



Why Read the Classics?

Italo Calvino

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“All that can be done is for each one of us to invent our own ideal library of our classics.” —from *Why Read the Classics?*

Classics, according to Italo Calvino, are not only works of enduring cultural value, but also something much more personal: talismans, touchstones, books through which we understand our world and ourselves. In *Why Read the Classics?*, Calvino shares over thirty of his classics in essays of warmth, humor, and striking insight. He ranges from Homer to Jorge Luis Borges, from the Persian folklorist Nezami to Charles Dickens. Whether tracing the links between Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and Alain Robbe-Grillet’s objectivity, discovering the origins of science fiction in the writings of Cyrano de Bergerac, or convincing us that the Italian novelist Carlo Emilio Gadda’s works are like artichokes, Calvino offers a new perspective on beloved favorites and introduces us to hidden gems.

“This book serves as a welcome reminder that the great works are great because they can mean so much to readers, and Calvino is a most knowledgeable guide to all the best destinations.” —*San Francisco Chronicle*

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