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Features

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The old devil

by [Mark Steyn](#)

On Zachary Leader's new biography of Kingsley Amis.

In the BBC TV adaptation of Kingsley Amis' 1986 novel *The Old Devils*, John Stride gives a gleeful, roaring performance as Alun Weaver, a celebrity novelist and professional Welshman recently returned from London to his native clime. There's a scene set at a book-signing for mostly effusive customers, to whom Weaver responds with a glance up from the table and some labored demurring: "No, no, you are too kind. This is mere hack work."

And then an intense young man appears. "I'm a great fan," he begins, "but I didn't think this book quite captured the lyrical freshness of *Mumbles Boy*."

There is the briefest of pauses, just time for a malicious smile from the novelist. "Why, thank you very much," he replies. "And what on earth makes you think I'm interested in the opinion of yo ...

Mark Steyn's most recent book is *America Alone: The End of the World As We Know It* (Regnery).

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