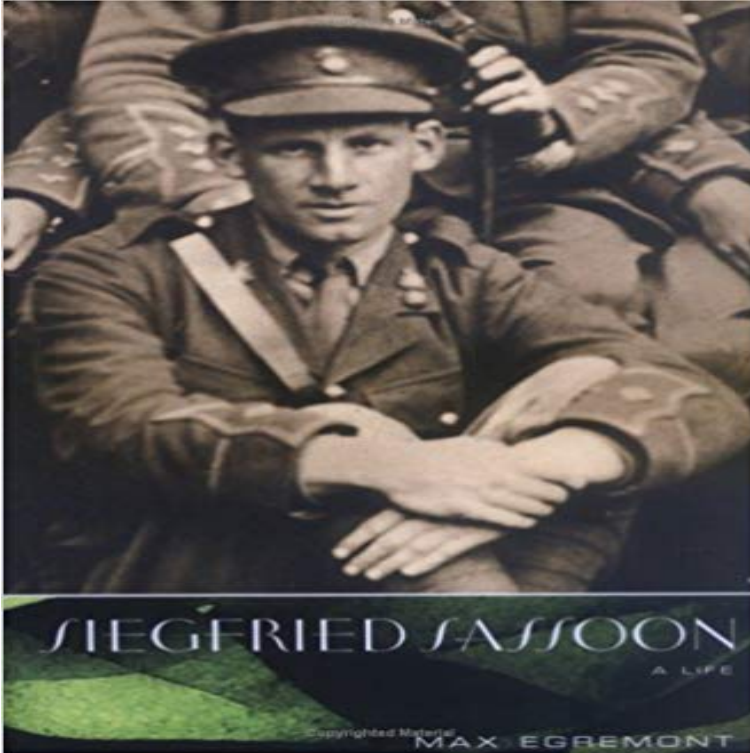


Siegfried Sassoon: A Life



Siegfried Sassoon was born in 1886 in Kent, and began writing verses as a boy. While a brave young officer, he confronted the terrible realities of the First World War on the battlefield, in verse, and, finally, by announcing his opposition to the war in 1917, showing that physical courage could exist alongside humanity and sensibility. In 1918, Sassoon found himself one of the most famous young writers of the time, a mentor to Wilfred Owen, and admired by Winston Churchill and T.E. Lawrence. He joined the Labour Party, became literary editor of the socialist Daily Herald, and began close friendships with Thomas Hardy and E.M. Forster, while trying to adapt his poetry to peacetime. Then Sassoon fell in love with the aristocratic aesthete Stephen Tennant, who led him into his group of Bright Young Things who inspired the early novels of Evelyn Waugh. At the demise of his passionate and fraught relationship with Tennant, Sassoon suddenly married the beautiful Hester Gatty in 1933 and retreated to a quiet country life until their eventual estrangement and Sassoon's subsequent conversion to Catholicism. From his famous war poems to the gentler vision of his prose, Sassoon wrote masterfully of war and lost idylls, and this work and its complex author are brilliantly illuminated in Max Egremont's definitive biography.

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