They seek him here, they seek him there, his clothes are loud, but never square, it will make or break him so he's got to buy the best, cause he's a dedicated follower of fashion.
And when he does his little rounds around the boutiques of London town, eagerly pursuing all the latest fads and trends, cause he's a dedicated follower of fashion.
That Dominic was the kinks, dedicated follower of fashion, which I think came out in 1966
And it is a kind of mocking commentary on the status of London, the very unexpected status of London in the mid sixties as the world capital of fashion, which is today's subject, right?
It is.
So, you know, we're talking about this just before we start the recording, won't we, Tom?
We're having a dispute, a historical dispute about fashion history, because I said, I think this is the one moment when Britain can genuinely claim to be the world capital of fashion, and British fashion is genuinely setting the trend worldwide.
And you said no, there was an earlier one.
Yes, because I think you had forgotten the episode that we'd, brilliant episode we did with Hilary Davidson on fashion in the age of Jane Austen, where she talked about how during the Napoleonic Wars, Britain is cut off from Paris, which is traditionally the capital of fashion.
And because of industrialization, and because of the growth of shopping in London and other cities, Bath and so on.
For the first time, you get the idea of fashion as something that is kind of changing season upon season.
And so very, very fleetingly in that period, the Regency period, kind of late, very late 18th century and into the first years of the 19th century, London then is perhaps the capital of fashion.
I mean, it doesn't last, but I take your point that the thing that's fascinating about London in the sixties is that it is not just for elites, as it was back in the Regency period, but basically for everyone.
I mean, that's the selling point, isn't it?
That's how it's seen the whole of London is full of people in miniskirts, which is obviously not really true, as we will discover.
But there is a sort of an overtly democratic ethos to sixties fashion, isn't there?
There's a democratic ethos, there is a sense of mass consumerism.
The funny thing about a podcast about sixties fashion, there may be lots of people listening who think, well, I'm not very interested in fashion.
But fashion in the sixties becomes, I think, a kind of metaphor, a symbol of wider social changes, so the rise of the teenage, of the rise of youth culture, but also the enormous economic recovery from the austerity of the 1940s and the privations of World War Two and the development of this sort of new, what they call in France, the 30 glorious years of full employment and economic growth and consumerism and urbanization and all these kinds of things.
And fashion actually stands in, I think, for a lot of that.
Well, that was what is so interesting about the sixties that I now appreciate over and over again is that it only really makes sense in the context of the privations of the

Second World War, that the kind of the blaze of color that you associate with the sixties exists in the kind of the monochrome context of the austerity that was the accompaniment of the of the war years.
Yeah, I think that's absolutely right.
And as we'll see with this story, it only makes sense when you go back 20 years and to see what people are, as you say, reacting against.
So what people's parents had grown up wearing.
Yeah, so people will have kind of Austin Powers type.
Groovy baby, kind of, yeah, you know, guys wearing incredibly frilly shirts and what is it in the kinks? The verse I didn't read about skin tight, frilly panties being drawn up tight, all that kind of stuff and girls in kind of plastic max and miniskirts and high boots and all that kind of thing.
So put that against the kind of the image that we have of the war years.
I guess it's a little bit unfair because we tend to think of the war years in black and white, don't we, because the footage is black and white.
Yeah, but there is a kind of slightly monochrome quality to the fashion.
Oh, there is.
Absolutely.
If you look at some photos of people in the 1930s and 1940s, just because of the availability of dye, actually, Tom, because the industrial processes for making clothes, I mean, it's expensive, it's expensive to wear colored clothes, but also, of course, most people are a huge proportion of people.
Let's just think about Britain specifically, but it's this is actually true, the United States, France, wherever.
Lots of people working factories in coal mines in very dirty jobs in a very smoky environment, houses heated by coal fires or whatever.
So it actually doesn't make sense to wear very brightly colored, delicate clothes.
You want to actually wear very hard wearing and dark clothes that will take the dirt effectively.
Also, a massively underappreciated point, you are colder.
You're living in a world without central heating.
So you wear more layers, you wear your coat much more often.
You might obviously wear a hat if you're a man and you have fewer items of clothing.
So let's say the outbreak of the Second World War, a middle-class woman in Britain would probably have about seven or eight dresses, a couple of suits, three coats, you know, six pairs of shoes or something, a working-class woman of which there are many, of course, they might have a far smaller wardrobe, three dresses, a couple of pairs of shoes, a man would generally have suits, an overcoat, now an overcoat, something like that would probably cost the equivalent in sort of the dent in your budget of about a thousand pounds in today's money.
That's a lot of money.
So that's a lot of money.
So your coat that you would buy, I mean, that might last you for 20, 30 years, you might actually pass it on to your son or to a family member.

