

## Lucky Jim Kingsley Amis

'A brilliant biography - John Sutherland has brought Monica Jones to life as she deserves.' Claire Tomalin 'I couldn't put it down. Vivid and penetrating, it's a brilliant portrait of a confounding, complex woman.' Cressida Connolly Monica Jones was Philip Larkin's partner for more than four decades, and was arguably the most important woman in his life. She was cruelly immortalised as Margaret Peel in Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* and widely vilified for destroying Larkin's diaries and works in progress after his death. She was opinionated and outspoken, widely disliked by his friends and Philip himself was routinely unfaithful to her. But Monica Jones was also a brilliant academic and an inspiring teacher in her own right. She wrote more than 2,000 letters to Larkin, and he in turn poured out his heart to her. In this revealing biography John Sutherland explores the question: who was the real Monica? The calm and collected friend and teacher? The witty conversationalist and inspirational lecturer? Or the private Monica, writing desperate, sometimes furious, occasionally libellous, drunken letters to the only man, to the absent man, whom she could love? Was Monica's life - one of total sacrifice to a great poet - worthwhile? Through his careful reading of Monica's never-before-seen letters, and his own recollections, John Sutherland shows us a new side to Larkin's story, and allows Monica to finally step out from behind the poet's shadow.

Age has done everything except mellow the characters in Kingsley Amis's *The Old Devils*, which turns its humane and ironic gaze on a group of Welsh married couples who have been spending their golden years—when “all of a sudden the evening starts starting after breakfast”—nattering, complaining, reminiscing, and, above all, drinking. This more or less orderly social world is thrown off-kilter, however, when two old friends unexpectedly return from England: Alun Weaver, now a celebrated man of Welsh letters, and his entrancing wife, Rhiannon. Long-dormant rivalries and romances are rudely awakened, as life at the Bible and Crown, the local pub, is changed irrevocably. Considered by Martin Amis to be Kingsley Amis's greatest achievement—a book that “stands comparison with any English novel of the [twentieth] century”—*The Old Devils* confronts the attrition of ageing with rare candor, sympathy, and moral intelligence.

Harry Caldecote is the most charming man you'll ever meet, a convivial academic who devotes his life to others. He is on call when his alcoholic niece falls into strange hands, when his brother threatens to emulate Wordsworth, when his son's lesbian lodger is beaten up by her girlfriend. He endures misplaced seductions, swindles and aggressive dogs just to keep the peace at the King's pub in Shepherd's Hill. But when the Adams' Institute of Cultural and Commercial History in America offers him the opportunity to do 'whatever he wanted to do' in a picturesque lakeside town, he faces a choice between freedom or responsibility - and whether to take charge of his own life.

In Kingsley Amis's virtuoso foray into virtual history it is 1976 but the modern world is a medieval relic, frozen in intellectual and spiritual time ever since Martin Luther was promoted to pope back in the sixteenth century. Stephen the Third, the king of England, has just died, and Mass (Mozart's second requiem) is about to be sung to lay him to rest. In the choir is our hero, Hubert Anvil, an

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extremely ordinary ten-year-old boy with a faultless voice. In the audience is a select group of experts whose job is to determine whether that faultless voice should be preserved by performing a certain operation. Art, after all, is worth any sacrifice. How Hubert realizes what lies in store for him and how he deals with the whirlpool of piety, menace, terror, and passion that he soon finds himself in are the subject of a classic piece of counterfactual fiction equal to Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle*. *The Alteration* won the John W. Campbell Memorial Award for best science-fiction novel in 1976.

Maurice Allington has reached middle age and is haunted by death. As he says, "I honestly can't see why everybody who isn't a child, everybody who's theoretically old enough to have understood what death means, doesn't spend all his time thinking about it. It's a pretty arresting thought." He also happens to own and run a country inn that is haunted. *The Green Man* opens as Maurice's father drops dead (had he seen something in the room?) and continues as friends and family convene for the funeral. Maurice's problems are many and increasing: How to deal with his own declining health? How to reach out to a teenage daughter who watches TV all the time? How to get his best friend's wife in the sack? How to find another drink? (And another.) And then there is always death. *The Green Man* is a ghost story that hits a live nerve, a very black comedy with an uncannily happy ending: in other words, Kingsley Amis at his best.

