

WRITING A CANADIAN LITERARY NOVELLA

WHY NOT?



JOHN CALABRÒ



Canada Council
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A NOVELLA, OH NO!

“... an ill-defined and disreputable literary Banana Republic.”

Stephen King

“The novella: stepping stone to success or waste of time?”

The Writer magazine

“... loathes the word novella... [because it is]... so frilly ...”

Dan Rhodes

“Un-publishable in nature, too long for a magazine and too short for book publishing.”



IAN MCEWAN

A 2007 Booker Prize Shortlist

Controversy: at 166 pages, 40,000 words, it was proudly called a novella by its British author

“Even when he's in a minor mode, as he is here, [with his novella] he is nothing short of amazing“

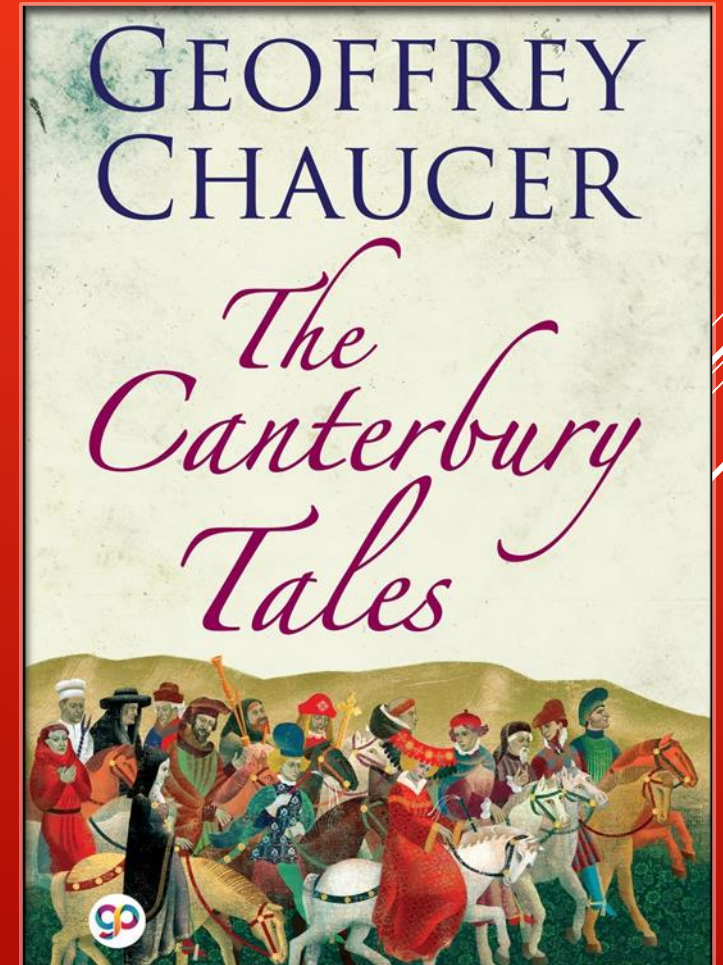
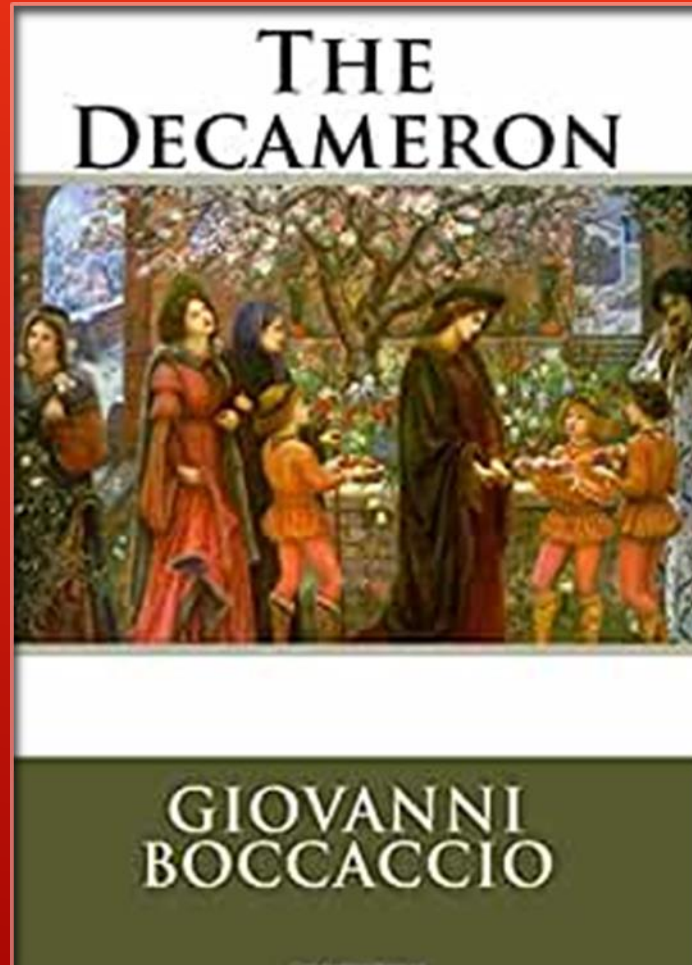
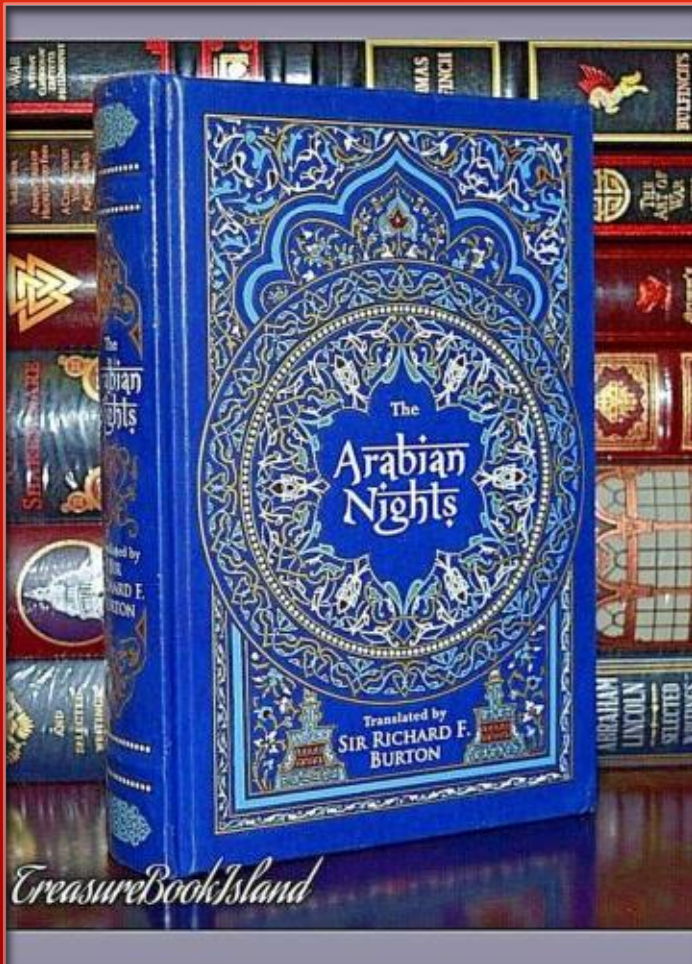
The Washington Post critic, Jonathan Yardley

