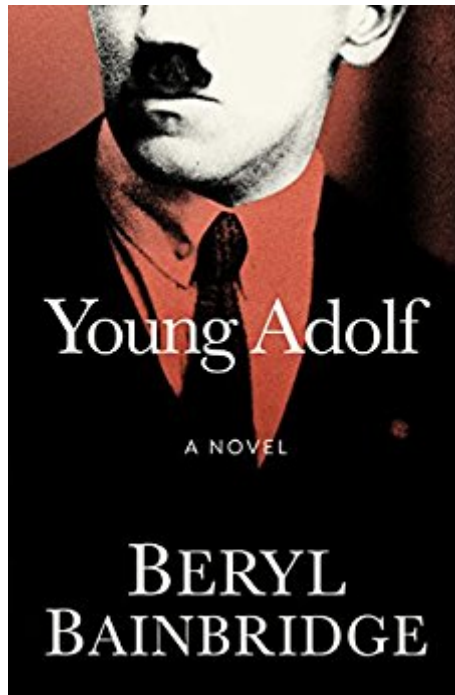




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Young Adolf: A Novel



Synopsis

A darkly humorous fictionalized account of Adolf Hitler's alleged stay in England as a young man. Before becoming the Führer of the Third Reich, it is said Adolf Hitler was a failed artist who bummed around at his half-brother's house in Liverpool from 1912 to 1913. Based on the memoir of the future despot's sister-in-law, Bridget Hitler, *Young Adolf* is a vivid imagining of this alleged visit to the United Kingdom. The story begins with Adolf aboard a ferry, aiming to avoid Austrian military service. He has no luggage, save for a book, and holds a false passport made out in the name of his dead brother, paranoid that the authorities might be tailing him. But what Adolf should be worried about is how he will be received at his destination. At the train station, his brother Alois greets him with outrage. Alois had sent money for their sister Angela to travel to Liverpool, but Adolf stole the funds. Taking refuge on the sofa for days, Adolf makes only one friend: Jewish landlord Mr. Meyer, surprisingly enough. With mutual interests in opera and architecture, the two become close, though Adolf does mention his thoughts on race relations and "contaminated blood." Eventually, under pressure, Adolf stops loafing and gets a menial job. Most people think he won't ever amount to much, but it's clear that Adolf has bigger aspirations. Originally published in 1978, this was the first foray into historical fiction for award-winning author Beryl Bainbridge, who would become famous for works like *Master Georgie* and the bestselling *Every Man for Himself*. Combining dark humor and psychological intrigue, *Young Adolf* is a portrait of both a man and a city before two World Wars changed everything.

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Customer Reviews

Beryl Bainbridge started with a good idea, mixing fact and fiction to create a picture of a young Adolf Hitler paranoid, socially inept, idle and accident prone and set him in Liverpool, cadging from his brother as he struggles to connect the inner version of his life and destiny with reality. The picture she paints is probably a very accurate one of his time in Vienna, living in doss houses, scraping pfennigs together and unable to build a coherent or sustainable pattern of life. The English setting heightens the sense of alienation, confusion, clumsiness and insecurity that surround him. If this is humour it is very dark farce, but it does prompt the reader to reflect, as always in the case of Hitler, on how close the world came on several occasions in the early 20th Century to escape the tragic future he later wrought. Of such things tragedy is made

I felt cheated from page one, but for the sake of this review's accuracy forced myself to complete it. Among its failings are that it has no crisis, no problem, no reason for the reader to wonder, to get excited or any other emotion. Whether or not Hitler actually went to Britain before WWI as the author alleges and stayed with his brother, it apparently had no discernible impact on the dictator or his thinking.

This book probably will not appeal to the ardently politically correct. They would recoil at the concept of not only a novel with Adolf Hitler as the central character, but also the fact that this book is very funny indeed. I laughed out loud a number of times reading this novel. Bainbridge's humour is devastatingly ironic. The novel follows a twenty three year old Adolf Hitler as he blunders his way through a stay in Liverpool in 1912 with his brother Alois and his Irish wife Bridget. Because of the humour, the reader can at times find themselves with a degree of sympathy for the rather hapless and paranoid Adolf. Whenever that happens, however, Bainbridge hits you again with a subtle turn of irony that lets you feel justifiable contempt for him. In short, this Hitler is a loser -- a future powerful figure cut down to size. Without wanting to give anything away, Bainbridge also explains why Hitler had that odd moustache -- "He [Adolf] resolved to grow a moustache. Never again would

he be mistaken for a woman." Very funny, believe me! This is a wonderful read that will certainly be appreciated by those with an interest in history and a sense of humour about it all.

William Patrick Hitler was born in Liverpool where he lived with his Parents. One indeed was Alois Hitler the half brother of Adolph. With this book Ms. Beryl Bainbridge stepped into what could have been controversial ground. Historically based fiction is a familiar foundation for her work, and this one is excellent. In, "Young Adolph", the Author imagines a trip he might have taken to visit his brother in Liverpool when he was 23 years of age. To the extent there is humor in the work it is at the expense of her subject who on his best day does not rise above pathetic, and when drunk becomes a raging lunatic. If this sounds familiar it should, as the Hitler of History was so painfully ordinary it is almost beyond belief he did not die on the street during one of his homeless periods. The Author brings about several events that are not earth shattering until you place them in the context of the Evil that was to be Hitler. Some are relatively minor as when we learn how his ridiculous hairstyle came about. However Ms. Bainbridge also hypothesizes where some of the events and practices that later would shake the world and resonate to today, may have started. The book is as interesting as many Historical Works I have read about this genocidal maniac, and in some ways it carries with it more impact than scholarly studies of the creature. When portrayed as he has been presented here, the horror he becomes and unleashes on a good portion of the world, is either amazing or terrifying and probably both. An evil genius would be an understandable character, however such an unlikely character that History elevated to one of the great mass murderers of the 20th Century is as far from genius as language allows. And this is what Ms. Bainbridge illustrates so well in this work.

A grim, bizarre little novel with no sympathetic characters. Adolf bears scant resemblance to his real-world namesake. Except for certain cute allusions to the future Führer -- we learn where the brown shirts, the weird hairstyle, and the toothbrush moustache come from, for example -- Adolf might as well be a completely fictional young sap. The plot is haphazard. For some reason a bleak, Dickensian underworld figures prominently without significantly altering or influencing Adolf other than requiring him to do a lot of fleeing. Bainbridge's gift for depicting menace and squalor are put to much better use in her novel *Watson's Apology*.

Pre-World War I Adolph Hitler is a total incompetent. Young Adolph comes to Liverpool to live with his brother Alois & his Irish wife. He is to help his brother in his new business. But he cannot do

anything right. He is depressed & paranoid. A total loser. It is a funny book, fiction yet chilling because we all know what really happened.

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