

the greatest man in the world james thurber

The Greatest Man in the World James Thurber: A Legacy of Wit and Wisdom

the greatest man in the world james thurber is a phrase that might strike some as hyperbolic at first glance, but a closer look at his life and work reveals why many regard him as one of the most influential American humorists and writers of the 20th century. Thurber's distinctive blend of wit, keen observation, and subtle satire has left an indelible mark on literature and popular culture. His legacy goes beyond mere laughter; it challenges readers to reflect on human nature, society, and the absurdities of everyday life.

In this article, we'll explore who James Thurber was, what made his work so special, and why he continues to be celebrated as a towering figure in literary humor. Along the way, we'll delve into his style, his most famous works, and the lasting impact he had on storytelling and cartoons. Whether you're a longtime fan or new to his writing, this exploration will deepen your appreciation for the greatest man in the world James Thurber.

Who Was the Greatest Man in the World James Thurber?

James Grover Thurber was born in 1894 in Columbus, Ohio. Despite facing several personal challenges, including poor eyesight that eventually left him nearly blind, Thurber carved out a remarkable career as a cartoonist, author, and journalist. He became a prominent figure at The New Yorker magazine, where his cartoons and short stories became a staple for readers hungry for humor that was both intelligent and accessible.

Thurber's background in journalism gave him a sharp eye for detail and a knack for capturing the quirks of human behavior. His work often reflected the everyday struggles and eccentricities of middle-class Americans, making his humor relatable across generations. He wasn't just a humorist; he was an astute observer of human nature.

The Man Behind the Humor

What set James Thurber apart wasn't just his ability to make people laugh. It was his understanding of the complexities beneath the surface of ordinary life. His stories often portrayed characters caught in misunderstandings, miscommunications, or ironic situations, highlighting the contradictions inherent in human relationships.

Despite his physical limitations later in life, Thurber's imagination and wit flourished. His cartoons, known for their simple yet expressive line drawings, complemented his writing perfectly. They added a visual punchline that made his humor even more effective.

The Writing Style and Themes of James Thurber

The greatest man in the world James Thurber developed a unique writing style that combined sharp satire with gentle absurdity. His prose was simple but clever, often using irony and understatement to make his points. Readers could find humor in the mundane, as Thurber revealed the comedy hidden in everyday scenarios.

Signature Features of Thurber's Work

- **Concise and Witty Language:** Thurber's writing is marked by brevity and precision. He knew how to say a lot with just a few words, making his stories punchy and memorable.
- **Everyday Situations Turned Absurd:** Many of his tales revolve around ordinary events that spiral into chaos or confusion, emphasizing the unpredictable nature of life.
- **Human Foibles and Relationships:** Thurber had a special interest in exploring the dynamics between men and women, often highlighting misunderstandings and the humorous side of domestic life.
- **Blend of Text and Illustration:** His cartoons weren't just accessories; they worked hand-in-hand with his stories to enhance the humor and storytelling.

Popular Themes

- **Miscommunication:** Many of Thurber's stories, such as "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," explore how miscommunication leads to comic or tragic outcomes.
- **The Absurdity of Modern Life:** He often poked fun at the complexities and contradictions of modern society.
- **The Battle of the Sexes:** Thurber's humorous take on relationships has resonated with readers for decades, capturing the timeless nature of gender dynamics.

The Greatest Works of James Thurber

While Thurber's entire body of work is worth exploring, certain pieces stand out as iconic examples of his genius.

“The Secret Life of Walter Mitty”

Perhaps his most famous short story, “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty” follows a meek man who escapes his mundane reality through vivid daydreams of heroism and adventure. The story’s exploration of escapism, imagination, and the contrast between inner life and external reality has made it a classic taught in schools worldwide.

Short Stories and Essays

Thurber’s collections such as **My Life and Hard Times** and **Is Sex Necessary?** showcase his range as a humorist and essayist. His ability to mix autobiography with comedy gives readers an intimate look at his life and worldview, wrapped in laughter.

