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Front Cover

The Yellow Scarf; Portrait of Henry Handel Richardson

Rupert Bunny, 1864–1947

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What must a book review contain? Like all works of art, no two book reviews will be identical. But fear not: there are a few guidelines for any aspiring book reviewer to follow. Most book reviews, for instance, are less than 1,500 words long, with the sweet spot hitting somewhere around the 1,000-word mark. (However, this may vary depending on the platform on which youâ€™re writing, as weâ€™ll see later.) In addition, all book reviews share some universal elements. These include: A concise plot summary of the book. Find book reviews, essays, best-seller lists and news from The New York Times Book Review.Â Authors arenâ€™t allowed mutual reviews in the Book Review anymore, but in the 1950s there was a moment of kismet. Photo. Credit Adam Maida; photo left: Keith Bedford/Bloomberg News.