



Letters to My Son on the Love of Books

Roberto Cotroneo, Roberto Controneo

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A guide for parents to help their children learn about life through literature. "And when it couldn't sleep one summer's night, what child hasn't imagined that it saw Peter Pan's ship sailing through the sky? I want to teach you to see that ship; I want to write you a book to tell you that serious books, even those difficult ones for adults, are nothing more than sailing ships in disguise and have the same magic as the ship sprinkled with gold dust sailed by Peter Pan..." So writes Roberto Cotroneo in the opening pages of his "Letters to My Son on the Love of Books," a beautiful, engaging collection of four "letters" from an Italian farmer to his young son Francesco that is an introduction to not only the wonders of literature, but also the moral dimensions it contains. Each "letter" focuses on a particular theme, and on one book or author to illustrate it. Cotroneo discusses how: Robert Louis Stevenson's "Treasure Island" instructs us on anxiety; tenderness is discovered in J.D. Salinger's "The Catcher in the Rye;" the notion of passion is articulated in T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" and "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"; and Thomas Bernard's "The Loser" illustrated how the pitfalls of unhealthy competition can turn talent into disaster. Cotroneo has chosen books from which he has learned valuable lessons about the world, lessons that as a father he passionately wants to share with his son. For book lovers of all ages, these letters of practical criticism offer valuable lessons for life.

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Oliver Whitley:

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