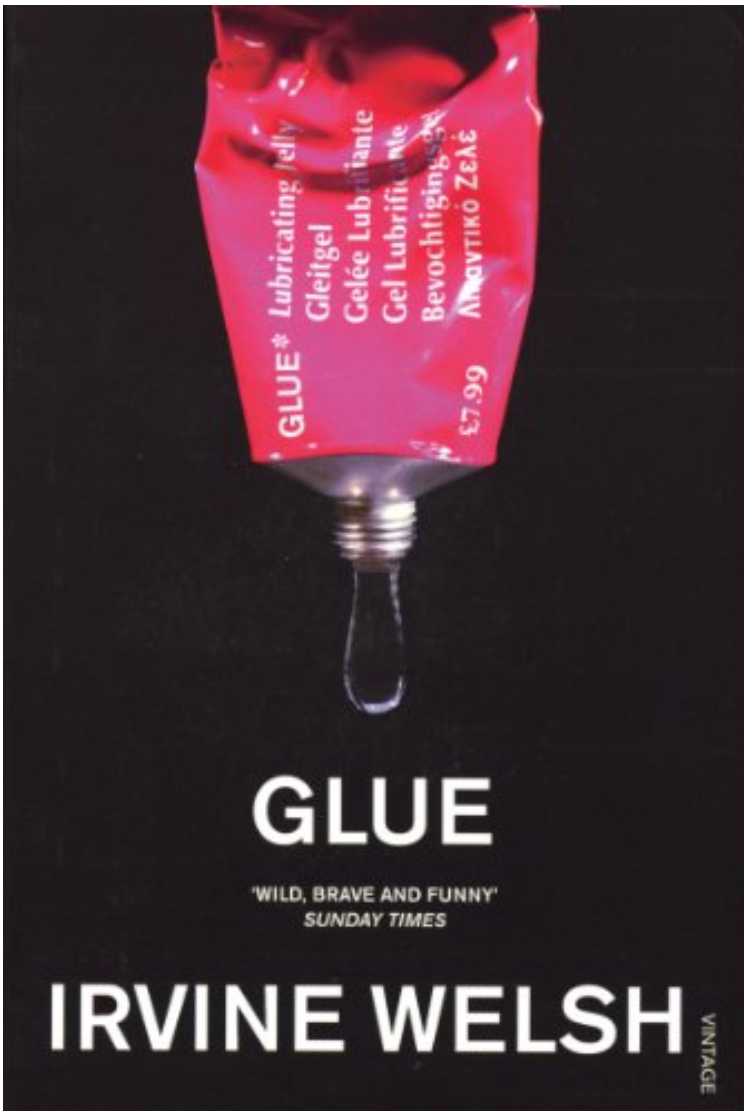


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Glue



Par Irvine Welsh
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurGlue is the story of four boys growing up in the Edinburgh schemes, and about the loyalties, the experiences and the secrets that hold them together into their thirties.As we follow their lives from the 70's into the new century - from punk to techno, from speed to Es - we can see each of them trying to struggle out from under the weight of the conditioning of class and culture, peer pressure and their parents' hopes that maybe their sons will do better than they did. What binds the four of them is the friendship formed by the scheme, their school, and their ambition to escape from both; their loyalty fused in street morality: back up your mates, don't hit women and, most importantly, never grass - on anyone..comWith a title like Glue, it would seem reasonable to assume that Irvine Welsh's fifth book is a meditation on the pitfalls of solvent abuse. In fact the word refers to the bonds that unite four boys, all of

whom have grown up in "the scheme"--i.e., Edinburgh's slum-clearance flats, whose optimistic construction in the 1970s give way to the poverty, unemployment, and crime of the succeeding decades. It is the pervasive despair of these crumbling projects that defines the lives of the protagonists: budding DJ Carl Ewart, boxer Billy Birrell, work-shy, sex-mad Terry Lawson, and Andrew Galloway, a drug addict who has tested HIV-positive. Recounted in the author's inimitable style, *Glue* is a grungy, Scots-accented bildungsroman. The novel follows the boys through their early forays into sex, drink, drugs, and football violence. Contemplating his erotic initiation, Carl Ewart poses such crucial questions as "How dae ah chat up a bird?" and "Do I wear a rubber johnny?" Here and there Welsh injects political commentary into the mix: Billy Birrell, for example, reflects that "having money is the only way to get respect. Desperate, but that's the world we live in now." For the most part, though, the author sticks to sex and violence and his famously offhand one-liners: "Guilt and shaggin, they go the gither like fish n chips." Fans of *Trainspotting* will love the book, even down to the brief appearance of Begbie and Renton. Others may feel that *Glue* is more of the same, and that, despite its graphic charms, the book finds Welsh stuck in a rut. --Jerry Brotton

