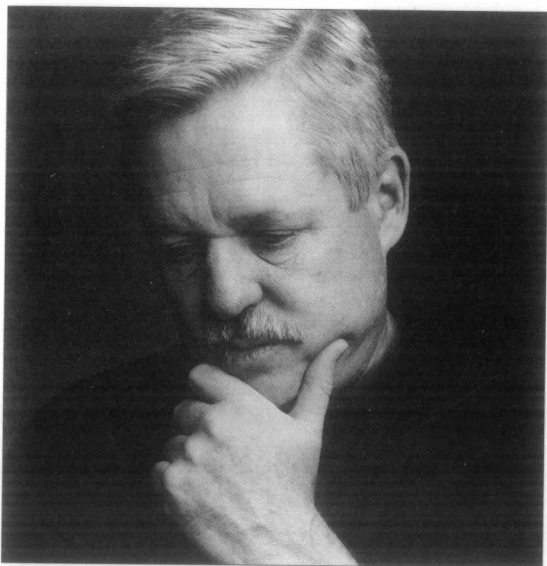


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**MAUPIN**



*further Tales of  
the City*

THE THIRD VOLUME IN THE ACCLAIMED SERIES



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Armistead Maupin was born in Washington, D.C. in 1944 but grew up in Raleigh, North Carolina. A graduate of the University of North Carolina, he served as a naval officer in Vietnam before moving to California in 1971 as a reporter for the Associated Press. In 1976 he launched his daily newspaper serial, *Tales of the City*, in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The first fiction to appear in an American daily for decades, *Tales* grew into an international sensation when compiled and rewritten as novels. Maupin's six-volume *Tales of the City* sequence – *Tales of the City*, *More Tales of the City*, *Further Tales of the City*, *Babycakes*, *Significant Others* and *Sure of You* – are now multi-million bestsellers published in eleven languages. The first two of these novels were adapted as a pair of widely acclaimed television mini-series: the third, *Further Tales of the City*, is currently in production. Maupin's 1992 novel, *Maybe the Moon*, chronicling the adventures of the world's shortest woman, was a number one bestseller. As a librettist he collaborated in 1999 with composer Jake Heggie on *Anna Madrigal Remembers* for mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade and Chanticleer, the classical choral ensemble. Maupin's latest novel is *The Night Listener*. He lives in San Francisco, California.

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*Also by Armistead Maupin*

TALES OF THE CITY  
MORE TALES OF THE CITY

BABYCAKES

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

SURE OF YOU

MAYBE THE MOON

*and published by Black Swan*

# Further Tales of the City

Armistead Maupin



BLACK SWAN

This was published in somewhat different  
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**For Steve Beery**



**Surely there are in everyone's life certain connections,  
twists and turns which pass awhile under the category of  
Chance, but at the last, well examined, prove to be the very  
Hand of God.**

**Sir Thomas Browne**  
***Religio Medici***

## **Further Tales of the City**



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## *Home and hearth*

---

There were outlanders, of course, who continued to insist that San Francisco was a city without seasons, but Mrs. Madrigal paid no heed to them.

Why, the signs of spring were everywhere!

Those Chinese schoolboys, for instance, sporting brand new green-and-yellow baseball caps as they careened down Russian Hill on their skateboards.

And what about old Mr. Citarelli? Only a seasoned San Franciscan could know that this was *exactly* the time of year he dragged his armchair into his garage and opened the door to the sunshine. Mr. Citarelli was infinitely more reliable than any groundhog.

Here on Barbary Lane, the vernal equinox was heralded by an ancient scarlet azalea that blazed like a bonfire next to the garbage cans. 'My goodness,' said Mrs. Madrigal, stopping to adjust her grocery bag. 'It's you again, is it?' It had also bloomed in August and December, but nature was always forgiven for offering too much of a good thing.

When Mrs. Madrigal reached the lych gate at Number 28, she paused under its peaked roof to survey her domain - the mossy brick plain of the courtyard, the illegal lushness of her 'herb garden,' the ivy-and-brown-shingle face of her beloved old house. It was a sight that never failed to thrill her.

Dropping the groceries in the kitchen - three new cheeses from Molinari's, light bulbs, focaccia bread, Tender Vittles for Boris - she hurried into the parlor to build a fire. And why not? In San Francisco, a fire felt good at any time of year.

The firewood had been a Christmas gift from her tenants - a whole cord of it - and Mrs. Madrigal handled it as if she were arranging ingots at Fort Knox. She had suffered too long under the indignity of those dreadful pressed sawdust things they sold at the

Searchlight Market. Now, thanks to her children, she had a fire that would *crackle*.

