

Italo Calvino

Quotes

Book, Cities, Reading, Writing, Mean, World, People, Giving, Men, Distance, Space, Past, Stories, Believe, Literature, Travel, Dream, Night, Memories, Two

A classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say.

~Italo Calvino

Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else.

~Italo Calvino

A human being becomes human not through the casual convergence of certain biological conditions, but through an act of will and love on the part of other people.

~Italo Calvino

I have tried to remove weight, sometimes from people, sometimes from heavenly bodies, sometimes from cities; above all I have tried to remove weight from the structure of stories and from language.

~Italo Calvino

The universe is the mirror in which we can contemplate only what we have learned to know in ourselves

~Italo Calvino

Traveling, you realize that differences are lost: each city takes to resembling all cities, places exchange their form, order, distances, a shapeless dust cloud invades the continents.

~Italo Calvino

It is not the voice that commands the story: it is the ear.

~Italo Calvino

The ideal place for me is the one in which it is most natural to live as a foreigner.

~Italo Calvino

Who are we, who is each one of us, if not a combinatoria of experiences, information, books we have read, things imagined?

~Italo Calvino

I will start out this evening with an assertion: fantasy is a place where it rains.

~Italo Calvino

In politics, as in every other sphere of life, there are two important principles for a man of any sense: don't cherish too many illusions, and never stop believing that every little bit helps.

~Italo Calvino

The city of cats and the city of men exist one inside the other, but they are not the same city.

~Italo Calvino

Melancholy is sadness that has taken on lightness.

~Italo Calvino

Sometimes one who thinks himself incomplete is merely young.

~Italo Calvino

Very often the effort men put into activities that seem completely useless turns out to be extremely important in ways no one could foresee. Play has always been the mainspring of culture.

~Italo Calvino

Fantasy is like jam. . . . You have to spread it on a solid piece of bread. If not, it remains a shapeless thing . . . out of which you can't make anything.

~Italo Calvino

Everything can change, but not the language that we carry inside us,

like a world more exclusive and final than one's mother's womb.

~Italo Calvino

Revolutionaries are more formalistic than conservatives.

~Italo Calvino

You take delight not in a city's seven or seventy wonders, but in the answer it gives to a question of yours.

~Italo Calvino

Novels as dull as dishwater, with the grease of random sentiments floating on top.

~Italo Calvino

The catalogue of forms is endless: until every shape has found its city, new cities will continue to be born. When the forms exhaust their variety and come apart, the end of cities begins.

~Italo Calvino

If you want to know how much darkness there is around you, you must sharpen your eyes, peering at the faint lights in the distance.

~Italo Calvino

The more one was lost in unfamiliar quarters of distant cities, the more one understood the other cities he had crossed to arrive there.

~Italo Calvino

It is within you that the ghosts acquire voices.

~Italo Calvino

There is no language without deceit.

~Italo Calvino

At times the mirror increases a thing's value, at times denies it.

~Italo Calvino

What harbor can receive you more securely than a great library?

~Italo Calvino

You'll understand when you've forgotten what you understood before

~Italo Calvino

What Romantic terminology called genius or talent or inspiration is nothing other than finding the right road empirically, following one's nose, taking shortcuts.

~Italo Calvino

A classic is a book which with each rereading offers as much of a sense of discovery as the first reading.

~Italo Calvino

Nobody looks at the moon in the afternoon, and this is the moment when it would most require our attention, since its existence is still in doubt.

~Italo Calvino

Photography has a meaning only if it exhausts all possible images.

~Italo Calvino

The city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand

~Italo Calvino

In love, as in gluttony, pleasure is a matter of the utmost precision.

~Italo Calvino

I am a prisoner of a gaudy and unlivable present, where all forms of human society have reached an extreme of their cycle and there is no

imagining what new forms they may assume.

~Italo Calvino

A classic is the term given to any book which comes to represent the whole universe, a book on a par with ancient talismans.

~Italo Calvino

Everything has already begun before, the first line of the first page of every novel refers to something that has already happened outside the book.

~Italo Calvino

Every time I must find something to do that will look like something a little beyond my capabilities.

~Italo Calvino

...Life is nothing but trading smells.

~Italo Calvino

Novelists tell that piece of truth hidden at the bottom of every lie.

~Italo Calvino

Knowledge of the world means dissolving the solidity of the world.

~Italo Calvino

How well I would write if I were not here!

~Italo Calvino

â€we can not love or think except in fragments of time each of which goes along its own trajectory and immediately disappears.

~Italo Calvino

The unconscious is the ocean of the unsayable, of what has been expelled from the land of language, removed as a result of ancient

prohibitions.

