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PENGUIN BOOKS

TWITTERATURE

“The classics are so last century.”—*The Guardian*

“Sincerest apologies to Shakespeare, Stendhal, and Joyce: how were we to know it would come to this?”—Mashable.com

“The trouble with Twitter is, I think, that too many twits might make a twat.”—David Cameron

“*Twitterature* makes me want to punch someone, preferably the ‘authors.’ They’re in Chicago. I’m gonna take a road trip.”
—@damig, Twitter

“A move likely to be greeted by book lovers with a mixture of horror and why-didn’t-I-think-of-that jealousy.”
—*Chicago Tribune*

“Just f*%ing shoot me now.”
—Mike C., grouchyconservativepundits.com

ALEXANDER ACIMAN was born in 1990. A sophomore at the University of Chicago, he was graduated from Horace Mann School in New York City. He has worked in the offices of several publications, including *The Paris Review* and the late *New York Sun*, which he and the city of New York mourn every day upon noticing its absence from every newsstand as the copper sun rises to greet the metropolis. He has published many articles in both his high school and college newspapers, as well as three feature article-essays in *The New York Times* and one in *The New York Sun*. He is also a devoted follower of Napoleon Bonaparte. He believes that there is no better way to start a day than with a run or a bike ride, and is known on occasion to enjoy a game of bocce or to engage in pugilism. He would like to write, own a pair of John Lobb shoes, and live out his days reading and writing in the Mediterranean basin with his brothers.

EMMETT RENSIN was born in 1990. He is a sophomore at the University of Chicago, before which he attended the finest parochial school in all of Los Angeles. A Huffington Post contributor and ordained reverend, and unable to tie his shoelaces at the tender age of sixteen, he gave it all up to pursue his true dream: putting stickers on books. This he did with care and devotion for many long hours, ensuring that every book in the reference library of the world-renowned Museum of Jurassic Technology at which he was employed had its lovely laminated ascension number neatly stuck upon its spine. He emerged from this a brighter and more worldly man. Rensin contributes to the University of Chicago's *Chicago Maroon* as well as the Huffington Post but takes care to balance his stresses with the relaxing arts of coat collection and Richard Nixon enthusiasm. Such balance is necessary, as extremity might cause Rensin's untimely death and prevent him from accomplishing his three life goals: penning the Great American Novel, mastery of card magic, and telling the perfect shaggy-dog joke.

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*Dedicated in Loving Memory
to the Victims of the R.M.S. Titanic*

Introduction

Life can offer us no greater treasure than art. It is all that is beautiful, and all that allows a man's soul to take leave of the quotidian trifles that molest his waking mind, to be lifted to the highest peaks of experience, and to peer briefly into the sublime. It is that which removes man from the static residue of time and casts him into the gentle waters of the eternal. It is to hear and to speak softly in the beauteous tongue of antiquity, and yet to foresee all that will unfold through the illimitably growing passage of our universe.

In short, art is pretty sweet.

What a *tragédie*, then, that so many modern people find the great works of literature inaccessible, overwhelming, and even, perhaps, dull. It is not a defect of their character, nor any special ineptitude that has disposed them in this manner; rather, these great texts - timeless as they may be - are, in their present form, outdated. Who but college students, hermits, and disciples of the disgraced John Ludd can muddle through them with any hope of understanding? This is what we seek, through our humble efforts, to remedy.

While some may describe the reinvention of our world's Great Works to suit the ever-evolving brain of the modern man as 'a triviality', 'a travesty', or 'that sucks', we prefer to think of ourselves as modern-day Martin Luthers. Herr Luther took the Holy Scripture itself, and seeing that the classic Vulgate no longer spoke to the souls of his contemporaries, he translated it into the vernacular of his time. By doing so, Luther unleashed a revolution of faith and literacy upon sixteenth-century Europe that had not been seen before and has not been equaled since.

In our own way, and in our own time, we hope to do the same.

However, it's probably best if we stay clear of the Bible.

