

# The Presidential Papers

## John Kessel

Mixing satire, farce, and dystopia, the stories in John Kessel's *The Presidential Papers* deconstruct the character and politics of five imagined presidents, some of whom bear striking resemblance to individuals who have occupied the Oval Office over the last thirty years.

Who are these men and what makes them so funny, when they are not terrifying? How damaged does a person need to be to seek such power, why do we vote for them, and what do they think about the 1959 Washington Senators?

In "The Franchise," aging career minor leaguer George H.W. Bush faces ace New York Giants pitcher Fidel Castro in the 1959 World Series. "The Last American" outlines the career of the final president of the United States and his thirty-three years in office. Can the megalomaniac President of the Solar System evade the consequences of his moronic rule in the original play "A Brief History of the War with Venus"?

In our Outspoken Interview we learn about crossing Mary Shelley with Jane Austen, about having classic SF writer James Gunn as a mentor, about being a spy in the English department, and about industrial capitalism, immigrants, and Buffalo, New York.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**John Kessel** is the author of the novels *Pride and Prometheus*, *The Moon and the Other*, *Good News from Outer Space*, *Corrupting Dr. Nice*, and in collaboration with James Patrick Kelly, *Freedom Beach*. Kessel's stories have twice received the Nebula Award given by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, in addition to the Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award, the Locus Poll, the James Tiptree Jr. Award. Kessel holds a B.A. in Physics and English and a Ph.D. in American Literature. He helped found and served as the first director of the MFA program in creative writing at North Carolina State University, where he has taught since 1982. He lives and works in Raleigh, NC with his wife, the author Therese Anne Fowler.

## ACCOLADES

"Kessel's writing, which recalls the best of such cutting-edge authors as Norman Spinrad and Philip K. Dick, while retaining its own acidic elegance of style, is nothing less than brilliant."

—*Austin American-Statesman*

"... Kessel successfully walks the fine line between mordant farce and psychological realism... Real people moving through an American reality that gets more and more surreal ..."

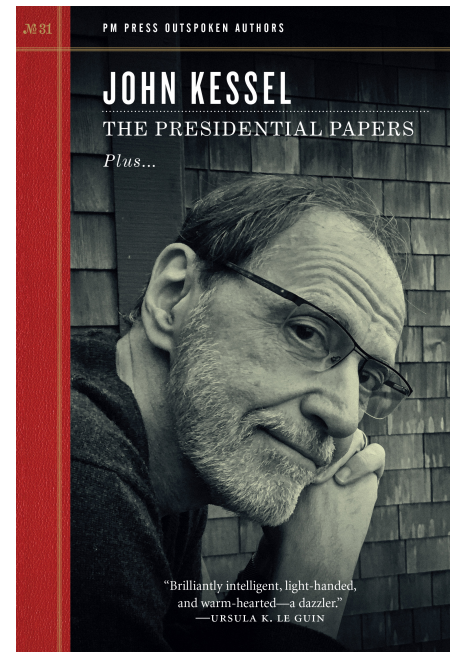
—Norman Spinrad, *Asimov's Science Fiction*

"Kessel is our American Brian Aldiss, capable of the most artful and rigorous literary composition, but with a mischievous genius that inclines him toward speculative fiction ... he writes with subtlety and great wit... and his craftsmanship is frequently absolutely brilliant. Plus, his sense of comedy is remarkable."

—*Publisher's Weekly*

"... Kessel's influences seem to come equally from history, literature, and Hollywood ... [but] enjoyable and skillful as Kessel's history-and-Hollywood numbers may be, these other stories remind us of his versatility and depth, and his acute understanding of the way SF works."

—*Locus*



## SUBJECT CATEGORY

Fiction: Science Fiction • Literary / Political

## PRICE

\$16.00

## ISBN

979-8-88744-058-3

## PAGE COUNT

160

## SIZE

5 x 7.5

## FORMAT

Paperback

## PUBLICATION DATE

10/22/2024

## US DISTRIBUTION

Publishers Group West

1-866-400-5351

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