Cartoons and Illustrations

Beyond writing, Thurber’s cartoons were groundbreaking in their simplicity and expressiveness. His sketches often featured quirky characters with exaggerated features, capturing the absurdity of social situations. These cartoons helped define *The New Yorker*’s visual style and inspired generations of cartoonists.

Why James Thurber Remains Relevant Today

The greatest man in the world James Thurber’s work continues to resonate for several reasons, making him a timeless figure in literature.

Universal Humor That Transcends Time

Thurber’s humor is not tied to a specific era or cultural moment. Instead, it draws on fundamental aspects of human nature—our fears, hopes, misunderstandings, and dreams. This universality keeps his stories fresh and relatable, even in the digital age.

Influence on Modern Comedy and Literature

Many contemporary writers and comedians cite Thurber as an inspiration. His blend of wit, irony, and gentle satire paved the way for humor that is smart but accessible. Understanding Thurber’s work offers valuable insights into

the art of storytelling and comedic timing.

Lessons in Empathy and Observation

Thurber's keen observations encourage readers to look more closely at themselves and others, fostering empathy through humor. His stories remind us that laughter often comes from recognizing our shared human imperfections.

Tips for Appreciating and Exploring Thurber's Work

If you're new to the greatest man in the world James Thurber or want to deepen your appreciation, here are some suggestions:

- **Start with "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty":** This iconic story encapsulates many of Thurber's themes and style.
- **Read Collections:** Books like **My Life and Hard Times** provide a broader look at his humor and personal experiences.
- **Explore His Cartoons:** Don't just read the stories—look at the accompanying illustrations to see how text and image complement each other.
- **Reflect on the Themes:** Consider how Thurber's humor reveals truths about human nature and society.
- **Share and Discuss:** Thurber's work often sparks conversation; sharing it with friends can deepen your understanding and enjoyment.

James Thurber's legacy as the greatest man in the world James Thurber lies not only in his humor but in his ability to connect with readers across time through the simple, profound truths of life. His work invites us to laugh at ourselves and, through that laughter, find a little more kindness and insight in the world around us.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who was James Thurber and why is he considered one

of the greatest men in literature?

James Thurber was an American cartoonist, author, journalist, and playwright known for his wit and humor. He is considered one of the greatest men in literature for his unique style of combining cartoons with humorous essays, influencing American humor significantly.

What are some of James Thurber's most famous works?

Some of James Thurber's most famous works include "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," "The Catbird Seat," and his numerous cartoons published in The New Yorker magazine.

How did James Thurber's personal experiences influence his writing?

James Thurber's partial blindness and experiences growing up in Columbus, Ohio, deeply influenced his perspective and humor, often reflecting themes of human folly and the absurdity of everyday life.

Why is James Thurber often referred to as 'the greatest man in the world' in literary circles?

James Thurber is often referred to as 'the greatest man in the world' in literary circles due to his enduring impact on American humor, his distinctive voice, and his ability to capture human nature with wit and insight.

What is the legacy of James Thurber in modern literature and popular culture?

James Thurber's legacy endures through his influence on humor writing, cartoons, and storytelling. His works continue to be studied and adapted, inspiring generations of writers and artists in both literature and popular culture.

Additional Resources

The Greatest Man in the World James Thurber: A Literary and Cultural Examination

the greatest man in the world james thurber is a phrase that may evoke curiosity, especially among enthusiasts of American literature and humor. James Thurber, a celebrated 20th-century writer, cartoonist, and humorist, has long been recognized for his unique ability to blend wit, satire, and poignant observation into works that continue to resonate. While calling him "the greatest man in the world" might be subjective, it serves as an entry

point to explore the profound impact Thurber had on American letters and popular culture. This article delves into the life, works, and legacy of James Thurber, analyzing why he remains an enduring figure in literary history.

James Thurber: An Overview of His Life and Career

Born in 1894 in Columbus, Ohio, James Grover Thurber carved a niche for himself as a master of American humor. His early life was marked by a near-blindness resulting from an accident, which ironically sharpened his observational skills and creativity. Thurber's career took off primarily at *The New Yorker* magazine, where his cartoons and short stories became staples during the 1920s through the 1950s.