~Italo Calvino

Falsehood is never in words; it is in things.

~Italo Calvino

Each sort of cheese reveals a pasture of a different green, under a different sky.

~Italo Calvino

Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears.

~Italo Calvino

Memories images, once they are fixed in words, are erased.

~Italo Calvino

Biographical data, even those recorded in the public registers, are the most private things one has, and to declare them openly is rather like facing a psychoanalyst.

~Italo Calvino

Memory is redundant: it repeats signs so that the city can begin to exist.

~Italo Calvino

The more enlightened our houses are, the more their walls ooze ghosts.

~Italo Calvino

Writing always means hiding something in such a way that it then is discovered.

~Italo Calvino

It is only after you have come to know the surface of things ... that you

can venture to seek what is underneath. But the surface of things is inexhaustible.

~Italo Calvino

The satirist is prevented by repulsion from gaining a better knowledge of the world he is attracted to, yet he is forced by attraction to concern himself with the world that repels him.

~Italo Calvino

It's better not to know authors personally, because the real person never corresponds to the image you form of him from reading his books.

~Italo Calvino

The human race is a zone of living things that should be defined by tracing its confines.

~Italo Calvino

The sea where living creatures were at one time immersed is now enclosed within their bodies.

~Italo Calvino

Without translation, I would be limited to the borders of my own country. The translator is my most important ally. He introduces me to the world.

~Italo Calvino

You know that the best you can expect is to avoid the worst.

~Italo Calvino

Each new Clarice, compact as a living body with its smells and its breath, shows off, like a gem, what remains of the ancient Clarices, fragmentary and dead.

~Italo Calvino

One reads alone, even in another's presence.

~Italo Calvino

The best introduction to the psychological world of one of the most important and gifted writers of our time.

~Italo Calvino

Today each of you is the object of the other's reading, one reads in the other the unwritten story.

~Italo Calvino

The novels that attract me most are those that create an illusion of transparency around a knot of human relationships as obscure, cruel, and perverse as possible.

~Italo Calvino

The word connects the visible trace with the invisible thing, the absent thing, the thing that is desired or feared, like a frail emergency bridge flung over an abyss.

~Italo Calvino

The soul is often in the surface, and the importance of 'depth' is overestimated.

~Italo Calvino

every choice has its obverse, that is to say a renunciation, and so there is no difference between the act of choosing and the act of renouncing

~Italo Calvino

seek and learn to recognize who and what, in the midst of inferno, are not inferno, then make them endure, give them space

~Italo Calvino

We could say, then, that man is an instrument the world employs to

renew its own image constantly.

~Italo Calvino

Nobody these days holds the written word in such high esteem as police states do.

~Italo Calvino

Futures not achieved are only branches of the past: dead branches.

~Italo Calvino

Elsewhere is a negative mirror. The traveler recognizes the little that is his, discovering the much he has not had and will never have.

~Italo Calvino

In general confusion youth recognizes itself and rejoices.

~Italo Calvino

The ultimate meaning to which all stories refer has two faces: the continuity of life, the inevitability of death.

~Italo Calvino

It is only through the confining act of writing that the immensity of the nonwritten becomes legible

~Italo Calvino

The line between the reality that is photographed because it seems beautiful to us and the reality that seems beautiful because it has been photographed is very narrow.

~Italo Calvino

Work stops at sunset. Darkness falls over the building site. The sky is filled with stars. "There is the blueprint," they say.

~Italo Calvino

Now, the old man happened to be the Lord.

~Italo Calvino

I'm reading! I don't want to be disturbed!

~Italo Calvino

You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel, *If on a winter's night a traveler*.

~Italo Calvino

My confidence in the future of literature consists in the knowledge that there are things that only literature can give us, by means specific to it.

~Italo Calvino

In abortion, the person who is massacred, physically and morally, is the woman.

~Italo Calvino

Don't ask where the rest of this book is!" It is a shrill cry that comes from an undefined spot among the shelves. "All books continue in the beyond.

~Italo Calvino

I do not have any political commitments anymore. I'm politically a total agnostic; I'm one of the few writers in Italy who refuses to be identified with a specific political party.

~Italo Calvino

If a lover is wretched who invokes kisses of which he knows not the flavor, a thousand times more wretched is he who has had a taste of the flavor and then had it denied him.

~Italo Calvino

When I'm writing a book I prefer not to speak about it, because only

when the book is finished can I try to understand what I've really done and to compare my intentions with the result.

~Italo Calvino

Reading is going toward something that is about to be, and no one yet knows what it will be.

~Italo Calvino

For the man who thought he was Man there is no salvation.

~Italo Calvino

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