Oh, and imagine if you leave it in the pub.
Well, that's a bit, I mean, that's the kind of thing that comes up in films, in novels, people will leave their coats behind or their hats or something.
Run back and run into the ladies.
Exactly.
It's a big deal.
And they're heavy, they're heavy fabrics, they're dark.
So yes, there is a sort of, what you described as the monochrome world.
Of course, it is distorted in that popular imagination because of cinematography, but it's not entirely inaccurate.
And then of course, the war comes.
So in Britain, clothing is rationed between 1941 and 1949.
So you get 66 clothing coupons a year at first.
And then that is actually steadily cut as the war goes on.
How long does that last, the clothing ration?
Because isn't that the Queen's wedding dress?
Yes.
There's all kinds of problems with how many coupons she has.
Exactly.
That's exactly right.
So it actually lasts until 1949, so four years after the Second World War.
And the, I mean, the sort of moment that if we have any listeners who are old enough to remember the war that they would remember is in 1942, the Board of Trade brings in a new thing where you have to have what's called utility clothes.
And they limit the number of fabrics that are available to you, but they also limit the number of designs.
And there are all kinds of restrictions.
So to give you some examples that may sound absolutely bizarre to people now, men's shirts are not allowed to have double cuffs.
So in other words, cuff links, you can't have kind of puffy sleeves on a shirt and on a women's shirt.
Men are not allowed to have, from that point on, most people are not making double breasted suits because it's a waste of cloth turnips on your trousers.
So trousers don't have turnips anymore.
I think that's probably, probably a good thing.
Well, it depends on the look you want to.
I've not a turnip on a trouser man, Tommy.
I'm not, I think that's a kind of positive from the wall.
You're limited to three buttons per garment.
So, you know, I mean, if you want a shirt or something with loads of buttons, you're not going to get it.
And most famously, you're only allowed to use elastic on women's knickers, on nothing else.
There's even the length of a man's sock is limited to nine inches.
And people actually complain.

Some people complain.
They say, well, I wanted longer socks.
You know, what about school boys?
That's a very good question.
I would say school boys probably they got away with it because their legs are short.
If you're a very small school boy, yes.
If I was a very short school boy, so I would have been laughing.
But that continues after the war.
So in the late 1940s, because there's not much leather, the shoe industry is kind of restricted.
The government had adopted a slogan in 1943, make, do and mend, which you and I will, I mean, we grew up with people talking about me doing me.
I mean, it's actually entered the end, they're certainly in Britain.
It's entered the English language as a, we don't think of it as having a kind of wartime sort of ethos, and that's not lifted until 1949.
So the kind of clothes that people were wearing just last night on the war, they're very boxy, kind of utilitarian.
There's obviously a kind of militaristic vogue.
There's a status, I suppose, in a funny way in wearing very sort of boxy, utilitarian clothes.
And these are the demob suits that discharged soldiers get at the end of the war.
Yeah.
And they're cheap suits.
You're a young man, that's the only suit you own.
And people complain about the demob suits.
Obviously, they say that the arm comes off and it's rubbish, and it doesn't look good and all this sort of stuff.
But at the same time, something quite democratic about it, because everyone's wearing the same suit.
Is there a sense still of less steelonglay, the look of the English gentleman?
Is that still a thing?
Fine tailoring and Savile Row and well, that's at the very top end.
I think generally, English clothes are very conservative, actually.
In the 1940s, the image of English fashion abroad, certainly is very conservative.
I don't think people in France, Italy, the traditional powerhouses of fashion, they're not looking to London and saying, gosh, you know, is London going to lead the way after the war?
I mean, nobody would ever.
Okay.
And so Paris has been under German occupation.
Yes.
But in the wake of the war, famously, it kind of, you know, it's the Phoenix from the ashes.

It's the butterfly reemerging and taking wing, isn't it, with the new look?
It is absolutely.
So this is a guy called Christian Dior, who is the, he's very glamorously, Tom, he's the son of a fertilizer manufacturer from Normandy.
And he makes uniforms for German officers in the war, doesn't he?
Notoriously.
Well, German officers' wives.
Ah, okay.
I'm being unfair on him then.
So actually what happens is Dior wanted to be an artist and he ended up sketching for fashion house and then he ends up designing the clothes.
And yes, in the war during the occupation, he does design clothes or he's said to have designed clothes for the wives of German officers.
I mean, to be fair, I don't think this is some sign of some latent Nazism in Christian Dior.
I mean, he's living under the occupation.
He has no choice effectively.
I mean, lots of people are, I don't know, baking croissants for German officers or whatever, but then there is this absolute landmark moment, which all fashion historians and anybody interested in the history of clothes will know, which is the 12th of February, 1947, when he unveils his first sort of individual collection and this is the birth of what's called the new look.
So everything that we described, the sort of very austere, utilitarian look of clothes, Dior ditches all that and his clothes and their women's clothes, they are very glamorous, narrow wastes and then great sweeping kind of skirts and dresses, emphasizing sort of voluptuousness and sexuality and curves and lush.
They're really kind of lush, glamorous clothes.
And of course, against the backdrop of a Europe that is, I mean, every country in Europe is full of bombed out buildings, homeless people, poverty stricken.
There's a sense of escapism to the New York.
And presumably it has to be Paris where this happens.
No other city would have this impact because Paris has this legacy as the great center of fashion.
Yeah.
And this is evidence that Paris is back after the humiliations and sufferings of the war.
Yes.
So it's interesting that the phrase, the new look is coined by an American journalist who is watching the unveiling of Dior's show and she says, oh, Christian, you know, it's a, what a new look you've adopted.
But the very fact that there are journalists there to watch it tells you that it's the focus of attention.
It's the focus of the world's attention and, you know, the clothes are reproduced in English magazines and English newspapers.

