

the dud avocado book

The dud avocado book has garnered considerable attention in recent years, captivating readers and avocado enthusiasts alike with its unique approach to the popular fruit. Whether you're a seasoned gardener, a culinary adventurer, or simply someone intrigued by the cultural significance of avocados, this book offers a fresh perspective that challenges conventional wisdom and explores the fascinating world of avocados gone wrong — or, as the title suggests, dud avocados. In this comprehensive article, we'll delve into what makes the dud avocado book a must-read, examining its themes, key insights, and why it's become a staple in the world of horticultural and culinary literature.

Understanding the Concept of the Dud Avocado

What is a Dud Avocado?

The term “dud avocado” refers to avocados that don't meet the typical expectations in terms of quality, taste, or appearance. These fruits may be misshapen, have inconsistent ripening patterns, or fail to develop the creamy texture and rich flavor that consumers associate with top-tier avocados. The dud avocado book explores these anomalies, highlighting how they challenge our perceptions of perfection in produce.

The Cultural and Culinary Significance

Avocados have become a global superfood, symbolizing health, versatility, and modern culinary innovation. However, the obsession with perfect, blemish-free avocados often leads to waste and misunderstanding. The dud avocado book champions the idea that flawed or imperfect avocados can still be valuable, delicious, and worthy of appreciation.

The Themes and Key Insights of the Dud Avocado Book

1. Embracing Imperfection in Food

One of the central themes of the book is the celebration of imperfection. It encourages readers to:

- Appreciate the unique shapes and blemishes of dud avocados.
- Understand that flaws do not necessarily impact flavor or nutritional value.
- Challenge societal standards that prioritize uniformity in produce.

2. The Science Behind Dud Avocados

The book delves into horticultural science, explaining why some avocados turn out to be dud fruits. Key points include:

- Variability in avocado cultivars and genetic diversity.
- The impact of environmental factors such as climate, soil quality, and water availability.
- Common issues like improper ripening, overgrowth, or disease.

3. Sustainability and Waste Reduction

A significant message is the importance of reducing food waste by utilizing imperfect produce. The book advocates for:

- Using dud avocados in recipes that conceal imperfections (e.g., smoothies, guacamole).
- Supporting local farmers who grow diverse avocado varieties.
- Rethinking grocery shopping habits to accept and even seek out imperfect fruits.

4. Culinary Creativity with Dud Avocados

The book showcases innovative recipes that turn dud avocados into culinary delights. For example:

- Using dud avocados in baked goods.
- Preparing spreads, sauces, and dressings.
- Incorporating them into salads and bowls with complementary flavors.

5. The Journey of the Dud Avocado

Personal stories and anecdotes of growers and consumers who have embraced dud avocados are woven throughout the book, illustrating that beauty and quality are not solely dependent on appearance.

Why the Dud Avocado Book is a Must-Read

Educational Value

Readers gain a deeper understanding of avocado cultivation, ripening processes, and the factors contributing to fruit imperfections. This knowledge fosters greater appreciation and reduces unnecessary waste.

Environmental Impact

By promoting the use of imperfect fruits, the book encourages sustainable practices that can help reduce the environmental footprint of food production and waste.

Inspiration for Culinary Experimentation

The book inspires home cooks and professional chefs to experiment with dud avocados, unlocking new flavors and textures that might otherwise be discarded.

Challenging Beauty Norms

It challenges societal standards of perfection, advocating for a more inclusive approach to food and produce appreciation.

Practical Tips from the Dud Avocado Book

How to Identify Dud Avocados

While some flaws are purely aesthetic, others may indicate quality issues. Key tips include:

- Check for soft spots or overly mushy areas.
- Inspect for mold, dark spots, or unusual odors.
- Assess ripeness through gentle pressure; a ripe avocado yields slightly but does not feel overly soft.

Proper Handling and Storage

Maximize the use of dud avocados with these practices:

- Store unripe avocados at room temperature until ripe.
- Refrigerate ripe or dud avocados to preserve freshness.
- Use dud avocados promptly to prevent spoilage.

