

For the Love of Reading

## Novel Novels: Not Your Average Story

Not every story has a clear beginning, middle and end. Here are three that challenge the traditional definition of "novel."



The Lover's Dictionary by David Levithan

The title of *The Lover's Dictionary* describes exactly what is inside this novel: a story of a relationship told through alphabetical dictionary entries describing the large and small events that shape a relationship. While the first entry describes a scene from the first meeting, the rest of the novel does not follow linearly. We learn of how the unnamed couple falls in love, events that cause tension, milestones in their relationship and vignettes about love.

For example:

I, n.  
*Me without anyone else.*

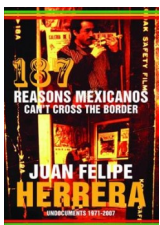
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Posted by Jacoba W. on June 11, 2015

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## New United States Poet Laureate



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Just announced: the Library of Congress appointed Juan Felipe Herrera as our latest national poet laureate. The child of migrant farm workers, Herrera is the first Latino poet laureate. As a child, he traveled up and down the state of California with his parents, and later attended UCLA with the help of a grant for disadvantaged youth.

At the age of 21, Herrera was inspired by the debut book by Puerto Rican poet, Victor Hernandez Cruz.

He also writes children's books and those for young adults. Check out our [list of his titles](#). [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on June 10, 2015

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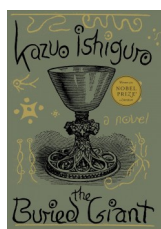
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## The Buried Giant



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If you've read any of Kazuo Ishiguro's novels, you know that not only can he write beautiful prose but that he also weaves interesting, compelling stories.

For an author who has written about widely divergent themes: life among the British gentry and serving classes (*The Remains of the Day*) and a group of schoolchildren being farmed for body parts (*Never Let Me Go*), his latest takes a leap into entirely new directions.

Call it an on the road/historical/Arthurian/ attempt-to-find-and-slay-a-giant-novel. This giant, who lives in Britain after the Anglo Saxon wars, spumes up dense clouds that cause people to lose their memories.

Beatrice and Axl, two very old Britons, find themselves denied candles in their village, forced to spend their nights in the cold dark, and are treated shabbily in other ways. They decide to leave and attempt a long arduous journey to see their only child, a son, who has not returned to the village for many years. Beatrice suffers from an unnamed illness that makes her very frail but she's determined to see their son again.

Because of the endless polluted mists, neither she nor Axl can remember why their son left, or why he has not returned. Axl vaguely recalls an argument just before they parted, so the old couple want to make amends.

In one village where they spend the night, the residents mob a young boy who has a weird bite on his skin. They are so angry that Axl fears for the boy's life, and rushes to his rescue, but the mob attacks him instead. After leaving this village they find this boy again accompanied by a Saxon. Long ago, Axl fought against the Saxons, and the country is just starting to heal from the vicious wars.

Axl and Beatrice agree to travel with them, because the Saxon promises to help the couple reach their destination. They feel sorry for the boy too, but they are also leery of his bite.

While trying to cross a bridge, guards with swords detain them. When the Saxon sees them coming, he concocts a plan to play the fool. He also advises the couple to say that the boy has come with them. So the Saxon lolls his head, wags his tongue while the guards draw swords and prepare to spear him. But his disguise succeeds at least until the guard realizes later that the boy might be the boy bitten by the dragon, and chases them again.

The party also meets elderly Sir Gawain, one of the knights of Arthur's Round Table. The king has commanded him to slay the buried giant. At one point, the Saxon accuses him of not really trying to kill the beast. Why else would it still be alive?

