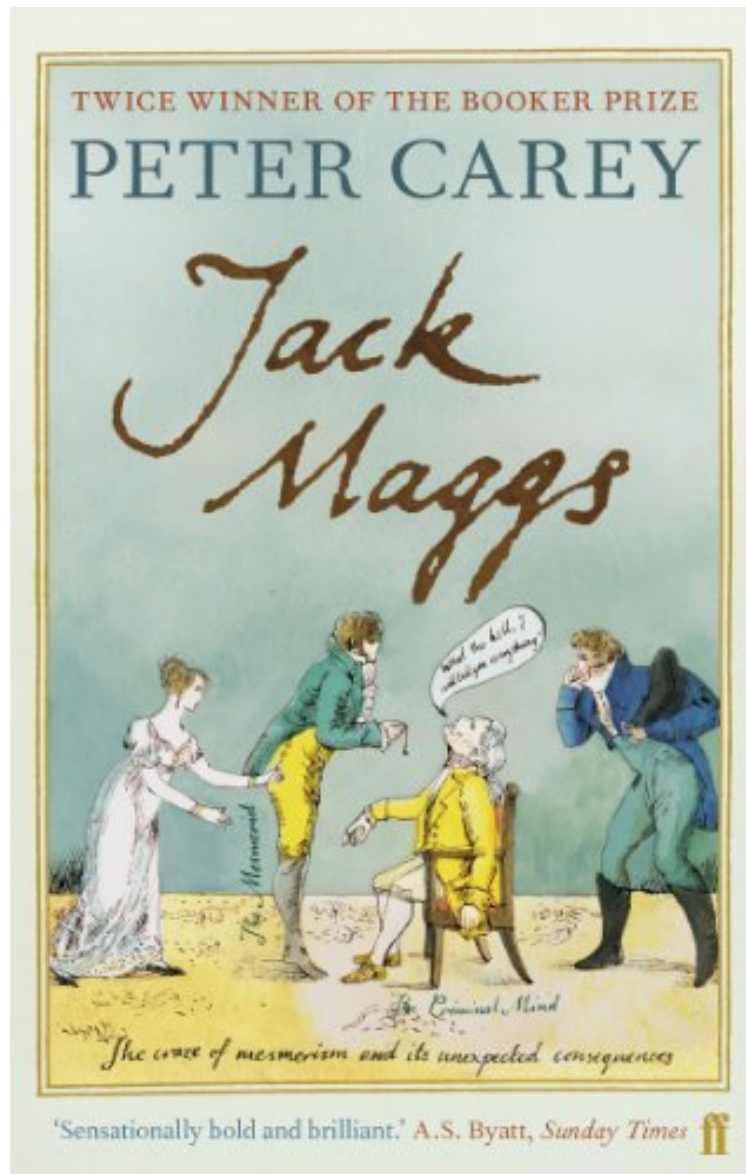


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## Jack Maggs (English Edition)

Von Peter Carey

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**Von Peter Carey : Jack Maggs (English Edition)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jack Maggs (English Edition):

Kundenrezensionen Hilfreichste Kundenrezensionen 0 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A superior villain, deliciously drawn. Von James T. King Carey's "Jack Maggs" is a narrative gem, crisply written with a dark relentless momentum as it unfolds in early 19th century London. Its tone is steeped in the miasma of fog rising on