Thurber's works are characterized by their subtle humor and exploration of human folly. His narratives often highlight the absurdities of everyday life, relationships, and social conventions, making him a pioneer of the modern American humorist tradition. His writing style—marked by simplicity, irony, and a touch of melancholy—has influenced countless authors and humorists who followed.

The Greatest Man in the World James Thurber: Literary Contributions

Thurber's literary output spans several genres, including short stories, essays, and cartoons. Among his most famous works is "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," a short story that captures the escapist fantasies of a meek man trapped in the mundanity of his daily routine. This story has been adapted multiple times into films and remains a cultural touchstone for the concept of imaginative daydreaming.

Humor and Satire in Thurber's Work

One of the defining features of Thurber's craft is his use of humor not merely to entertain but to critique social norms and human weaknesses. His cartoons, often minimalist in style, deliver sharp satirical commentary on gender roles, marriage, and the absurdities of modern life. Thurber's humor is rarely coarse; instead, it is subtle and intellectual, inviting readers to reflect on their own experiences with a smile.

His ability to portray the complexity of human relationships, especially the dynamics between men and women, is notable. Stories like "The Catbird Seat"

showcase his knack for suspense blended with comedy, revealing the strategic battles often waged behind closed doors in everyday life.

Thurber's Artistic Style and Influence on Cartooning

Beyond writing, Thurber was a gifted cartoonist whose sketches complemented his literary work. His drawings are characterized by their loose, childlike lines and exaggerated figures, which convey humor through simplicity. This style broke away from the more polished and detailed cartoons of his time, influencing generations of cartoonists.

Thurber's cartoons were not just humorous illustrations but integral parts of his storytelling, often blurring the line between visual art and literature. This interdisciplinary approach helped elevate cartooning as a legitimate form of artistic and literary expression.

Contextualizing Thurber in American Literary History

To understand why some might refer to James Thurber as "the greatest man in the world," one must consider his place within the broader context of American literature. Thurber emerged during a period of significant cultural change—the early to mid-20th century—when humor was increasingly used as a tool for social critique.

Comparison with Contemporary Humorists

Thurber's contemporaries included figures like Dorothy Parker and S.J. Perelman, who also contributed to the rise of sophisticated American humor. However, Thurber's distinct voice—marked by a gentle yet incisive approach—set him apart. Unlike the often biting sarcasm of Parker or the absurdist humor of Perelman, Thurber's work balanced whimsy and melancholy, creating a unique emotional resonance.

Legacy and Modern Relevance

Decades after his death in 1961, Thurber's influence persists. Modern humorists and writers frequently cite him as a foundational figure in American comedy. His explorations of human nature continue to feel relevant, and his style has been adapted in various media, from film to theater.

Moreover, academic interest in Thurber's work has grown, with scholars

examining the nuances of his satire and its reflection of mid-century American values. His ability to capture universal themes through the lens of personal experience ensures that his stories remain accessible and insightful.

Exploring the Persona Behind the Legend

Understanding the man behind the phrase “the greatest man in the world James Thurber” requires a look at his personality and personal challenges. Thurber was known for his wit not just on the page but in conversation and correspondence. Despite his physical limitations—his near blindness and health issues—he maintained a sharp intellect and a resilient spirit.

Strengths and Challenges

Thurber’s greatest strength lay in his observational acuity and his capacity for empathy, which allowed him to create characters that felt authentic and relatable. Nevertheless, his personal life was not without difficulties. His marriages and relationships often mirrored the complexities he portrayed in his fiction, adding a layer of depth to his understanding of human nature.

His physical disability also shaped his artistic output, pushing him toward a more conceptual and imaginative form of expression. This adversity arguably enhanced his creativity, making his work all the more compelling.

The Enduring Appeal of James Thurber

The phrase “the greatest man in the world James Thurber” encapsulates the admiration many hold for his contributions to art and literature. Thurber’s legacy is multifaceted: he was a writer, cartoonist, social commentator, and cultural icon. His work transcends time through its wit, humanity, and insight.

While “greatest man” may be an honorific open to interpretation, it underscores the profound impact Thurber has had on readers and creators alike. His blend of humor and pathos, coupled with his innovative style, ensures that his voice remains a vital part of the American literary landscape.