Indeed, in American magazines and newspapers, that wouldn't be the case
if they were being unveiled and, you know, it pains me to say it, Tom, but if
they're being unveiled in Birmingham, that would not be the, the world would
not be watching.
Fair enough.
So it's sort of an illusion, actually, the new look, because most people
can't afford new look clothes.
They are still living in the sort of world.
I mean, rationing is still going for another two years in Britain, but it's
an aspiration.
And does this percolate through into kind of mass market clothing in, in Britain?
Slowly.
In the long run?
Yes.
In the long run, exactly.
In the 1950s.
So actually what happens is after 1949 when the Russians are lifted, the British
economy takes another two or three years to really sort of fire up again.
And when it does fire up again, obviously people are buying, you know, different
clothes, they're buying more, more lightweight clothes, more colorful.
They're keen to sort of put the wartime experience and the kind of the heaviness
behind them.
That said, when you look at pictures of the sort of early to mid 1950s and young
people, I mean, if you look at some of the famous young people in Britain,
of the early to mid 50s, so, I mean, Kingsley Amis, Philip Larkin, the writers
who come of age in that period or people like that, they're wearing tweed suits,
heavy shoes, tie often an overcoat.
They are wearing versions of the sort of heavy clothes that their parents would have
worn.
So kind of intellectual young men who like jazz are still wearing suits, right?
They are.
Absolutely.
They are.
Absolutely.
They are.
But we've talked about the influence of Paris.
What about the influence of America?
Because American troops have been over in Britain and there's a kind of a sense
that America is vibrant, colorful, wealthy, relaxed, everything that bombed
out stuffy Britain isn't.
Is that having an impact on fashion?
Hollywood always has an impact on fashion.
So even in the 1930s, I say even in 1930s, especially in the 1930s, people are
often complaining sort of daily express columnists are complaining that young

women in Britain are copying American fashions.
But actually the fashions they're copying are not so different from what they're wearing themselves.
They might be a particular cut of a skirt or something like that, but they're not people aren't all dressing in jeans or anything like that.
What you do have is people who are copying, for example, biker films in the mid 1950s.
So that's the leather jacket.
So that's the sort of ancestors of the rockers will come to the mods and rockers in a second.
And you do have a group of people now who are different, who have not really existed, except an emberonic form in the thirties before that, of course, is teenagers, right?
So teenagers have money, similar to the stories about young women.
But actually the first example of a sort of fashion subculture in the fifties is the Teddy boys.
And Teddy boy, the Teddy is Edward the seventh, right?
Yes.
The Edwardian period.
I mean, that's the weird thing.
It is the new look also is kind of very influenced by the, the, the sweep and the color and the, the, the cut of Edwardian dress.
It is because actually, if you think about what was very cool in, let's say the twenties, it was a very androgynous look for women, for example, let's say flappers, most famously.
Um, so the new look is, is actually looking back to the much more kind of romantic, glamorous fashions of the Edwardian period.
And do you think that's because there's a sense that it's not just a second world war, but the first world war, that there's been this continuous process of conflict and convulsion and therefore perhaps the Edwardian period is seen as, you know, something to get back to.
Yeah, I would, I mean, it's the, it's where you would look to, it's where you would look to, because people aren't going to look back to the 1920s flapper fashions because they're, you know, what's coming.
Yeah.
Yeah.
That's the day before yesterday.
But yeah, so with the, with the Teddy boys, Edwardian, as you said, um, that again, it's, it's not, I mean, it's so different from the new look, but actually it's not just similar in the sense that it's an attempt to inject a kind of romanticism and a glamour to clothing, but that is bottom up, right?
No, not initially.
This is interesting.
So people do think the Teddy boys bottom up, but actually what seems to have

happened, and of course, when you're writing about fashion history, you're actually just picking up fragments of stuff and trying to, trying to get some sense of a narrative out of it.
You know, what are people wearing here?
What are people wearing there?
There's some suggestion that actually rich, you know, upper middle class young men at the end of the 1940s, as rationing is coming to an end, as there's a little bit more money around and making a little bit of effort to, to just look at a bit fancier, so fancy collar or a nice waistcoat or sort of narrower trousers and stuff.
And then basically what seems to have happened is that percolated down, let's say you're 21 and you fancy yourself as quite cool, not that you would have used that expression.
You wear a more colourful shirt, you sweep your hair up in a quiff, you wear kind of tapered trousers, you have kind of black boots.
And these are the Teddy boys.
So what the press describe as gay dog clothes?
Exactly.
Yeah.
So there's a description in a book called Hurry On Down, which is written in 1953 by a friend of Kingsley and it's called John Wayne.
And he's talking about lots of youths and he says most of the John Wayne as in the cowboy, not the cowboy, and he says most of the more blue or brown suits and shoes with pointed toes.
But here and there, there was one with a loud tweed jacket and flannel.
So broader shoes, sometimes in suede.
So the use of suede is a kind of giveaway.
The ones in blue or brown suits have their hair swept into shiny quiffs, stiff with grease above the forehead.
The others had theirs brushed smoothly back, blah, blah, blah.
There are some who made, had violent coloured shirts on to make them look like their own conception of Americans.
So they're not really like Americans.
They look like what they think.
But this is interesting because of course they're both looking back to Edward the 7th and what's seen as the dandyism, but also the idea that you wear something colourful makes you look American is a reminder of how far America is ahead of Britain at this point, the late 40s, early 50s.
Because the grease in the hair, that's the DA, isn't it, the duck's arse, which John Travolta wears in Greece.
Exactly.
That is very American.
And this is probably the first time since maybe the 20s where fashion has been shocking.

