



Memories of the Ford Administration: A Novel

John Updike

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When historian Alfred "Alf" Clayton is invited by an academic journal to record his impressions of the Gerald R. Ford Administration (1974–77), he recalls not the political events of the time but rather a turbulent period of his own sexual past. Alf's highly idiosyncratic contribution to Retrospect consists not only of reams of unbuttoned personal history but also of pages from an unpublished project of the time, a chronicle of the presidency of James Buchanan (1857–61). The alternating texts mirror each other and tell a story in counterpoint, a frequently hilarious comedy of manners contrasting the erotic etiquette and social dictions of antebellum Washington with those of late-twentieth-century southern New Hampshire. Alf's style is Nabokovian. His obsessions are vintage Updike.



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