Creative Uses for Dud Avocados

Transform less-than-perfect avocados into culinary masterpieces with these ideas:

- Make creamy avocado smoothies or shakes.
- Incorporate into baking recipes like muffins or bread.
- Use in face masks or skincare routines, as their nutrients can benefit skin health.

The Impact of the Dud Avocado Book on Society and the Food Industry

Promoting Food Justice and Equity

By emphasizing the value of imperfect produce, the book advocates for fair treatment of all fruits and vegetables, regardless of appearance, helping to combat food waste and hunger.

Influencing Consumer Behavior

The book has contributed to shifting consumer perceptions, encouraging people to buy and consume imperfect avocados and other fruits, fostering a more sustainable food culture.

Encouraging Sustainable Farming Practices

Farmers are inspired to diversify their cultivation methods and embrace less-than-perfect fruits, which can lead to more resilient and sustainable agriculture systems.

Conclusion: Redefining Beauty in the World of Avocados

The dud avocado book is more than just a guide to imperfect avocados; it's a movement towards embracing authenticity, sustainability, and creativity in our food systems. By understanding the science behind dud avocados and celebrating their unique qualities, consumers and growers alike can foster a more inclusive and environmentally conscious approach to produce. Whether you're interested in culinary innovation, reducing waste, or simply shifting your perspective on beauty standards, this book offers invaluable insights and inspiration.

In a world obsessed with perfection, the dud avocado book reminds us that sometimes, the most imperfect fruits can produce the most perfect moments — in flavor, in purpose, and in perspective. So next time you encounter a dud avocado, remember: beauty is subjective, and even the flawed can be fabulous.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is 'The Dud Avocado' about?

'The Dud Avocado' is a novel by Elaine Dundy that follows the comedic and often satirical adventures of a young American woman navigating life and love in 1950s Paris.

Why has 'The Dud Avocado' regained popularity recently?

Its renewed popularity is due to the rise of vintage and classic literature enthusiasts, as well as its themes of independence and self-discovery resonating with modern readers.

Are there any recent adaptations of 'The Dud Avocado'?

While there haven't been major film or TV adaptations recently, there is ongoing interest in adapting the novel for stage or streaming platforms, reflecting its cultural significance.

Who is the protagonist in 'The Dud Avocado'?

The story centers around Sally Jay Gorce, a free-spirited young woman exploring her identity and experiences in post-war Paris.

What themes does 'The Dud Avocado' explore that make it relevant today?

The novel explores themes of independence, self-discovery, and challenging societal expectations, making it a relatable and inspiring read for contemporary audiences.

Additional Resources

The Dud Avocado Book: A Deep Dive into a Literary Classic with a Controversial Legacy

In the landscape of American literature, few novels have sparked as much debate, admiration, and critique as *The Dud Avocado*. First published in 1958, this semi-autobiographical novel by Elaine Dundy offers a vivid portrayal of post-war expatriate life in Paris, but it also invites scrutiny for its portrayal of gender roles, cultural stereotypes, and literary merit. Over the decades, *The Dud Avocado* has cemented its place as both a beloved cult classic and a subject of literary controversy. This article explores the origins of the book, its thematic core, its reception over time, and the reasons behind its enduring yet polarizing reputation.

Origins and Context: How *The Dud Avocado* Came to Be

Elaine Dundy's Life and Inspiration

Elaine Dundy, born in 1921, was an American author and actress whose life experiences heavily influenced her writing. Having traveled extensively and lived in Europe, she drew upon her personal encounters and observations to craft her debut novel. *The Dud Avocado* is inspired by her own time living in Paris during the 1950s, a period marked by expatriate artists, writers, and bohemians seeking inspiration and liberation amid post-war shifts.

