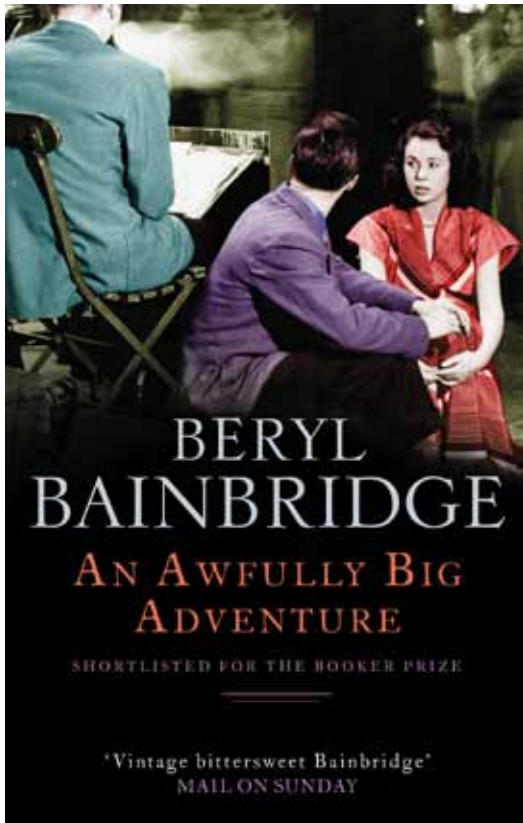




Reader's Guide



An Awfully Big Adventure Beryl Bainbridge

Abacus
Price £8.99

www.themanbookerprize.com



An Awfully Big Adventure

It is 1950 and the Liverpool repertory theatre company is rehearsing its Christmas production of Peter Pan, a story of childhood innocence and loss. Stella has been taken on as assistant stage manager and quickly becomes obsessed with Meredith, the dissolute director. But it is only when the celebrated O'Hara arrives to take the lead, that a different drama unfolds. In it, he and Stella are bound together in a past that neither dares to interpret.

Discussion points

What are your impressions of Stella? What aspects of her character do you identify with?

Sexual politics and awareness of harassment are very different today than they were in the 1950s. What are the situations in the book that remind you of this? If the books were set in the 21st century how do you think these would be handled?

An Awfully Big Adventure is often described as a comedy, would you agree with this?

Many of the characters are consumed by the past. In what ways are they haunted by the past and how do they use storytelling to deal with some of these issues?

The novel is written primarily from Stella's point of view. How does being in Stella's mind affect the reader? The reader also experiences the thoughts of Uncle Vernon, Meredith and O'Hara. How did this help you to understand these characters?

Background information

Link to the Man Booker Prize website
<http://themanbookerprize.com>

Link to the publisher's website
<http://www.littlebrown.co.uk>

An Awfully Big Adventure was made into film in 1995 directed by Mike Newell and starring Georgina Gates, Alun Armstrong, Alan Rickman and Hugh Grant.

Movie review, The New York Times
<http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=99OCE3DD1530F932A15754COA963958260>.