They weren't really her children, of course, but she treated them as such. And they appeared to accept her as a parent of sorts. Her own daughter, Mona, had lived with her for a while in the late seventies, but had moved to Seattle the previous year. Her reason had been characteristically cryptic: 'Because . . . well, because it's The Eighties, that's why.'

Poor Mona. Like a lot of her contemporaries, she had capitalized The Eighties, deified the new decade in the hope that it would somehow bring her salvation, deliver her from her own bleak vision of existence. The Eighties, for Mona, would be the same in Seattle as in San Francisco . . . or Sheboygan, for that matter. But no one could tell her that. Mona had never recovered from The Sixties.

The landlady's ersatz children - Mary Ann, Michael and Brian - had somehow kept their innocence, she realized.

And she loved them dearly for that.

Minutes later, Michael showed up at her door with his rent check in one hand and Boris in the other.

'I found him on the ledge,' he said, 'looking faintly suicidal.'

The landlady scowled at the tabby. 'More like homicidal. He's been after the birds again. Set him down, will you, dear? I can't bear it if he has bluejay on his breath.'

Michael relinquished the cat and presented the check to Mrs. Madrigal. 'I'm sorry it's so late. Again.'

She waved it away with her hand, hastily tucking the check into a half-read volume of Eudora Welty stories. She found it excruciating to discuss money with her children. 'Well,' she said, 'what shall we do about Mary Ann's birthday?'

'God,' winced Michael. 'Is it that time already?'

Mrs. Madrigal smiled. 'Next Tuesday, by my calculations.'

'She'll be thirty, won't she?' Michael's eyes danced diabolically.

'I don't think that should be our emphasis, dear.'

'Well, don't expect any mercy from me,' said Michael. 'She put me through hell last year on *my* thirtieth. Besides, she's the last one in the house to cross The Great Divide. It's only proper that we mark the event.'

Mrs. Madrigal shot him her Naughty Boy look and sank into the armchair by the hearth. Sensing another chance to be picturesque, Boris dove into her lap and blinked languidly at the fire. 'Can I

interest you in a joint?' asked the landlady.

Michael shook his head, smiling. 'Thanks. I'm late for work as it is.'

She returned his smile. 'Give my love to Ned, then. Your new haircut looks stunning, by the way.'

'Thanks,' beamed Michael, reddening slightly.

'I like seeing your ears, actually. It makes you look quite boyish. Not at all like you've crossed The Great Divide.'

Michael showed his appreciation with a courtly little bow.

'Run along now,' said the landlady. 'Make little things grow.'

After he had left, she permitted herself a private grin over this Great Divide business. She was sixty now, for heaven's sake. Did that mean she had crossed it twice?

Sixty. Up close, the number was not nearly so foreboding as it had once been from afar. It had a kind of plump symmetry to it in fact, like a ripe Gouda or a comfy old hassock.

She chuckled at her own similes. Is that what she had come to? An old cheese? A piece of furniture?

She didn't care, really. She was Anna Madrigal, a self-made woman, and there was no one else in the world exactly like her.

As that comforting litany danced in her head, she rolled a joint of her finest sinsemilla and settled back with Boris to enjoy the fire.

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## *Michael*

---

For almost three years now Michael Tolliver had been manager of a nursery in the Richmond District called God's Green Earth. The proprietor of this enterprise was Michael's best friend, Ned Lockwood, a brawny forty-two-year-old who was practically the working model for the Green-collar Gay.

Green-collar Gays, in Michael's lexicon, included everyone who dealt with beautiful living things in a manly, outdoorsy fashion: nurserymen, gardeners, forest rangers and some landscape architects. Florists, of course, didn't qualify.

Michael loved working in the soil. The fruits of his labors were aesthetic, spiritual, physical and even sexual - since a number of

men in the city found nothing quite so erotic as the sight of someone's first name stitched crudely across the front of a pair of faded green coveralls.

Like Michael, Ned hadn't always been a Green-collar Gay. Back in the early sixties, when he was still a student at UCLA, he had paid his tuition by pumping gas at a Chevron station in Beverly Hills. Then one day a famous movie star, fifteen years Ned's senior, stopped in for an oil change and became hopelessly smitten with the lean, well-muscled youth.

After that, Ned's life changed radically. The movie star wasted no time in setting up house with his newfound protégé. He paid for the remainder of Ned's education and incorporated him - as much as propriety and his press agent allowed - into his life in Hollywood.

Ned held his own quite well. Blessed with a sexual aura that bordered on mysticism, he proceeded to win the heart of every man, woman and animal that crossed his path. It was not so much his beauty that captivated them but his innate and almost childlike gift for attentiveness. He listened to them in a town where no one ever listened at all.

