

Forum:[Hack Forums](#)

Thread: [What's the best book you've ever read?](#)

Dystortion - July 3, 2025, 8:25 am

My Top Must-Reads

Hey everyone, I've burned through a ton of books over the my years both old and young, but these six books hit different for me.

1. Diary of a CEO by Steven Bartlett

Why I Loved It: Steven Bartlett rips back the business machine of his own rules and learnings with real world examples of how all the 'laws' he states in the book has allowed him to build an empire and leading him to become the CEO and founder of multiple businesses and a dragon on the BBC's Dragons Den.

Key Takeaways: Vulnerability is strength: sharing your failures breeds connection. Consistency > Inspiration: small daily habits compound into massive wins. (Kaizen philosophy which I'll go into deeper detail in another thread) Mental health matters: success without sanity isn't worth chasing. What's one habit you swear by in your daily grind because we all have our struggles and perhaps someone else might learn from what you preach?

2. The Smartest Person in the Room by Christian Espinosa

Why I Loved It: Espinosa dismantles the corporate cybersecurity BS and shows how culture, leadership, and psychology can sink or skyrocket your security program. Explaining how one bad apple ruins a box of good ones. A mastery for anyone leading their own business or is high up in the hierarchy of a company. The teachings Christian showcases in this book is profound, I've read through most top business books available to date and this one is by far top 3.

Key Takeaways: Tech is just one piece: people and processes are the real game-changers. Leadership buy-in beats any flashy tool.

3. Chip War by Chris Miller

Why I Loved It: A geopolitical thriller disguised as a technology history. From Silicon Valley to TSMC's fabs, it shows why semiconductors are the backbone of modern economic and imo political tensions. It's a very in depth drawn-out book at times I think but it's a fantastic read if you could stick through it because of it's density. I wondered how a book could write so much about semiconductors without actually delving into the technicality of them just the origins of how they were inventing and their current placement in the world's demand and supply but I see now why it's dense.

Key Takeaways: Tiny transistors = massive global leverage. Supply chains are national security. Tech supremacy is as strategic as any battlefield.

4. The Art of War by Sun Tzu

Why I Loved It: Timeless strategy moulded into battlefield aphorisms (I think is the correct word). Whether you're negotiating a contract or out-maneuvering competitors, these 2,500-year-old lessons still hold weight in most fields; the art of war isn't about "war" but more about the fight us humans endure against one another. A specific scenario that I think holds such powerful tactics employed by this book would be the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty Negotiations between the UK's delegates and the Irish plenipotentiary delegates.

Key Takeaways: Know yourself & your opponent: prepare by understanding strengths and weaknesses. Win without fighting: the highest form of victory is subduing the enemy's strategy. Adaptability rules: rigid plans die under real-world pressure.

5. The Art of Invisibility by Kevin Mitnick

Why I Loved It: Legendary hacker - I don't think any introduction is needed to this icon who has been my inspiration to be involved in Cyber and technology as much as I am. The book's premise is revealing how everyone from your ISP to marketers can track you and exactly how to vanish from their radars.

Key Takeaways: Privacy is a practice: tools alone can't fix bad habits. Social engineering rules: humans remain the weakest link. Layer up: combine VPNs, burner devices, & opsec routines to stay hidden.

6. Private Peaceful by Michael Morpurgo

Why I Loved It: I first read this as a kid and it wrecked me in the best way. The bond between brothers, the horrors of WWI through a child's eyes, and the bittersweet ending still hits like a gut-punch every time. A huge reason for my love of WW1 and WW2, it's by far my biggest interest and this book is just a sweet return to innocence and peace of childhood. I remember reading this and then watching the movie to follow and it was my biggest reason for being happy for years. No idea as to why.

Key Takeaways: Empathy for the soldier: you feel every step in those muddy trenches. The power of narrative: simple language amplifies raw emotion. Questioning authority: sometimes bravery is about standing up for what's right.

7. The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown

Why I Loved It:

I devoured this at age 9 and it blew my mind with its blend of art, history, and secret societies. The thrill of decoding puzzles that are years above your understanding has a sense of I am god.

Key Takeaways: The power of symbols: Every painting, every sculpture can hide layers of meaning. History as mystery: Real-world locations (Louvre, Westminster) become playgrounds for adventure.

Curiosity drives discovery with question everything

Through a Child's Eyes: Pattern Recognition: At 9, I didn't know the term, but I was learning to spot recurring motifs - keys, roses, mirrored text and link them to solutions. This sharpened my attention to detail long before I understood deduction in school.

Critical Thinking: I took every "fact" at face value: the Priory of Sion, Opus Dei until I reread it years later and caught Dan Brown's playful nod to how fiction can masquerade as history. Lesson to always question your sources.