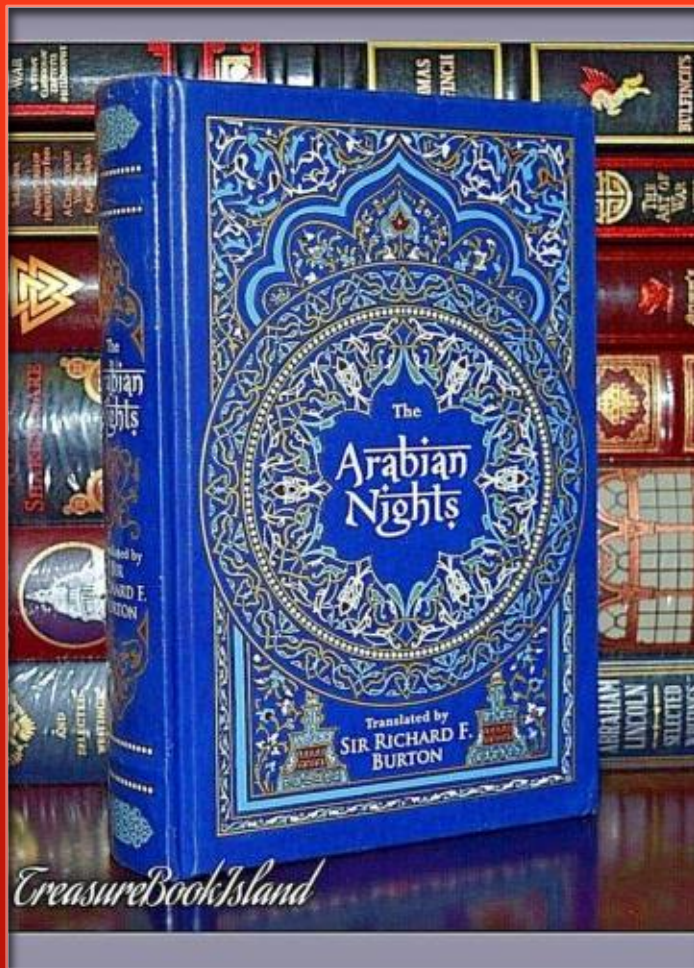


BUT, BUT, BUT... IT HAS HISTORY

- The term novella began as a Latin adjective meaning **young or new**, as applied to **farming**.
- From there it became an accepted term to denote anything that **was new or young**.
- Later it became a noun, where a “**novella**” denoted a **newly planted tree**.
- In the 6th Century the word “**novels**” was used to denote **new laws**.
- It enters the Middle-Ages in Italy to mean “**the news**.”
- Boccaccio uses the word in different ways such as, “**a piece of news, a recently acquired story, or an unusual story**.”
- At that point we first hear the term as a verb, “**novellar**” to **tell a story**.

YES... IT HAS LITERARY HISTORY





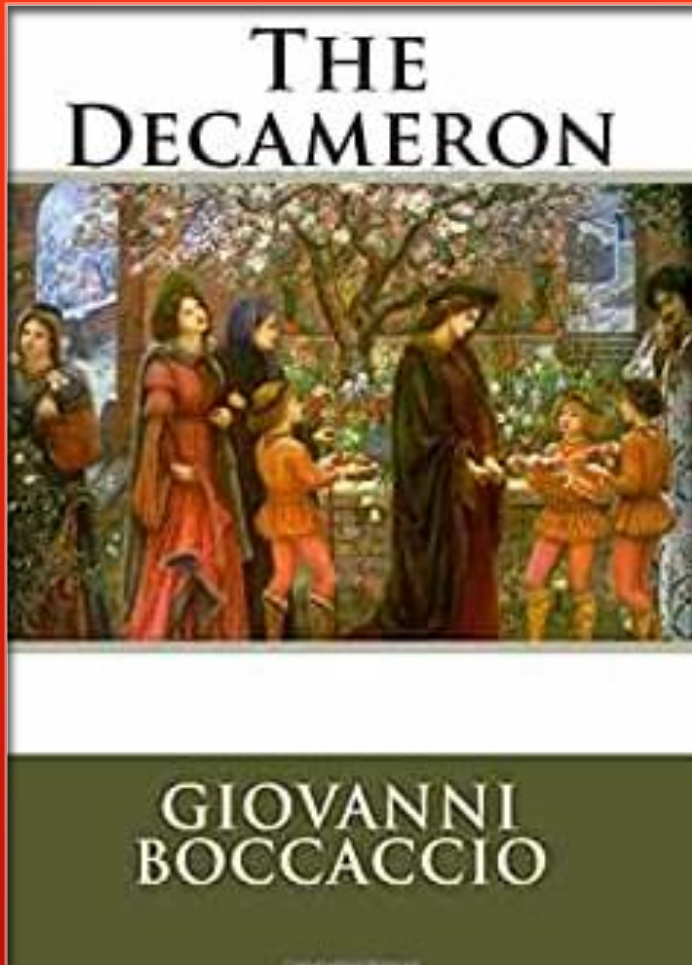
THE ARABIAN NIGHTS OR *THE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS*