The Novel's Genesis and Publishing History

Dundy began writing *The Dud Avocado* in the early 1950s, aiming to depict the vibrant, sometimes chaotic life of young Americans abroad. The novel was initially met with modest success but gained popularity through word-of-mouth and critical acclaim for its lively prose and sharp humor. It was published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, a major publisher, and quickly became a favorite among expatriate circles and literary circles alike.

Cultural and Literary Background

The 1950s was a fertile period for American expatriate literature, with authors like Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Gertrude Stein having set the stage earlier. Dundy's novel fits within this tradition but also challenges some of its conventions by focusing on a young woman's perspective in a male-dominated expatriate scene. This perspective provided a fresh voice but also introduced complexities regarding gender portrayal that would fuel debate in later years.

The Plot and Main Themes of *The Dud Avocado*

Overview of the Narrative

The story centers on Sally Jay Gorce, a spirited and somewhat naive young American woman who moves to Paris in search of adventure, love, and self-discovery. Through Sally's eyes, readers explore the city's cafes, the expatriate community, and the romantic entanglements that define her journey. The plot is episodic, capturing moments of humor, heartbreak, and cultural clash.

Major Themes Explored

- **Expatriate Identity and Cultural Clash:** The novel vividly depicts the expatriate experience, highlighting the allure and disillusionment of life abroad. Sally's outsider perspective creates a lens through which the cultural differences between Americans and Europeans are examined.
- **Gender and Sexuality:** Dundy's portrayal of Sally's sexual freedom was groundbreaking for its time, emphasizing independence and personal choice. However, some critics argue that the portrayal sometimes relies on stereotypes or reduces complex characters to comic archetypes.
- **Youth and Rebellion:** At its core, the novel celebrates youthful exuberance, the desire to break free from societal constraints, and the pursuit of authentic self-expression.
- **Humor and Satire:** Dundy's sharp wit and humorous tone underpin much of the narrative, offering a satirical view of the expatriate scene and the absurdities of modern life.

Literary Style and Narrative Technique

Writing Style

Elaine Dundy's prose is characterized by its vivacity, wit, and keen observational skills. Her language combines humor with poignancy, capturing the chaotic energy of Paris and the inner life of her protagonist. The novel's tone oscillates between lighthearted comedy and moments of introspective depth.

Narrative Perspective

The first-person narration provides intimacy and immediacy, allowing readers to experience Sally's thoughts, feelings, and perceptions directly. This perspective fosters empathy but also invites critique regarding the reliability of her perceptions and the subjective lens through which the story is told.

Structural Elements

The episodic structure mirrors the fragmented, unpredictable nature of expatriate life. The narrative jumps between scenes and encounters, creating a mosaic of experiences that collectively portray Sally's quest for

meaning.

Reception and Critical Legacy

Initial Reception

Upon publication, *The Dud Avocado* was praised for its lively prose, humor, and authentic depiction of Parisian life. It quickly gained a following among readers interested in expatriate culture and modern American literature. Critics highlighted Dundy's talent for capturing the zeitgeist of the era and her fresh female perspective.

Contemporary and Modern Critiques

Over time, the novel's reputation has become more complex. Critics have debated whether *The Dud Avocado* is a pioneering feminist work or if it inadvertently perpetuates stereotypes. Some argue that the portrayal of Sally Jay's sexuality and independence was progressive for the 1950s, while others contend that certain characterizations reinforce clichés.

Literary Significance

Despite the controversy, the book is regarded as an important piece of mid-20th-century American expatriate fiction. It also stands as a testament to Dundy's literary voice, blending humor, social commentary, and personal narrative.

Controversies and Criticisms

Portrayal of Gender and Race

Critics have pointed out that some aspects of *The Dud Avocado* reflect the gender norms and racial stereotypes prevalent during its time. Sally Jay's sexual liberation is depicted through a lens that some interpret as objectifying, and the depiction of European characters, especially in terms of race and class, can be seen as stereotypical.

Literary Merit and Criticism

While celebrated for its humor and style, some literary critics have questioned the novel's depth and lasting literary significance. They argue that its episodic, plot-light structure and focus on superficial experiences may limit its enduring impact compared to more substantial works of the era.