So people are writing all kinds of letters to newspapers and they say, how
have they got all this money?
How have these young people got all this money to spend on clothes?
And of course that becomes a refrain that you hear again and again through the
50s and 60s that they've got more money than cents and all this sort of stuff.
But that dies, I would say the teddy boy look, maybe 1955 or so.
It's not really cool.
You still see them around as you do with all these subcultures, but basically
it's no longer the cutting edge.
And it's been replaced by something that lots of our British listeners certainly
will know, which is mod, modernism.
Again, there's a novel that captures this very well, a book called Absolute
Beginners by Colin McGinnis and he describes what a teenage boy looks like.
This is 1959, college boy crop hair with burned in parting, neat white Italian
rounded collared shirt, short Roman jacket, very tailored, two little vents,
three buttons, no turnip, narrow trousers, 17 inch bottoms, absolute maximum pointed
toe shoes and a white Mac lying folded by his side.
Right.
So that Dominic is introducing a third pole of fashion, which is Italy.
Yes.
We've had Paris, we've had America, and now we've got Italy as well.
Yeah.
Italy is very cool in mid to late 50s Britain.
So this is the age of what people rather touching me at the time called
espresso bars where you would go and you would order your espresso coffee.
And there'd be the kind of clanking Gadget machine.
I mean, there's actually an argument among coffee bar historians, I think,
about which was the first coffee shop to have a Gadget espresso machine in mid 50s Britain.
And these are seen as very cutting edge, extraordinarily fashionable.
I mean, so cutting edge, so space age.
And people will dress in what they think of as Italian clothes.
They wear kind of a lot of black, a lot of very tight jackets, tight trousers.
The boys, of course, will often want to ride Vespa or Lambereta scooters.
Because they're Italian.
Because they're Italian.
The scooter is very...
You're looking like you're scooting around Naples or Rome.
Yeah.
So it's funny how in 1947, nobody had a scooter.
In 1967, if you'd had a scooter, it would have been really old hat and really passe.
But in 1957, the scooter is where it's at.
And you're riding around in Great Gang on your scooters
and turning up at places like Brighton where you are having run-ins with rockers.
Isn't that right?

Or is that not true?
That is right.
That does happen.
But the point at which that happened, so for our overseas listeners,
this is a very famous sort of fracture point in British youth culture in 1964-65.
But the point at which that happens is actually long after mod has really ceased to be very fashionable.
So that modernist look, you listen to jazz, you go to a cafe, you wear very tight, dark clothes.
There's a sort of sense of tremendous precision about your appearance with the Mons.
And their enemies, as you said, the rockers who wear black leather jackets,
they wear white t-shirts, they wear jeans.
So again, they're looking like John Travolta in Greece.
Yeah.
So it's an American look.
Or James Dean.
Or James Dean, yeah.
Well, of course, yes, because John Travolta in Greece deserves that.
James Dean is the original.
So James Dean or Marlon Brando, I would have said, would be the two sort of obvious heroes to people.
If you're genuinely cool, you don't wear either of these uniforms at this point.
What do you wear if you're genuinely cool?
In the mid-60s.
No, no, in the 50s.
Oh, in the 50s.
But in the 50s, you would wear this.
You would wear this.
Okay.
So these are genuinely the cutting edge.
They are at that point.
This is like eight years before they fight each other on the beaches.
But isn't there a slight sense that mods are cooler than rockers?
I think there's always been that sense.
But maybe that's a middle-class perspective.
Mods are much more popular.
I mean, mods listen to jazz.
Later on, they'll listen to soul.
Whereas rockers listen to late 50s rock and roll.
So it's slight remainers against Brexiteers vibe a little bit.
I was just thinking about that, Tom.
I knew you were going to go.
Sorry, I was so predictable.
No, no, no.
Because I think it's a good line.

Because it's actually not so much class.
It's about culture.
Yeah.
It's about the vibe.
Exactly.
Do you look to America and Biker Films and James Dean?
And is that your inspiration?
Or is your inspiration?
Coffee shops.
Coffee shops and scooters.
So the mods later on will go on to be people who take
loads of amphetamines and dance all night and all that stuff.
But I think in the late 50s, that's not quite the case.
It's two incarnations in mod, I would say.
Late 50s and early 60s.
But there's a sort of attention to detail with your clothes.
There would have been unthinkable in the late 1940s when you just
don't have that money.
You see, what's changed now is that there is so much more money
around the economy is booming.
Teenagers have weekend jobs.
So all these people, how do they pay for it?
Some of them have pocket money, but lots of them work in hairdressers,
in pubs, in cafes, after school, all of that sort of stuff.
In a way, again, that would have been very, very difficult 10 or 20 years earlier.
Just before we go to the break, two questions.
One specifically about this very close attention to the detail of clothes
among certain groups of men.
This is an unbelievably homophobic age.
Homosexuality is illegal.
There's a deep suspicion of men who take too great an interest in fashion.
Is that an issue?
Is there a kind of anxieties about homosexuality around the interest
in fashion in Britain?
That's a really good question, Tom.
And I would say probably not, actually.
I think it's easy to over-hype that.
I think there is absolute anxiety in the newspapers about the amount of money
that young people spend on clothes and about how much they care about clothes.
And you see that again and again.
People will write columns and letters saying,
our youngsters have lost their moral bearings.
They're spending all this money on clothing.
They care about clothes.