A New York Times Notable Book of the Year A Publisher's Weekly Best Book of the Year Combining the wit of David Lodge with Poe's delicious sense of the macabre, these are three witty, spooky novellas of satire set in academia—a world where Derrida rules, love is a "complicated ideological position," and poetic justice is served with an ideological twist.

A hilarious satire about college life and high class manners, this is a classic of postwar English literature. Regarded by many as the finest, and funniest, comic novel of the twentieth century, *Lucky Jim* remains as trenchant, withering, and eloquently misanthropic as when it first scandalized readers in 1954. This is the story of Jim Dixon, a hapless lecturer in medieval history at a provincial university who knows better than most that "there was no end to the ways in which nice things are nicer than nasty ones." Kingsley Amis's scabrous debut leads the reader through a gallery of emphatically English bores, cranks, frauds, and neurotics with whom Dixon must contend in one way or another in order to hold on to his cushy academic perch and win the girl of his fancy. More than just a merciless satire of cloistered college life and stuffy postwar manners, *Lucky Jim* is an attack on the forces of boredom, whatever form they may take, and a work of art that at once distills and extends an entire tradition of English comic writing, from Fielding and Dickens through Wodehouse and Waugh. As Christopher Hitchens has written, "If you can picture Bertie or Jeeves being capable of actual malice, and simultaneously imagine Evelyn Waugh forgetting about original sin, you have the combination of innocence and experience that makes this short romp so imperishable."

One of The Washington Post's 50 Most Notable Works of Fiction in 2018 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune keep hitting beleaguered English professor Jason Fitger right between the eyes in this hilarious and eagerly awaited sequel to the cult classic of anhedonic academe, the Thurber Prize-winning *Dear Committee Members*. Once more into the breach... Now is the fall of his discontent, as Jason Fitger, newly appointed chair of the English Department of Payne

University, takes arms against a sea of troubles, personal and institutional. His ex-wife is sleeping with the dean who must approve whatever modest initiatives he undertakes. The fearsome department secretary Fran clearly runs the show (when not taking in rescue parrots and dogs) and holds plenty of secrets she's not sharing. The lavishly funded Econ Department keeps siphoning off English's meager resources and has taken aim at its remaining office space. And Fitger's attempt to get a mossbacked and antediluvian Shakespeare scholar to retire backfires spectacularly when the press concludes that the Bard is being kicked to the curricular curb. Lord, what fools these mortals be! Julie Schumacher proves the point and makes the most of it in this delicious romp of satire.

Here is the authorized, definitive biography of one of the most controversial figures of twentieth-century literature, renowned for his blistering intelligence, savage wit and belligerent fierceness of opinion: Kingsley Amis was not only the finest comic novelist of his generation—having first achieved prominence with the publication of *Lucky Jim* in 1954 and as one of the Angry Young Men—but also a dominant figure in post—World War II British writing as novelist, poet, critic and polemicist. In *The Life of Kingsley Amis*, Zachary Leader, acclaimed editor of *The Letters of Kingsley Amis*, draws not only on unpublished works and correspondence but also on interviews with a wide range of Amis's friends, relatives, fellow writers, students and colleagues, many of whom have never spoken out before. The result is a compulsively readable account of Amis's childhood, school days and life as a student at Oxford, teacher, critic, political and cultural commentator, professional author, husband, father and lover. Even as he makes the case for Amis's cultural centrality—at his death *Time* magazine claimed that “the British decades between 1955 and 1995 should in fairness be called ‘the Amis era’”—Leader explores the writer's phobias, self-doubts and ambitions; the controversies in which he was embroiled; and the role that drink played in a life bedeviled by erotic entanglements, domestic turbulence and personal disaster. Dazzling for its thoroughness, psychological acuity and elegant style, *The Life of Kingsley Amis* is exemplary: literary biography at its very best.