(9TH-CENTURY)

King Shahryar, who finds that while away his wife has been unfaithful, and kills her. His anger unappeased, he marries and kills a new wife each day. His vizier's (a highly ranked minister) eldest daughter, Shahrazad hatches a plan to save herself and other women. She marries the king and each evening she tells a story, leaving it incomplete and promising to finish it the following night. The stories are so entertaining, and the king so eager to hear the end that he puts off her execution from day to day and finally abandons his evil design on women.

uncertain authorship

India, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Turkey, and Greece

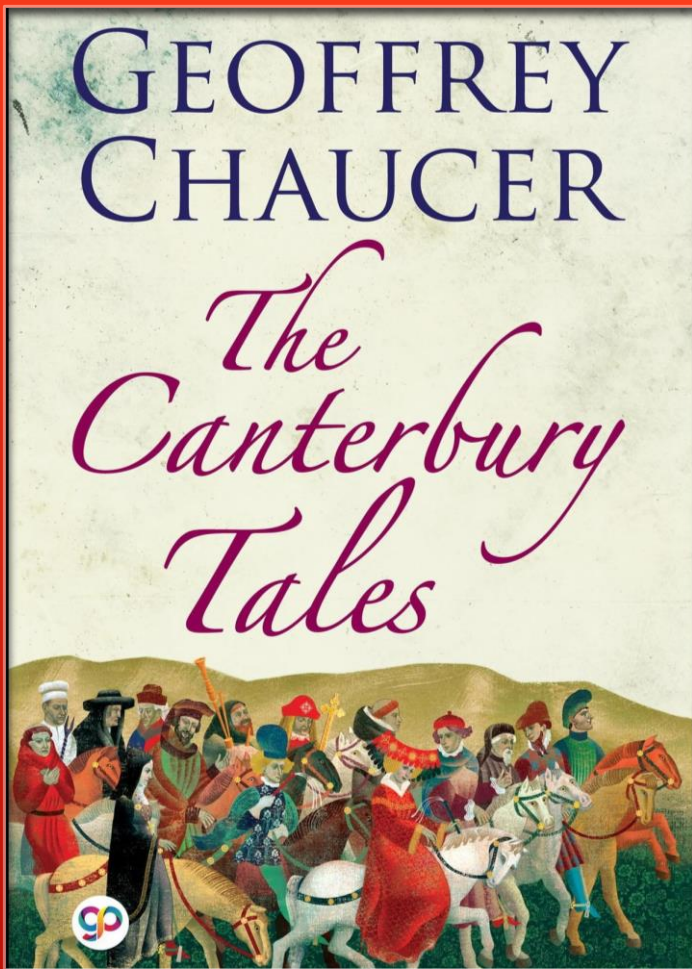


THE DECAMERON

(1349-1353)

The tales are divided around themes and like most of the oral stories of the day, tales of misfortunes with a twist, tales of great happiness, of achievement, of loss, of desire, of treachery, of love with happy endings and those without.

