

You'll Be Okay: My Life With Jack Kerouac

Edie Kerouac-Parker



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"You have a unique viewpoint from which to write about Jack as no one else has or could write. I feel very deeply that this book must be written. And no one else, I repeat, can write it."—William S. Burroughs

Edie Parker was eighteen years old when she met Jack Kerouac at Columbia University in 1940. A young socialite from Grosse Pointe, Michigan, she had come to New York to study art, and quickly found herself swept up in the excitement and new freedoms that the big city offered a sheltered young woman of that time.

Jack Kerouac was also eighteen, attending Columbia on a football scholarship, impressing his friends with his intelligence and knowledge of literature. Introduced by a mutual friend, Jack and Edie fell in love and quickly moved in together, sharing an apartment with Joan Adams (who would later marry William S. Burroughs). This is the story of their life together in New York, where they began lifetime friendships with Allen Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs, and others. Edie's memoir provides the only female voice from that nascent period, when the leading members of the Beat Generation were first meeting and becoming friends. In the end, Jack and Edie went their separate ways, keeping in touch only on rare occasions through letters and late-night phone calls. In his last letter to Edie, written a month before his death, Kerouac ended it with the encouraging phrase: "You'll be okay." It was from that note that the title of this book was taken.

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