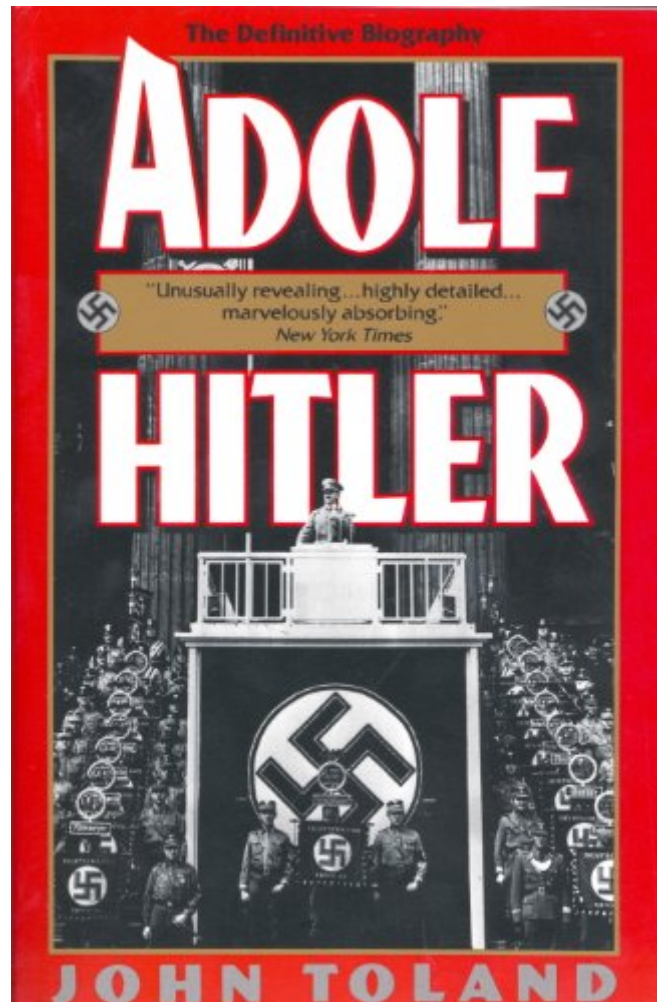


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Adolf Hitler: The Definitive Biography



Synopsis

Pulitzer Prize-winning historian John Toland's classic, definitive biography of Adolf Hitler remains the most thorough, readable, accessible, and, as much as possible, objective account of the life of a man whose evil affect on the world in the twentieth century will always be felt. Toland's research provided one of the final opportunities for a historian to conduct personal interviews with over two hundred individuals intimately associated with Hitler. At a certain distance yet still with access to many of the people who enabled and who opposed the Führer and his Third Reich, Toland strove to treat this life as if Hitler lived and died a hundred years before instead of within his own memory. From childhood and obscurity to his desperate end, Adolf Hitler emerges, in Toland's words, "far more complex and contradictory . . . obsessed by his dream of cleansing Europe Jews . . . a hybrid of Prometheus and Lucifer."

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Customer Reviews

For anyone truly interested in finding and reading a definitive biography of Adolph Hitler, this is the book. This work is at once carefully documented and scholarly yet is also eminently readable and entertaining. Although there is no single volume that adequately explains the mysterious truth of

Adolph Hitler the phenomenon, author John Toland delivers a most informative and exhaustively researched manuscript that does help us to understand Adolph Hitler the man. Toland spent several years researching this book with intensive interviews by surviving principals, and had access to a wide range of archival data and previously unpublished data and facts. The result is this magisterial work. This is a book much like Toland's previous efforts in that it concentrates heavily on interviews with a literal torrent of people who had significant contact and knowledge of Hitler, from those who surrounded him in his rise to power, and who followed him into the ash and ruins of the embattled and besieged Third Reich. From his early days in Austria, to his school boy experiences and the discouraging failures of his early adulthood, through the heady but painful days as a volunteer in the front lines during World War I, Toland faithfully traces the rise and growth of this strange young man as he falls prey to a variety of venomous and unfortunate ideas and prejudices that mark him for life, and set the path to the kind of pathological aberrances that characterized his beliefs and behaviors from that point on. Yet Toland makes a painful effort to be non-judgmental, and carefully presents all the facts as he can best determine them.

This book has to be one of the longest biographies ever written about a historical figure, but it is greatly the worth the effort expended to read it. John Toland is as good a historian as one will ever experience in the modern era. His books, to a one, are eminently readable. There is no historian who has the ability to make his subjects appear so lifelike, even to those who lived long after the events he writes about. By taking actual quotes and putting them into proper context, Toland marinates a genre long known for its aridity. Hitler the man was as complex a person on the political stage as any that preceded him, or have followed. Toland wades through Hitler's many complexities and seeming contradictions, and sheds light on what drove the Fuhrer's madness and his need to bring Europe (and later the world) to the brink of destruction. Toland offers plausibility to what drove Hitler to vilify and massacre the Jewish race in Europe, his goals of conquest, and his political system...areas in which historians have argued about for generations. We learn many things about Hitler's childhood and early adulthood, things which may shed some light on the future dictator's *raison d'être*. From a disappointing childhood to dreams of being an artist and architect in Vienna, Austria, to his service in the German army during World War I, Hitler's dreams of a Germanic empire are mapped out every stage of the way. Toland's treatment of Hitler is fair, which is deeply hard to do, as the leader of Germany's Third Reich has caused much misery and destruction to people all over the world. His detachment makes Hitler appear much more scarier.

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