



# The Hustler

*Walter Tevis*

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To Fast Eddie Felsen, a young pool hustler, there was only one thing that mattered: to make the big time and the big money in the world of pool by beating the best in the country.

Hustling suckers in small towns for good stake money was practice for his goal, and when he felt ready he went to Bennington's pool hall in Chicago to find Minnesota Fats. Eddie and Fats pit nerve against skill in a fantastic match over an unbroken thirty-six hours. Eddie's final painful loss teaches him that nerve alone isn't enough—guts, stamina, and character make the difference between winners and losers.

It takes an interlude with Sarah, an alcoholic and a born loser, to bring the lesson home, and the shrewd advice and backing of Bert, a professional gambler, to put it into practice. Bert knows talent without character is nothing and stakes Eddie to a climactic all-or-nothing rematch. When it is over, Eddie knows a great deal more about big-time pool, about money, and about himself. In beating Fats he became the best in the country.

*"A fine, swift, wanton, offbeat novel."*

—*The New York Times*

The basis for a major motion picture starring Paul Newman and Jackie Gleason, this landmark novel packs plenty of action, romance, and suspense.

## About the Author

Walter Tevis was born in San Francisco in 1928 and lived in the Sunset District, close to Golden Gate Park and the sea, for the first ten years of his life. At the age of ten his parents placed him in the Stanford Children's Convalescent Home for a year, during which time they returned to Kentucky, where the Tevis family had been given an early grant of land in Madison County. Walter traveled across country alone by train at the age of eleven to rejoin his family and felt the shock of entering Appalachian culture when he enrolled in the local school. He made friends with Toby Kavanaugh, a fellow student at the Lexington high school, and learned to shoot pool on the table of the recreation room in the Kavanaugh mansion, and to read science fiction books for the first time in Toby's small library. They remained lifelong friends, and Toby grew up to become the owner of a pool room in Lexington.

At the age of seventeen, Walter became a carpenter's mate in the Navy, serving on board the USS *Hamil* in Okinawa. After his discharge, he studied at the University of Kentucky where he received B.A. and M.A. degrees in English Literature and studied with Abe Guthrie, author of *The Big Sky*. Upon graduation he taught everything from the sciences and English to physical education in small-town Kentucky high schools. At that time he began writing short stories, which were published in the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Esquire*, *Redbook*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Playboy*. He wrote his first novel, *The Hustler*, which was published in 1959, and followed that with *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, which was published in 1963. He taught English literature and creative writing at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio for fourteen years, where he was a distinguished professor, and left that post in 1978 to come to New York and resume writing. He wrote four

more novels—*Mockingbird*, *The Steps of the Sun*, *The Queen's Gambit* and *The Color of Money*—and a collection of short stories, *Far From Home*. He died of lung cancer in 1984. His books have been translated into French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish, Icelandic, Greek, Slovak, Serbo-Croatian, Israeli, Turkish, Japanese, and Thai.

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