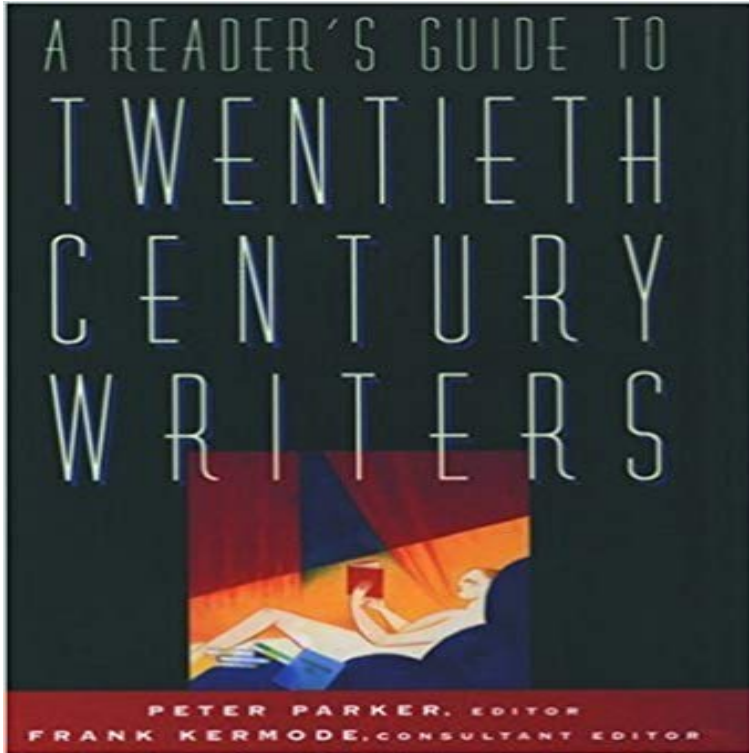


A Readers Guide to Twentieth-Century Writers



Which playwright spent two years copying old masters in the Louvre to sell to tourists? Which poet was arrested and charged with obscenity for the publication of *Howl*? Which writer described her ideal life as lying on a pink fur rug doing absolutely nothing? Who was sacked from a newspaper for coming in late and crying about a love affair? Who declared (with some justification) that she may have been married three times, but that her husbands were all geniuses? Who claimed that his first book sold only eight copies? *A Readers Guide to Twentieth-Century Writers* provides answers to these and many other questions. With biographical entries for over 1,000 novelists, short-story writers, poets, and playwrights from the United States and Canada, Britain and Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, India, Africa, and the Caribbean, the Guide is an essential and entertaining handbook of the lives and work of the century's English-language writers. Readers will find profiles of all the major literary figures of the period, including James Joyce, W.H. Auden, Tennessee Williams, Ernest Hemingway, and Samuel Beckett, as well as James Baldwin, Alice Walker, Cynthia Ozick, Robert Frost, J.R.R. Tolkien, Kazuo Ishiguro, Derek Walcott, Gertrude Stein, and those who have been undeservedly neglected or have fallen out of fashion. Each entry provides a biographical outline and critical assessment as well as a full bibliography of the writer's work, covering honors, awards, and other successes as well as literary brawls, libel actions, and assorted difficulties with money, drink, drugs, husbands, wives, lovers, and publishers. We read that Harper Lee grew up alongside Truman Capote, whom she depicted in *To Kill a Mockingbird* as the precocious Dill; that Chinua Achebe narrowly missed assassination during the Nigerian Civil War when his home was bombed; and that Amy Lowell demanded

that twelve pitchers of iced water be on hand wherever she went, and guarded her house with seven savage sheepdogs (which she killed, however, when they became a nuisance). We learn that one writer's work (Richard Kostelanetz) includes a story with only single-word paragraphs and a novel of 1,000 blank pages, and that Louise Erdrich worked as a sugar-beet hoer, Edward Albee worked as a messenger for Western Union, and Richard Ford worked briefly for the CIA. A Readers Guide to Twentieth-Century Writers is an invaluable and highly readable reference book, which celebrates the lives and works of the best writers of our age. It has been written by the same team of contributors, made up of biographers, critics, novelists, historians, academics, and literary journalists, that produced A Readers Guide to the Twentieth-Century Novel. Together these two volumes form the liveliest, as well as the most comprehensive, encyclopedia of twentieth-century literary life currently available.

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