



Loitering with Intent

By Peter O'Toole

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Loitering with Intent By Peter O'Toole

The popular actor describes his youth in northern England, his father, his mother, the difficulty of a wartime childhood, the impression of the war, his education, and his introduction to drama.

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Loitering with Intent By Peter O'Toole Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The star of *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Beckett* and other films, O'Toole here offers a rambling narrative of his upbringing in northern England during the '30s and '40s. There are some entertaining anecdotes: O'Toole's auditions at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, where he charmed the Academy's director before he knew who the man was, or that the organization gave acting classes; his travels and bohemian adventures with friend O'Liver (sic); the peripatetic life of his father, a bookie, and his shady friends. Unfortunately, O'Toole's sentences run on, his narrative jumps confusingly in time and he uses slang and earthy metaphors to excess. The strangest part of the book is the many pages devoted to Adolf Hitler, about whom O'Toole writes with sloppy familiarity: "The dictates of Providence had Hitler clearly murmuring that his opponents all were little worms and, abstractedly perhaps, thinking of Danzig and Poland, he took his sheet of paper that Neville Chamberlain had signed and wiped his fearful arse on it." Reading this memoir is like sitting at a bar with a chatty drunk whose nearly incoherent monologue contains a few lucid, wonderful moments.

Photos not seen by PW.

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From Library Journal

Caveat emptor: this is only the first volume of the Irish actor's memoirs, covering roughly the opening 20 years of his life. Once you accept the fact that there will be no stories about the making of *Lawrence of Arabia* or O'Toole's many other wonderful films, you can revel in his colorful writing: e.g., "It was smashing to be back among the throng of gamesters, gee-gees, jockeys, bookies." Among the aforementioned "throng" was the author's roguish father, Captain Pat. The other major figure in these pages is Adolf Hitler; Peter was 7 when World War II broke out, and he's obviously still obsessed with the imprint the German dictator left on the world. Entertaining stuff, but recommended only for larger collections.

- Thomas Wiener, formerly with "American Film"

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From Kirkus Reviews

Really elided first volume of O'Toole's autobiography. Those hot for chat about the star's great films (*Lawrence of Arabia*, etc.) and the great actors and drinkers with whom he has worked and busted up the world must wait for the next installment. Born in 1932 in (perhaps) Ireland (a fact counterfacted by there being an English as well as an Irish birth record), and raised as a native of the now vanished (he says) town of Hunsbeck in Yorkshire, O'Toole writes in a lingual ecstasy whose charms will enroth many and will often have readers untangling congested diction, including baby talk much like Joyce's in his portrait of the artist as a young moo-cow and a striving for hip underclass lyricism of a richness much like Dylan Thomas's brush-work on the fey folk of *Under Milk Wood* (O'Toole played Captain Cat in the film version). One must go with O'Toole and his inner merriment; at times, he strikes off an engaging passage for which his mannered voice fits the action. Less happily, O'Toole sandbags us with a halfpenny life of Adolf Hitler as seen through the eyes of Childe Peter--a third of the book! All right, Hitler loomed large, but O'Toole's Adolf is both a boy's reaction to newsreel Nazis ("Childhood meant war, barbed wire...") and a skim from standard Hitler bios. Better moments include his tour in the Royal Navy ("My sea had been black; black and grey with great lumps of roaring white water crashing over our bows to rush swilling along the lurching deck. Often I had stood, gloved hands gripping a rail or a stanchion, just gazing, awed by this immense world of black and brutal water"), and his rather pastel auditions for the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts. Too, his sporting dad's life as a bookie, thumbed onto the page with large gobs of paint, looms big in his limericky dashabout high jinks. High lumpen. Wordsman, be spare. (Photographs.) -- Copyright ©1993, Kirkus

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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