No one cared in my day, which is obviously untrue.
This is a sign of decadence.
But I think it's going slightly too far to say, therefore, it's effeminacy.
And the second question, which I think is such a big question that we'll leave it
to the second half, is we've talked about boys.
What about girls?
So when we come back, second half, let's look at the evolution of female fashion
through the fifties and into the sixties.
We'll see you in a few minutes.
Hello.
Welcome back to The Rest is History.
And we are looking at the evolution of London, most improbably,
in the light of the austerity of the 1940s and the post-war years,
into the leading light of global fashion in the mid-sixties.
And Dominic, I guess that if people think of a single item of clothing that sums up
the image of swinging London, it would be the miniskirt.
Yes.
How far are we from the miniskirt in the fifties?
We're quite away.
We talked before the break about the new look.
I mean, those are quite long, voluptuous, voluminous clothes.
So teenage girls drive so much of this market.
There are, I think, at the end of the 1950s, early 1960s,
teenagers are spending £800 million a year in Britain.
And so that's economically really significant, isn't it?
Really significant.
And the bulk of that is driven by girls.
We're going to get into later on in this half of the episode, the kind of magazines,
the advertising, the way in which people are basically trying to separate
teenage girls from their money and succeeding.
But yeah, the miniskirt is still a few years away.
Now, the person who's always credited with inventing it,
no one person invented the miniskirt, by the way,
but the person who's always credited with inventing it is probably the single
most famous British designer of this period.
The designer who's actually equated more than anybody else worldwide
with the spirit of 60s fashion.
And that is, of course, Mary Quant, Tom.
I mean, even you've heard of Mary Quant.
What do you mean, even me?
60s fashion is not really your...
I love 60s fashion.
You do, actually. I'm being very harsh.
Because I've read your books.

I know you're... I'm being very harsh.
You are.
So, Mary Quant, she's almost a cliché, like all clichés, with a...
We love a cliché on the rest of 60s.
With a grain of truth.
So, she is the daughter of liberal schoolteachers from Wales.
She was born in 1934.
She comes to study fashion at Goldsmiths in London in the early 1950s.
She meets a guy there called Alexander Plunkett Green, who's very posh.
No.
Yeah.
Surely not with a name like that.
Well, there's a lot of very posh people in the story of 60s fashion, actually.
Or people trying to be posh.
Through her husband, so they get married, through him, she gets into this set,
who are kind of...
They're young, they're rich, they're public school educated.
That's... So, for overseas listeners, confusingly, that means they're privately educated.
They are very well connected.
And they call themselves the Chelsea set.
They live in Chelsea.
And Chelsea, which is West London, just west of the centre,
for those people who don't know London.
Chelsea in the 1950s has this image, this sort of bohemian image.
The best way I can give you a sort of sense of that is that in Kingsley Amos' novel,
Lucky Jim, which is the story of a guy who, a classic kind of jazz listening,
tweed jacket wearing young man, who's planning to escape from his academic job, Tom,
and to move to the capital.
Very, very commendable behaviour.
He is fantasising in his mind about all the exciting places he could live in London.
And there's a huge list of London neighbourhoods, as Jim is thinking,
sort of, stream of consciousness.
And then he mentions Chelsea, and then he stops, and he says,
no, not Chelsea.
Because Kingsley Amos hates bohemianism.
And he hates kind of upper-class dandies and free thinkers and people like that.
And Chelsea, even at this point, early 1950s, is equated with that.
And the high street in Chelsea is Kings Road.
It's the Kings Road, exactly.
And the Kings Road, I guess, with Carnaby Street and Soho,
will become one of the beating hearts of fashion.
Absolutely.
But at this point, actually, the Kings Road, which even now, by the way,
you go to the Kings Road in London, and there will be young Japanese women

walking down the Kings Road looking for boutiques.
Well, it's kind of Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren as well, in due course.
Of course, punk later on in the 1970s.
But at this point, actually, the Kings Road is just a high street.
So there are bakeries, and there are fishmongers.
And actually, in the surrounding flats, there are lots of writers,
and would be writers and artists.
It's not a fashionable street at all.
But it's there, partly because the rents are not prohibitively high,
that Mary Quant, who has studied fashion at Goldsmiths,
she opens a shop called Bazaar.
As she says at the time, she wants it to be a willow base of clothes and accessories,
sweaters, scarves, shifts, hats, jewelry, and peculiar odds and ends.
As if this is on the Kings Road.
And this is on the Kings Road.
And this is not New Look fashion.
So this is not the kind of swirling, voluptuous, curvaceous, voluminous look
that has been seen as the sort of cutting edge since 1947.
These are very brightly colored clothes.
And the key thing about it, and this will come up again and again through this story,
the inspiration, she says, is children's clothes.
And this is such a key element, I think, to the 60s.
And actually, funny enough, when I first wrote about this, which is 20 years ago,
it didn't strike me as powerful as it does today, how odd that is.
And also, when it starts to get a sexual dimension, which we will come to,
how slightly unsettling that is actually to a 21st century reader, I think.
In what sense are they drawing?
I mean, what kind of famous five outfits?
Yeah, so pinafores, the skirts are getting shorter.
You asked about getting to the mini skirts.
And is that because young girls wear their skirts tend to be shorter?
Well, traditionally, if you're at school, if you are six years old,
you're not going to be wearing like a full length dress, are you?
I mean, you would wear a shorter skirt.
And so shorter skirts for adult women make them look...
Fantalize them a bit.
Fantalizes them a little bit.
So, Nicarbaca, she has, she has kind of knee socks.
The patterns that Mary Quint uses, so polka dots, stripes.
Yeah, of course, I'd never thought of that.
Again, they are equated with children's clothes.
Even the fabrics, Tom, Kingdom, most obviously, or tartan,
those are things that, you know, they are seen as the fashions.
Oh, you mentioned the Enid Blyton, famous.

