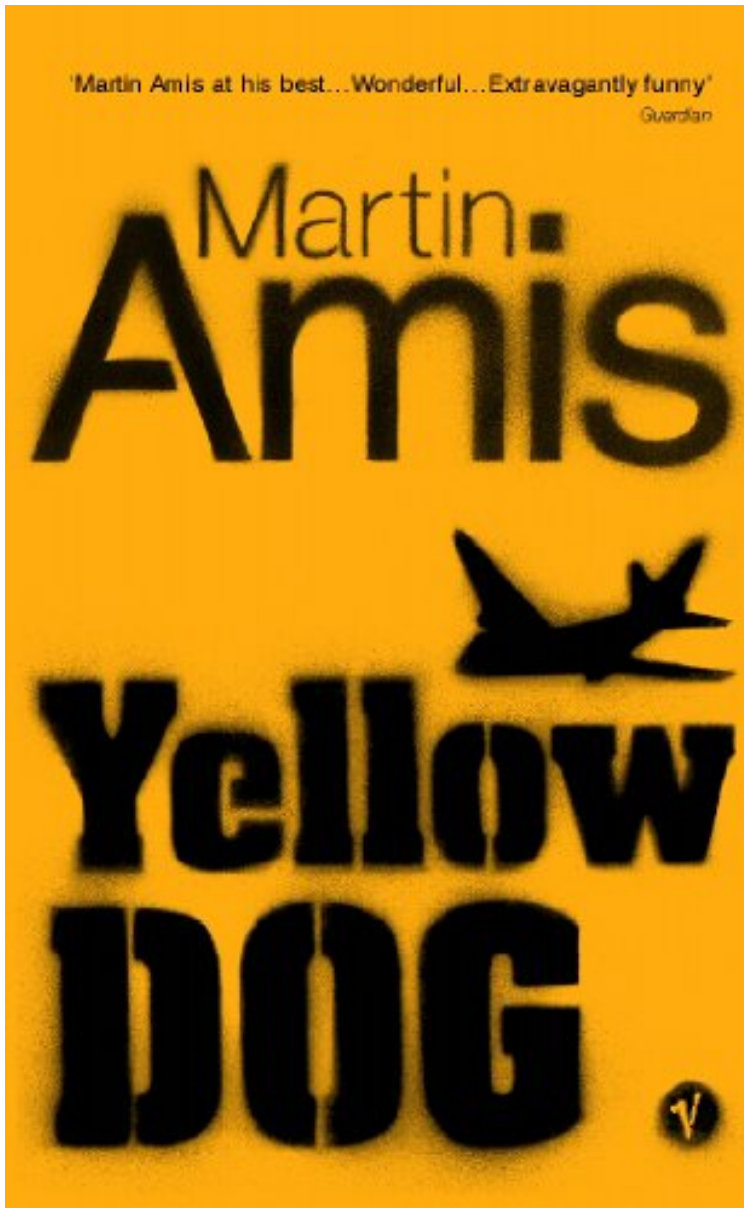


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Yellow Dog



Par Martin Amis
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Description : Description du produitMartin Amis brilliant and controversial new novel, already hailed in the British press as "Dickens with a snarl" and a "great comic extravagance." After Xan Meo is brutally attacked in the garden of a London pub and suffers a severe head trauma, his wife and daughters find they are living with a strangerunpredictable, violent, vengeful, lost: "His condition felt like the twenty-first century: it was something you wanted to wake up from." While it may alarm his family, Xans new personality is a good match for the city and the age in which he lives. For this is the vicious London of tabloid journalist Clint Smoker, whose daily reports of illicit sex and outrageous scandal are every bit as fake (and artful) as the noose tattooed around his neck. This is a world where the King of England keeps a Chinese mistress in Paris and tries to suppress a video-taped, bathtub "intrusion" of his fifteen- year-old

daughter from reaching the internet. A world of hit men, pornographers, tycoons, and displaced royalty. A world where brilliant people perform unspeakable acts and bodyguards provide no protection. Yellow Dog is Martin Amis at his dazzling best: comic, fierce, gritty, and profound. Amis explores what is changeless and perhaps unchangeable: patriarchy and the entire edifice of masculinity; the violence arising between man and man; the tortuous alliances between men and women; and the vanished dream that we can protect our future and our progeny.

When 'dream husband' Xan Meo is vengefully assaulted in the garden of a London pub, he suffers head-injury, and personality-change. Like a spiritual convert, the familial paragon becomes an anti-husband, an anti-father. He submits to an alien moral system - one among many to be found in these pages. We are introduced to the inverted worlds of the 'yellow' journalist, Clint Smoker; the high priest of hardmen, Joseph Andrews; the porno tycoon, Cora Susan; and Royce Traynor, the corpse in the hold of the stricken airliner, apparently determined, even in death, to bring down the plane that carries his spouse.

