



The Odd Couple: The Curious Friendship between Kingsley Amis and Philip Larkin

Richard Bradford

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The Odd Couple: The Curious Friendship between Kingsley Amis and Philip Larkin Richard Bradford Kingsley Amis was a mimic, jester, father, husband, atheist, pseudo-socialist and clubland Tory boozier with a limitless taste for adultery; Philip Larkin a glum misanthrope who lived in self-imposed solitude. And yet, after meeting at St John's, Oxford in 1941, this unlikely pair struck up a friendship to endure for more than forty years, despite a period of acrimony in the 1960s. From their early days of undergraduate ambitions and enthusiasms through to the bitterness of middle age, Richard Bradford charts the progress of a remarkable friendship, and shows how crucial it was to the making of these two literary giants. Without Larkin's inspiration and input, Amis would never have written his award-winning debut, *Lucky Jim*; if not for Amis's overnight success, Larkin would never have abandoned his hopes of becoming a novelist and turned instead to verse. Larkin's ensuing resentment would simmer beneath the surface of their relationship for years to come. Drawing on an enormous archive of letters, manuscripts and interviews, *The Odd Couple* not only offers a rare glimpse into the private correspondence of two controversial and eccentric men, it also illuminates some of the finest novels and poems of the twentieth century.

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