

Machine Elves Descending

John King

"John King is an adventurous avant-garde novelist. The sheer virtuosity of his language overflows with a richness of invention." —Boyd Tonkin, *The Independent*

Best known for the social realism of novels such as *The Football Factory*, *Human Punk*, and *London Country*, John King's writing also carries speculative strands, with his interest in dystopian fiction clear in several books. *The Liberal Politics of Adolf Hitler* took this further, and the main story in this collection, "Machine Elves Descending," drives deep into the worlds of science fiction. As an alien spaceship approaches, pod-dweller Stretch scans the flatlands, hoping that the invaders will become bored and leave. Once the aliens have landed, Stretch becomes unsure, as new memories close in.

"Granny's Letters" tells the story of an elderly widow waiting for an under-threat Post Office to deliver her mail. Granny Smith isn't as frail as she appears, though. She knows how to dish out some righteous justice. "See No Evil" finds Jimmy Ramone released from prison and facing temptation, conscious that he must resist if he is to survive the night.

Plus . . .

"Writing the Canals": finding inspiration in the local waterways. "A Very Corporate Coup": an article that appeared in the *New Statesman* in the run-up to the EU referendum. "The Shed": a trip into the famous Chelsea home end and the author's youth. "May Day": introduction to the London Books edition of John Sommerfield's 1936 novel of the same name, republished as part of the London Classics series which John edits.

And featuring . . .

"Call Me Elvis," an interview with the surrealist collagist and experimental novelist Allan Kausch. Books, beer, and punk rock . . . Animal rights, international travel, our spiritual paths . . . The Clash, Bowie, Pete Johnson . . . Alan Sillitoe, George Orwell, American fiction.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John King is the author of ten novels and three novellas to date. His first, *The Football Factory*, was an immediate word-of-mouth success and was subsequently turned into a high-profile film. His stories reflect his cultural interests—particularly music, pubs, and youth cultures—while challenging a range of stereotypes that are often accepted by the established political factions. Common themes are powerlessness and enemy-creation, the contradictions found in every walk of life. Before becoming an author King worked at a variety of jobs and spent two years travelling around the world in the late 1980s. He has long been associated with fanzines, writing for various titles over the years and running *Two Sevens* in the early 1990s. He currently publishes and edits *Verbal*, a fiction-based publication. He lives in London.

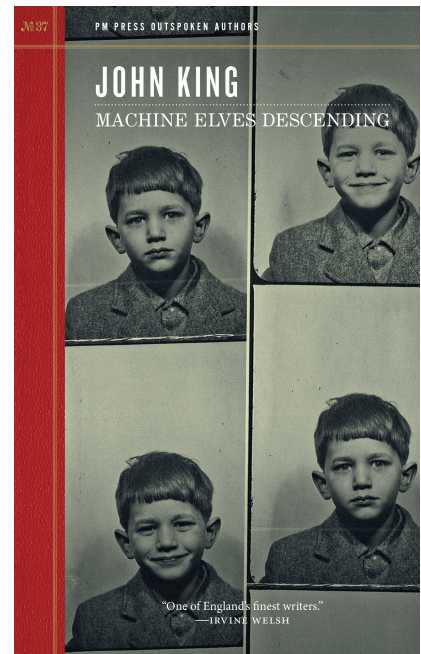
ACCOLADES

"Since his earliest football novels, through *Human Punk* and *The Prison House*, until his latest, *London Country*, John King has etched out narrations of faith and conviction. He touches on the human possibilities which lie over our vast, latent suburbs and their county lines, of a Britain vibrant with life and vitality, a Britain which most writers ignore, but which is firm in identity and sensitive to history. His complete work is far more complex—even more mysterious—than any casual comment presumes."

—Alan Warner

"One of England's finest writers, John King, has just written his greatest book. *Slaughterhouse Prayer* is amazing and totally mental, as well as being passionate and big-hearted. It will blow you away."

—Irvine Welsh



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