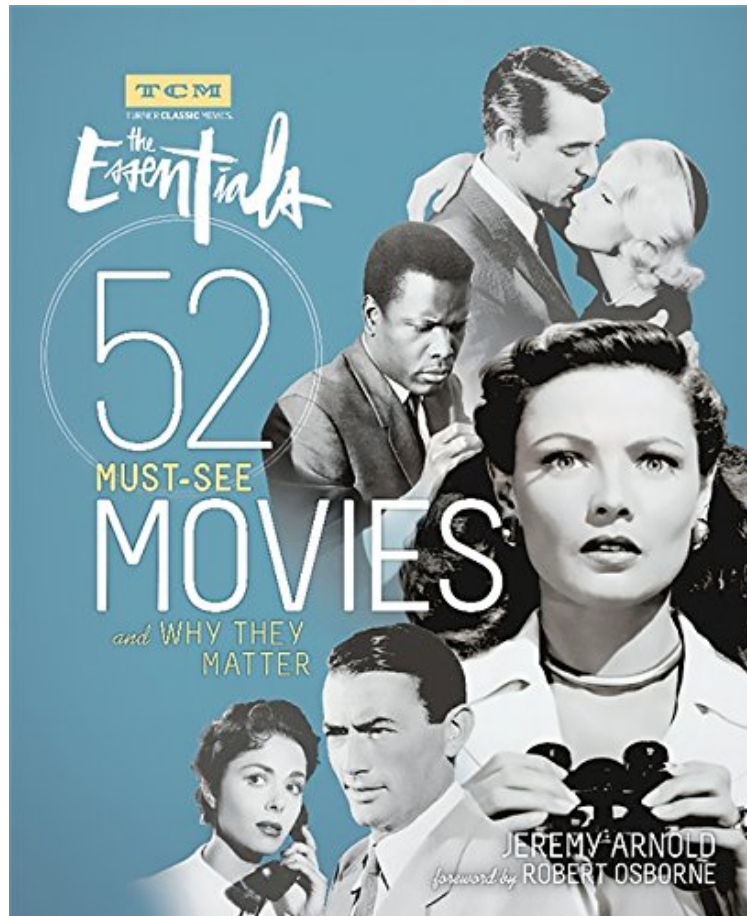


# Turner Classic Movies: The Essentials: 52 Must-See Movies and Why They Matter

Jeremy Arnold

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#23898 in Books Arnold Jeremy 2016-05-03 2016-05-03 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.25 x 1.00 x 7.501, .0 #File Name: 0762459468288 pages Turner Classic Movies The Essentials 52 Must See Movies and Why They Matter | File size: 74.Mb

**Jeremy Arnold : Turner Classic Movies: The Essentials: 52 Must-See Movies and Why They Matter** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Turner Classic Movies: The Essentials: 52 Must-See Movies and Why They Matter:

39 of 40 people found the following review helpful. Arnold's book is one of the Essentials By Larry David Wilson Jeremy Arnolds book The Essentials: 52 Must-See Movies and Why They Matter is marvelous. Like the movies it features, it is essential for any fan or student of classic cinema. It is essential for offering new and exciting insights into the films chosen, for devising and using an inviting format for their discussion, and for being a book that will require rereading when the chance arises to see the films (most likely on the Turner Classic Movies channel). Arnolds book is beautifully produced on fine paper with front and back covers invitingly composed. Before even opening the book, the reader can have some fun trying to identify the performers pictured, as well as the