You may be wondering, good sirs, what exactly we intend to do with these great works of art. What one must keep in mind is that the literary canon is not valued for its tens of thousands of dull, dull words but for the raw insight into humanity it provides. While perhaps an unwieldy tome was the best method of digesting this knowledge during a summer spent in the Victorian countryside in the Year of Our Lord, Eighteen Hundred and Seventy-Three, times have changed. Virginité must

not be distracted with books, nor damsel-chasing pacified with poetry. Instead we must run free into the world and not once look back.

And so, we give you the means to absorb the strong voices, valuable lessons and stylistic innovations of the Greats without the burdensome duty of hours spent reading. We take these Great Works and present their most essential elements, distilled into the voice of Twitter - *the social networking tool that with its limit of 140 characters a post (including spaces) has refined to its purest form the instant-publishing, short-attention-span, all-digital-all-the-time, self-important age of info-deluge* - and give you everything you need to master the literature of the civilized world.

For indeed, does any man have such great pretense as to suppose that he may digest all that it is right and proper for him to have digested in the stunted mortal fit granted to him by Providence? Perhaps in the eighteenth year of your life you sat on a porch asking yourself: *What exactly is Hamlet trying to tell me? Why must he mince words and muse in lyricism and, in short, whack about the shrub?* Such questions are no doubt troubling - and we believe they would have been resolved were the Prince of Denmark a registered user on Twitter.com, well versed in the idiosyncrasies and idioms of the modern day. And this, in essence, is what we have done. We have liberated poor Hamlet from the rigorous literary constraints of the sixteenth century and made him - without losing an ounce of wisdom, beauty, wit, or angst - a happening youngster. Just like you, dear reader.

In brief - and we mean this literally - we have created our generation's salvation, a new and revolutionary way of facing and understanding the greatest art of all arts: Literature.

And allow us now to open
The eternal aperture,
To the brilliant soul of common man:
We now present you . . . *Twitterature*.

The Catcher in the Rye

by J. D. Salinger

@HoldenLolfield

Fucked up for the last time. They're throwin' me out of the old school! Still haven't seen a goddamn horse! LOL!

Do you ever wonder what they used in Egypt to embalm mummies? It's special ancient mummy juice, that's what it is.

Left school. Totally yelled some nasty shit down the hall - that'll show em! Headin' 2 NY soon. Hit me up.

Surrounded by phonies. Everywhere!

I tried to bone some kid's mom. She wasn't havin' it. I have this really gay lumberjack hat now, though.

Checked into a dingy hotel; it's pretty crappy. Pay per view isn't working. I guess I'll just call a hooker?

Whoa: never ever try to short a hooker. These guys called pimps come and fuck you up.

Still surrounded by phonies! I bet you're all phonies, too. Ugh.

Think I have mouth cancer - will keep you all updated.

Anyone know where ducks go during winter? Do they freeze??

On a date with a girl I don't care about. So bizarre that nature makes me do such funny, contradictory things. Hypocrisy to the max. Deep.

Decided to run away from home. I told my sister about it. She's here.

I think some dude just tried to fuck me. Yeah, some dude just tried to put his dick in me. Disgusting.

He's a phony too, of course.

Sister insists on going west with me - I said no way. Women can't be cowboys!!

On second thought, west probably as phony as east.

Life is full of frustration and contradiction.

I miss those pricks I swore at in school. :(Even though they were phonies.

The Da Vinci Code

by Dan Brown

@CatholicGuilt

Heading to Paris! A man is dead and the police think only my superhuman knowledge of cryptology can solve this one.

Oh fuck - the police think I killed him!!!

These idiots don't understand this is a CODE! Thankfully, this bangin' - er, beautiful - French girl is helping me out.

Driving to a bank. Good time to exposit the history of all these crazy Catholic secret societies to this French girl - maybe get her hot??

HOLY SHIT!!!! We stole the Codex for a large-scale conspiracy that is conveniently in my area of expertise!

A historian explained rest of complicated conspiratorial legend. It's good we keep track of all this. For the lady's benefit, of course.

WTF!! A FUCKING ALBINO!! My cushy tenure at Harvard did NOT prepare me for all this action!!!

