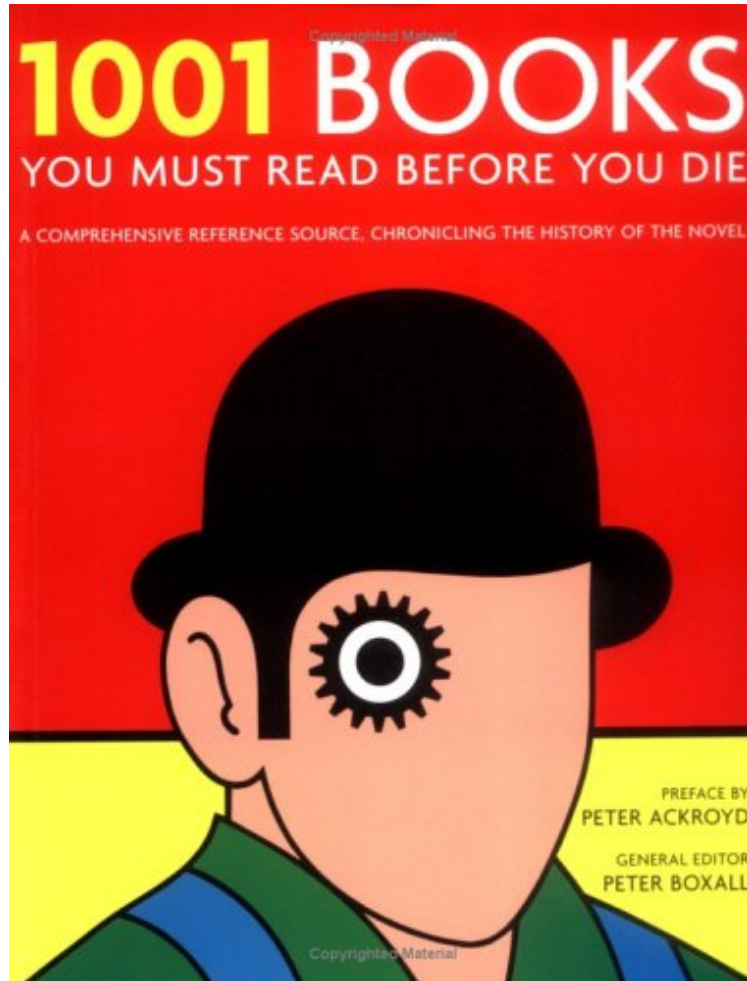


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1001 Books: You Must Read Before You Die

Peter Boxall

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Peter Boxall : 1001 Books: You Must Read Before You Die before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised 1001 Books: You Must Read Before You Die:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Another book of lists?By Linda Sue RichardsThis is the be-all end-all of books of lists. I have a dozen or so books that can best be described as merely "books of lists of books." Some are scholarly. Some are casual. Some are silly. This book, "1001 Books You Must Read Before You Die" is scholarly, as well as friendly to the everyday reader. It's a weighty book, maybe five pounds or so, but any book with 1001 book recommendations should be heavy. The high-quality glossy paper adds to the weight and durability. It starts with a nice preface, introduction, and then the bulk is in the chronological list of books from pre-1700 and proceeds to the 2000s. This is nice for people like me who like to cross things off as I get done with them. Each entry has an illustration or two. Sometimes it's as simple as a photo or line drawing of an author; other times it might be the original cover, or a still photo from the film adaptation, etc. It's a nice coffee table book that can guide you to more reading,

and be referred to again and again. It ends with an author index (all the books by one author) and general index (literary terms, for instance). I enjoyed reading about some of my favorite books and also exploring some new books I want to read. 5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Not exactly a must-read.

By Tracy Rowan This is a curious book with a curious notion behind it: That one must read certain books in order to feel well-read. It's not enough to be a voracious reader if all we read are the latest magazines and newspapers, or the latest best-seller, or loads of junk lit. This is a book which purports to be a reference to literature which has had an impact on the world, and on our collective imagination, but it omits such obvious influences as Shakespeare and The Bible without explanation of any sort. Surely these two works have had as much influence on the Western world as all the rest put together, and Shakespeare, at least, has a universal appeal which cuts across any religious lines. A quick examination shows a volume weighted heavily towards contemporary literature. More than 700 of its 900+ pages are devoted to 20th and 21st century works. While I don't doubt that many, if not most, of these works are worth reading, I would question the notion that all have and will continue to have a great impact on world thought. While I am heartened to find works by many non-Western authors within the same two chapters, I have to wonder why so few appear in earlier chapters. I also can't help but wonder about why pre-eighteenth century literature is limited to about 20 pages, and we go from Aesop to the 19th century in about 150 pages. I spent a couple of hours marking each book I'd already read - an occupation more amusing than useful - and discovered to my dismay that I'm not nearly as well-read as I'd hoped. At least by the standards of this book. And yet by most standards I know I am well-read. Again, curious.

In all honesty, as interesting and even useful as I find this book, I find that my objections to both inclusions and exclusions to be about equal. While the commentary is good, often fascinating, I don't see that it can make up for the weight given to contemporary and Western literature, particularly English-language works.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Worth the Time and Price if You find just a few great books.

By Robert Watson I disagree with a lot of the choices, maybe even most of them. But if this book introduces you to just one or two great books you otherwise would have overlooked, then it's worth the time or money. Since skimming through this book a few months ago, I've already found three or four such books, and I hope that those books in turn will lead to yet more great books. This includes far too many recent books for my tastes, and not nearly enough of the 18th and 19th centuries. But that is precisely one reason I purchased the book. I'm already familiar with the 18th and 19th centuries, and the first half of the 20th century. I suspect the 19th century is what I'll love best, but I figured it was time to see what was going on now.

From "The Alchemist" to "Thus Spake Zarathustra" and Achebe to Zola, "1001 Books" offers concise critical insights into the books and the writers that have excited the imagination of the world. It offers reviews, author biographies, plot and character assessments and historical information on those books considered the most important, compelling, or simply the best fiction ever written. Whether classics, novels, thrillers, science fictions, or romances, you will never again be stuck for what to read next or how to find the next great book from an author. In the style of the phenomenally successful "1001 Movies", this is an incisive guide to the books that have had a real impact - whether in the form of critical acclaim or as cult classics. It is an eclectic selection by a superb international team of writers and critics, a provides a new take on old classics and is a guide to what's hot in the huge contemporary fiction market. It is also an ideal reference for anyone who loves to read.

About the Author Dr Peter Boxall is a lecturer in English Literature at the University of Sussex. He has published widely on 20th and 21st century fiction and drama. His publications include a reader's guide to 'Waiting for Godot' and 'Endgame', and a book on DeLillo entitled Don DeLillo: the Possibility of Fiction. He is currently writing a book about the influence of Samuel Beckett's work on contemporary fiction. He lives and works in Brighton.