Global Curiosity: That book was my first geography lesson. I mapped the Seine, sketched the Mona Lisa's hidden smile. Even if I misunderstood the religious backstory, I loved that history could

be a living treasure hunt.

Emotional Resonance of Myth: The tale of Mary Magdalene felt larger than life, and at 9 I assumed it was gospel. Later I learned about historical debate versus legend and understanding myth's power taught me to separate narrative magic from academic fact.

Problem-Solving Confidence: Solving puzzles in a book gave me a rush, even if I misinterpreted a clue or glossed over the Vatican's politics.

Childhood Misinterpretations & What I'd Missed I believed every conspiracy. I spent lunch convinced my teacher was part of some secret order. It taught me about confirmation bias - see what you want to see.

I glossed over the moral questions: Robert Langdon's ethics around secret-keeping flew over my head. Only later did I ponder whether withholding truth can ever be justified.

I assumed symbols had one meaning: The ambigrams, Fibonacci sequence; I thought they were universal codes, not artistic choices. It taught me that context matters symbols shift with culture and intent.

DazedB - July 3, 2025, 12:02 pm

The 7 habits of a highly successful person

Dystortion - July 3, 2025, 12:09 pm

(Jul 3, 2025 12:02 PM)DazedB Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) The 7 habits of a highly successful person

Brilliant suggestion, I believe it's an older book tho focusing on the older corporate lifestyle but the same principles still apply. Will definitely add to my shortlist.

Riot - July 3, 2025, 2:41 pm

The Bible? I honestly can't remember any books I've read. I know I read To Kill a Mockingbird in school - but that's about it. I learned most of my vocabulary skills and English intricacies from playing Runescape so much.

Dystortion - July 3, 2025, 2:50 pm

(Jul 3, 2025 02:41 PM)Riot Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) The Bible? I honestly can't remember any books I've read. I know I read To Kill a Mockingbird in school - but that's about it. I learned most of my vocabulary skills and English intricacies from playing Runescape so much.

Runescape lmao - the time people have invested in that game is absolutely mental, I mean 20 years later and they still aren't anywhere near being at the top. That's meant to be a great piece of literature, very school taught. You're english is great from what I've seen across posts so they've done a good job

VidurrE - July 4, 2025, 2:00 am

The Firm by John Grisham... Has everything from the mob to murder and the kitchen sink

RangoWorld - July 4, 2025, 2:56 am

Meditations by Marcus Aurelius.

4chan.org/bl - July 4, 2025, 9:37 am

The rational male by rollo tomassi, must read for every male on this planet.

Dennis - July 4, 2025, 10:12 am

"The Last Children of Schewenborn (German: Die letzten Kinder von Schewenborn) is a 1983 novel by Gudrun Pausewang, depicting life in rural Germany in the aftermath of a nuclear war."

The first time I read that book I was like 15. 20 years later, still my most favorite book.

Dystortion - July 4, 2025, 10:27 am

(Jul 4, 2025 10:12 AM)Dennis Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) "The Last Children of Schewenborn (German: Die letzten Kinder von Schewenborn) is a 1983 novel by Gudrun Pausewang, depicting life in rural Germany in the aftermath of a nuclear war."

The first time I read that book I was like 15. 20 years later, still my most favorite book.

Oh this is going to the top of my list, I absolutely love germany and war/post-war era. Thanks for the share!

(Jul 4, 2025 09:37 AM)4chan.org/b/ Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) The rational male by rollo tomassi, must read for every male on this planet.

A new one for me, will give it a look and see if it should go to the shortlist, thank you

(Jul 4, 2025 02:56 AM)RangoWorld Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Meditations by Marcus Aurelius.

Taking a trip deep into history it seems, I think anything of the roman era is highly interesting.

Especially the emporers, I'd say this is a highly interesting read given it's his private notes I believe

(Jul 4, 2025 02:00 AM)VidurrE Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) The Firm by John Grisham... Has everything from the mob to murder and the kitchen sink

Who doesn't love a bit of the mob, they remain some of the best movies and series ever made, never delved into any books related on the topic though. Nice share!

K4RM4 - August 17, 2025, 6:30 pm

Kingdom of Fear

- Hunter S Thompson

Dystortion - August 19, 2025, 11:22 am

(Aug 17, 2025 06:30 PM)Ab3Snak3 Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Kingdom of Fear

- Hunter S Thompson

First time hearing of this one! thanks for the suggestion

3nvy0r3 - August 20, 2025, 2:03 am

Hands down, The brothers Karamazov.

As an avid reader for the past 7-8 years, nothing ever came close to it. I never miss a chance to recommend it.

For those interested it's an exploration of the human nature, morality, passion, faith & social implications of faith and a few more themes throughout the book.

Dystortion - August 20, 2025, 3:59 am

(Aug 20, 2025 02:03 AM)3nvy0r3 Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Hands down, The brothers Karamazov.