In 1954, Kingsley Amis grabbed the attention of the literary world as one of the Angry Young Men with his first novel *Lucky Jim*. He maintained a public image of blistering intelligence, savage wit, and belligerent fierceness of opinion until his death in 1995. In his letters, he confirms the legendary aspects of his reputation, and much more. This collection contains more than eight hundred letters that divulge the secrets of the artist and the man, with an honesty and immediacy rare in any biography or memoir. Amis, so assured in his pronouncements on fellow writers, grapples privately with fears, self-doubts, ambitions, and personal disasters. He is wildly funny, indulging in mordant gossip and astonishing frankness with his intimate friends and lovers. Some letters are dashed off with signature frustration; others are written with painstaking and painful circumspection. They make vivid the triumphs and tumult of his life and his times, from post-

war Britain through the Thatcher era, as well as his attractions to women, jazz, drink, and the comic possibilities of the English language. As an intellectual pugilist who took no prisoners, Kingsley Amis had few peers. These letters, at times scandalous, at times tragic, reinforce his historical relevance and literary stature.

Kingsley Amis was one of the great masters of comic prose, and no subject was dearer to him than the art and practice of imbibing. This new volume brings together the best of his three out-of-print works on the subject: *Kingsley Amis in Drink*, *Everyday Drinking* and *How's Your Glass?* In one handsome package, the book covers a full shelf of the master's riotous and erudite thoughts on the drinking arts: Along with a series of well-tested recipes (including a cocktail called the Lucky Jim) are Amis's musings on *The Hangover*, *The Boozing Man's Diet*, *The Mean Sod's Guide*, and (presumably as a matter of speculation) *How Not to Get Drunk* - all leavened with fun quizzes on the making and drinking of alcohol all over the world. Mixing practical know-how and hilarious opinionation, this is a delightful cocktail of wry humour and distilled knowledge, served by one of our great gimlet wits.

Kingsley Amis, along with being the funniest English writer of his generation was a great chronicler of the fads and absurdities of his age, and *Girl, 20* is a delightfully incisive dissection of the flower-power phase of the 1960s. Amis's antihero, Sir Roy Vandervane, a conductor and composer who bears more than a passing resemblance to Leonard Bernstein, is a pillar of the establishment who has fallen hard for protest, bellbottoms, and the electric guitar. And since vain Sir Vandervane is a great success, he is also free to pursue his greatest failing: a taste for younger and younger women. Highborn hippie Sylvia (not, in fact, twenty) is his latest infatuation and a threat to his whole family, from his drama-queen wife, Kitty, to Penny, his long-suffering daughter. All this is recounted by Douglas Yandell, a music critic with his own love problems, who finds that he too has a part in this story of botched artistry, bumbling celebrity, and scheming family, in a time that for all its high-minded talk is as low and dishonest as any other.

Douglas Yandell, a young-ish music critic, is enlisted by Kitty Vandervane to keep an eye on her roving husband - the eminent conductor and would-be radical Sir Roy - as he embarks on yet another affair. Roy, meanwhile, wants Douglas as an alibi for his growing involvement with Sylvia, an unsuitably young woman who loves nothing more than to shock and provoke. Life soon becomes extremely complicated as Douglas finds himself caught up in a frantic, farcical tangle of relationships, rivalry and scandal. *Girl, 20* is a merciless send-up of 1970s London's permissive society from a master of uproarious comedy. With a new introduction by Howard Jacobson.

A wise, sensitive novel about Russia, exile, family, love, history and fate, this work asks what people owe the place they were born, and in return, what it owes them. A New York Times Editors' Choice, named a Best Book of 2018 by Bookforum, Nylon, Esquire, and Vulture.

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New York Times Bestseller Winner of the World Fantasy Award One of New York magazine's 10 Best Books of the Year One of NPR's 5 Best Works of Foreign Fiction The celebrated scary fairy tales of Russia's preeminent contemporary fiction writer—the author of the prizewinning memoir about growing up in Stalinist Russia, *The Girl from the Metropol Hotel* Vanishings and aparitions, nightmares and twists of fate, mysterious ailments and supernatural interventions haunt these stories by the Russian master Ludmilla Petrushevskaya, heir to the spellbinding tradition of Gogol and Poe. Blending the miraculous with the macabre, and leavened by a mischievous gallows humor, these bewitching tales are like nothing being written in Russia—or anywhere else in the world—today.