Cultural Reception Today

In modern contexts, the novel's cultural sensitivities are scrutinized more critically. Readers and scholars examine whether the portrayal of certain characters and themes aligns with contemporary values or if it reflects outdated stereotypes.

The Legacy and Continuing Relevance of *The Dud Avocado*

Cult Classic Status

Despite critiques, *The Dud Avocado* remains a cult favorite, particularly among readers interested in expatriate culture, feminist history, and mid-century American literature. Its lively voice and vivid depiction of Paris continue to resonate.

Influence on Literature and Media

The novel has influenced subsequent writers and has been referenced in various cultural works. Its depiction of a young woman navigating independence abroad prefigures later feminist narratives and stories about travel and self-discovery.

Reprints and New Editions

In recent years, *The Dud Avocado* has seen renewed interest through reprints and special editions, often accompanied by scholarly essays contextualizing its themes and controversies. This resurgence underscores its importance as both a literary artifact and a cultural touchstone.

Conclusion: The Enduring Debate

The Dud Avocado is more than just a book; it's a reflection of its time, a catalyst for ongoing discussions about gender, culture, and literature. Elaine Dundy's lively, humorous voice captures a moment in history but also invites us to question how narratives about identity and adventure are constructed and received. Whether celebrated as a pioneering feminist novel or critiqued for its stereotypes, *The Dud Avocado* remains a vital part of American literary history—an imperfect yet enduring mirror of the post-war expatriate experience. Its legacy continues to provoke, entertain, and challenge readers, ensuring its place in the pantheon of classic American novels with a complex, sometimes controversial, but undeniably compelling history.

[The Dud Avocado Book](#)

the dud avocado book: *The Dud Avocado* Elaine Dundy, 2007-06-05 A smart, funny classic about a young and beautiful American woman who moves to Paris determined to live life to the fullest. *The Dud Avocado* follows the romantic and comedic adventures of a young American who heads overseas to conquer Paris in the late 1950s. Edith Wharton and Henry James wrote about the American girl abroad, but it was Elaine Dundy's Sally Jay Gorce who told us what she was really thinking. Charming, sexy, and hilarious, *The Dud Avocado* gained instant cult status when it was first published and it remains a timeless portrait of a woman hell-bent on living. "I had to tell someone how much I enjoyed *The Dud Avocado*. It made me laugh, scream, and guffaw (which, incidentally, is a great name for a law firm)." –Groucho Marx [*The Dud Avocado*] is one of the best novels about growing up fast... -The Guardian

the dud avocado book: *Life Itself!* Elaine Dundy, 2012-01-05 Author of the celebrated and hilarious *THE DUD AVOCADO*, the classic novel about a young American ingenue in Paris, Elaine Dundy was born in New York in the 1930s. Her first years were spent in an apartment on Park Avenue until the stock market crash wiped out most of the family's money. She went to university in the south where, among other studies, she worked hard at losing her virginity. Deciding the stage was her true home, Elaine Dundy headed first to Paris and then to London, where she met and married the famous theatre critic Kenneth Tynan. Though their union was intoxicating, it was far from easy and the successful publication in 1958 of her novel finished off the marriage. But it was the opening of a new world of writers for Elaine Dundy, including friendships with Tennessee Williams, Hemingway and Gore Vidal. Extremely funny and extraordinarily honest this wonderfully remembered story of growing up in America is as much a tonic as life itself.