Extrait 1 Round About 1970: The Man of the House
Windows '70
The sun rose up from behind the concrete of the block of flats opposite, beaming straight into their faces. Davie Galloway was so surprised by its sneaky dazzle, he nearly dropped the table he was struggling to carry. It was hot enough already in the new flat and Davie felt like a strange exotic plant wilting in an overheated greenhouse. It was they windaes, they were huge, and they sucked in the sun, he thought, as he put the table down and looked out at the scheme below him. Davie felt like a newly crowned emperor surveying his fiefdom. The new buildings were impressive all right: they fairly gleamed when the light hit those sparkling wee stanes embedded in the cladding. Bright, clean, airy and warm, that was what was needed. He remembered the chilly, dark tenement in Gorgie; covered with soot and grime for generations when the city had earned its 'Auld Reekie' nickname. Outside, their dull, narrow streets nipping with people pinched and shuffling from the marrow-biting winter cold, and that rank smell of hops from the brewery wafting in when you opened the window, always causing him to retch if he'd overdone it in the pub the previous night. All that had gone, and about time too. This was the way to live! For Davie Galloway, it was the big windows that exemplified all that was good about these new slum-clearance places. He turned to his wife, who was polishing the skirtings. Why did she have to polish the skirtings in a new hoose? But Susan was on her knees, clad in overalls, her large black beehive bobbing up and down, testifying to her frenzied activity. - That's the best thing about these places, Susan, Davie ventured, - the big windaes. Let the sun in, he added, before glancing over at the marvel of that wee box stuck on the wall above her head. - Central heating for the winter n aw, cannae be beaten. The flick ay a switch. Susan rose slowly, respectful of the cramp which had been settling into her legs. She was sweating as she stamped one numbed, tingling foot, in order to get the circulation back into it. Beads of moisture gathered on her forehead. - It's too hot, she complained. Davie briskly shook his head. - Naw, take it while ye can get it. This is Scotland, mind, it's no gaunny last. Taking in a deep breath, Davie picked up the table, recommencing his arduous struggle towards the kitchen. It was a tricky bugger: a smart new Formica-topped job which seemed to constantly shift its weight and spill all over the place. Like wrestling wi a fuckin crocodile, he thought, and sure enough, the beast snapped at his fingers forcing him to withdraw them quickly and suck on them as the table clattered to the floor. - Sh . . . sugar, Davie cursed. He never swore in front of women. Certain talk was awright for the pub, but no in front of a woman. He tiptoed over to the cot in the corner. The baby still slept soundly. - Ah telt ye ah'd gie ye a hand wi that Davie, yir gaunny huv nae fingers and a broken table the wey things are gaun, Susan warned him. She shook her head slowly, looking over to the crib. - Surprised yedinnae wake her. Picking up her discomfort, Davie said, - Ye dinnae really like that table, dae ye? Susan Galloway shook her head again. She looked past the new kitchen table, and saw the new three-piece suite, the new coffee table and new carpets which had mysteriously arrived the previous day when she'd been out at her work in the whisky bonds. - What is it? Davie asked, waving his sore hand in the air. He felt her stare, open and baleful. Those big eyes of hers. - Where did ye get this stuff, Davie? He hated when she asked him things like that. It spoiled everything, drove a wedge between them. It was for all of them he did what he did; Susan, the baby, the wee fellay. - Ask no questions, ah'll tell ye no lies, he smiled, but he couldn't look at her, as unsatisfied himself with this retort as he knew she would be. Instead, he bent down and kissed his baby daughter on the cheek. Looking up, he wondered aloud, - Where's Andrew? He glanced at Susan briefly. Susan turned away sourly. He was hiding again, hiding behind the bairns. Davie moved into the hall with the stealthy caution of a trench soldier fearful of snipers. - Andrew, he shouted. His son thundered down the stairs, a wiry, charged life-force, sporting the same dark brown hair as Susan's, but

shorn to a minimalist crop, following Davie through to the living room. - Here eh is, he cheerfully announced for Susan's benefit. Noting that she was studiously ignoring him, he turned to the boy and asked, - Ye still like it up in yir new room? Andrew looked up at him and then at Susan. - Ah found a book ah never had before, he told them earnestly. - That's good, Susan said, moving over and picking a thread from the boy's striped T-shirt. Looking up at his father, Andrew asked, - Whencan ah geta bike, Dad? - Soon, son, Davie smiled. - You said when ah went tae school, Andrew said with great sincerity, his large dark eyes fixing on his father's in a milder form of accusation than Susan's. - Ah did, pal, Davie conceded, - and it's no long now. A bike? Where was the money coming from for a bloody bike? Susan Galloway thought, shivering to herself as the blazing, sweltering summer sun beat in relentlessly, through the huge windows.