particular Essential film in which they appeared that is discussed, of course, in the book. The photo on the back cover should provide no trouble for anyone not living in a cave for the last 40 years. This book is graced with a foreword by Robert Osborne, who is, of course, the longtime and still principal host of Turner Classic Movies, who has been part of the TCM landscape since the beginning, i.e., 1994, when he was on the stage with Ted Turner and other notables to launch this essential channel. Osbourne's foreword points out, among other tidbits, that the 52 films featured in this book were chosen from among the nearly 300 films that have been shown as part of the series since its debut in 2001. So, I guess these 52 are the most essential of the Essentials. As a simple but important stroke of genius, Arnold presents the 52 films in chronological order, beginning with *Metropolis* released in 1927 to *Spinal Tap* in 1984. Thus, we are treated to a panoply of films extending from near the end of the silent era through the Golden Age of Hollywood (and places elsewhere in the world) to the time of the summer blockbuster and beyond to a point now more than three decades ago. Since I am a loyal fan of TCM, I have seen all of the films featured in the book, except, somehow, for the last one, the mockumentary *Spinal Tap*. I am old enough to have seen some of these films for the first time in the original theatre release and others on TCM. The first I recall seeing in the theatre was *The Third Man*, released in 1949, when I was nine years old. Why I have that recollection is because I remember being bored stiff by this dark, convoluted drama playing out in the streets of post-war Vienna. I have a different opinion today. The films featured in this book were released over a span of 57 years. The decades most represented are the 1940s (14 films) and the 1950s (14), followed by the 1930s (11), which is perhaps understandable, since these are generally thought of as the decades comprising the Golden Age of Hollywood. Only eight films from the 1960s are included and three from the 1970s, with one each from the 1920s and the 1980s. The year most represented among the 57 covered is 1950, with four selections (*Winchester 73*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Gun Crazy*, and *All About Eve*). Interestingly, it is 1950 and not 1939 that is best represented, inasmuch as the latter year is often thought to represent the pinnacle of film achievement; only *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* and *Gone With the Wind* from the latter year are discussed. As one might imagine, most of the films were made by U.S. companies, but a few were done by foreign companies, including *Metropolis* (Germany), *The Red Shoes* (Britain), *The Bicycle Thief* (Italy), *The Third Man* (Britain), *Seven Samurai* (Japan), and *Breathless* (France). The U.S. companies best represented are United Artists, MGM, Universal, Paramount, Warner Bros., RKO, Columbia, and 20th Century Fox, all of great importance in contributing to the film medium as an art form. A long string of notable film directors was involved in making these films. I tried to guess as I was listing them who would be the standouts, but I was able to guess only two of the four directors with two or more films among the Essentials. The standout directors, which might not be much of a surprise, are Billy Wilder, with three films featured (*Double Indemnity*, *Sunset Blvd.*, and *Some Like It Hot*), and William Wyler, with the same number (*The Best Years of our Life*, *Roman Holiday*, and *Ben-Hur*). Frank Capra and Alfred Hitchcock are the runners-up, with two films each. The remainder of the directors made it onto the list on the strength of one film each, and in two cases as co-directors. The actors and actresses at the tops of the cast lists for these films perhaps should be more familiar to classic movie fans than even the directors. Most of the performers appear only once at the top of the cast, but there are four that appear twice, Clark Gable (for *It Happened One Night* and *Gone With the Wind*), Betty Davis (for *Now, Voyager* and *All About Eve*), James Stewart (for *Winchester 73* and *Rear Window*), and Gregory Peck (for *Roman Holiday* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*). The author Jeremy Arnold devised an inviting format for the discussion of each film. The first page lists the film title, the company that released it, the year of its release, its director, producer, screenplay authors, and cast list. A capsule statement of its plot is presented and either a poster or some shots of cast members. The longest portion of each chapter involves a discussion of Why Its Essential, These sections comprise the centerpiece of the book; they are what allow Jeremy Arnold to show off his stuff. No matter how much the reader thinks he or she knows about a given film, there will be something in each one of these evaluations that will be new and interesting. In addition, each chapter offers a short assessment by Robert Osborne and a few comments by whomever joined Osborne during the telecast of the films included. Finally, each chapter concludes with information on What to Look For, which obviously should be read before any viewing or reviewing of the film in question. I highly recommend this book to readers with an interest in classic films and suggest that it be kept within reach near the television set. Even better, I suggest that the reader check the TCM website and compile a schedule for the next showing of the 52 films covered in this amazingly informative and entertaining book.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Love the trivia and the "what to look for" in ...By Altxgalsw This book is fascinating! Love the trivia and the "what to look for" in the film section. Great write up and pictures. A great read.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. For Any Classic Film Fan By T. Norman A great book to add to any movie lovers collection especially if you are into classic film. It's not just another review and ratings book, but looks at the impacts of these 52 movies and how they impacted culture and the movie industry as well.

Showcasing 52 Essential films from the golden age to the present, Turner Classic Movies invites you into a world filled with stirring performances, dazzling musical numbers, and bold directorial visions that mark the greatest moments in film history. Since its inception on Turner Classic Movies in 2001, The Essentials has become the ultimate series for movie lovers to expand their knowledge of must-see cinema and discover or revisit landmark films that have

had a lasting impact on audiences everywhere. Based on the TCM series, *The Essentials* book showcases fifty-two must-see movies from the silent era through the early 1980s. Readers can enjoy one film per week, for a year of stellar viewing, or indulge in their own classic movie festival. Some long-championed classics appear within these pages; other selections may surprise you. Each film is profiled with insightful notes on why it's an Essential, a guide to must-see moments, and running commentary from TCM's Robert Osborne and *Essentials* guest hosts past and present, including Sally Field, Drew Barrymore, Alec Baldwin, Rose McGowan, Carrie Fisher, Molly Haskell, Peter Bogdanovich, Sydney Pollack, and Rob Reiner. Featuring full-color and black-and-white photography of the greatest stars in movie history, *The Essentials* is your curated guide to fifty-two films that define the meaning of the word "classic."

"[An] excellent book. Author Arnold distills why each movie is a must-see, and augments his knowledgeable text with sidebar quotes from various TCM hosts... Handsomely designed and packed with great photos, *The Essentials* would be a perfect gift for a young person who's just dipping his or her toe into these waters but I found it equally appealing." Leonard Maltin, [leonardmaltin.com](http://leonardmaltin.com)" An entertaining read... Beautifully-designed and illustrated... Author Jeremy Arnold does a superb job presenting the reasons why a particular film matters." Raymond Benson, *Cinema Retro*