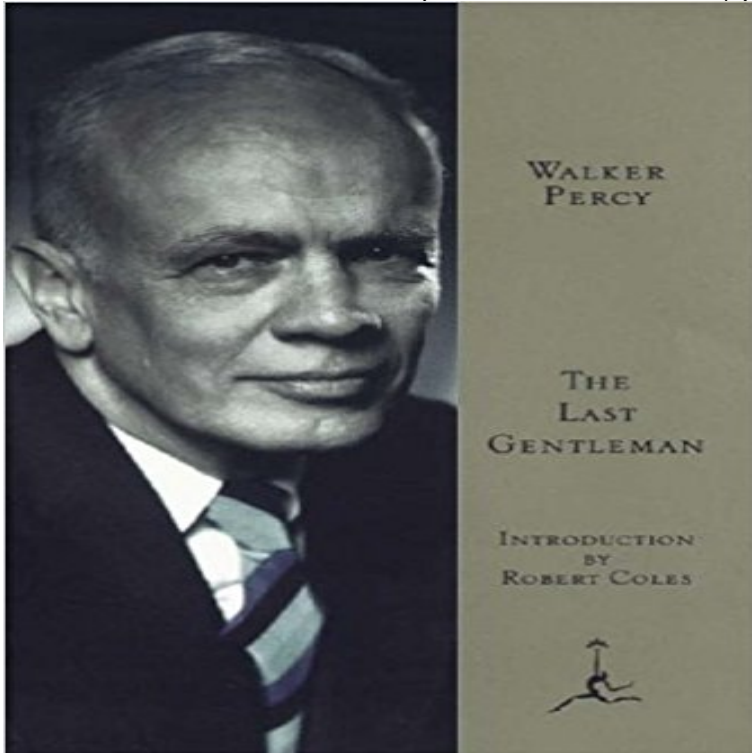


The Last Gentleman (Modern Library)



The Last Gentleman is lovely and brilliant...a highly whimsical kind of picaresque tale that puts one in mind of both Faulkner and Camus, wrote Joyce Carol Oates when Walker Percys novel was first published in 1966. Williston Bibb Barrett, the last gentleman of the story, is a displaced Southerner who has dropped out of Princeton owing to a nervous condition that his psychoanalyst associates with an inability to fit into groups. While living in New York City, our wayfarer-hero falls in love with a young woman he spies through a telescope...and sets out on a cross-country odyssey in search of home, identity, and the meaning of contemporary life. The Last Gentleman is a fantastically intuitive report on how America feels to the touch, said Wilfrid Sheed. Page-for-page and line-for-line this is certainly one of the best-written books in recent memory. As a Southern writer, Percy inherits the remains of a sonorous musical language. But beyond that, his unique point of view forms beautiful sentences like a diamond cutting glass. Alfred Kazin agreed: Percy is a natural writer, downright, subtle, mischievous . . . a philosopher among novelists. With a new Introduction by Robert Coles. The Modern Library has played a significant role in American cultural life for the better part of a century. The series was founded in 1917 by the publishers Boni and Liveright and eight years later acquired by Bennett Cerf and Donald Klopfer. It provided the foundation for their next publishing venture, Random House. The Modern Library has been a staple of the American book trade, providing readers with afford-able hardbound editions of impor-tant works of literature and thought. For the Modern Librarys seventy-fifth anniversary, Random House redesigned the series, restoring as its emblem the running torch-bearer created by Lucian Bernhard in 1925 and refurbishing jackets, bindings,

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