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For those interested it's an exploration of the human nature, morality, passion, faith & social implications of faith and a few more themes throughout the book.

Well, I'm convinced - this is going to the list

diablospartan - August 20, 2025, 10:50 am

Well i dont know if its the best book but my favourite of all time its Think and grow rich by Napoleon

Hill

Northern Lights - August 20, 2025, 4:57 pm

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/18459/18459-h/18459-h.htm>

Hypnerotomachia Poliphili by Francesco Colonna

English: Poliphilo's Strife of Love in a Dream, or The Dream of Poliphilus

"..a mysterious arcane allegory in which the main protagonist, Poliphilo, pursues his love, Polia, through a dreamlike landscape. In the end, he is reconciled with her by the 'Fountain of Venus'." Honestly, I was not expecting to be as enthralled in this book as I was. It was published 1499 so at minimum there was going to be an interesting difference in language and the world. But it heavy in latin word and references, so without background knowledge it can be confusing.

Liber Primus

Cicada 3301

The experience from the events made the book so epic.

aerozprit - August 20, 2025, 5:51 pm

The Art of War by Sun Tzu and the Da vinci code are absolutely master peaces!!!

The best book what I read is the humans them self. If you watch people closely you see that EVERYONE work in the same way. Other good book is life it self, because after all there is always a new page.

I'm recommend everyone to read marvel comics, imo best things ever

LawrenceIII - August 22, 2025, 8:35 pm

I'm going to have to go with The Lord of the Rings Trilogy, no book series has ever captivated me as much as these have.

Dystortion - August 22, 2025, 8:55 pm

(Aug 20, 2025 10:50 AM)diablospartan Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Well i dont know if its the best book but my favourite of all time its Think and grow rich by Napoleon Hill

Definitely not a bad book, I would recommend it to anyone who's into finance/business books. Still standing the test of time given how old it is.

(Aug 20, 2025 04:57 PM)Northern Lights Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#)

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/18459/18459-h/18459-h.htm>

Hypnerotomachia Poliphili by Francesco Colonna

English: Poliphilo's Strife of Love in a Dream, or The Dream of Poliphilus

"..a mysterious arcane allegory in which the main protagonist, Poliphilo, pursues his love, Polia, through a dreamlike landscape. In the end, he is reconciled with her by the 'Fountain of Venus'." Honestly, I was not expecting to be as enthralled in this book as I was. It was published 1499 so at minimum there was going to be an interesting difference in language and the world. But it heavy in latin word and references, so without background knowledge it can be confusing.

Liber Primus

Cicada 3301

The experience from the events made the book so epic.

Well you've got me hooked there mentioning it's heavy in Latin, I love that. Definitely an interesting plot - not something I'd normally choose but seems like I must give it a shot.

(Aug 20, 2025 05:51 PM)aerozprit Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) The Art of War by Sun Tzu and the Da vinci code are absolutely master peaces!!!

The best book what I read is the humans them self. If you watch people closely you see that EVERYONE work in the same way. Other good book is life it self, because after all there is always a new page.

I'm recommend everyone to read marvel comics, imo best things ever

Thank you for your suggestions, haven't heard of those both. And of course marvel comics are a staple, I'm not a comic guy so for me, I think they'll wait.

(Aug 22, 2025 08:35 PM)Lawrencelll Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) I'm going to have to go with The Lord of the Rings Trilogy, no book series has ever captivated me as much as these have.

Okay give this is a trilogy id absolutely love to give my time to, I feel like you'd need a good two weeks stress free, in a forest in order to fully take this one in as you're going through. Id want to give it my full attention. I'm dying to read these

Lawrencelll - August 26, 2025, 6:35 pm

(Aug 22, 2025 08:55 PM)Dystortion Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Okay give this is a trilogy id absolutely love to give my time to, I feel like you'd need a good two weeks stress free, in a forest in order to fully take this one in as you're going through. Id want to give it my full attention. I'm dying to read these

You won't be disappointed, the Silmarillion was supposed to be his magnum opus and he unfortunately passed before it could be truly completed. His lore is unique in the sense that most questions you ask can be answered, he truly strived to create a true mythology.

deeds - August 26, 2025, 9:07 pm

The holy bible.

simonoverleak341 - August 28, 2025, 2:20 am

I know it's an obvious answer but 1984 is a must read.

Oh_Well - August 28, 2025, 2:28 am

Not so extraordinary, but Edward Snowden's book ("Permanent Record") really shook me when I first read it.

Saltandvinegar - August 28, 2025, 2:59 am

Best book that I've read was 'fear and loathing in las vegas: a savage journey to the heart the american dream' by Hunter S. Thompson. Reading this book is like a moving playing in your head, you truly dont want to put it down once you've picked it up. The movie wasn't anything like the book tho