Giovanni Boccaccio

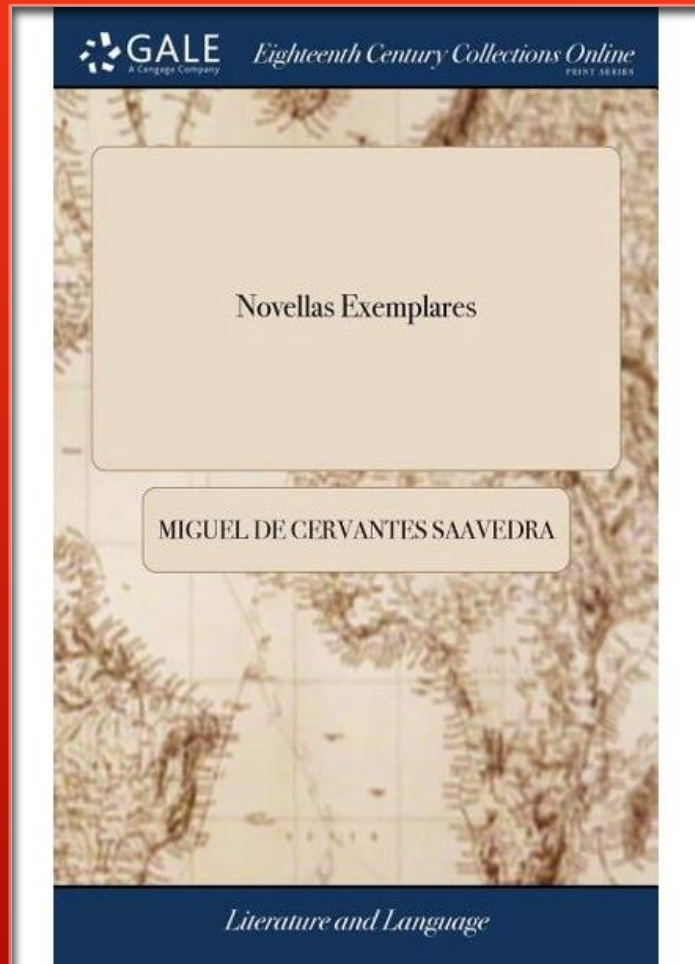


THE CANTERBURY TALES

(1387-1400)

A story telling contest, with a very diverse group of pilgrims telling 24 stories as they go from London to Canterbury competing for the modest prize of a free lunch.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER



EXEMPLARY NOVELLAS

(1612)

Miguel de
Cervantes

Candide,
or the Optimist
VOLTAIRE



CANDIDE

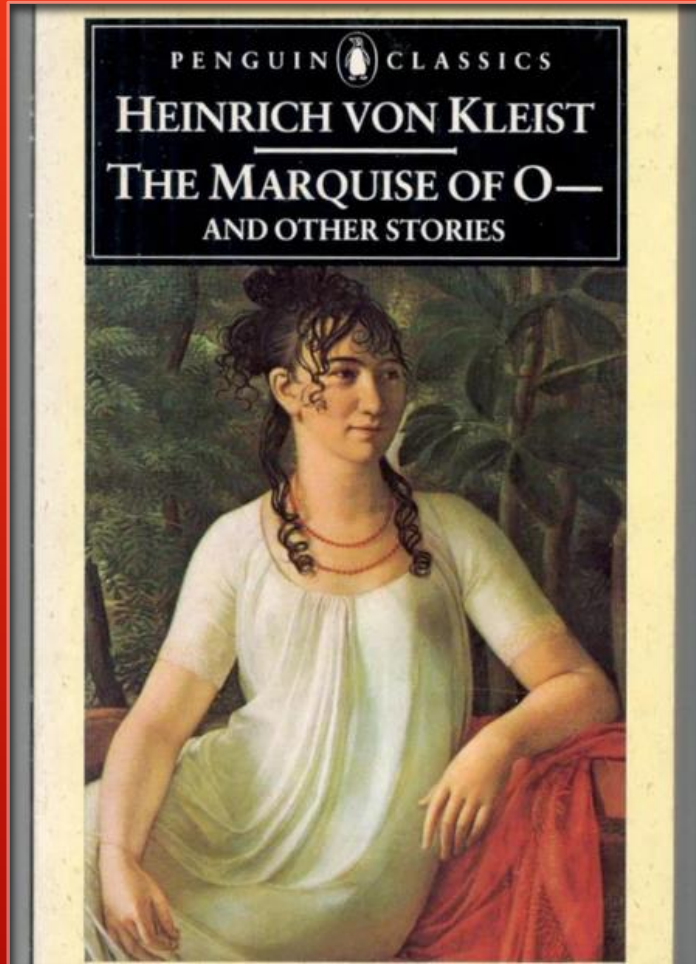
(1759)