[The Greatest Man In The World James Thurber](#)

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Black, 2018-11-05 No detailed description available for James Thurber. His masquerades.

the greatest man in the world james thurber: *Symbolic Leaders* Orrin E. Klapp, Orrin Edgar Klapp, 2006-05-01 Radio, television and the press form the vast stage on which the public dramas of our time are played to a responsive audience of millions- the peoples of our nation and of the world. Almost anyone can steal the scene and become a public hero, a favorite villain or a lamented victim. How do these persons-the symbolic leaders-emerge? Who are they? How does the climate of public opinion affect the would-be leader? How does the public use its leaders? This book discusses how symbolic leaders emerge, how unknown people become symbolic and it analyzes the kinds of encounters that are likely to make individuals either heroes, villains, or fools. The book portrays the ups-and-downs of public images, as well as crises and role reversals, in which parties may swap roles without meaning to. The book concludes with a final chapter, which deals with the concept of public drama and its implications for change as well as its instability in modern society. *Symbolic Leaders* is a probing and provocative analysis of the process of public drama and of the actors, who play the leading roles, discussed in terms of their significance for the structures of our rapidly changing society and illustrated by vivid case histories. Professor Klapp's lively style makes this work an eminently readable sociological study. The social scientist will find in it a challenging and original theory of social organization, which suggests strategic areas for further research. Public relations personnel will find it an invaluable practical handbook of clues for creating a public image. And the general reader will find *Symbolic Leaders* a fascinating and thought-provoking commentary on public life in our society. Orrin Klapp is the author of *Heroes, Villains, and Fools: The Changing American Character*, as well as many articles on the process of symbolic leadership. He was Professor of Sociology at San Diego State College, California from 1949-1969. He did much research on social types and came up with his five types of heroes in 1962. He believed that the difference between symbolic leaders and practical leaders were psychological. He is a well-noted American sociologist.

the greatest man in the world james thurber: What If Someday I Could Make a Movie Robert Geller, 2005-11 Robert Geller's *What If Someday I Could Make A Movie* puts to rest the tired cliché about adaptations of books-which was better, the film or the book? As a teacher of literature and screenwriting he cites his motivation for attempting the impossible. His memoir details the struggles he faced in bringing America's finest writers to the screen. Without apology, he affirms his passionate affinity for the written words that shaped his teaching career and his loving fascination for movies that helped to shape his life. From intuition to script, to the daily production struggles, his memoir describes the challenges confronted while bringing Baldwin, Bellow, Hemingway, O'Connor and Updike to large viewing audiences nationwide, hoping to acquaint readers with masterful storytellers. Geller's commitment to a personal dream enabled him to gather an unmatched array of talent-Teresa Wright, Robin Williams, Blythe Danner, Jerry Stiller, Tommy Lee Jones and Ron Howard who joined with him to create twenty-four critically acclaimed films.

the greatest man in the world james thurber: *Senator Joe McCarthy* Richard H. Rovere, 1996-04-12 The definitive job, and I can't imagine what else there is to say about him.—Walter Lippman This is an appraisal without apology. If its judgments are uncompromising, they are also given without rancor, indeed with an air of almost sympathetic curiosity about the phenomenon that was McCarthy. . . . It is no surprise that [Rovere's] book is a vividly written, sophisticated recreation of a political episode whose manic qualities already begin to seem unbelievable.—Anthony Lewis

the greatest man in the world james thurber: *James Thurber: Writings & Drawings (LOA #90)* James Thurber, 1996-10-01 A comprehensive collection of the American humorist's best work—including "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty"—plus original drawings and a chronology of Thurber's own troubled life James Thurber, whimsical fantasist and deadpan chronicler of everyday absurdities, brought American humor into the 20th century. His comic persona, a modern city-dweller whose zaniest flights of free association are tinged with anxiety, remains hilarious, subtly disturbing, and instantly recognizable. Here, in over 1,000 pages, editor Garrison Keillor presents the best and most extensive collection ever assembled. Pieces include "The Secret Life of

