



The Life of Kingsley Amis

Zachary Leader

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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**The Life of Kingsley Amis**, Zachary Leader, acclaimed editor of **The Letters of Kingsley Amis**, draws not only on unpublished works and correspondence but also on interviews with a wide range of Amis's friends, relatives, fellow writers, students and colleagues, many of whom have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.

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