the dud avocado book: *The Summer Book* Tove Jansson, 2012-08-08 In *The Summer Book* Tove Jansson distills the essence of the summer—its sunlight and storms—into twenty-two crystalline vignettes. This brief novel tells the story of Sophia, a six-year-old girl awakening to existence, and Sophia's grandmother, nearing the end of hers, as they spend the summer on a tiny unspoiled island in the Gulf of Finland. The grandmother is unsentimental and wise, if a little cranky; Sophia is impetuous and volatile, but she tends to her grandmother with the care of a new parent. Together they amble over coastline and forest in easy companionship, build boats from bark, create a miniature Venice, write a fanciful study of local bugs. They discuss things that matter to young and old alike: life, death, the nature of God and of love. "On an island," thinks the grandmother, "everything is complete." In *The Summer Book*, Jansson creates her own complete world, full of the varied joys and sorrows of life. Tove Jansson, whose Moomintroll comic strip and books brought her international acclaim, lived for much of her life on an island like the one described in *The Summer Book*, and the work can be enjoyed as her closely observed journal of the sounds, sights, and feel of a summer spent in intimate contact with the natural world.

the dud avocado book: *The Old Man and Me* Elaine Dundy, 2009-06-16 A sly, funny novel about an American girl trying to make it in 1960s London—and discovering that she's in over head. In *The Dud Avocado*, Elaine Dundy revealed the life of the young expatriate in Paris in all its hilarious and heartbreaking drama. With *The Old Man and Me*, written when Dundy was living in England in the early 1960s, she tackles the American girl in London, a bit older but certainly no wiser. Honey Flood (if that's her real name) arrives in London with only her quick wits and a scheme. To get what she wants, she'll have to seduce the city's brightest literary star, no matter how many would-be bohemians she has to charm, how many smoky jazz clubs she has to brave, or how many Lady Something-Somethings she has to humor. But with success within her reach, Honey finds that in making the Soho scene, she's made a big mistake.

the dud avocado book: *Book Lust to Go* Nancy Pearl, 2010-06-01 Adventure is just a book away as bestselling author Nancy Pearl returns with recommended reading for more than 120 destinations — both worldly and imagined — around the globe. From Las Vegas to the Land of Oz,

Naples to Nigeria, Philadelphia to Provence, Nancy Pearl guides readers to the very best fiction and nonfiction to read about each destination. Even within one country, she traverses decades to suggest titles that effortlessly capture the different eras that make up a region's unique history. This enthusiastic literary globetrotting guide includes stops in Korea, Sweden, Afghanistan, Albania, Parma, Patagonia, Texas, and Timbuktu. *Book Lust To Go* connects the best fiction and nonfiction to particular destinations, whether your bags are packed or your armchair is calling. From fiction to memoir, poetry to history, Nancy Pearl's *Book Lust to Go* takes the reader on a globetrotting adventure — no passport required.

the dud avocado book: *The One-Straw Revolution* Masanobu Fukuoka, 2010-09-08 Call it "Zen and the Art of Farming" or a "Little Green Book," Masanobu Fukuoka's manifesto about farming, eating, and the limits of human knowledge presents a radical challenge to the global systems we rely on for our food. At the same time, it is a spiritual memoir of a man whose innovative system of cultivating the earth reflects a deep faith in the wholeness and balance of the natural world. As Wendell Berry writes in his preface, the book "is valuable to us because it is at once practical and philosophical. It is an inspiring, necessary book about agriculture because it is not just about agriculture." Trained as a scientist, Fukuoka rejected both modern agribusiness and centuries of agricultural practice, deciding instead that the best forms of cultivation mirror nature's own laws. Over the next three decades he perfected his so-called "do-nothing" technique: commonsense, sustainable practices that all but eliminate the use of pesticides, fertilizer, tillage, and perhaps most significantly, wasteful effort. Whether you're a guerrilla gardener or a kitchen gardener, dedicated to slow food or simply looking to live a healthier life, you will find something here—you may even be moved to start a revolution of your own.

the dud avocado book: Reading Alice Munro's Breakthrough Books J.R. (Tim) Struthers, Ailsa Cox, Corinne Bigot, Catherine Sheldrick Ross, What in terms of Alice Munro's creative artistry and creative power allowed her to become the first and only short story writer, the first and only Canadian, and just the thirteenth woman in history to win the Nobel Prize in Literature? And exactly when during Munro's career did her artistry and power advance to ensure that she would earn such world-wide renown? The answers lie in studying the boldly innovative yet greatly under-examined group of her four mid-career breakthrough books. Our volume therefore provides a carefully orchestrated analysis of Munro's subtle yet potent handling of form, technique and style both within individual stories and across these special collections. *Reading Alice Munro's Breakthrough Books: A Suite in Four Voices* not only addresses a significant vacancy in Munro criticism – and, by extension, in all short story criticism – but, equally importantly, offers an exciting new model for how criticism can be collectively written.