Meanwhile, we explore the entanglements of Henry England: his incapacitated wife, Pamela; his Chinese mistress, He Zizhen; his fifteen-year-old daughter, Victoria, the victim of a filmed 'intrusion' which rivets the world - because she is the future Queen of England, and her father, Henry IX, is its King. CHAPTER ONE. Renaissance Man But I go to Hollywood but I go to hospital, but you are first but you are last, but he is tall but she is small, but you stay up but you go down, but we are rich but we are poor, but they find peace but they find . . . Xan Meo went to Hollywood. And, minutes later, with urgent speed, and accompanied by choric howls of electrified distress, Xan Meo went to hospital. Male violence did it. 'I'm off out, me,' he told his American wife Russia. 'Ooh,' she said, pronouncing it like the French for where. 'Won't be long. I'll bath them. And I'll read to them too. Then I'll make dinner. Then I'll load the dishwasher. Then I'll give you a long backrub. Okay?' 'Can I come?' said Russia. 'I sort of wanted to be alone.' 'You mean you sort of wanted to be alone with your girl-friend.' Xan knew that this was not a serious accusation. But he adopted an ill-used expression (a thickening of the forehead), and said, not for the first time, and truthfully so far as he knew,

'I've got no secrets from you, kid.' . . . Mm,' she said, and offered him her cheek. 'Don't you know the date?' 'Oh. Of course.' The couple stood embracing in a high-ceilinged hallway. Now the husband with a movement of the arm caused his keys to sound in their pocket. His half-conscious intention was to signal an impatience to be out. Xan would not publicly agree, but women naturally like to prolong routine departures. It is the obverse of their fondness for keeping people waiting. Men shouldn't mind this. Being kept waiting is a moderate reparation for their five million years in power . . . Now Xan sighed softly as the stairs above him softly creaked. A complex figure was descending, normal up to the waist, but two-headed and four-armed: Meo's baby daughter, Sophie, cleaving to the side of her Brazilian nanny, Imaculada.

Behind them, at a distance both dreamy and self-sufficient, loomed the four-year-old: Billie. Russia took the baby and said, 'Would you like a lovely yoghurt for your tea?' 'No!' said the baby. 'Would you like a bath with all your floaty toys?' 'No!' said the baby, and yawned: the first lower teeth like twin grains of rice. 'Billie. Do the monkeys for Daddy.' 'There were too many monkeys jumping on the bed. One fell down and broke his head. They took him to the doctor and the doctor said: No more monkeys jumping on the BED.' Xan Meo gave his elder daughter due praise. 'Daddy'll read to you when he comes back,' said Russia. 'I was reading to her earlier,' he said. He had the front door open now. 'She made me read the same book five times.' 'Which book?' 'Which book? Christ. The one about those stupid chickens who think the sky is falling. Cocky Locky. Goosey Lucy. And they all copped it from the fox, didn't they, Billie.' 'Like the frogs,' said the girl, alluding to some other tale. 'The whole family died. The mummy. The daddy. The nanny. And all the trildren.' 'I'm off out.' He kissed Sophie's head (a faint circus smell); she responded by skidding a wet thumb across her cheek and into her mouth. And then he crouched to kiss Billie. From the Hardcover edition. From Publishers

Weekly In this much-anticipated 10th novel-which has already fomented a furor in Britain-the prose is brilliant and often hilarious, and the insights into contemporary culture are disturbingly prescient. But the book's many successes cannot hide its fundamental flaw: an overly complex and needlessly opaque narrative structure. The wildly plotted novel begins when modern "Renaissance man" (actor/writer) Xan Meo is viciously assaulted; his head injury changes this "dream husband" into an oversexed, sadistic lout, ultimately forcing his wife to cast him out. But the attack isn't an act of random violence. As one of his assailants, Mal, cryptically puts it, "You went and named him... J-o-s-e-p-h A-n-d-r-e-w-s." From this enigmatic opening, Amis weaves a complex tapestry of narrative threads: Xan Meo is trying to recover his lost personality and his family's loving embrace; teenage Princess Victoria-a future queen of England-is being blackmailed with

a video of her in the bath; tabloid journalist Clint Smoker-emasculated by a laughably small penis-extracts his revenge by being relentlessly misogynistic in print. Meanwhile, the recidivist, violent criminal Joseph Andrews-now a pornography impresario in Los Angeles-is plotting a way to return to England to die.

Making these intersecting narratives cohere would be a challenge for any writer, but Amis reaches even further with a backdrop of apocalyptic violence (a transatlantic flight that's doomed to crash, a meteor that might hit the planet). That background clouds his core themes, which are more than dramatic enough to be compelling: violence and its intimate connections to sex and gender, the "obscenification" of everyday life and the 21st-century preoccupation with fame. (A typical Amis apercu: "Fame had so democratized itself that obscurity was felt as a deprivation or even a punishment.") Thanks to Amis's pitch-perfect dialogue, his I-can't-believe-he-wrote-that humor and his perceptive critique of contemporary morals, this is still a novel of many pleasures-and still a novel to be reckoned with. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.