



Penguin Modern Classics

# J. B. Priestley

## The Good Companions



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## THE ANTI-DEATH LEAGUE

*Kingsley Amis*

Lieutenant James Churchill had been reasonably pro-death before he made love to Catherine, and before he realized what the appalling nature of Operation Apollo was. Officially, he and his fellow officers had a seventy-five per cent chance of survival. Unofficially, he'd been told, there was none. Then someone started the Anti-Death League and there suddenly seemed a way out of the horrors to come.

Kingsley Amis's story of sinister military plans, spies, double agents and triple bluffs is set against a background of indolent officers' fun and games, with women, with each other and with a hidden new weapon which was just a red herring to keep everyone guessing about the real nature of their secret schemes.

*Also published*

LUCKY JIM

TAKE A GIRL LIKE YOU

ONE FAT ENGLISHMAN

## ROOM AT THE TOP

*John Braine*

'Remember the name: John Braine. You'll be hearing quite a lot about him. *Room at the Top* is his first novel, and it is a remarkable one.' This is what John Metcalfe wrote in the *Sunday Times* when this novel was published.

The hero Joe Lampton, was brought up on the fringes of poverty and squalor in an ugly North Country town. He has emerged with one overriding aim: to fight his way up into the bright world of money and influence.

So, when he moves to a new town and a new job and starts to move among comfortably-off, intelligent people it looks as if the campaign is succeeding. Since he is an attractive and energetic young man, it is not long before a very pretty girl with a rich father falls in love with him.

Only one thing holds him back: he is himself in love with another woman. She is older than he, her looks are beginning to fade, and she is married already. But between them an extraordinary love grows up, a passion of both the heart and the senses.

This book shows a deep insight into the passion of men and women, it portrays erotic love with power and tenderness, and it has a profound feeling for the sanity of the senses and their world. Though it is at times angry and ironic it is never self-pitying.

John Wain

## HURRY ON DOWN

The book that was the pioneer of the new kind of English novel which appeared in the fifties, linking the names of John Wain, Kingsley Amis, Iris Murdoch, and later John Braine.

*'Hurry on Down, a young man's first novel, is a bustling kaleidoscope of a book, by an author fertile in expedient, keenly observant and occasionally probing the heart of darkness' – Sunday Times*

## A WINTER IN THE HILLS

The scene is North Wales: not the North Wales of the pier and the ice-cream cornet, but the dour and secret land where the Ancient Britons took refuge and where they still abide, speaking their own language and living their own life. Into this very alien country Mr Wain takes his central character, an English philologist whose motive – to begin with – is merely to acquire fluent Welsh so that he can add to his qualifications and apply for a better job. But a winter in the hills changes all that. This country, and these people, do not offer themselves easily to the incomer; but when contact is finally made, the results are strong, lasting – and surprising.

*'A winter's tale of light and laughter' – John Whitley in the Sunday Times*

## J. B. PRIESTLEY

Priestley, like some other popular and successful novelists, is curiously ignored by the mandarins of the modern literary establishment. It is as if critics – good men who in other spheres would perhaps die for the principle of ‘One man, one vote’ – are sworn to crush democracy in the literary world. Where the author of novels of such solid worth as *The Good Companions* is concerned, this can hardly be allowed.

‘It would be foolish to disregard his achievement and make little of his vast creative energy’ – Anthony Burgess in *The Novel Now*.

A number of J. B. Priestley’s books have been published  
in Penguins

### *Novels*

OUT OF TOWN

LONDON END

(the first two volumes of ‘*The Image Men*’)

