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Quotes about Books - Classics

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Books that have become classics -- books that have had their day and now get more praise than perusal -- always remind me of retired colonels and majors and captains who, having reached the age limit, find themselves retired on half pay.

- Aldrich, Thomas B.

Definition of a classic: a book everyone is assumed to have read and often thinks they have.

- Bennett, Alan

There are certain books in the world which every searcher for truth must know: the Bible, the Critique of Pure Reason, the Origin of Species, and Karl Marx's Capital.

- Bois, W. E. B. Du

A classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say.

- Calvino, Italo

A truly great book should be read in youth, again in maturity and once more in old age, as a fine building should be seen by morning light, at noon and by moonlight.

- Davies, Robertson

A classic is a book that doesn't have to be written again.

- Doren, Carl Van

There are books which take rank in your life with parents and lovers and passionate experiences, so medicinal, so stringent, so revolutionary, so authoritative.

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo

There is but one way left to save a classic: to give up revering him and use him for our own salvation.

- Gasset, Jose Ortega Y

A book is never a masterpiece: it becomes one. Genius is the talent of a dead man.

- Goncourt, Edmond and Jules De

The praise of ancient authors proceeds not from the reverence of the dead, but from the competition and mutual envy of the living.

- Hobbes, Thomas

The light that radiates from the great novels time can never dim, for human existence is perpetually being forgotten by man and thus the novelists discoveries, however old they may be, will never cease to astonish.

- Kundera, Milan

Every man with a bellyful of the classics is an enemy to the human race.

- Miller, Henry

A classic is classic not because it conforms to certain structural rules, or fits certain definitions (of which its author had quite probably never heard). It is classic because of a certain eternal and irrepressible freshness.

- Pound, Ezra

For what are the classics but the noblest thoughts of man? They are the only oracles which are not decayed, and there are such answers to the most modern inquiry in them as Delphi and Dodona never gave. We might as well omit to study Nature because she is old.

- Thoreau, Henry David

The fact is, the public make use of the classics of a country as a means of checking the progress of Art. They degrade the classics into authorities. They use them as bludgeons for preventing the free expression of Beauty in new forms.

- Wilde, Oscar



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