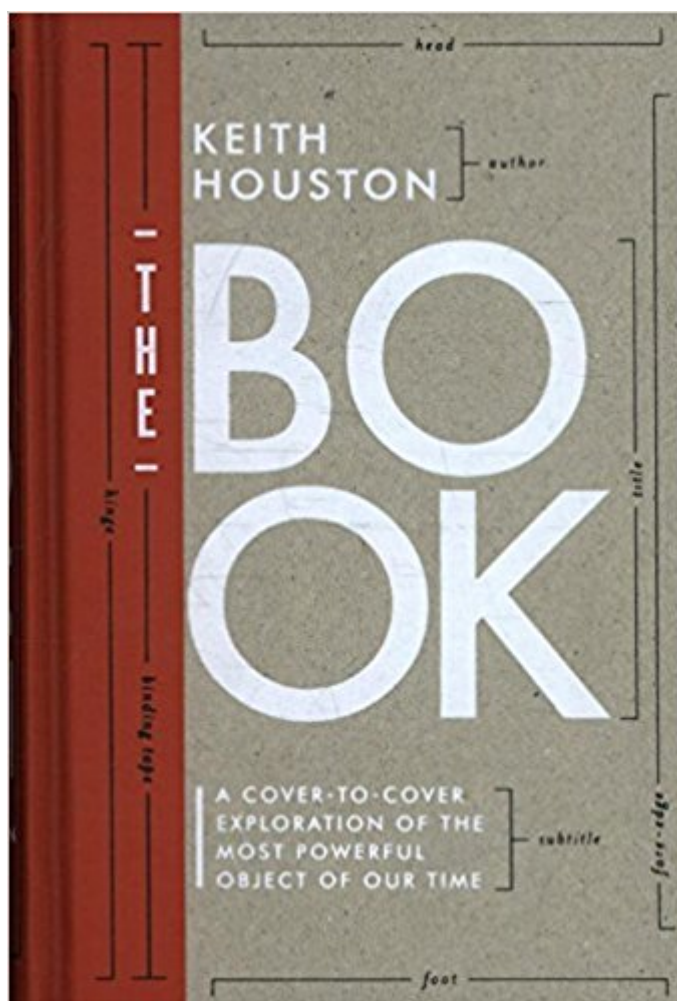


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The Book: A Cover-to-Cover Exploration Of The Most Powerful Object Of Our Time



Synopsis

“Everybody who has ever read a book will benefit from the way Keith Houston explores the most powerful object of our time. And everybody who has read it will agree that reports of the book’s death have been greatly exaggerated.” —Erik Spiekermann, typographer

We may love books, but do we know what lies behind them? In *The Book*, Keith Houston reveals that the paper, ink, thread, glue, and board from which a book is made tell as rich a story as the words on its pages of civilizations, empires, human ingenuity, and madness. In an invitingly tactile history of this 2,000-year-old medium, Houston follows the development of writing, printing, the art of illustrations, and binding to show how we have moved from cuneiform tablets and papyrus scrolls to the hardcovers and paperbacks of today. Sure to delight book lovers of all stripes with its lush, full-color illustrations, *The Book* gives us the momentous and surprising history behind humanity’s most important and universal information technology. 71 color illustrations

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“A lovingly designed and illustrated deep history of the book.” — John Williams, *New York Times*

“Mr. Houston savors evocative detail. . . . As befits its subject, *The Book* is pleasingly designed with an offbeat self-consciousness about its sturdy appearance and Mr. Houston’s unapologetic nerdiness is matched by a jaunty style. . . . Mr. Houston is an eager, affable guide, and his detailed history is a welcome reminder that

this is an unrepentantly analog contraption is one of the truly great pieces of technology.

• Henry Hitchings, Wall Street Journal "A love letter to the physical book, this is a fascinating and erudite telling of how it came into being. . . . Hugely enlightening."

• Tory Lyne-Pirkis, The Yorkshire Post "Keith Houston's deft history of the object wraps entire civilizations into the telling, propelling us through the evolution of writing, printing, binding and illustration with gusto."