Walter Mitty" and "The Catbird Seat," the brilliantly satirical Fables for Our Time, the classic My Life and Hard Times, and the best of The Owl in the Attic, Let Your Mind Alone!, My World—And Welcome to It, and the other famous books. Plus 500 wonderful drawings, including The Seal in the Bedroom and celebrated sequences like "The Masculine Approach" and "The War Between Men and Women." Rounding out the volume is a selection from The Years with Ross, a memoir of the New Yorker publisher, and a number of wonderful early pieces never collected by Thurber. Only a book of this scope can do justice to Thurber's extraordinary career and to the many unexpected turns of his comic genius. LIBRARY OF AMERICA is an independent nonprofit cultural organization founded in 1979 to preserve our nation's literary heritage by publishing, and keeping permanently in print, America's best and most significant writing. The Library of America series includes more than 300 volumes to date, authoritative editions that average 1,000 pages in length, feature cloth covers, sewn bindings, and ribbon markers, and are printed on premium acid-free paper that will last for centuries.

the greatest man in the world james thurber: *A Question of Quality* Louis Filler, 1976 The subjects treated in this symposium have one major characteristic in common, that they have recently, or relatively recently, enjoyed high popularity among readers. Also, they have received from substantial to torrents of comment.

the greatest man in the world james thurber: *After Midnight* Susan Bluestein Davis, 1998-02 From Simon & Schuster, *After Midnight* is Susan Bluestein Davis' exploration of the life and death of Brad Davis. Susan Bluestein Davis tells the heart-wrenching story of her life with her longtime partner, Hollywood star Brad Davis--from his rise to fame through his role in the movie *Midnight Express* to the painful struggle with AIDS, the disease that finally took his life.

the greatest man in the world james thurber: *The Thurber Carnival* James Thurber, 2022-08-16 In *The Thurber Carnival*, James Thurber masterfully weaves together a collection of his most beloved humorous essays, illustrations, and short stories, encapsulating the absurdities of everyday life in the early 20th century. This rich tapestry of wit and satire is characterized by Thurber's distinctive voice, where humor effortlessly mingles with poignant social commentary. The book is a reflection of the literary landscape of its time, drawing on the traditions of American humor while challenging the conventions of modernist literature through a blend of clever storytelling and whimsical illustrations, often featuring his iconic, anthropomorphic animals and bumbling protagonists. James Thurber, known for his keen observational humor and sharp social critique, was a key figure in the golden age of American magazines, illustrating and writing for *The New Yorker*. His upbringing in Columbus, Ohio, marked by a blend of introspection and vibrant family dynamics, deeply influenced his comedic style. The themes of isolation and the idiosyncrasies of human relationships present in his works often reflect his own challenges in life, including his eventual loss of eyesight, which added layers of depth to his understanding of the world's absurdities. Beloved by readers of all ages, *The Thurber Carnival* is an essential read for anyone seeking to appreciate the nuances of American humor. Whether you are a longtime admirer of Thurber or discovering his work for the first time, this collection promises to delight with its insightful comedy and timeless observations, making it a fitting addition to the libraries of readers who cherish literary humor and astute social commentary.

the greatest man in the world james thurber: *Media Sport Stars* Garry Whannel, 2005-07-08 *Media Sport Stars* considers how masculinity and male identity are represented through images of sport and sport stars. From the pre-radio era to today's specialist TV channels, newspaper supplements and websites, Whannel traces the growing cultural importance of sport and sportmen, showing how the very practices of sport are still bound up with the production of masculinities. Through a series of case studies of British and American sportsmen, Whannel traces the emergence of the sporting 'hero' and 'star', and considers the ways in which the lives of sport stars are narrated through the media. Focusing on figures like Muhammad Ali and David Beckham, whose fame has spread well beyond the world of sport, he shows how growing media coverage has helped produced a sporting system, and examines how modern celebrity addresses the issues of race and

nation, performance and identity, morality and violence. From Babe Ruth to Mike Tyson, Media Sport Stars demonstrates that, in an era in which both morality and masculinity are perceived to be 'in crisis', sport holds a central place in contemporary culture, and sport stars become the focal point for discourses of masculinity and morality.

