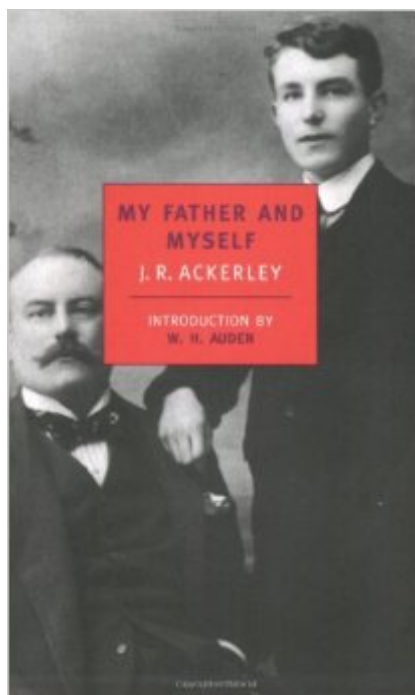


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# My Father And Myself (Nyrb Classics S)



## Synopsis

When his father died, J. R. Ackerley was shocked to discover that he had led a secret life. And after Ackerley himself died, he left a surprise of his ownâthis coolly considered, unsparingly honest account of his quest to find out the whole truth about the man who had always eluded him in life. But Ackerley's pursuit of his father is also an exploration of the self, making *My Father and Myself* a pioneering record, at once sexually explicit and emotionally charged, of life as a gay man. This witty, sorrowful, and beautiful book is a classic of twentieth-century memoir.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

*My Father and Myself* is a memoir published posthumously. In its pages Ackerley outlines his suspicions about his father's life before marrying his mother. He begins by examining some photographs that document his father's friendship with a number of other handsome young men back at the turn of the twentieth century. As one who embraces his homosexuality (with hundreds of partners over several decades), Ackerley sets about to see if he can discover if his father was also gay. What makes him suspect? Well, for one, unlike many British men, his father seems not to possess the usual homophobia but rather indicates to Ackerley that he has the freedom to pursue whatever life he wishes. And Ackerley feels compelled to take his father's advice: "I was now on the sexual map and proud of my place on it. I did not care for the word "homosexual" or any label, but I stood among the men, not among the women. Girls I despised; vain, silly creatures, how could their smooth soft, bulbous bodies compare in attraction with the muscular beauty of men?"

Their place was the harem, from which they should never have been released; true love, equal and understanding love, occurred only between men. I saw myself therefore in the tradition of the Classic Greeks, surrounded and supported by all the famous homosexuals of historyâ "one soon sorted them outâ "and in time I became something of a publicist for the rights of that love that dare not speak its nameâ • (154-5).His understanding of his condition seems to belong to its largely misogynist period, eh? But he is indeed living his life with a certain guilt-free abandon that was not to be widely duplicated until the 1970s. He also confesses to throwing aside certain individuals in search of his ignis fatuus.

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