What kind of school uniform?
They're school uniform.
They're the things that Enid Blyton's kids would wear in the stories.
They're jolly, bright, informal.
But again, also, it's backward looking, right?
I mean, as with the Teddy Boys, as with Sergeant Pepper in due course,
there's a sense of people drawing inspiration directly from a past
that a previous generation had come to seem as the definition of unfashionable.
And therefore, for those on the cutting edge,
the highly unfashionable suddenly becomes fashionable.
And we're aware of that as an ongoing cycle right the way up into the present.
Well, people write about that all the time now.
To what extent does popular culture cannibalize itself?
Are we ceased to produce anything new and we're constantly just cannibalizing the past?
You could reasonably argue that even at this point,
effectively, what they're cannibalizing is the 1920s.
So the flapper look.
There is a definite continuity between the flapper look and the sort of the sixties look.
So Mary Quant anyway, she does these clothes that are seen at the time as tremendously groundbreaking.
Now, just a couple of things about this.
First of all, she boasts the time and it's a very sixties boast.
I mean, people always make this about anything they produce in the 1960s.
She says, it's classless.
In our shops, you will find duchesses jostling with typists to buy the same dresses.
This is not true.
So I gave the example in, I think, in one of my books in White Heat
of a pin of four dress that she made that was in vogue in 1960.
And that cost 17 guineas.
And that's the equivalent of three weeks wages for a young woman who works in an office.
But it's interesting that she would want to make that claim.
I mean, she wouldn't want to make that claim presumably a decade before,
where the price is the whole point.
Yeah. It's a social democratic age, I think you would say.
The 1950s and 1960s, there's still a hint of the leftover egalitarianism from the end of World War II.
It's an age of full employment, an age of the surging living standards.
An age when there's a reaction against what's seen as the stuffiness and the snobbery of the old establishments.
But is there also a sense that fashion that is coming from the streets
has a credibility that hadn't been there before?
Is there any sense of that?
I think there's a slight sense that there are people challenging the old very top-down fashion house directed.
Look, they're a new vehicle.

I mean, we'll get into boutiques in just a second.
Just before we do that, Mary Quant, one of the things about her, actually,
is although her initial shop is really a shop for kind of Sloan Square people,
so quite posh people in Chelsea, she does become genuinely mass market.
So there has been formed a new group called the London Fashion House Group,
which organizes London Fashion Weeks and organizes tours of Paris and New York.
And she is always at the forefront in that.
And she actually signs a deal with J.C. Penney.
So our American listeners will know the name J.C. Penney.
It's one of the biggest clothing chains in the United States in the 60s.
And they sell her label clothes in 1,700 American branches.
She's the first British designer of that generation
whose clothes you can buy them in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in Los Angeles, in Chicago, wherever.
You know, it's a genuine kind of global reach.
And it's that sort of jolly infantile kind of look that is novel, I think, that is unusual,
because it's seen as unconservative and informal and all of those things.
And when you say infantile, the look isn't just kind of short skirts.
It's also going back to the slightly thinner look of flappers in the 20s, right?
Yeah, absolutely.
No curves or...
No curves.
Anything like that.
We'll sort of deconstruct that a bit later on, I think, because it's a fascinating thing.
And it becomes even more pronounced later in the 60s when he gets twiggy.
The rejection of the curves of the new look and the rejection of...
I mean, I think just as a spoiler, lots of people at the time talk about it.
It's a rejection of motherhood, a rejection of female maturity and a huge obsession with youth, by the way.
As early as 1959, Vogue has an editorial where they say that the word young is becoming the persuasive adjective for all fashions, hairstyles and ways of life.
Now, that was just not true.
We think of that as true now, but that really wasn't true 20 or 30 years earlier.
The obvious reason being that young people didn't have very much money.
So there's absolutely no point in marketing all your stuff to them.
And actually, what happens is, because there's not much money, once you become an adult,
you buy adult clothes that will hopefully...
That overcoats, there's worth the equivalent of £1,000,
you're hoping that that will last you till you're dead.
Yeah, you don't want to have to change it every...
You don't want to have to change it.
Every four weeks.
But by 1959, people are talking about disposable fashion, about clothes that you will wear for just one year and then you will ditch, even when you're 19 or 20.
So you talked about how Marie-Claude's first boutique is actually very, very expensive.

