



The Information

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Richard Tull has published two difficult, unread novels and continues pursuing an unprofitable literary life, writing book reviews and editing an intellectual journal, to the chagrin of his wife, a successful public relations executive. Richard's failure is made worse by the fame of Gwyn Barry, his university roommate, whose second novel, dealing with a utopian community, is an international best seller. Although Richard sees no merit in his friend's book and cannot understand its popularity, Gwyn becomes a major celebrity, constantly interviewed on television and in slick magazines, appearing in rock videos, and hobnobbing with film stars.

Richard wants revenge but cannot decide how best to accomplish it. He hires Steve Cousins, a mysterious criminal known as "Scoozy," to have Gwyn beaten up; contemplates seducing Gwyn's wife, Lady Demeter; attempts to make his friend appear to be a plagiarist; and tries to convince the judges for a literary prize Gwyn covets that the novelist is a cad.

Like Amis' previous seven novels, *THE INFORMATION* has a lot on its mind, including sex, violence, the social and moral decline of Great Britain, and the vulgar vitality of America. (Gwyn and Richard crisscross the United States on a publicity tour.) Also like his earlier work, *THE INFORMATION* is a highly self-conscious endeavor with Amis himself making occasional appearances as the amused narrator. The novel is brilliantly written and wickedly funny, but it is not all it might have been because Amis, a bracingly vicious, mean-spirited satirist, is not nasty enough, does not carry the novel's darker elements, especially Scoozy, as far as they could have gone.

Sources for Further Study

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