



Hild: A Novel

By Nicola Griffith

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WINNER OF THE WASHINGTON STATE BOOK AWARD FOR FICTION

In seventh-century Britain, a new religion is coming ashore and small kingdoms are merging, frequently and violently. Hild is the king's youngest niece, with a glittering mind and a natural authority.

She is destined to become one of the pivotal figures of the Early Middle Ages: Saint Hilda of Whitby. But for now she has only the powerful curiosity of a bright child and the precarious advantage of a plotting uncle, Edwin of Northumbria, who will stop at nothing to become overking of Angles. Hild establishes a place for herself at his side as the king's seer, and she is indispensable as long as she doesn't lead Edwin astray. The stakes are high?life and death?for Hild, for her family, and, increasingly, for those who seek the protection from this strange girl who seems to see the future. Drawing from the few records history has left us, Nicola Griffith has brought the young Saint Hilda's harsh, but beautiful, world to vivid, absorbing life.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review In her first foray into historical fiction, Griffith explores the young life of Hild, the future St. Hilda of Whitby. Set in seventh-century Anglo-Saxon England, during the early years of Christianity there, the novel begins with the sudden death of Hild's father, Lord Hereric. To secure the futures of her daughters, Hild's ruthless and cunning mother embarks on a plan to hook their fate to the coattails of Edwin Snakebeard, Lord Hereric's ambitious brother and king-to-be. Soon, Hild becomes Edwin's trusted seer, and as the novel progresses, she attempts to stay in his favor, treading carefully among the large egos of the court and knowing that her survival depends as much on luck as it does on the accuracy of her predictions. Griffith expertly blends an exploration of seventh-century court life and a detailed character study of Hild as she balances a need for acceptance, love, and friendship and a desire to escape the strict gender roles of her time. While fierce battles and political intrigue feature prominently, so do the fascinating details of everyday life, particularly the lives of women. In short, Griffith triumphs with this intelligent, beautifully written, and meticulously researched novel. --Kerri Price

From Bookforum

Hild recounts the early years of an actual seventh-century English girl, [...] a remarkable child treated by those around her as though she possesses supernatural powers. [...] Griffith realistically represents the brutality of everyday life in this milieu. She is interested in exploring the costs of slavery for both parties to the transaction, the ramifications of illness or injury in an age of physical violence, and the effects of political change at the highest level on the lives of individual people. [...] In its ambition and intelligence, *Hild* might best be compared to Hilary Mantel's novels about Thomas Cromwell. [...] [Griffith has a] sharp eye for what happens to plants and animals (especially birds) over the course of the seasons, as well as an understated and just-lyrical-enough prose style that delights the reader locally without ever distracting from the forward movements of character and plot. —Jenny Davidson

Review

"One of the best novels, period." ?*Dorothy Allison*

"Truly, truly remarkable." ?*Karen Joy Fowler*

"Extraordinary...[*Hild*] resonates to many of the same chords as *Beowulf*, the legends of King Arthur, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *Game of Thrones*." ?*Neal Stephenson*

"*Hild* is a book as loving as it is fierce, brilliant, and accomplished. To read it felt like a privilege and a gift." ?*NPR*

"Terrific... Griffith has taken what little is known of the life of St. Hilda and imagined a vibrant, if brutal, world... *Hild* [is] a pleasure to sink into." ?*The Washington Post*

"Sharp as steel, clear as garnet, essential and sensual and right, Griffith's telling of Hild's adventures offers us something far better than mere comfort: the lure of the sublime." ?*The Seattle Times*

"Splendid...I can hardly wait for the next." ?*Los Angeles Review of Books*

"You could describe *Hild* as being like *Game of Thrones* without the dragons, but this is so much deeper

than that, so much richer. A glorious, intensely passionate walk through an entirely real landscape, *Hild* leads us into the Dark Ages and makes them light, and tense, and edgy, and deeply moving. The research is flawless, the characters fully alive. If it wasn't like this, it should have been--and I'm sure that it was!"
Manda Scott

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Spencer Fuentes:

Book is to be different for each grade. Book for children until adult are different content. We all know that that book is very important normally. The book *Hild: A Novel* has been making you to know about other knowledge and of course you can take more information. It is very advantages for you. The reserve *Hild: A Novel* is not only giving you much more new information but also being your friend when you experience bored. You can spend your current spend time to read your guide. Try to make relationship with all the book *Hild: A Novel*. You never truly feel lose out for everything if you read some books.

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