What's the process whereby these clothes start to percolate down?
So the classic figure is the dolly bird.
Yes, yeah, right.
These are the girls who are going to, you know, screaming at the Beatles or Silla Black, I guess.
Silla Black.
And nobody outside of Britain will know who Silla Black was, but Google her.
Look her up.
So the big phenomenon is the rise of the independent little boutique.
Previously, you bought your clothes often from a department store or a shop like Marks & Spencer.
So a high street store.
Now those department stores, even quite small, not small towns, but medium-sized towns,
might have a department store.
These are places with long leases and high rents.
Boutiques are very different.
They have short-term leases and they're paying low rents.
The shop is often down a side street.
It's not on the main road because it's too expensive.
And they're young people who, you know, who open them.
They may only be around for two or three years.
The atmosphere is much more informal.
And it's actually through those shops opening in places across Britain
that the Mary Quant Look is kind of diffused.
And people are copying it because they've seen it in magazines and things,
which again, we'll get onto.
And the Dolly Bird, so we said before that the people who are really driving this are young women
or young girls, stroke women between the ages of, let's say, 13, 14 and maybe 24, 25.
And they absolutely, you know, the Mary Quant Look, it's modern, it's informal,
it's quite androgynous.
That definitely has begun to conquer the mass market by the early 1960s.
How? I mean, how are people, say, outside London?
Yeah, how do they see it?
You know, outside the West End.
How are they coming across these fashions?
Magazines or TV or what?
TV is part of it.
So by the late 1950s, both the BBC and ITV, their commercial competitor,
running weekly pop music programs, sort of ready, steady go, Six Five Special,
these kind of programs in which you see pop groups who are wearing these clothes,
but you also see the audience.
Of course, not everybody has a TV at this point.
So even more important than TV, I would argue, are magazines.
Women's magazines had always been massive.
So there's a magazine called Woman.
And in the late 1950s, there's some extraordinary statistic that out of all the British women

between the ages of 16 and 44, half of them read Woman Magazine.
Wow, that is a stupid five figures.
Yeah.
But also the new thing is magazines for teenage girls, for very young women.
And they obviously didn't really exist before because they didn't have the money.
Now there are magazines like Romeo, Mirabelle, Boyfriend.
The most famous one is called Honey.
Honey was launched in 1960, circulation 140,000.
Their slogan, I mean, the Teddy Boys is gay dog clothes.
Their slogan is young, gay and going far.
And they sponsor boutiques.
They sponsor hairdressers.
They organize tours.
And it's all, you know, you will attract the right boy.
You will be economically successful.
You will get a good job.
You will do all this if you wear the right clothes and you have the right makeup.
So those magazines are kind of working cahoots in a way, as they do today,
as, you know, Instagram influencers do today with the fashion industry.
Right.
And so Instagram influencers depend on photography.
What about the fashion magazines?
Because fashion photographers become part of swinging London as well, don't they?
Photography is absolutely massive in this period.
The magazine that really pioneers, this is a completely different magazine called The Queen.
And later rebranded Queen.
So it's bought by a guy called Jocelyn Stevens, who's a young man.
And he becomes the head of English Heritage.
Yeah, exactly.
There you go, Tom.
Very improbably.
What an unexpected link that is.
Very sand views on Stonehenge.
Oh, excellent, excellent use.
Wow, I did not see that coming.
So he bought, when he was 25, he bought this dusty society magazine called The Queen.
And he says, I'm going to make this the magazine for the new generation.
And he recruits a very famous photographer, Anthony Armstrong Jones,
who becomes Lord Snowden, Marys Princess Margaret.
Yeah, familiar to viewers of The Queen.
Very familiar to viewers of The Queen.
Sorry, the crown.
Sorry.
All these queens and crowns.

So it's probably The Queen magazine that inspires the most famous magazines of all,
which are the color supplements.
Most people listening to this will be like, what?
I can't believe they're claiming that color supplements and newspapers
are something incredibly exciting and radical.
But they are, Tom.
So in the Sunday Times launches its color section in February, 1962,
this is one of the landmark publications of Britain in the 1960s.
Well, I mean, any massive stars appear in the Sunday Times color supplement.
That is absolutely true.
I hadn't thought of that.
God, how low have they fallen, Tom?
That their very first edition was a photograph of the supermodel of the age,
Gene Shrimpton, modeling a Mary Quant dress,
photographed by the great photographer of the age, David Bailey.
The headline says there's going to be a story by Ian Fleming,
a New James Bond story.
And of course, the most recent iteration of the Sunday Times magazine,
Tom featured the Rest is History.
So that tells you.
Hot model sporting the very latest in overcoat fashion.
Yes.
Dominic, I should just intrude at this point, because Theo, who is 13,
has no idea what a color supplement is.
I know.
This is the one podcast Tom we've done that makes me feel really old,
because this is all just babble to Theo.
It's just completely incomprehensible babble.
So color supplement, it's a magazine that's in color,
that comes with the newspaper.
And of course, people didn't do that before,
or it was much more difficult to do,
because color printing was so expensive,
rather like colorful clothes.
These things are only possible because of the technological advances.
And it's very 60s, isn't it?
Again, it's very bright primary colors.
Exactly.
The whole style of it, you just open it
and it's very much resonant to the 60s.
And through these color supplements,
so the other newspapers like the Observer
and the Sunday Telegraph rush to follow suit,
they make stars of the photographers.

So the three in particular, very famous to people who remember the 1960s,
Terrence Donovan, Brian Duffy, and most famously of all,
David Bailey.
David Bailey is from the east end of London.
He was born in 1938.
He fell in love with photography during his national service.
So for those people who don't know that,
I mean, you were conscripted effectively
and you went and served overseas in the 1950s,
in the colonies, in the British army.
He was sent to Singapore.
He fell in love with photography there.
He'd always been interested in birdwatching.
Ironically, birdwatching.
Thanks for that.
That was a lovely one.
That's a very authentic 60s joke.
It is a very, it's a very 60s joke.
And people like David Bailey,
who have risen from working class backgrounds
through their talent.
I mean, there's no one can question these people.
They're immensely talented.
They have an amazing eye
and they're shooting very sort of kinetic, informal pictures.
There's a very, a great break with the sort of stylized 1940s,
1950s, very stiff and stuffy fashion photographs.
They become kind of folk heroes actually.
So you mentioned Austin Powers at the beginning.
Austin Powers is a photographer.
Of course he is, I've forgotten that.
And there's no other age actually.
I mean, we have my friend, Chris Floyd,
who is a photographer,
who's photographed some incredible people,
listens to this podcast,
is a member of the Restless History Club.
But I mean, even he would, I'm sure,
admit that photographers in the 21st century
are not the folk heroes that they were in the 1960s,
when, thanks partly to Lord Snowden and Antony Armstrong Jones,
they are, I mean, when David Bailey gets divorced,
that news is on the front page of the newspapers.
Right.