A GLOBE AND MAIL BEST BOOK OF 2018 Eight months before he became a suicide bomber, Prin went to the zoo with his family. Following a cancer diagnosis, forty-year old Prin vows to become a better man and a better Catholic. He's going to spend more time with his kids and better time with his wife, care for his recently divorced and aging parents, and also expand his cutting-edge research into the symbolism of the seahorse in Canadian literature. But when his historic college in downtown Toronto faces a shutdown and he meets with the condominium developers ready to take it over—including a foul-mouthed young Chinese entrepreneur and Wende, his sexy ex-girlfriend from graduate school—Prin hears the voice of God. Bewildered and divinely inspired, he goes to the Middle East, hoping to save both his college and his soul. Wende is coming, too. The first book in a planned trilogy, *Original Prin* is an entertaining and essential novel about family life, faith, temptation, and fanaticism. It's a timely story about timeless truths, told with wise insight and great humour, confirming Randy Boyagoda's place as "one of the best satirical writers today." (Micah Mattix, *The American Conservative*)

In this entertaining and enlightening collection David Lodge considers the art of fiction under a wide range of headings, drawing on writers as diverse as Henry James, Martin Amis, Jane Austen and James Joyce. Looking at ideas such as the Intrusive Author, Suspense, the Epistolary Novel, Magic Realism and Symbolism, and illustrating each topic with a passage taken from a classic or modern novel, David Lodge makes the richness and variety of British and American fiction accessible to the general reader. He provides essential reading for students, aspiring writers and anyone who wants to understand how fiction works.

Lucky Jim New York Review of Books

Kingsley Amis always claimed that his fiction was not based on his life, and he worked hard and quite successfully at obscuring the autobiographical threads that run through his novels. But they exist, and Richard Bradford traces the channels between Amis's experiences, his states of mind, and his fictionalized versions of both. Bradford's biography shows that it is impossible to offer a comprehensive picture of Amis the man as husband, philanderer, friend, father, jester, son, boozier, agnostic, pseudo-socialist, and club-land Tory without also considering how each dimension of his life tested and extended his literary skills. Sometimes he remodeled the present, particularly during the 1950s when his books reflected his double life as family man and prolific libertine. He revisited the past in novels such as *The Riverside Villas Murder*, a detective story that tells us much about his early relationship with his father. Less frequently he took revenge, notably with his cruel parody of his second wife Elizabeth Jane Howard in *Stanley and the Women*. Readers of Amis's books often feel as if they have had a personal encounter with a shadowy presence behind the words, and Bradford's biography embodies this shadow.

To this tantalizing nonfiction collection Martin Amis brings the same megawatt wit, wickedly acute perception, and ebullient wordplay that characterize his novels. He encompasses the full range of contemporary politics and culture (high and low) while also traveling to China for soccer with Elton John and to London's darts-crazy pubs in search of the perfect throw. Throughout, he offers razor-sharp takes on such subjects as: American politics: "If history is a nightmare from which we are trying to awake, then the Reagan era can be seen as an eight-

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year blackout. Numb, pale, unhealthily dreamless: eight years of Do Not Disturb." Chess: "Nowhere in sport, perhaps in human activity, is the gap between the tryer and the expert so astronomical.... My chances of a chess brilliancy are the 'chances' of a lab chimp and a type writer producing King Lear."

A Best Book of the Year: NPR and Boston Globe Finally a novel that puts the "pissed" back into "epistolary." Jason Fitger is a beleaguered professor of creative writing and literature at Payne University, a small and not very distinguished liberal arts college in the midwest. His department is facing draconian cuts and squalid quarters, while one floor above them the Economics Department is getting lavishly remodeled offices. His once-promising writing career is in the doldrums, as is his romantic life, in part as the result of his unwise use of his private affairs for his novels. His star (he thinks) student can't catch a break with his brilliant (he thinks) work Accountant in a Bordello, based on Melville's Bartleby. In short, his life is a tale of woe, and the vehicle this droll and inventive novel uses to tell that tale is a series of hilarious letters of recommendation that Fitger is endlessly called upon by his students and colleagues to produce, each one of which is a small masterpiece of high dudgeon, low spirits, and passive-aggressive strategies. We recommend Dear Committee Members to you in the strongest possible terms.

Robin Davies knows how to look after number one. Raised in a bland suburb of South London in the 1930s, Robin longs for the freedom to do what he wants. When he escapes to study in Oxford, he meets Nancy Bennett, a young woman even less worldly than himself. As Robin stumbles through his rites of passage to adulthood, involving rebellion, self-discovery, sex, war, seduction and the threat of commitment, we come to realise just how far he will go to have his cake and eat it.