The couple decide to visit a monastery even though it is out of the way and high on a mountain because they heard a monk there offers excellent counseling. But alas, the monastery was not what they thought. Around its windows and parapets, huge ravens swarm eager for bites of flesh. There is also a large tower that looks burnt, and has a suspicious platform on which it looks like battles have been fought, and enemies thrown off. Later the Saxon discovers a weird torture device in an out-building. And yes, those hungry ravens continue to batter the hatches. Ishiguro weaves history, Arthurian legend, and medieval fear of those different from us into a wonderful parable, but at heart, this is a story of a long marriage, how two people survive both the rough and calm seas of life, trying to bridge their differences, and caring for each other despite mistakes, arguments, hard feelings and the chaos of a world gone mad around them. For an entirely different take on England long ago, try Geraldine Brooks' *Year of Wonders: a novel of the plague.*

Posted by Dory L. on June 9, 2015

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[Relationships](#)

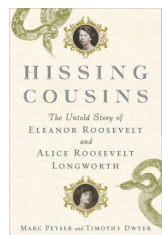
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## Hissing Cousins



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This double biography of two famous first cousins, both belonging to the famous Roosevelt clan, brings the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to life in both Washington DC and New York and gives us a fascinating peak into two strong women's lives, both of whom married or were born into politics. Eleanor Roosevelt and her first cousin Alice were born just eight months apart. Alice came from the Republican Oyster Bay branch of the family and Eleanor from the Democratic Hyde Park (NYC) branch. Not only did they differ in political and social outlooks, but they even pronounced their last name differently. Alice's family said Rose'evelt. And Eleanor's pronounced the same name as Ruse-evelt. [Read more](#)

Posted by Dory L. on June 1, 2015

[Hissing Cousins : the untold story of Eleanor Roosevelt and Alice Roosevelt Longworth](#)

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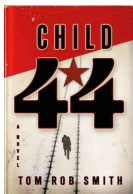
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## 3 Psychological Thrillers

Are you looking for a book that you can't put down? One that raises the hair on your arms and doesn't leave your mind for days? Or, are you just looking for a recommendation for your Adult Summer Reading guide? One of these may be for you!



[Child 44 by Tom Rob Smith](#)

Set in Stalinist Soviet Union, former war hero and current MGB agent Leo Demidov works long hours tracking down and arresting citizens suspected of political crimes. Leo knows most of them are innocent, just as he knows he can easily be on the other side of the interrogation table. Sent to investigate the death of a co-worker's child, Leo is upset because he has more important work to do. His frustration levels grow when the child's parents won't stop insisting that their child has been murdered. In the Soviet Union in 1953 there is no crime, and certainly no murder. Meanwhile, Leo's jealous co-work plants seeds of doubt into their superior's minds, and when Leo refuses to denounce his wife as a traitor, they both become targets of the State. While on the run, Leo encounters more evidence that there is a serial killer on the loose-one that is targeting children and he is determined to put a stop to it.

This fast paced thriller will leave you on the edge of your seat. Several twists and turns only add to the suspense. Though the book deals with sensitive topics, they are not described in gorey detail. Smith instead focuses on the fear the Soviet system instilled in its people. Read it now before it hits the big screen this fall!

If you enjoyed Child 44, then read the series other two books- [The Secret Speech](#) and [Agent 6](#).

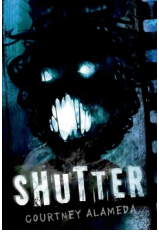
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Posted by [Jacoba W.](#) on June 1, 2015

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## Shutter, Courtney Alameda



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Horror stories scare me and this one was no exception. Micheline Helsing (yes, she's related to THE Van Helsing) is a tetrachromat and a ghost hunter. Tetrachromats can see spirits that regular humans cannot, but Micheline is particularly unique. She uses a special camera to trap and destroy ghosts who are terrorizing the human world. Micheline is good at her job; together with her loyal team she fights off creatures that would leave most of us hiding under the covers. It's a scary job, but Micheline isn't afraid, until the night she disobeys orders and goes after a dangerous spirit alone. Now she and her friends are racing against the clock to defeat an unknown, powerful evil before it consumes them from the inside...literally.

Check out this creepy adventure for a good scare!

Posted by Becky F. on May 20, 2015

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