You know, he is a star.
It's a big, big deal.
So Dominic, photographers are very groovy,
but equally groovy are the people that they're shooting.
I love the fact that you're now doing this as Austin Powers.
Better believe it, baby.
So you mentioned Jean Schrimpton.
Yes.
Appearing in the first edition of the Sunday Times color supplement.
And she's probably the most famous model of the 60s.
Definitely.
So just tell us about her.
So she comes from the sort of the edge of the county set,
I suppose you would say, the gentry in Buckinghamshire.
Her father was a, he was a businessman.
He worked in the building trade.
She's tall and immensely, you know, obviously incredibly good looking.
She was going to become a secretary, but she ends up
signing on the Lucy Clayton modeling school,
which is the modeling school in London.
And she is shooting an advert for Corn Flakes
when David Bailey spots her and he books her to do a shoot for Vogue.
And they basically not just become,
I mean, it's very common with these photographers,
they would have a single muse that they worked with all the time
that they would end up having a relationship with,
which is exactly what happens with David Bailey and Jean Schrimpton.
And they command enormous amounts of kind of newspaper attention
in the early 60s.
And the thing about her is that she,
she's seen as quite girl next door.
So she's incredibly good looking, but she's sort of tall and lissom
and kind of willowy.
Again, she's not terribly curvaceous.
Yeah.
And that's, I mean, I'm not being prurient.
That's an important part of her appeal.
Because that's the 60s look.
Because the look is not to be immensely curvaceous.
The look is to be sort of, well, twig-like.
Yeah.
She looks younger than she is, I think it's fair to say.
And what also makes her a big star, and this is where we should end,
Tom, it's great to end a fashion podcast on a cliffhanger.

Yeah.
So to give you some sense of what a big star she is,
I mean, she has been on the cover of Vogue and Glamour and Elle
and all these magazines.
And she's seen in America, in Europe,
as by far the most famous model in the world.
In the autumn of 1965, she's offered a job in Melbourne, Australia.
And she's going to be modeling a range of synthetic all-on dresses
at this big racing carnival that they have in Melbourne
that includes the Derby.
And to give you a sense of what a star she is,
when the Beatles had gone to Australia,
they had been paid £1,500.
She is going to be paid £2,000 by the Victoria Racing Club.
And she doesn't have to split it four ways, does she?
She doesn't have to split, yeah, exactly.
That is a year's income for the average Australian.
And she's just basically been told to go there for two weeks.
And she arrives on Derby Day at the Flemington Racecourse.
This is the height of the kind of Melbourne season.
So all the posh people in Melbourne, such as they are,
as Australia, of course, Tom, they have turned.
Dominic, we're going to Australia in November.
We are, but they love it, though, don't they?
I would just like Australians to know that I do not associate myself at all
with that comment by Dominic.
She arrives on the 30th of October, 1965.
Everybody is so excited that she is going.
The local Melbourne Sun News Pictorial says, you know,
we are going to be treated to the spectacle
of the most beautiful girl on earth.
But, Tom, what she does that day in Melbourne at the racecourse
not only sends shockwaves through Anglo-Australian relations,
it's a landmark in human history.
Wow. And on that bombshell.
Can we really leave people hanging?
Not knowing.
We must.
Wow.
The good thing is, Tom, if people are members of the Restless History Club,
they can find out what she does.
They can find out now.
But otherwise, they'll have to wait till the next episode,
which is awful because we've never had a bigger cliffhanger in the Restless History.

It's huge.
All right, so we will be back next time when we continue the story of 60s fashion.
London really does start to swing.
But before London starts to swing, Dominic will reveal what the shrimp does in Melbourne.
History cliffhangers, don't get bigger than that.
We'll see you next time.
Bye-bye.
Bye-bye.
Hello Restless History listeners.
It's Anita Arnand from Empire Podcast, which I host along with...
me, William Dalrymple, and we are here to tell you about our brand new series
on the Russian Empire and the Great Game.
So far in this series, we've told the story of Ivan the Terrible,
who tortured and murdered his way through his reign somehow,
being effective enough to unify Russia,
but bonkers enough to stab his son right through the head.
We've also done an episode on Restless History fan favorite,
Peter the Great, the recent runner-up on historical Love Island 2.
No detail was spared.
We've got Dwarf Throwing, Wheelbarrow Racing,
and the creation of the vital post of Archdeacon Fuck Off.
And all this week, we're going to be talking Catherine the Great,
the most powerful woman in history.
Hers is a brilliant story.
Not only was she a political genius and a modernizer,
but it was under her reign that Russia took control of huge areas of modern Ukraine,
a next Crimea, and built towns like Hassan and Sevastopol
that are all too familiar to us at the moment.
So if you want to see how Russia became the world power it is today,
and look at how Putin is influenced by those leaders of the Russian Empire,
you can listen by searching Empire wherever you get your podcasts.