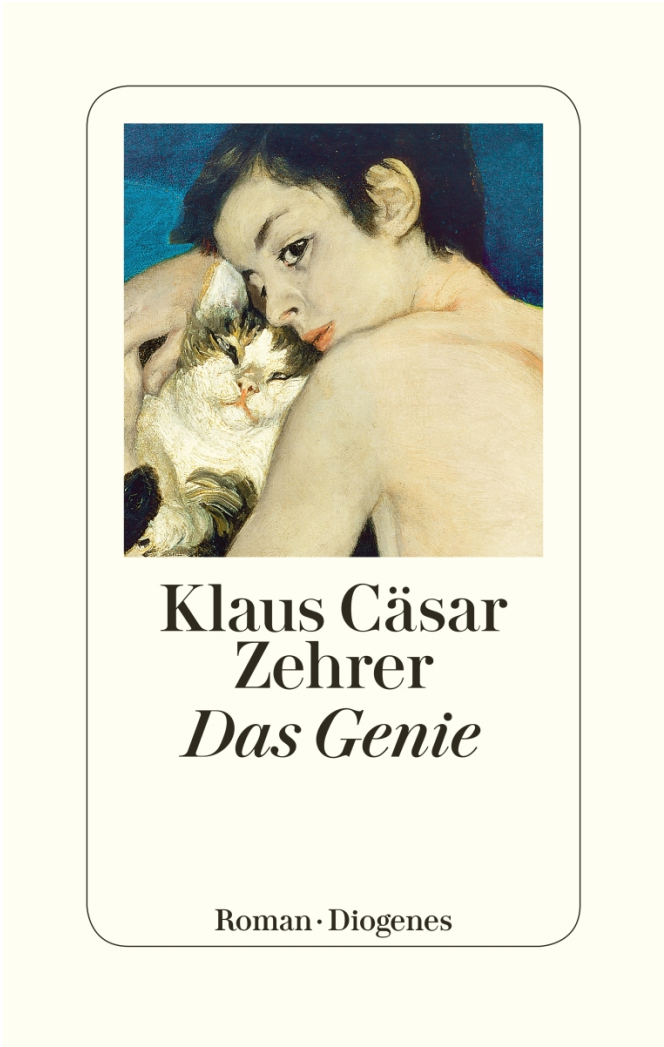
Diogenes

Book factsheet

Klaus Cäsar Zehrer
The Genius

Published by Diogenes as *Das Genie*
Original title: *Das Genie*



This literary debut of lucid, elegant prose, entertaining and vivid, tells the life story of William James Sidis (1898 – 1944), a ›wonder child‹ torn between the expectations of society and the desire for self-definition.
Boston, 1910: Eleven-year old William James Sidis is hailed as the ›wonder boy from Harvard‹ by the American press. His father Boris, a well-known psychologist with the burning ambition to better the world through education, is jubilant. He has trained William since birth according to a special learning programme. By using the ›Sidis Method‹, he claims, all children could develop the same abilities as his son. But as William grows older, he breaks away from his parents and his upbringing. He refuses to put his intelligence at the disposal of a society which is ruled by exploitation, greed for profit and military force. Instead, he tries to shape his life according to his own ideas – with unflinching determination.
A historical and at the same time politically highly topical biographical novel as well as a great debut.

Contemporary Literature
656 pages
11.6 × 18.4 cm
September 2017

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Translation rights currently sold:
Japanese

Bestseller

Spiegel Bestseller

Award

2017 *Das Genie* auf der Shortlist des ›Bayerischen Buchpreises‹ in der Kategorie Belletristik als eines der drei nominierten Bücher

Praise

The Genius

»Klaus Cäsar Zehrer has recognized the potential of his [William Sidis'] story and has been working on it for nine years. Now the result shows the author's potential.« – Michael Luisier / SRF 1 Kultur , Zurich

»Author Zehrer [. . .] has not invented this incredible life story but created it from a wealth of literature about William Sidis and his father Boris. From this, he distilled an exceptional novel.« – Lilo Solcher / Augsburger Allgemeine

»A great joy to read – researched in an outstanding way, told in a virtuoso manner and explosive in terms of social policy.« – Brigitte Woman, Hamburg

»Klaus Cäsar Zehrer wrote a fabulous novel, clever and thrilling.« – Alexander Kissler / Cicero, Berlin

»The author rediscovered the highly gifted man and tells his fate in a thrilling novel.« – Gerlinde Kubbies / Münchner Merkur

»That's an excellently portrayed piece of history which never leaves the novel's setting. I am impressed and thrilled.« – Ellen Pomikalko / BuchMarkt, Frankfurt

»The incredible story of William James Sidis' life, a genius, rebel and a visionary ahead of his time. Klaus Cäsar Zehrer wrote an outstanding book, as funny as it is clever and surprisingly topical.« – Benedict Wells

»Sparkling with a passion for storytelling [. . .] All in all, a wonderful story of real-life events.« – Ulrich Noller / SWR 2, Baden-Baden

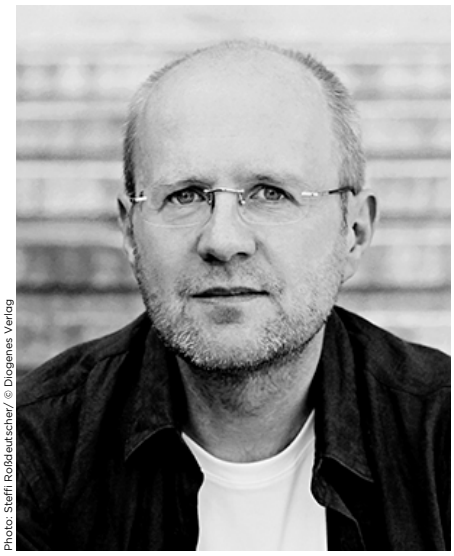

Photo: Steffi Roßdeutscher/ © Diogenes Verlag

Klaus Cäsar Zehrer, born in Schwabach in 1969, lives in Berlin as a freelance writer, editor and translator. His first book with Diogenes Verlag, *The Genius,* was named the best debut novel of 2017 by the literary blogging collective *Das Debüt.* Klaus Cäsar Zehrer has a doctorate in Cultural Studies, and edited, together with Robert Gernhard, the classic work of comic verse *Hell und Schnell.* He also plays for the German national writers' football team.



The Terrible Zebra
256 pages
2022

Praise (cont'd)

». . . so gripping that you do not want to put it down even after the first page. [. . .] The author weaves a magnificent novel of development.« – Annette Bruhns / Spiegel Wissen, Hamburg

»It is a wunderkind novel that pulls out all the artistic stops, gripping, informative, grotesque and clever, a book about the art of the perfect life and its tragic failure, practically crying out for a film version.« – Michael Braun / Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger

»This well-researched and brilliantly fictionalised debut novel is an engrossing read. [...] This is an eloquent, clever and poignant book which will enthral a wide range of readers.« – New Books in German, London