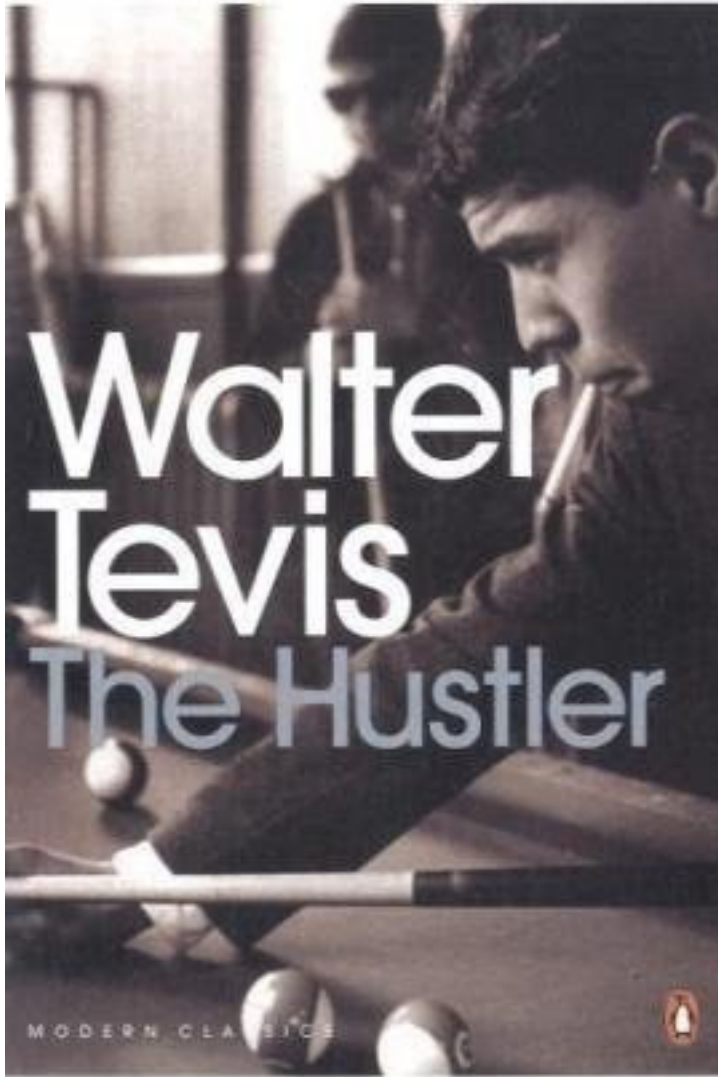


The Hustler (Penguin Modern Classics)



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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 look for Minnesota Fats. Eddie and Fats pit nerve against skill in a fantastic match over an unbroken thirty-six hours. This contest shows Eddie some things he did not know about guts, stamina and 'character' - the difference between winners and losers, and it proves a hard and painful lesson to learn. It takes an interlude with Sarah, an alcoholic student and a born loser, to give the lesson meaning, and the shrewd advice and backing of Bert, a professional gambler, to put it into practice. Bert knows that talent without character is nothing and stakes Eddie to a climactic return match for all or nothing. When it is over, Eddie knows a great deal more about big-time pool, about money, and about himself. In beating Fats he has become the best in the country.

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