The love affair lasted almost five years. When it was over, the two men parted as friends. The movie star even helped subsidize Ned's move to San Francisco.

Today, in his middle years, Ned Lockwood was handsomer than ever, but balding - no, bald. What remained of his hair he kept clipped short, wearing his naked scalp proudly in the long-haul trucker tradition of Wakefield Poole porno movies. 'If I ever start raking my hair over from the back and sides,' he once told Michael earnestly, 'I want you to take me out and have me shot.'

Ned and Michael had gone to bed together twice - in 1977. Since then, they had been friends, co-conspirators, brothers. Michael loved Ned; he shared his romantic exploits with the older man like a small dog who drags a dead thing home and lays it adoringly on the doorstep of his master.

And Ned always listened.

'You wanna go to Devil's Herd tomorrow night?' asked Ned. 'They've got a live band.'

Michael looked up from the task at hand. He was boxing primroses for a Pacific Heights realtor who had fretted far too long over a choice of the pink or the yellow. The realtor eyed Ned bitchily, then resumed his fussing:

'Of course, there *are* some potted fuchsias on the deck and those are sort of purplish. I mean, the purple might not even *go* with the yellow. What do you think?'

Michael shot Ned an apologetic glance and tried to remain patient with his customer. 'All flowers go together,' he said evenly. 'God isn't a decorator.'

The realtor frowned for a split second, perhaps determining if the remark had been impertinent. Then he laughed dryly. 'But some decorators are God, right?'

'Not around my house,' smiled Michael.

The realtor leaned closer. 'You used to know Jon Fielding, didn't you?'

Michael rang up the purchase. 'Something like that,' he replied.

'Oh . . . if I hit a nerve, I'm sorry.'

'Not a bit.' He smiled nonchalantly, hoping he didn't sound as feisty as he felt. 'It's been a long time, that's all.' He slid the box of primroses in the direction of his inquisitor. 'You know him, huh?'

The realtor nodded. 'We did a fly-in together once. Gamma Mu.' He tossed out the name like bait, Michael noticed, as if *everyone* had heard of the national gay millionaires' fraternity.

Michael didn't bite. 'Give him my best when you see him,' he said.

'Right.' The realtor simply stared for a moment, then reached over and stuffed his business card into the pocket of Michael's coveralls. 'This is who I am,' he said *sotto voce*. 'You should come over one night. I have a Betamax.'

He left without waiting for a reply, passing Ned in the doorway.

'What about it?' asked Ned.

Michael looked at the realtor's card long enough to read the name, Archibald Anson Gidde, then dropped it into the trash can.

'Sorry, Ned, what did you say?'

'Devil's Herd,' said Ned. 'Tomorrow night?'

'Oh . . . yeah. Sure. I'd love to.'

Ned checked him out for a moment, then tousled his hair. 'You O.K., Bubba?'

'Sure,' said Michael.

'Did that guy . . .?'

'He knew Jon,' said Michael. 'That's all.'



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## *The A-Gays gather*

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Arch Gidde was a mess. Twenty minutes before his dinner guests were scheduled to arrive the yellow primroses were still in their tacky little plastic pots. And Cleavon – damn his lazy, jiveass soul – was still in the kitchen, dicking around with the sushi.

Arch bellowed from the bedroom. 'Cleavon . . . *Cleavon!*'

'Yo,' replied Cleavon.

The realtor winced at himself in the mirror. *Yo*, for Christ's sake. Harold had never said *yo*. Harold had been campy, to be sure, but never, ever disrespectful. Arch had lost Harold in the divorce, however, and Rick was too selfish (and far too shrewd) to part with a competent servant who was both black *and* gay.

'Cleavon,' yelled Arch, 'I cannot stress too strongly that the primroses *must* be potted before the guests arrive. I want four of them in that elephant planter and four in the box on the end of the deck.'

A pause. Then another *yo*.

Arch Gidde groaned out loud, then pushed up the sleeves of his new Kansai Yamamoto sweater from Wilkes. It was embroidered with a huge multihued hyena that draped itself asymmetrically across his left shoulder. Is it too much? he wondered.

No, he decided. Not with the sushi.

The guests arrived almost simultaneously, all having attended a cocktail party thrown by Vita Keating, wife of the Presto Pudding heir.

They included: Edward Paxton Stoker Jr. and Charles Hillary Lord (the Stoker-Lords), William Devereux Hill III and Anthony Ball Hughes (the Hill-Hugheses), John Morrison Stonecypher (sometimes referred to as The Prune Prince) and Peter Prescott Cipriani.

Conspicuously absent was Richard Evan Hampton, Arch