the dud avocado book: *The Book of Ebenezer le Page* G.B. Edwards, 2012-03-07 Ebenezer Le Page, cantankerous, opinionated, and charming, is one of the most compelling literary creations of the late twentieth century. Eighty years old, Ebenezer has lived his whole life on the Channel Island of Guernsey, a stony speck of a place caught between the coasts of England and France yet a world apart from either. Ebenezer himself is fiercely independent, but as he reaches the end of his life he is determined to tell his own story and the stories of those he has known. He writes of family secrets and feuds, unforgettable friendships and friendships betrayed, love glimpsed and lost. *The Book of Ebenezer Le Page* is a beautifully detailed chronicle of a life, but it is equally an oblique reckoning with the traumas of the twentieth century, as Ebenezer recalls both the men lost to the Great War and the German Occupation of Guernsey during World War II, and looks with despair at the encroachments of commerce and tourism on his beloved island. G. B. Edwards labored in obscurity all his life and completed *The Book of Ebenezer Le Page* shortly before his death. Published posthumously, the book is a triumph of the storyteller's art that conjures up the extraordinary voice of a living man.

the dud avocado book: *The Hearing Trumpet* Leonora Carrington, 2021-01-05 An old woman enters into a fantastical world of dreams and nightmares in this surrealist classic admired by Björk and Luis Buñuel. Leonora Carrington, painter, playwright, and novelist, was a surrealist trickster par

excellence, and *The Hearing Trumpet* is the witty, celebratory key to her anarchic and allusive body of work. The novel begins in the bourgeois comfort of a residential corner of a Mexican city and ends with a man-made apocalypse that promises to usher in the earth's rebirth. In between we are swept off to a most curious old-age home run by a self-improvement cult and drawn several centuries back in time with a cross-dressing Abbess who is on a quest to restore the Holy Grail to its rightful owner, the Goddess Venus. Guiding us is one of the most unexpected heroines in twentieth-century literature, a nonagenarian vegetarian named Marian Leatherby, who, as Olga Tokarczuk writes in her afterword, is "hard of hearing" but "full of life."

the dud avocado book: *Testing the Current* William McPherson, 2013-01-08 Growing up in a small upper Midwestern town in the late 1930s, young Tommy MacAllister is scarcely aware of the Depression, much less the rumblings of war in Europe. For his parents and their set, life seems to revolve around dinners and dancing at the country club, tennis dates and rounds of golf, holiday parties, summers on the Island, and sparkling occasions full of people and drinks and food and laughter. But curious as he is and impatient to grow up, Tommy will soon come to glimpse the darkness that lies beneath so much genteel complacency: hidden histories and embarrassing poor relations; the subtle (and not so subtle) slighting of the "help"; the mockery of President Roosevelt; and "the commandment they talked least about in Sunday school," adultery. In *Testing the Current* William McPherson subtly sets off his wide-eyed protagonist's perspective with mature reflection and wry humor and surrounds him with a cast of vibrant characters, creating a scrupulously observed portrait of a place and time that will shimmer in readers' minds long after the final page is turned.