the Thames, obscuring the pasts - and the present motives - of all the players. Title character Jack Maggs is that ante-postmodern ideal of a villain wherein a genuinely huge and good heart triumphantly barges through the foul abuses of a childhood spent learning, then practicing the art of housebreaking. Witness Jack's first day on the job as an eight-year-old "Climbing Boy" who thought he was being taken to a new school: "Silas carefully lifted off the chimney pot and placed it on the roof. Said he -- All right, young whipper-snapper, down you go. (I hesitated) So he picked me up, and slid me in, as simple as dropping shot into a cannon." This child, later apprehended, tried, and deported to Australia, eventually becomes the man who often "stooped for his ankle knife. He felt the rough sure grip of the handle he himself had made with twine and tar. A convict's knife, it dated from before the time when he could have afforded the finest steel and ivory for the handle. He crouched now, a powerful shadow in the doorway of his own living room, drawing the blade in wide circle through the night." Yet, he is just as certainly "the prodigal father," undertaking a journey of lethal risk to rejoin and know his long-lost ward in this finely drawn story. "Jack Maggs" satisfies on many levels. It paints vivid portraits of a host of eccentrics, among them a young novelist who dabbles dangerously in hypnosis and magnet therapy, his dumpy wife and saucy sister-in-law, a nouveau-riche grocer with household help he neither wants or needs, and a maid in his employ who's also his "Good Companion" on cold English nights. What a fun bunch, and each packed with the genuine baggage of the era: its fears, wisdoms, idioms, and oddities. All elements collide at the entry of Jack Maggs into their lives. At the same time, the novel addresses some thoroughly contemporary issues, such as the psychiatric validity (or not) of "repressed memory" revelations and the consequences of a life where no "Roe v. Wade" exists. A final note: Whether or not you've read (and recall) "Great Expectations" is irrelevant to your enjoyment of Mr. Carey's novel. Although such background might add context and color, this work stands on its own.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Well drawn but unsatisfying exploration of redemption  
Von Ein Kunde Jack Maggs, Peter Carey's latest novel, is well observed and well written, with Carey's trademark eye for detail turned into deliciously quirky prose. I am a big fan of Carey, but must, however, confess to being disappointed at Jack Maggs. The novel seems to me to be too much form and not enough content, the characters not as interesting or as likeable as in earlier books. I went to a reading the author gave when this book was first published, and like all great authors (I imagine) he possessed a rich, if intimidating, seam of fascinating insights, thoughtful observations and witty reminiscences. I meant to ask him what *The Unusual Life of Tristan Smith* was all about, and why he had written it, as, when I first read that novel, I sensed that Carey may have been losing his grip on what had made him one of my favourite novelists. But understandably I didn't have the courage. Now, with Jack Maggs, I think my fears have been confirmed. The brilliance of *Illywhacker* and *Oscar and Lucinda* has been replaced by the well constructed competence of a writer struggling to recapture the inspiration of youth. Where Carey once continually surprised me, made me laugh, made me think and ultimately dazzled me with the strange and wonderful virtuosity of his prose, now he leaves me with a vaguely hollow feeling, as though the compassion and depth of thought he used to infuse in all of his writing has somehow dissipated. Jack Maggs is not a bad book, it is just not the brilliant book that you would expect from a once-brilliant author.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A Dickens of a Good Read!  
Von Billy J. Hobbs Peter Carey, the Booker Prize winner of "*Oscar and Lucinda*," brings Jack Maggs to life and in this new novel of the same name, he combines a fresh 20th century style with Victorian atmosphere and resurrects "*Great Expectations*" and Charles Dickens at the same time! And perhaps to the relief of thousands of school children who have had to read the original! Carey's Mr. Maggs bears the responsibility of being the protagonist and we meet the former convict knocking on the door of an earlier acquaintance (whom we will come to know later in the novel) in London. Maggs, as you will remember, was sentenced to life exile in Australia (it was really "down under" then!) when we last heard of him in "*Great Expectations*." We know from that novel that, via Dickensian and Victorian melodrama and coincidence, he has shaken his chains of bondage and become a wealthy (and worthy!) citizen of the Colony, one who, struck by Pip's kindness in an earlier day, sets the young boy up anonymously to become a "gentleman" in London society. Now, Maggs has dared to return to England (under penalty of death....) to "meet my boy," as he says. Mr. Phipps, Carey has determined, has really led the life of a gentleman; however, he is not so eager to meet his benefactor, fearing, for one, that all this "life of leisure" might be taken away from him! It may come as a surprise that Mr. Phipps appears so ungrateful. Thus, the tragedy begins. The author introduces us to the "newly-found" technique of hypnotism and we are given an insight into Maggs through this venue, to discover his fears, his Phantom, and to learn the real man, tragic as it seems. Maggs has had to endure the horrifying experiences of being a convict in the British penal colony and through his hypnotism we see these torturous moments and come to understand Maggs the man. Indeed, he is the product of his environment and we meet some real Dickens characters here. Carey pays homage to Dickens--and we see this readily--in a kinder, gentler manner than one first perceives. Publishers Weekly has called this book "irresistible" and that descriptive aptly applies.

Kurzbeschreibung London, 1837. Jack Maggs, raised and deported as a criminal, has returned from Australia, in secret and at great risk. What does he want after all these years, and why is he so interested in the comings and goings at a

plush townhouse in Great Queen Street? And why is Jack himself an object of such interest to Tobias Oates, celebrated author, amateur hypnotist and fellow burglar - in this case of people's minds, of their histories and inner phantoms? A thrilling story of mesmerism and possession, of dangerous bargains and illicit love against the backdrop of Victorian London.

As a novelist, Peter Carey is hardly a stranger to the 19th century: his *Oscar and Lucinda* was a veritable treasure-trove of Victoriana. In this novel, however, Carey has set himself an even more complicated task--reimagining not only a vanished era but one of that era's masterpieces. *Jack Maggs* is a variation on *Great Expectations*, in which Dickens's tale is told from the viewpoint of Australian convict Abel Magwitch. The names, it's true, have been tinkered with, but the book's literary paternity is unmistakable. So, too, is the postcolonial spin that Carey puts on Dickens's material: this time around, the prodigal Maggs is perceived less as an invading alien than a righteous (if not particularly welcome) refugee. Of course, rewriting a page-turner from the past offers some major perils, not the least of them being comparisons to the original. Carey, however, more than withstands the test of time, alluding to the formality of Victorian prose without ever bending over backward to duplicate it. In addition, his eye for physical detail--and the ways in which such details open small or large windows onto character--is on par with that of Dickens. Here, for example, he pins down both the body and soul of a household servant: "Miss Mott was lean and sinewy and there was nowhere much for such a violent shiver to hide itself. Consequently it went right up her spine and disappeared inside her little white cap and then, just when it seemed lost, it came out the other side and pulled up the ends of her thin mouth in a grimace." Throw in a wicked mastery of period slang, a subplot about Victorian mesmerism (of which Dickens was, in fact, a practitioner), and an amazing storytelling gift, and you have a novel which meets and exceeds almost any expectation one might bring to it.

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