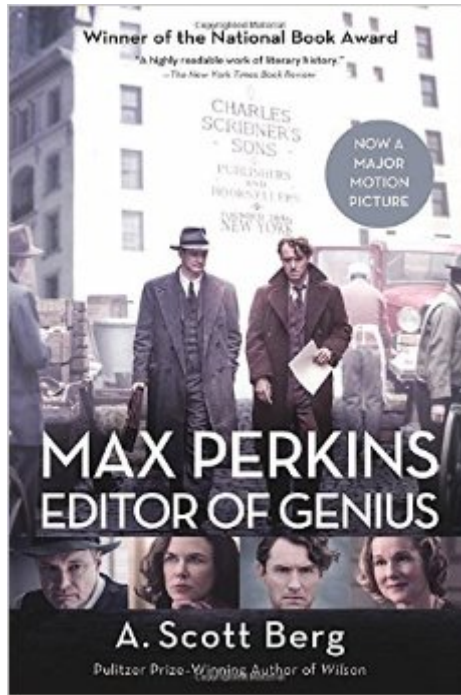


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Max Perkins: Editor Of Genius



Synopsis

Now the Major Motion Picture *Genius*, Starring Colin Firth, Nicole Kidman and Jude Law. The National Book Award winner from Pulitzer-Prize winning author A. Scott Berg. "The talents he nurtured were known worldwide: F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Thomas Wolfe, and numerous others. But Maxwell Perkins remained a mystery, a backstage presence who served these authors not only as editor but also as critic, career manager, moneylender, psychoanalyst, father-confessor, and friend." This outstanding biography, a winner of the National Book Award, is the first to explore the fascinating life of this genius editor extraordinary "in both the professional and personal domains. It tells not only of Perkins' stormy marriage, endearing eccentricities, and secret twenty-five-year romance with Elizabeth Lemmon, but also of his intensely intimate relationships with the leading literary lights of the twentieth century. It is, in the words of Newsweek, "an admirable biography of a wholly admirable man."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Max Perkins: Editor of *Genius* is one of the best non-fiction titles I've read in a long time, and will likely be one of the best books I'll ever read. Berg (with the help of his own editor) truly is a genius: he pulls us directly into the story, introducing us to Scribner's Max Perkins at the zenith of his editorial career, then plunges us into his first acquisition -- F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* -- before taking us, methodically, through Perkins's life. An intrepid biographer, Berg tells us only what we need to know about Perkins's early life, getting to the good stuff: his discovery of Fitzgerald and Thomas Wolfe and his work with Ernest Hemingway. We also find out about

Perkins's work with other remarkable authors, including Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings (*The Yearling*), S.S. Van Dine (the Philo Vance mysteries), and Arthur Train, creator of the mythical DA Ephraim Tutt. I laughed out loud at the story about how many believed that Tutt existed after the publication of his "autobiography," complete with photos. We learn of Perkins's patient relationship with the frustrating Thomas Wolfe, a mammoth talent and physical specimen who could not contain his own enthusiasm. Berg suggests that, as Perkins discovered, Wolfe wasn't writing "books," he was writing one book, which would have encompassed thousands of pages if he had not died early -- a profound insight into the heart and soul of a dynamic author. We learn much of Papa Hemingway as well, including some insights into the macho author's home life. Elements of Hemingway's unpublished fiction suggest that the bullfighting fan, fisherman, and big game hunter might have enjoyed switching gender roles in bed with one of his wives.

Long before his bestseller *Wilson* and *Lindbergh* and other celebrity subjects, A. Scott Berg published in 1978 *Max Perkins Editor of Genius*. As an old English major I would bet that most college English professors never heard of this important man of American letters! This excellent biography should fit the bill in introducing to modern readers a crucial figure in publishing history! Maxwell Perkins was born into the home of an affluent attorney in New York City in 1884. He graduated from Harvard with a degree in economics. Perkins worked briefly as a newspaper reporter before being hired by Scribners in 1910. He died in 1948. What makes this book a joy is to see Perkins working as a mentor, critic, friend and editor of many important authors. Among them: Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald: Perkins had a close relationship with the alcoholic and depressive Fitzgerald. Chapters are devoted to how Perkins guided Scott through such masterpieces as *The Great Gatsby*, *Tender in the Night* and his first big seller *This Side of Paradise*. Many anecdotes deal with Perkins visits with Scott and Zelda his mentally ill but talented wife. Ernest Hemingway was the best seller of all the Scribners authors. Hem won the Nobel Prize for Literature for such great novels as *The Sun Also Rises*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *The Green Hills of Africa* and many more novels and short stories. Hemingway was rough hewn who loved his role as a macho he-man. Perkins viewed him as a younger brother. Perkins often visited with Hemingway in Key West and other locales where the two close friends hunted and fished together. Thomas Wolfe - The giant in size novelist from Asheville North Carolina viewed Perkins as a father figure.

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