You know that old Italian dude who painted the picture of the smiling lady? He's the key to all of this. LOL, who would have thought?

Police won't stop chasing us! Will tweet all locations; just don't tell the Popo! Or

the Pope.

Oh man, this gal is hot. But it's harder than I thought to find romance amidst a global plot to conceal the truth about Jesus Christ.

Taking a breather to solve some puzzles. 'A Pope', anybody? There's so many! Mad props if anyone can solve it.

Thanks to @dudeonthebus. Oh goddamnit, another cryptex? Jesus fucking Christ. Literally.

Can't someone tell this albino and the cops that we're just TRYING TO SOLVE A MYSTERY? It's like a crossword! Everyone needs to CTFO!

Puzzles, puzzles, puzzles all day long.

So you're looking for something. Got a smokin' hot French babe with you. Then it turns out what you're looking for IS that babe. Yeah!

Jesus. The lady is a direct descendant of Christ. All good. Oh what? Another puzzle? Bring on the sequel!

Paradise Lost

by John Milton

@MorningStarlet

FALLING UNTO THE ABYSS!!!! I'll talk more about why in several hundred pages to avoid any confusion.

OH MY GOD I'M IN HELL.

'Tis Pandemonium down here. Would ROFL but it's very hot.

I'm bored. I'm the chairman of the board. My compatriots are r-tards. Inaction? Is that the best we can do? We art fucking demons!

Sitting on our asses waiting for an apology from G-d isn't exactly renegade. Pussies.

Anyone heard anything about Earth? Good? Bad? Will be there tonight bringing the MOTHAFUCKIN' RUCKUS. If anyone wants in, txt it.

On second thought, I'm going alone.

So there was a fight. Sometimes you invent gunpowder and you think SWEET but then they whip out JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF and BAM! We're in hell.

How do you defeat your own son, born to YOUR OWN DAUGHTER! Freud would have a field day.

Did you know I can change shapes? BAM: halo, wings, grace. Looking sharp, looking the part. Time to go kick some Promethean ass.

What? The almighty knows everything? Asshole sent Gabriel - the mothafuckin' archangel himself - to warn Adam and his first lady.

It's comforting to know that women were just man's first really good idea.

I'd like to cite Angry Mob v. Frankenstein - we are not responsible for all your nonsense.

Turns out the woman's dumber than the man, but she has this thing that if she doesn't give it to him, he starts to obey. I shall exploit that.

Dressed as a snake. She's going for it . . . Yes! She ate the forbidden apple! Guess God wasn't paying attention. Omniscient, hah!

So I won. They're getting kicked out. Boo hoo.

They're holding hands and crying. I wish someone would hold my hand :(

Beelzebub just isn't what I want. Stop crying! I didn't cry when I got kicked out of heaven and lost Parad—I FOUND A NAME FOR MY MEMOIRS!!

The Metamorphosis

by Franz Kafka

@bugged-out

Another day. Gotta go out selling.

Typing feels weird today.

Uh-oh. There are some white spots on my stomach . . .

I seem to have transformed into a large bug. Has this ever happened to any of you?
No solution on Web MD.

This is so weird. I read that this kind of thing usually reflects a deep disgust and discomfort with one's body. Is this true? Ana/Mia/bug??

Family not happy with my condition! Father and mother may want me dead.

Sister leaves me food!!! Thank god.

Sorry no updates. Bug time is weird. Lose track.

Sister very timid and confused - what's up with that? - but still leaving me food.

Looked outside today. Men living in my house! Who let them in? Sis plays violin for them! MORE DEGRADING THAN BEING AN INSECT.

That's it. I'm going out there. Wish me luck.
OMFG, my father totally threw an apple into my back.

REPEAT: THERE IS AN APPLE LODGED IN MY FUCKIN' BACK!

I am dying - the pain grows greater every day.

If I die my family may be able to move on. I curse the day I inexplicably transformed into a gigantic, six-legged metaphor!

And the rest is silence . . .

(Now that I'm gone my sister is a capable woman with a promising future. Guess the real 'metamorphosis' was hers!)

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