Voltaire



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THE GERMAN NOVELLAS

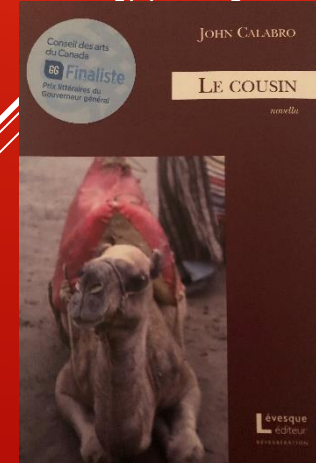
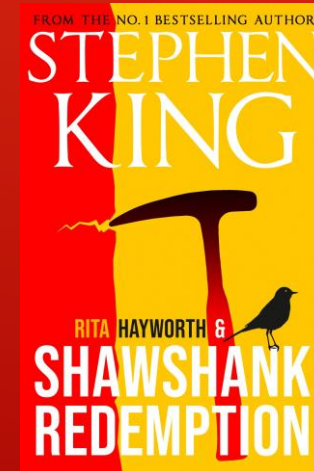
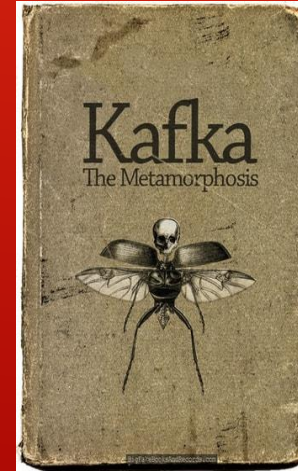
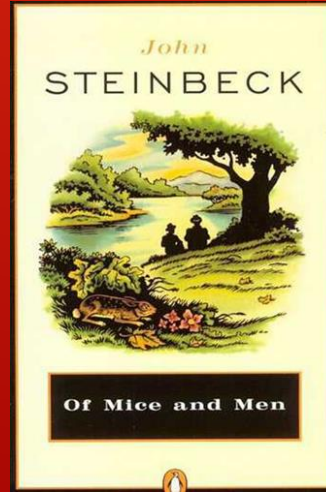
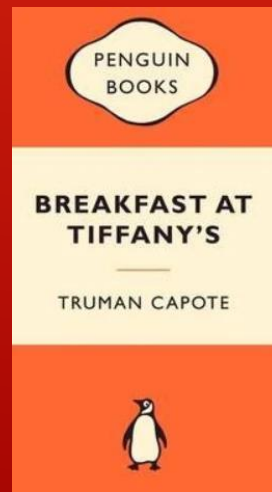
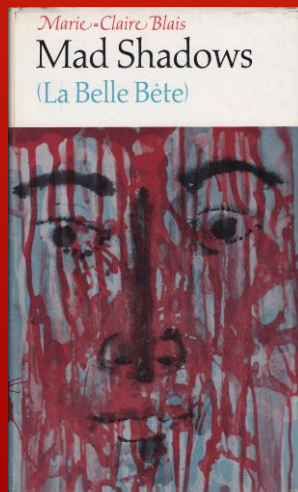
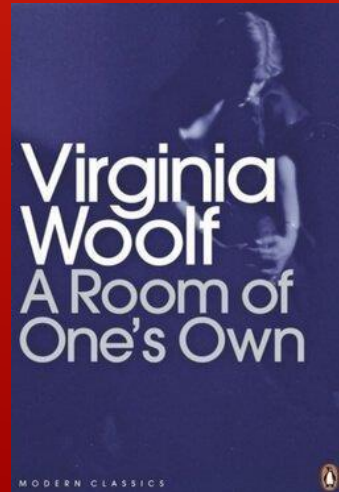