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the greatest man in the world james thurber: **The Wisconsin Alternative Curriculum Design in Basic English/communication Skills for Grade 9 , 1981**

the greatest man in the world james thurber: **The Middle Aged Man on the Flying Trapeze** James Thurber, 2022-08-16 In *The Middle Aged Man on the Flying Trapeze*, James Thurber employs his signature blend of wry humor and keen observation to explore the existential dilemmas faced by men grappling with both age and ambition. This collection of short stories, rich with Thurber's trademark wit, delves into the absurdity of everyday life and the bittersweet nature of middle age. The narratives are characterized by their imaginative storytelling and a style that oscillates between satire and poignant reflection, encapsulating the cultural milieu of early 20th-century America, when societal expectations often clashed with personal dreams. James Thurber, an influential figure in American literature, was born in Columbus, Ohio in 1894 and became renowned for his contributions to *The New Yorker* magazine. His experiences as a man balancing humor and pathos in the face of life's incongruities deeply informed his writing. The book reflects his own sense of vulnerability while navigating the complexities of adulthood amid a rapidly changing society, presenting a reflective yet playful commentary on life's inherent contradictions. I highly recommend *The Middle Aged Man on the Flying Trapeze* to readers who appreciate a combination of sharp humor and profound insight. Thurber's unwavering honesty and ability to illuminate the hilarity of our shared human condition make this collection a delightful yet thought-provoking read for anyone seeking to reconcile their dreams with the realities of life.

the greatest man in the world james thurber: **The Epic Hero** Dean A. Miller, 2003-05-22 Selected by Choice Magazine as an Outstanding Academic Title From Odysseus to Aeneas, from Beowulf to King Arthur, from the Mahābhārata to the Ossetian Nart tales, epic heroes and their stories have symbolized the power of the human imagination. Drawing on diverse disciplines including classics, anthropology, psychology, and literary studies, this product of twenty years' scholarship provides a detailed typology of the hero in Western myth: birth, parentage, familial ties, sexuality, character, deeds, death, and afterlife. Dean A. Miller examines the place of the hero in the physical world (wilderness, castle, prison cell) and in society (among monarchs, fools, shamans, rivals, and gods). He looks at the hero in battle and quest; at his political status; and at his relationship to established religion. The book spans Western epic traditions, including Greek, Roman, Nordic, and Celtic, as well as the Indian and Persian legacies. A large section of the book also examines the figures who modify or accompany the hero: partners, helpers (animals and sometimes monsters), foes, foils, and even antitypes. *The Epic Hero* provides a comprehensive and provocative guide to epic heroes, and to the richly imaginative tales they inhabit.

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against SURCOUF; • roles that women played before and after the disaster. Learn the real story behind one of the most misunderstood submarine disasters in history. Written for history buffs, servicemen and servicewomen, and anyone interested in a good mystery, The SURCOUF Conspiracy examines one of the strangest submarine stories of all time.

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the greatest man in the world james thurber: Stories for Men Charles Grayson, 2017-09-04 Can the reading public imagine a less likely but more needed book than *Stories for Men* - a seventy-five-year-old anthology edited by Charles Grayson - written in an age when such a title would scarcely raise an eyebrow! Imagine a book about men in which the featured theme is not rapists, child abusers, or men who never weep, feel little sorrow, or prefer dog fighting to baseball. To say the least, this is a counter-cultural collective portrait necessary in today's politically correct world. The original editor, Charles Grayson, hit the nail on the head in his explicit opening remarks. The only claim we make for this book is that it doesn't pretend to offer the best, or the finest, in the world's foremost short stories by contemporary masters. Simply it is just a bundle of yarns by present day American writers, each dealing with a different phase of the actions and activities of men, designed for good reading. The text fulfills its mission. The work features little known short stories by such major writers as Erskine Caldwell on racial relations, James M. Cain on murder, James T. Farrell on street life, Dashiell Hammett on men and divorce, Ring W. Lardner on baseball, Damon Runyon on football, William Saroyan on horseracing, Thomas Wolfe on travel, William Faulkner on foreigners, among many others. For readers interested in a slice of America, this will be a book of inestimable value as well as personal pleasure. *Stories for Men* will prove ideal.