ANGEL PAVEMENT

### *Travel, Criticism, and Essays*

VICTORIA’S HEYDAY

THE ENGLISH

ENGLISH JOURNEY

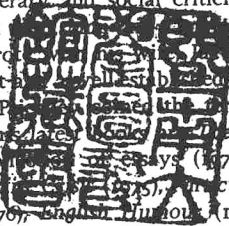


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## THE GOOD COMPANIONS

J. B. Priestley, the son of a schoolmaster, was born in Bradford in 1894. After leaving Belle Vue High School he spent some time as a junior clerk in a wool office. (A lively account of his life at this period may be found in his volume of reminiscences, *Margin Released*.) He joined the army in 1914, and in 1919, on receiving an ex-officer's grant, went to Trinity Hall, Cambridge. In 1922, after refusing several academic posts, and having already published one book and contributed critical articles and essays to various reviews, he went to London. There he soon made a reputation as an essayist and critic. He began writing novels, and with his third and fourth novels, *The Good Companions* and *Angel Pavement*, he scored a great success and established an international reputation. This was enlarged by the plays he wrote in the 1930s and 1940s, some of these, notably *Dangerous Corner*, *Time and the Conways* and *An Inspector Calls*, having been translated and produced all over the world. During the Second World War he was exceedingly popular as a broadcaster. Since the war his most important novels have been *Bright Day*, *Festival at Farbridge*, *Lost Empires* and *The Image Men*, and his more ambitious literary and social criticism can be found in *Literature and Western Man* and *Journey Down A Rainbow*, which he wrote with his wife, Quetta Hawkes, a distinguished archaeologist and well established writer herself. It was in this last book that Priestley coined the term 'Admass', now in common use. Among his later works are *The English* (1973), *Outcries and Asides*, a collection of essays (1974), *A Visit to New Zealand* (1974), *The Cambridge Book* (1975), *Particular Pleasures* (1975), *Found Lost Found* (1976), *English Humour* (1976) and *Instead of Trees* (1977). (Many of his books have been published in Penguins.) The Priestleys live and work in a charming old house in Alveston, Warwickshire.







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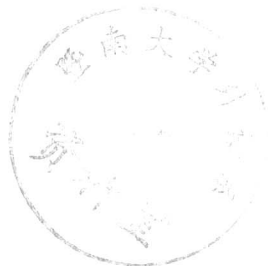
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# The Good Companions

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J. B. PRIESTLEY



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Penguin Books Canada Ltd, 2801 John Street, Markham, Ontario, Canada L3R 1B4  
Penguin Books (N.Z.) Ltd, 182-190 Wairau Road, Auckland 10, New Zealand

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First published by William Heinemann Ltd 1929  
Published in Penguin Books 1962  
Reprinted 1964, 1966, 1969, 1972  
Reissued in Penguin Modern Classics 1976  
Reprinted 1978