• Barbara Kiser, books and arts editor of Nature magazine "If you love books, love the feel of a book in your hands, the heft and smell, the swish of a turned page and the satisfying thump of the cover -- and you must or you wouldn't be reading this -- have I got the book for you. . . . The bookiest of books. . . . Houston. . . writes with zest. He's an enthusiast if not an obsessive, with a voracious appetite for details, from the daily grind in a medieval scriptorium to the intricate workings of a modern offset press. . . . The Book is nothing if not user-friendly."

• Bill Marvel, Dallas Morning News "Invitingly tactile. . . . Sure to delight book lovers of all stripes with its lush, full-color illustrations, THE BOOK gives us the momentous and surprising history behind humanity's most important and universal information technology."

• Book Reporter "Erudite, playful, and illuminating. . . . Houston is both witty and intensely detailed, thus appealing both to general readers and to bibliophiles who will wish to know the specifics of making papyrus, of stitching together pages, and of learning how we arrived at today's paper sizes. . . . A splendid, challenging mixture of information and fun."

• Kirkus Reviews (starred review) "Houston's fixation with this object is a delight, and his understanding of how history is written and his clear delineation between speculation and established fact are very refreshing."

• Publishers Weekly (starred review) "This engaging volume should satisfy a wide cross-section of book lovers, history buffs, and those interested in the dynamic relationship among language, the written word, and human ingenuity."

• Rebecca Brody, Library Journal "[A] masterful and overwhelmingly entertaining volume, both an homage to the book and one itself to be cherished by readers everywhere."

• Clea Simon, The Boston Globe "We bibliomaniacs have a soulmate in Keith Houston . . . riveting."

• Alan Taylor, Scottish Review of Books "Savor this deeply researched love letter to every bibliophiles favorite thing . . . a scholarly and light-hearted review of everything you want to know on the origins of the written language, the media upon which it is captured, and its methods of illustration, reproduction, and distribution."

• Jennifer Bort Yacovissi, Washington Independent Review of Books "Splendidly comprehensive and tactile."

• Russell Leadbetter, The Herald "This witty and mischievous tome traces the evolution from papyrus to paperback in

448 pages. It's an optimistic ode to one of mankind's greatest inventions, which continues to thrive even against the onslaught of e-readers. "Everybody who has ever read a book will benefit from the way Keith Houston explores the most powerful object of our time. And everybody who has read it will agree that reports of the book's death have been greatly exaggerated." - Erik Spiekermann, Professor at University of the Arts Bremen

Keith Houston is the author of *Shady Characters* and the founder of shadycharacters.co.uk. He lives in London.

I'm very impressed with this book, both in the content of the text and quality of the book itself. As a history of the development of the book it is more of an overview but that fits in with the intent of the book. The illustrations and images in the hardcover version are very useful and amazing clear and sharp; I wish more publishers would take this kind of care in their book. And the book itself has a certain charm to it, it really is a pleasure to read and enjoy.

Fantastically fascinating! I've spent a lifetime writing and editing, and this is a wonderful re-cap of what's, to me, perhaps the most wonderful thing in the world

I really enjoyed reading this. The content was interesting covering all aspects of what it took to create modern books. It is very readable and flows quickly. The physical book itself is very high quality and interesting to examine.

Interesting read, especially for someone who loves history and books in general

This is an excellent book! Very interesting and well-written. It's also beautifully illustrated. I enjoyed it so much that I gave it to three other people as gifts; they were overjoyed to receive it. If you're a bibliophile, you really must read this book. However, even casual readers will likely appreciate this wonderful book.

It is a great gift for that person you know who loves books and documentaries.

One of the most beautifully produced books I have seen in a long time. Highly recommend if you love the feel and touch of books. A feast for the eye!

Fabulous if you have any interest in how paper, printing, books from Egyptian papyri to computer generated words are collected. The "Book" itself is wonderfully produced.

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