

## The Rachel Papers

*Martin Amis*

Jan 8 - Jan 10, 2004

This must be one of Amis first novels, written in the early 70's. It has a slapdash quality, and is certainly inspired by the works of his father. The story is a simple one, boy just before coming of age wanting to seduce older woman, in fact turning out to be only a girl marginally older than himself, and it is not clear who is doing the seduction. The vehicle for presenting the story is a supposed journal written by the protagonist, presented not necessarily chronologically, which inevitably makes for intermittent confusion.

There is little sense of the actual timeperiod, which by inference must be the early 70's. There is an emphasis on sex, drugs and heavy drinking, and much explicit description of the former without it being arousing. The seduction works, but predictably once having been achieved and savoured, interest is promptly lost.

The character is a literary one, no doubt closely modeled on the author himself, as is almost always the case with young writers. In the depiction of the father having a mistress, one may be forgiven for suspecting likewise, if more distant, echoes of the authors own father. The constant jokes and literary references are intended to amuse and maybe also impress the unwary reader. A temptation many a young bookish author finds irresistible. There are some nice touches, like the protagonist walking around the Tate gallery the day before having the planned date there, in order to rehearse a dazzling intellectual show-off and read up on paintings and painters preparing for the intended display.

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