

Hitler

author: Ian Kershaw

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Synopsis

author	Ian Kershaw
readBy	Damian Lynch
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Hailed as the most compelling biography of the German dictator yet written, Ian Kershaw's *Hitler* brings us closer than ever before to the heart of its subject's immense darkness.

From his illegitimate birth in a small Austrian village to his fiery death in a bunker under the Reich chancellery in Berlin, Adolf Hitler left a murky trail, strewn with contradictory tales and overgrown with self-created myths. One truth prevails: the sheer scale of the evils that he unleashed on the world has made him a demonic figure without equal in the 20th century.

Ian Kershaw's *Hitler* brings us closer than ever before to the character of the bizarre misfit in his 30-year ascent from a Viennese shelter for the indigent to uncontested rule over the German nation that had tried and rejected democracy in the crippling aftermath of World War I. With extraordinary vividness, Kershaw recreates the settings that made Hitler's rise possible: the virulent anti-Semitism of prewar Vienna, the crucible of a war with immense casualties, the toxic nationalism that gripped Bavaria in the 1920s, the undermining of the Weimar Republic by extremists of the Right and the Left and the hysteria that accompanied Hitler's seizure of power in 1933 and then mounted in brutal attacks by his storm troopers on Jews and others condemned as enemies of the Aryan race.

In an account drawing on many previously untapped sources, Hitler metamorphoses from an obscure fantasist, a "drummer" sounding an insistent beat of hatred in Munich beer halls, to the instigator of an infamous failed putsch and, ultimately, to the leadership of a ragtag alliance of right-wing parties fused into a movement that enthralled the German people.

Reader's comments

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