TAG PUDDING = o(0 × oo)

Reading should not be about something it should be about the nothings that occur before and after reading. As anyone who has gazed at the covers of a book over a book’s lifetime can tell you, reading is a very weak pattern of information gathering and typos and it should stay that way. Or as Tom often says to his students at Oberlin College where he teaches courses in 18th-century Russian pastoral literature: “nothing ever really happens inside a book.” Like an anecdote or a building w/o walls, books are the most careless and also the most relaxing of things you can do to your brain. That is why they are so beautiful and why reading and college go together so well i.e. because they in fact go together so poorly. Students rarely read their course assignments. We live in an age of rampant grade inflation. There are too many serious readers of literature and too few beautiful non-readers of books. What we need is more books and fewer readers. Of course, the reader of a book is like an imaginary animal in an imaginary cage, an evanescent grid whose parameters are always unchanging relative to its narrative contents. Nothing about a book should change. Each cover constitutes a stereotype of an illusion, like all those animals outside looking in who we think are us. What does it mean to look carelessly at a book? I think it means to look at one locked window and see a few identical animals inside. The beauty of a typo is that it is self-organizing.

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