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My Mentor: A Young Man's Friendship with William Maxwell

Alec Wilkinson

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My Mentor: A Young Man's Friendship with William Maxwell Alec Wilkinson
At twenty-four, Alec Wilkinson decided that he wanted to write, so his father asked for the help of his closest friend, William Maxwell, widely regarded as one of the twentieth century's great American writers and an editor of fiction for forty years at The New Yorker. MY MENTOR is the story of a young man's education at the hands of a master and a heartbreaking meditation on the brave, graceful end of Maxwell's long and happy life - he died at ninety-one, in July 2000. Making use of biography, memoir, and essay, and writing in a lapidary but intimate voice, Wilkinson explores the deeply resonant friendship between the old man and the young one. His experience with Maxwell over the course of twenty-five years he takes as the occasion for a profound and moving reflection on writing, wisdom, fatherhood, love, courage, dignity, and the end that awaits us all.

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