the greatest man in the world james thurber: The Thurber Letters Harrison Kinney, Rosemary A. Thurber, 2007-11-01 Though he died more than forty years ago, James Thurber remains one of America's greatest and most enduring humorists, and his books -- for both adults and children -- remain as popular as ever. In this comprehensive collection of his letters -- the majority of which have never before been published -- we find unsuspected insights into his life and career. His prodigious body of work -- fables, drawings, comic essays, reportage, short stories, including his famous *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* -- all define Thurber's special and prolific genius. Like most good humorists, he was prone to exaggeration, embellishment, and good-natured self-deprecation. In his letters we find startling revelations about who he really was, and why the prism through which he viewed the world could often be both painfully and delightfully distorting. For the first time, Thurber's daughter Rosemary has allowed the publication of many of the extremely personal letters he wrote early in his life to the women he was -- usually hopelessly -- in love with, as well as the affectionate and hilarious letters that he wrote to her. In addition, Harrison Kinney, noted Thurber biographer, has located a number of Thurber letters never before published. *The Thurber Letters* traces Thurber's progress from lovesick college boy to code clerk with the State Department in Paris and reporter for the *Columbus Dispatch*, through his marriages and love affairs, his special relationship with his daughter, his illustrious and tumultuous years with *The New Yorker*, his longstanding relationship with E. B. White, his close friendship with Peter De Vries, and his tragic last days. Included in the book are Thurber drawings never before published. His candid comments in these personal letters, whether lighthearted or melancholy, comprise an entertaining, captivating, informal biography -- pure, wonderful Thurber.

the greatest man in the world james thurber: Will Cuppy, American Satirist Wes D. Gehring, 2013-10-11 Back in the golden age of humor books (late 1920s-early 1950s), when wits of the pantheon like Robert Benchley, James Thurber, and S.J. Perelman were producing their signature works, there was another singular satirist who more than held his own with such fast company: Will Cuppy (1884-1949). This factual funnyman's metier is dark comedy that flirts with nihilism. His agenda is baldly stated in such classic Cuppy book titles as *How to Be a Hermit* (1929), *How to Tell Your Friends from the Apes* (1931), and *The Decline and Fall of Practically Everybody* (1950). This biography doubles as a critical study of a satirist whose shish-kebabing of humanity was

often done through the veiled anthropomorphic use of animals. For a biographer, Will Cuppy represents a treasure trove of possibilities. He was a great humorist, and most of his best work is still in print, but until now he has never been the subject of a book-length study. His mesmerizingly complex and eccentric private life almost trumps the comic accomplishments of his public persona.

the greatest man in the world james thurber: The Fighting Sullivans Bruce Kuklick, 2016-11-07 In November of 1942, the five Sullivan brothers from Waterloo, Iowa, were killed when a Japanese torpedo sank their ship during the most ferocious naval engagement fought in the South Pacific. The family's loss, the most extraordinary for the United States in its military history, was immortalized—and valorized—in the 1944 film *The Fighting Sullivans*. This book tells the story of how calamity, with the help of Hollywood and the wartime publicity machine, transformed a family of marginal and disreputable young men, intensely disliked in their hometown, into heroes. The Sullivan boys joined the armed forces after Pearl Harbor, and the US Navy accepted that they would all serve on one ship, the light cruiser USS Juneau. The five brothers gave the navy great publicity, but when the ship went down and survivors were not rescued, the service faced a serious problem. *The Fighting Sullivans* examines the campaign that followed, as the navy and its partners in Hollywood turned a tragedy of errors into a public relations victory. Bruce Kuklick shows how the myth of the Sullivan family was created using bits and pieces of real events, but with twists that turned the boys into superhumans and their beleaguered parents into self-sacrificing patriots. He explores the close relationship between Hollywood studios and the military, which aimed to boost morale and support for the war. A study in mythmaking, *The Fighting Sullivans* offers a behind-the-scenes look at the manufacture of heroes in twentieth-century wartime America.

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