Terry Lawson

The First Day at School

Wee Terry and Yvonne Lawson sat with juice and crisps at a wooden table of the Dell Inn, in the concrete enclosure they called the beer garden. They were looking over the fence at the bottom of the yard, down the steep bank, contemplating the ducks in the Water of Leith. Within a few seconds awe turned to boredom; you could only look at ducks for so long, and Terry had other things on his mind. It had been his first day at school and he hadn't enjoyed it. Yvonne would go next year. Terry said to her that it wasn't very good and he'd been frightened but now he was with their Ma, and their Dad was there as well, so it was okay. Their Ma and Dad were talking and they knew their Ma was angry. - Well, they heard her ask him, - what is it yuv got tae say? Terry looked up at his Dad who smiled and winked at him before turning back to address the boy's mother. - No in front ay the bairns, he said coolly. - Dinnae pretend tae care about thaim, Alice Lawson scoffed, her voice rising steadily, implacably, like a jet engine taking off, -yir quick enough tae walk oot oan thaim! Dinnae pretend that! Henry Lawson shuffled around to check who'd heard. Met one nosy gape with a hard stare until it averted. Two old fuckers, a couple. Interfering auld bastards. Speaking through his teeth, in a strained whisper, he said to her, - Ah've telt ye, they'll be looked eftir. Ah've fuckin well telt ye that. Ma ain fuckin bairns, he snapped at her, the tendons in his neck taut. Henry knew that Alice was always driven to believe the best in people. He fancied that he could summon enough controlled outrage, enough injured innocence into his tone of voice to suggest that her audacity in believing that he (for all his faults, of which he'd be the first to admit) could leave his own children unprovided for, was overstep-ping the mark, even accounting for emotions running high in the break-up of their relationship. Indeed, it was just those sort of allegations that had practically driven him into the arms of Paula McKay, a spinster of the Parish of Leith. The fine Paula, a young woman of great virtue and goodness which had repeatedly been called into question by the embittered Alice. Was not Paula the sole carer for her father George, who owned the Port Sunshine Tavern in Leith and who was stricken with cancer? It would not be long now and Paula would need all the help she could to get through this difficult time. Henry would be a tower of strength. And his own name had been continually sullied, but Henry was graciously prepared to accept that people tended to say things they didn't mean in emotionally fraught times. Did he not also know the pain of the breakdown of their relationship? Was it not harder for him, he being the one who had to leave his children? Looking down and across at them Henry let his eyes glisten and a lump constrict his throat. He hoped Alice caught that gesture and that it would be enough. It seemed as if it was. He heard burbling noises, like the stream below them, he fancied, and he was moved to put his arm round her shaking shoulders. - Please stay, Henry, she shuddered, pressing her head into his chest, filling her nostrils with the scent of Old Spice still fragrant on his cheese-grater chin. Henry was not so much a five-o'clock-shadow man, as a lunchtime-shadow man, having to shave at least twice a day. - There, there, Henry cooed. - Dinnae you be worryin. We've got the bairns, yours n mine, he smiled, reaching over and tousling young Terry's mop of curls, considering that Alice really should take the boy to the barber's mair often. He was like Shirley Temple. It could cause the laddie to grow up funny. - Ye never even asked how he got oan at school. Alice sat up straight, fused with a new bitterness as she focused again on what was happening. - You never gave me the chance, Henry retorted in tetchy impatience. Paula was waiting. Waiting for his kisses, for that comforting arm that was now round Alice. Crying, puffy, sagging Alice. What a contrast with Paula's youthful body; tight, lithe, unmarked by childbirth. There really could be no contest. Thinking, beyond his words, smells and strong arm, about what was actually happening and letting the pain pulse hard and unremit-tingly in her chest, Alice managed to snap, - He cried and cried and cried. He gret his eyes oot. This angered Henry. Terry was older than the rest of his class, missing a year's schooling due to his meningitis.

He should have been the last one to cry. It was Alice's fault, she spoiled him, still tre...