

The Book Lover's Almanac: A Year of Literary Events, Letters, Scandals and Plot Twists

Alex Johnson

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The Book Lover's Almanac is a delightful daily compendium of literary facts and anecdotes.

The monthly sections open with a rundown of prominent authors' births and deaths and the dates when famous works were first issued or performed. Their concise entries recount notable events from their particular dates. Most vignettes draw on nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature. In fitting valedictory fashion, the chapters close with writers' reputed last words. Frequent photographs, engravings, and handwritten extracts punctuate the text.

The details are striking for their randomness and synchronicity. *Ulysses* was published on James Joyce's fortieth birthday, February 2, 1922. On May 3, 1810, Lord Byron swam the Dardanelles strait in 1 hour 10 minutes—or so he claimed; in 1984, it took Patrick Leigh Fermor 3 hours. May 4 marks both the beginning of Gulliver's travels and Sherlock Holmes's apparent death.

The mixture of high-brow and popular culture is amusing. Lee Child starts writing each Jack Reacher thriller on September 1. One January entry lists a demanding set of books that Charles Darwin borrowed from the London Library in 1845; another remembers when Joey and Rachel swapped their favorite books in an episode of *Friends*.

Full of enjoyable trivia and lush illustrations, *The Book Lover's Almanac* is perfect for bibliophiles.

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