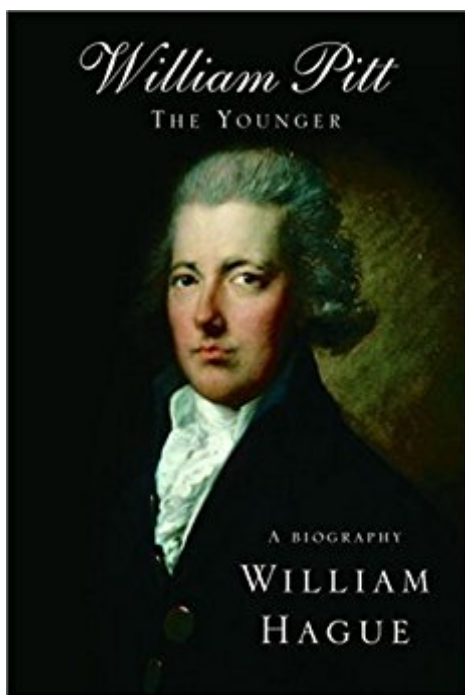


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William Pitt The Younger



Synopsis

William Pitt the Younger is an illuminating biography of one of the great iconic figures in British history: the man who in 1784 at the age of twenty-four became (and so remains) the youngest Prime Minister in the history of England. In this lively and authoritative study, William Hague—himself the youngest political party leader in recent history—explains the dramatic events and exceptional abilities that allowed extreme youth to be combined with great power. The brilliant son of a father who was also Prime Minister, Pitt was derided as a “schoolboy” when he took office. Yet within months he had outwitted his opponents, and he went on to dominate the political scene for twenty-two years (nineteen of them as Prime Minister). No British politician since has exercised such supremacy for so long. Pitt’s personality has always been hard to unravel. Though he was generally thought to be cold and aloof, his friends described him as the wittiest man they ever knew. By seeing him through the eyes of a politician, William Hague—a prominent member of Britain’s Conservative Party—succeeds in explaining Pitt’s actions and motives through a series of great national crises, including the madness of King George III, the impact of the French Revolution, and the trauma of the Napoleonic wars. He describes how a man dedicated to peace became Britain’s longest-serving war leader, how Pitt the liberal reformer became Pitt the author of repression, and how—though undisputed master of the nation’s finances—he died with vast personal debts. With its rich cast of characters, including Charles James Fox, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Edmund Burke, and George III himself, and set against a backdrop of industrial revolution and global conflict, this is a richly detailed and rounded portrait of an extraordinary political life. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

It's such a well written and researched book. I found it fascinating how the Parliament worked when I thought Whigs and Tories had become the "parties", but in fact this was earlier and had broken down, and members changed sides. Also how much power the King still retained, how smart Pitt was. Lastly as an Australian many events were going on, the regency crisis, French Revolution and how a penal settlement on the other side of the world was a small issue. Mainly the authorship of William Hague. I am encouraged to get his biography of Wilberforce a contemporary.

An excellent biography on one of Britain's greatest prime ministers. Mr. Hague goes into every detail regarding Mr. Pitt's life both personally and politically. He talks about relations with other members of Parliament and how he handled both foreign crisis like the French Revolution and economic crisis like when Britain was forced to print paper currency for the first time. This book views Pitt as an excellent leader dedicated to his work devoted to finances and a fair peace. Very readable so do not be intimidated by the length!

This is a very good overview of the life of one of the most influential leaders in parliamentary history. While it is a bit general at times, I found myself enjoying the discussions of how parliament functioned at the end of the 18th century. I initially read this to get some background into my studies of the 19th century reform movements in Parliament, but I was so captivated by the story, as told by Mr Hague, that I have taken to reading other works on 18th century politicians and political alignments. Overall, I was pleasantly surprised by this book and I recommend it to anyone interested in the development of British politics.

Nice history of one of the most amazing politicians in history. The book's faults are that this is truly a political history - lots of exhaustive details of motions and who is in line for what cabinet post, etc -

and there is a bit of disconnect with wider history going on in England, Europe and the world. I would have appreciated a bit more depth into the characters who surrounded Pitt in his brief 20 years in the public. For instance, Fox, historically famous and Pitt's bête noir, gets little to no discussion or background. Nevertheless, an intense look into the life of a remarkable statesman, and the book is enlightening to that extent, but not so much for anything outside of that life.

The younger William Pitt lived a life that is not widely known or appreciated in the USA and this well-written and entertaining biography should help to remedy that. It is so unusual for a super-genius to have the opportunity, interest and special aptitude for politics Pitt had that the example deserves much study. We are fortunate that William Hague, the author, did not become Prime Minister himself in 2001 so that he was free to stay in Yorkshire and complete this work.

I bought this as a Christmas gift for my wife who is an avid history buff, especially British history. She is loving it. It gives her a view of what happened in England after the United States won its independence and all the political and cultural changes that followed the loss of the colonies.

You don't have to be interested in politics to enjoy this excellent book, both research and writing of the highest standard by William Hague. Have already bought his William Wilberforce biography as well.

It has been a long time since a book has inspired me this much, and made it this difficult to put down. I highly recommend reading this book for a good primer on one of Britain's greatest Prime Ministers, as written by a man who knows British Parliament from the inside out.

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