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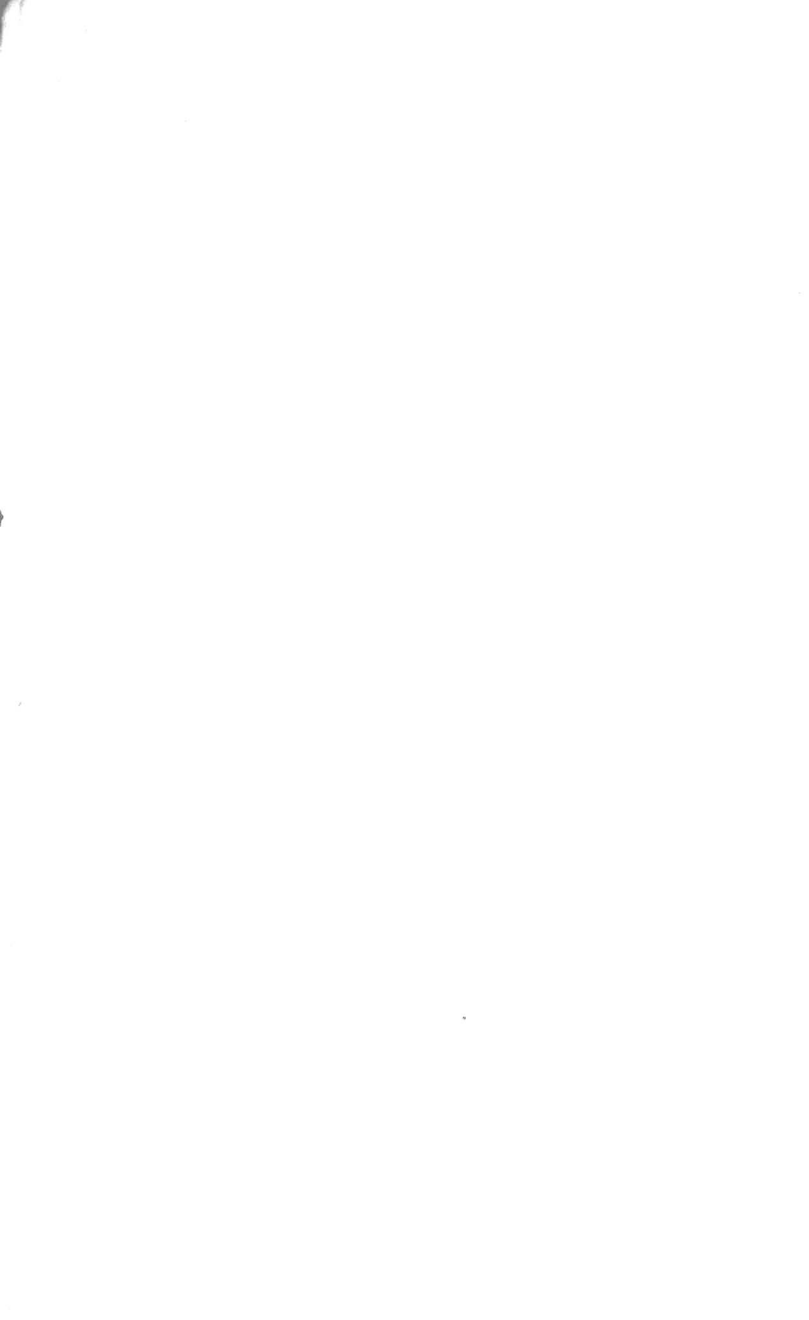
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by C. Nicholls & Company Ltd  
Set in Linotype Pilgrim

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TO  
HUGH WALPOLE  
FOR A FRIENDSHIP THAT HAS EVEN  
TRIUMPHANTLY SURVIVED  
COLLABORATION



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## BOOK ONE





## CHAPTER I

### *Mr Oakroyd Leaves Home*

#### I

THERE, far below, is the knobbly backbone of England, the Penine Range. At first, the whole dark length of it, from the Peak to Cross Fell, is visible. Then the Derbyshire hills and the Cumberland fells disappear, for you are descending, somewhere about the middle of the range, where the high moorland thrusts itself between the woollen mills of Yorkshire and the cotton mills of Lancashire. Great winds blow over miles and miles of ling and bog and black rock, and the curlews still go crying in that empty air as they did before the Romans came. There is a glitter of water here and there, from the moorland tarns that are now called reservoirs. In summer you could wander here all day, listening to the larks, and never meet a soul. In winter you could lose your way in an hour or two and die of exposure perhaps, not a dozen miles from where the Bradford trams end or the Burnley trams begin. Here are Bodkin Top and High Greave and Black Moor and Four Gates End, and though these are lonely places, almost unchanged since the Domesday Book was compiled, you cannot understand industrial Yorkshire and Lancashire, the wool trade and the cotton trade and many other things besides, such as the popularity of Handel's *Messiah* or the Northern Union Rugby game, without having seen such places. They hide many secrets. Where the moor thins out are patches of ground called 'Intake', which means that they are land wrested from the grasp of the moor. Over to the right is a long smudge of smoke, beneath which the towns of the West Riding lie buried, and fleeces, tops, noils, yarns, stuffs, come and go, in and out of the mills, down to the railways and canals and lorries. All this too, you may say, is a kind of Intake.

At first the towns only seem a blacker edge to the high moorland, so many fantastic outcroppings of its rock, but now that you are closer you see the host of tall chimneys, the rows and rows of little houses, built of blackening stone, that are like tiny sharp ridges on the hills. These windy moors, these clanging dark valleys, these factories and little stone houses, this