the dud avocado book: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography 2005-2008* Lawrence Goldman, 2013-03-07 Who made modern Britain? This book, drawn from the award-winning Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, tells the story of our recent past through the lives of those who shaped national life. Following on from the Oxford DNB's first supplement volume-noteworthy people who died between 2001 and 2004-this new volume offers biographies of more than 850 men and women who left their mark on twentieth and twenty-first century Britain, and who died in the years 2005 to 2008. Here are the people responsible for major developments in national life: from politics, the arts, business, technology, and law to military service, sport, education, science, and medicine. Many are closely connected to specific periods in Britain's recent history. From the 1950s, the young Harold Pinter or the Yorkshire cricketer, Fred Trueman, for example. From the Sixties, the footballer George Best, photographer Patrick Lichfield, and the Pink Floyd musician, Syd Barrett. It's hard to look back to the 1970s without thinking of Edward Heath and James Callaghan, who led the country for seven years in that turbulent decade; or similarly Freddie Laker, pioneer of budget air travel, and the comedians Ronnie Barker and Dave Allen who entertained with their sketch shows and sit coms. A decade later you probably browsed in Anita Roddick's Body Shop, or danced to the music of Factory Records, established by the Manchester entrepreneur, Tony Wilson. In the 1990s you may have hoped that 'Things can only get better' with a New Labour government which included Robin Cook and Mo Mowlam. Many in this volume are remembered for lives dedicated to a profession or cause: Bill Deedes or Conor Cruise O'Brien in journalism; Ned Sherrin in broadcasting or, indeed, Ted Heath whose political career spanned more than 50 years. Others were responsible for discoveries or innovations of lasting legacy and benefit-among them the epidemiologist Richard Doll, who made the link between smoking and lung cancer, Cicely Saunders, creator of the hospice movement, and Chad Varah, founder of the Samaritans. With John Profumo-who gave his name to a scandal-policeman Malcolm Fewtrell-who investigated the Great Train Robbery-or the Russian dissident Aleksandr Litvinenko-who was killed in London in 2006-we have individuals best known for specific moments in our recent past. Others are synonymous with popular objects and experiences evocative of recent decades: Mastermind with Magnus Magnusson, the PG-Tips chimpanzees trained by Molly Badham, John DeLorean's 'gull-wing' car, or the new British Library designed by Colin St John Wilson-though, as rounded and balanced accounts, Oxford DNB biographies also set these events in the wider context of a person's life story. Authoritative and

accessible, the biographies in this volume are written by specialist authors, many of them leading figures in their field. Here you will find Michael Billington on Harold Pinter, Michael Crick on George Best, Richard Davenport-Hines on Anita Roddick, Brenda Hale on Rose Heilbron, Roy Hattersley on James Callaghan, Simon Heffer on John Profumo, Douglas Hurd on Edward Heath, Alex Jennings on Paul Scofield, Hermione Lee on Pat Kavanagh, Geoffrey Wheatcroft on Conor Cruise O'Brien, and Peregrine Worsthorne on Bill Deedes. Many in this volume are, naturally, household names. But a good number are also remembered for lives away from the headlines. What in the 1980s became 'Thatcherism' owed much to behind the scenes advice from Ralph Harris and Alfred Sherman; children who learned to read with Ladybird Books must thank their creator, Douglas Keen; while, without its first producer, Verity Lambert, there would have been no Doctor Who. Others are 'ordinary' people capable of remarkable acts. Take, for instance, Arthur Bywater who over two days in 1944 cleared thousands of bombs from a Liverpool munitions factory following an explosion-only to do the same, months later, in an another factory. Awarded the George Cross and the George Medal, Bywater remains the only non-combatant to have received Britain's two highest awards for civilian bravery.