Lucky Jim is Jim Hart's memoir, the story of how he survived a violent childhood home, found incredible words inside him, created a love that was both so right and so wrong, and finally found the strength to be his true self. Jim is a master at building relationships. Charming, funny, and a great listener with a guru's insight, his success in life and business was based on his ability to connect with others, from people recovering in 12-step groups in Upstate New York to those living in the rarified air of Martha's Vineyard. But after 20+ years sober, one slip-up triggered an active addiction that threatened his relationships with his then-wife, singer-songwriter Carly Simon, his recovery friends, his severely disabled son, and even with himself as he began to confront his sexuality.

Vastly entertaining and outright hilarious, Paul Murray's debut heralds the arrival of a major new Irish talent. His protagonist is endearing and wildly witty—part P. G. Wodehouse's Bertie Wooster, with a cantankerous dash of A Confederacy of Dunces' Ignatius J. Reilly thrown in. With its rollicking plot and colorful characters, An Evening of Long Goodbyes is a delightful and erudite comedy of epic proportions. Charles Hythloday observes the world from the comfortable confines of Amaurot, his family estate, and doesn't much care for what he sees. He prefers the black-and-white sanctum of classic cinema—especially anything starring the beautiful Gene Tierney—to the roiling and rumbling of

twenty-first-century Dublin. At twenty-four, Charles aims to resurrect the lost lifestyle of the aristocratic country gentleman—contemplative walks, an ever-replenished drink, and afternoons filled with canapés as prepared by the Bosnian housekeeper, Mrs. P. But Charles's cozy existence is about to face a serious shake-up. His sister, Bel, an aspiring actress and hopeless romantic, has brought to Amaurot her most recent—and to Charles's mind, most ill-advised—boyfriend. Frank is hulking and round, and resembles nothing so much as a large dresser, probably a Swedish one. He bets on greyhounds and talks endlessly of brawls and pubs in an accent that brings tears to Charles's eyes. And, most suspiciously, his entrance into the Hythlodays' lives just happens to coincide with the disappearance of an ever-increasing number of household antiques and baubles. Soon, Charles and Bel discover that missing heirlooms are the least of their worries; they are simply not as rich as they have always believed. With the family fortune teetering in the balance, Charles must do something he swore he would never do: get a job. Booted into the mean streets of Dublin, he is as unprepared for real life as Frank would be for a cotillion. And it turns out that real life is a tad unprepared for Charles, as well.

After retiring from a lifetime of teaching literature, Patricia Meyer Spacks embarked on a year-long project of rereading dozens of novels: childhood favorites, fiction first encountered in young adulthood and never before revisited, books frequently reread, canonical works of literature she was supposed to have liked but didn't, guilty pleasures (books she oughtn't to have liked but did), and stories reread for fun vs. those read for the classroom. *Rereading* records the sometimes surprising, always fascinating, results of her personal experiment. Spacks addresses a number of intriguing questions raised by the purposeful act of rereading: Why do we reread novels when, in many instances, we can remember the plot? Why, for example, do some lovers of Jane Austen's fiction reread her novels every year (or oftener)? Why do young children love to hear the same story read aloud every night at bedtime? And why, as adults, do we return to childhood favorites such as *The Hobbit*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and the *Harry Potter* novels? What pleasures does rereading bring? What psychological needs does it answer? What guilt does it induce when life is short and there are so many other things to do (and so many other books to read)? Rereading, Spacks discovers, helps us to make sense of ourselves. It brings us sharply in contact with how we, like the books we reread, have both changed and remained the same.

