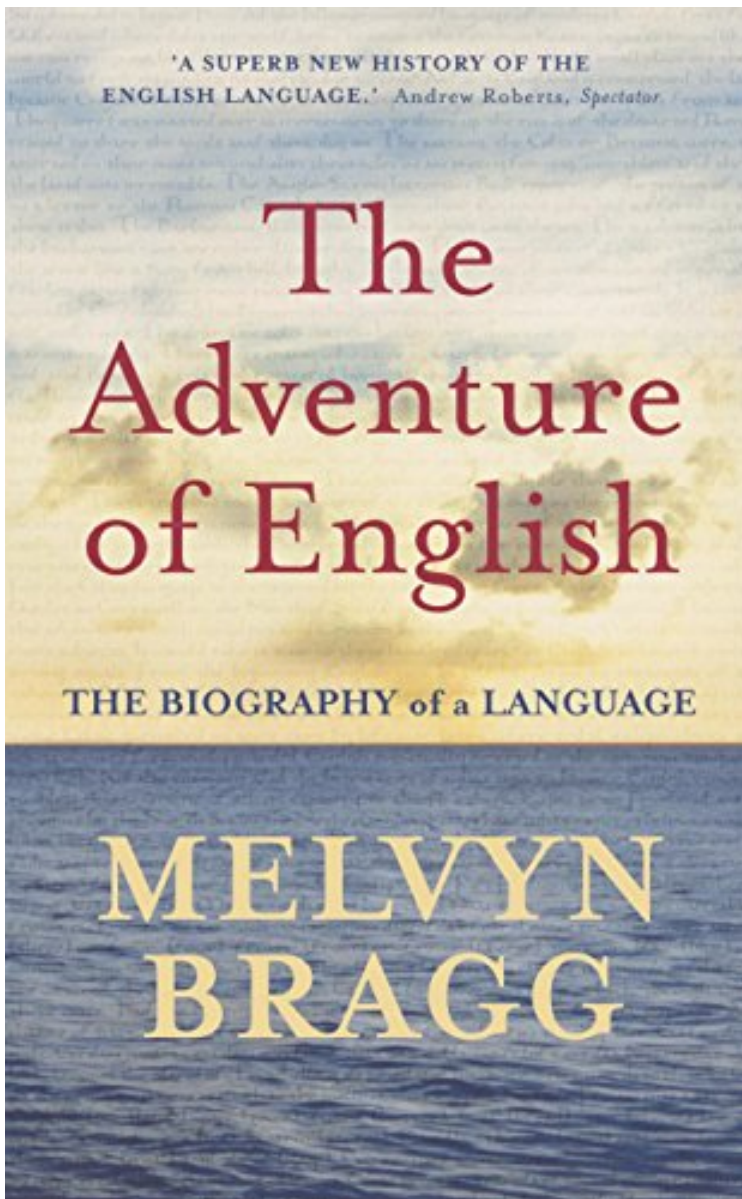


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The Adventure Of English (English Edition)



Par Melvyn Bragg
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurEnglish is the collective work of millions of people throughout the ages. It is democratic, ever-changing and ingenious in its assimilation of other cultures. English runs through the heart of world finance, medicine and the Internet, and it is understood by around two thousand million people across the world. Yet it was very nearly wiped out in its early years.In this book Melvyn Bragg shows us the remarkable story of the English language; from its beginnings as a minor guttural Germanic dialect to its position today as a truly established global language. THE ADVENTURE OF ENGLISH is not only an enthralling story of power, religion and trade, but also the story of people, and how their day-to-day lives

shaped and continue to change the extraordinary language that is English. 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.

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.

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