the dud avocado book: *The Spectator* , 2011

the dud avocado book: The Novel Cure Ella Berthoud, Susan Elderkin, 2014-12-30 Delightful... elegant prose and discussions that span the history of 2,000 years of literature.—Publisher's Weekly A novel is a story transmitted from the novelist to the reader. It offers distraction, entertainment, and an opportunity to unwind or focus. But it can also be something more powerful—a way to learn about how to live. Read at the right moment in your life, a novel can—quite literally—change it. The Novel Cure is a reminder of that power. To create this apothecary, the authors have trawled two thousand years of literature for novels that effectively promote happiness, health, and sanity, written by brilliant minds who knew what it meant to be human and wrote their life lessons into their fiction. Structured like a reference book, readers simply look up their ailment, be it agoraphobia, boredom, or a midlife crisis, and are given a novel to read as the antidote. Bibliotherapy does not discriminate between pains of the body and pains of the head (or heart). Aware that you've been cowardly? Pick up *To Kill a Mockingbird* for an injection of courage. Experiencing a sudden, acute fear of death? Read *One Hundred Years of Solitude* for some perspective on the larger cycle of life. Nervous about throwing a dinner party? Ali Smith's *There but for The* will convince you that yours could never go that wrong. Whatever your condition, the prescription is simple: a novel (or two), to be read at regular intervals and in nice long chunks until you finish. Some treatments will lead to a complete cure. Others will offer solace, showing that you're not the first to experience these emotions. The Novel Cure is also peppered with useful lists and sidebars recommending the best novels to read when you're stuck in traffic or can't fall asleep, the most important novels to read during every decade of life, and many more. Brilliant in concept and deeply satisfying in execution, *The Novel Cure* belongs on everyone's bookshelf and in every medicine cabinet. It will make even the most well-read fiction aficionado pick up a novel he's never heard of, and see familiar ones with new eyes. Mostly, it will reaffirm literature's ability to distract and transport, to resonate and reassure, to change the way we see the world and our place in it. This appealing and helpful read is guaranteed to double the length of a to-read list and become a go-to reference for those unsure of their reading identities or who are overwhelmed by the sheer number of books in the world.—Library Journal

the dud avocado book: The Chrysalids John Wyndham, 2020-09-23 THE COLD WAR SCI-FI CLASSIC: Following a global nuclear war, a telepathic young boy searches for freedom in a fundamentalist society. "One of the most thoughtful post-apocalypse novels ever written." —David Mitchell, New York Times—bestselling author of *Cloud Atlas* *The Chrysalids* is set in the future after a devastating global nuclear war. David lives in a tight-knit community of religious and genetic fundamentalists, who exist in a state of constant alert for any deviation from what they perceive as the norm of God's creation—deviations broadly classified as "offenses" and "blasphemies." Offenses consist of plants and animals that are in any way unusual, and these are publicly burned to the accompaniment of the singing of hymns. Blasphemies are human beings—ones who show any sign of

abnormality, however trivial. They are banished from human society, cast out to live in the wild country where, as the authorities say, nothing is reliable, and the devil does his work. David grows up surrounded by admonitions: KEEP PURE THE STOCK OF THE LORD; WATCH THOU FOR THE MUTANT. At first, he hardly questions them, though he is shocked when his sternly pious father and rigidly compliant mother force his aunt to forsake her baby. It is a while before he realizes that he too is out of the ordinary, in possession of a power that could doom him to death or introduce him to a new, hitherto-unimagined world of freedom. *The Chrysalids* is a perfectly conceived and constructed work from the classic era of science fiction. It is a Voltairean philosophical tale that has as much resonance in our own day, when genetic and religious fundamentalism are both on the march, as when it was written during the Cold War.

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Imagination is one of the most admired and influential works of criticism of the last century, a work that is not only a masterpiece of literary criticism but an important statement about politics and society. Published in 1950, one of the chillier moments of the Cold War, Trilling's essays examine the promise—and limits—of liberalism, challenging the complacency of a naïve liberal belief in rationality, progress, and the panaceas of economics and other social sciences, and asserting in their stead the irreducible complexity of human motivation and the tragic inevitability of tragedy. Only the imagination, Trilling argues, can give us access and insight into these realms and only the imagination can ground a reflective and considered, rather than programmatic and dogmatic, liberalism. Writing with acute intelligence about classics like Huckleberry Finn and the novels of Henry James and F. Scott Fitzgerald, but also on such varied matters as the Kinsey Report and money in the American imagination, Trilling presents a model of the critic as both part of and apart from his society, a defender of the reflective life that, in our ever more rationalized world, seems ever more necessary—and ever more remote.

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