'A brilliantly and preposterously funny book' Guardian 'A flawless comic novel ... I loved it then, as I do now. It has always made me laugh out loud' Helen Dunmore, *The Times* Jim Dixon has accidentally fallen into a job at one of Britain's new red brick universities. A moderately successful future in the History Department beckons - as long as Jim can stave off the unwelcome advances of fellow lecturer Margaret, survive a madrigal-singing weekend at Professor Welch's, deliver a

lecture on 'Merrie England' and resist Christine, the hopelessly desirable girlfriend of Welch's awful son Bertrand. Inspired by Amis's friend, the poet Philip Larkin, Jim Dixon is a timeless comic character, adrift in a hopelessly gauche and pretentious world, in a witty campus novel that skewers the hypocrisies and vanities of 1950s academic life. With an introduction by David Lodge

Ending Up is a grimly hilarious dance of death, full of bickering, bitching, backstabbing, drinking (of course), and idiocy of all sorts. It is a book about dying people and about a dying England, clinging to its memories of greatness as it succumbs to terminal decay. Everyone wants a comfortable place to die, and Kingsley Amis's characters have found it in Tuppenny-happeney Cottage, where assorted septuagenarians have come together to see one another out the door of life. There's grotesque Adela, whose sole passion is her cheapness; her brother Brigadier Bernard Bastable, always strategizing a new retreat to the bathroom before sallying forth to play some especially nasty practical joke; Shorty, the servant, who years ago had a fling with the brigadier in the barracks and now organizes his day around a trail of hidden bottles; George Zeyer, the distinguished professor of history, bedridden and helpless to articulate his still-coherent thoughts; and Marigold, who slowly but surely is forgetting it all. And now it is Christmas. Children and grandchildren are coming to visit their ailing elders. They don't know what lies in store before the story ends. None of us do.

By the author of *A Terrible Country* and *Raising Raffi*, a novel of love, sadness, wasted youth, and literary and intellectual ambition—"wincingly funny" (*Vogue*) Keith Gessen is a brave and trenchant new literary voice. Known as an award-winning translator of Russian and a book reviewer for publications including *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times*, Gessen makes his debut with this critically acclaimed novel, a charming yet scathing portrait of young adulthood at the opening of the twenty-first century. The novel charts the lives of Sam, Mark, and Keith as they overthink their college years, underthink their love lives, and struggle to find a semblance of maturity, responsibility, and even literary fame. The hero of *One Fat Englishman*, a literary publisher and lapsed Catholic escaped from the pages of Graham Greene to the campus of Budweiser College in provincial Pennsylvania, is philandering, drunken, bigoted, and very very fat, not to mention in a state of continuous spluttering rage against everything, not least his own overgrown self. In America, Roger Micheldene must deal with not so obliging suburban housewives, aspiring Jewish novelists who as good as clean his clock, stray deer, bad cigars, children who beat him at Scrabble ("It was no wonder that people were horrible when they started life as children"), and America itself, while making ever-more desperate and humiliating overtures to Helen, a Scandinavian ice queen. If only Roger would dare to show some real feeling of his own. This comic masterpiece—about the 1950s crashing drunkenly into the consumerist 1960s and a final scion of a disintegrating Old World empire encountering its upstart New World offspring—is one of Kingsley Amis's greatest and most caustic performances.

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A hilarious satire about college life and high class manners, this is a classic of postwar English literature. Regarded by many as the finest, and funniest, comic novel of the twentieth century, Lucky Jim remains as trenchant, withering, and eloquently misanthropic as when it first scandalized readers in 1954. This is the story of Jim Dixon, a hapless lecturer in medieval history at a provincial university who knows better than most that “there was no end to the ways in which nice things are nicer than nasty ones.” Amis’s scabrous debut leads the reader through a gallery of emphatically English bores, cranks, frauds, and neurotics, with each of whom Dixon must contend in one way or another in order to hold on to his cushy academic perch and win the girl of his fancy. More than just a merciless satire of cloistered college life and stuffy post-war manners, Lucky Jim is an attack on the forces of boredom, whatever form they may take, and a work of art that at once distills and extends an entire tradition of English comic writing, from Fielding and Dickens through Wodehouse and Waugh. As Christopher Hitchens has written, “if you can picture Bertie or Jeeves being capable of actual malice, and simultaneously imagine Evelyn Waugh forgetting about original sin, you have the combination of innocence and experience that makes this short romp so imperishable.”

Gordon Scott-Thompson has been commissioned to write the biography of veteran novelist Jimmie Fane, a task which is fraught with unforeseen difficulties. Just one of those is Gordon's moustache, which is a pet hate of Jimmie's. Jim Dixon is bored by his job as a medieval history lecturer. His days are only improved by pulling faces behind the backs of his superiors as he tries desperately to survive provincial bourgeois society, an unbearable 'girlfriend' and petty humiliation at the hands of Professor Welch.

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