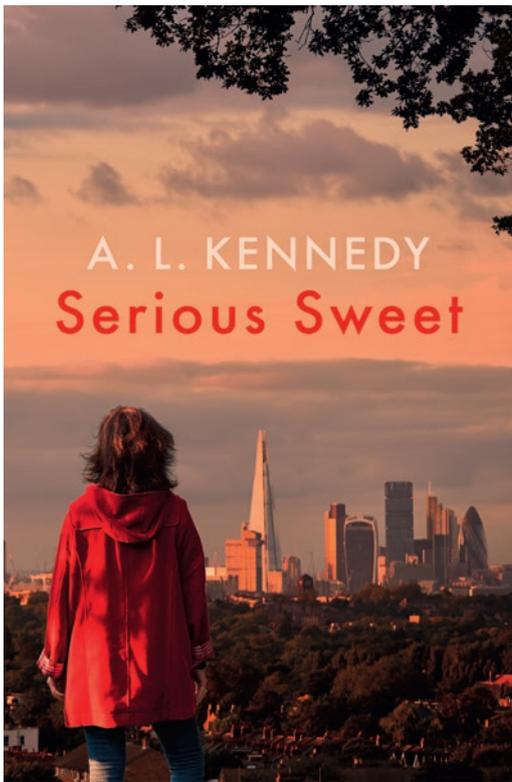


# Reader's Guide



Other novels by A. L. Kennedy  
*Looking for the Possible Dance* (1993)  
*So I Am Glad* (1995)  
*Day* (2007)

## Serious Sweet A. L. Kennedy

Jonathan Cape

[www.themanbookerprize.com](http://www.themanbookerprize.com)

#FinestFiction



### About the author

A. L. Kennedy has twice been selected as one of *Granta's* Best of Young British Novelists and has won a host of other awards – including the Costa Book of the Year for her novel *Day*. She lives in London and is a part-time lecturer in creative writing at Warwick University.

### About the book

A good man in a bad world, Jon Sigurdsson is 59 and divorced: a senior civil servant in Westminster who hates many of his colleagues and loathes his work for a government engaged in unmentionable acts. A man of conscience. Meg Williams is 'a bankrupt accountant – two words you don't want in the same sentence, or anywhere near your CV'. She's 45 and shakily sober, living on Telegraph Hill, where she can see London unfurl below her. Somewhere out there is safety. Somewhere out there is Jon, pinballing around the city with a mobile phone and a letter-writing habit he can't break. He's a man on the brink, leaking government secrets and affection as he runs for his life. *Serious Sweet* is about two decent, damaged people trying to make moral choices in an immoral world: ready to sacrifice what's left of themselves for honesty, and for a chance at tenderness. As Jon and Meg navigate the sweet and serious heart of London – passing through 24 hours that will change them both for ever – they tell a very unusual, unbearably moving love story.

### Discussion points

Descriptions and discussions of contemporary London reoccur throughout *Serious Sweet*. To what extent might it be considered a state-of-the-nation novel?

*Serious Sweet* contains elements of romantic comedy and elements of political satire. How do these elements interact in the novel?

The narrative voice in *Serious Sweet* moves continually between third person and first person. How does this affect your reading of the characters?

*Serious Sweet* is set on a single day. What affect does this timespan have on the action of the novel, and what might have been the author's reasons for doing this?

### Themed reading

David Nicholls *One Day*  
Zadie Smith *White Teeth*  
Rose Tremain *The Road Home*

### Useful links

<http://www.a-l-kennedy.co.uk/>

<http://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/books/serious-sweet-by-a-l-kennedy-review-a3246371.html>

<https://www.ft.com/content/98496400-2417-11e6-9d4d-c11776a5124d>

<http://www.spectator.co.uk/2016/05/disgusted-of-london-a-l-kennedys-serious-sweet-reviewed/>