

Gloria kept wondering if Mr Huws-Evans was going to put his arm round her. She'd never yet gone to the pictures in male company without at least this happening, and usually quite a lot more being tried on, but somehow Mr Huws-Evans didn't seem the man for any of that. He was older than her usual escorts, to  
5 start with, and to go on with there was something about that mackintosh hat and that string bag which made it hard to think of him putting his arm round anyone, except perhaps his mother. Once she caught sight of his hand dangling over the arm of the seat towards her, and she moved her own hand carefully so that he could take hold of it easily if she wanted to, but he didn't. He leaned rather closer  
10 to her to light her cigarettes than he strictly needed to, and that was all. After a pair of tin gates had been shown opening in a slow and dignified way, there was about half an hour of advertisements while everybody whistled the tunes that were playing. The cereals and the detergents came up, then a fairly long and thorough episode about razor-blades. During it Mr Huws-Evans suddenly said: "It's  
15 a damned scandal, that business."  
"What's that, then?"  
"Well, all this business about the modern shave. All these damned gadgets and things. It's just a way of trying to get you to use a new blade every day, that's all."  
"Oh, I get you. You mean because the —"  
20 "Mind you, with the kind of blade some of these firms turn out you've got to use a new blade. I grant them that." He laughed briefly. "If you don't want to skin yourself getting the beard off, that is. And of course they don't give a damn how much they spend on publicity. It's all off tax. Doesn't really cost them a bean."  
Gloria was going to say "How's that then?" but Mr Huws-Evans's manner, that of  
25 one with a comprehensive explanation on instant call, warned her not to. She said instead: "No, of course it doesn't."  
He looked at her with mingled scepticism and wistfulness, and ended the conversation by saying violently: "Some of these firms."  
While the lights went down again, Gloria thought about this brief exchange. It was  
30 just the kind of talk older men went in for, the sort of thing her father discussed with his buddies when they called to take him down to the pub.

[417 mots]

Kingsley Amis, *My Enemy's Enemy* (1962)

Seven short stories set in post WW II England, *My Enemy's Enemy* is a social satire.