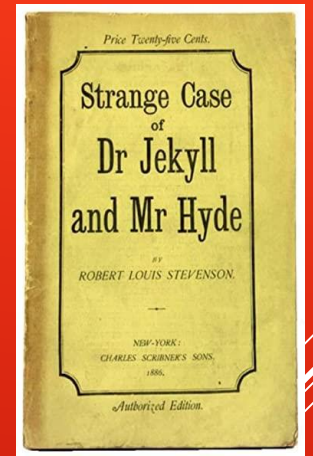
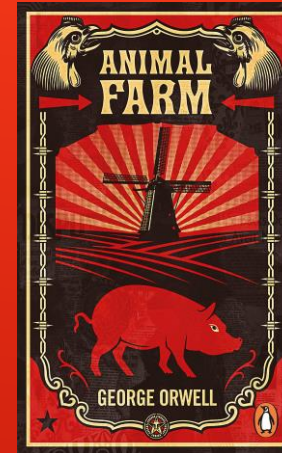
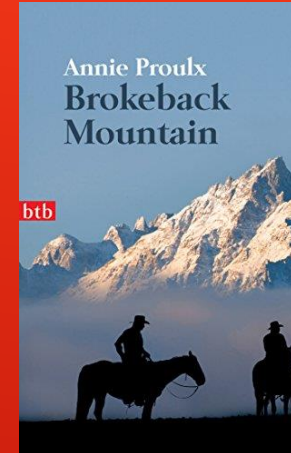
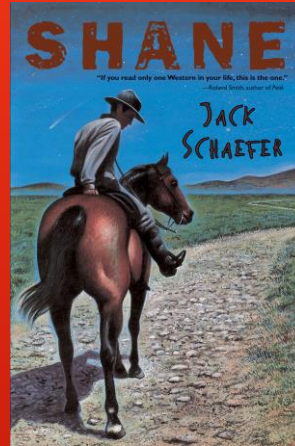
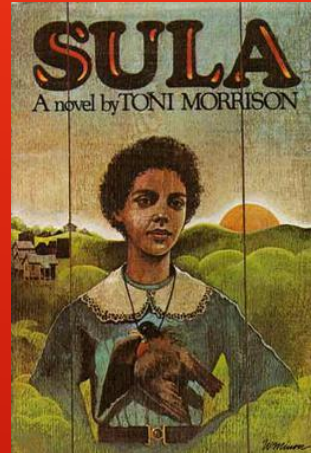
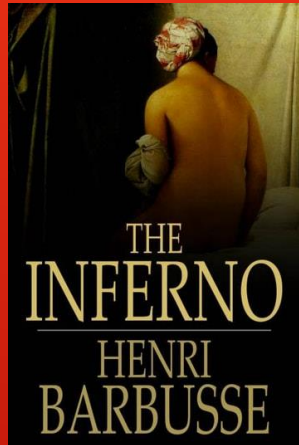
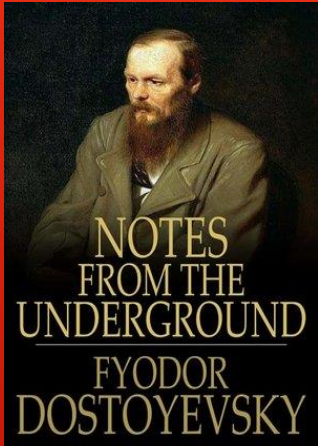
(18TH CENTURY)

Heinrich von Kleist

Thomas Mann

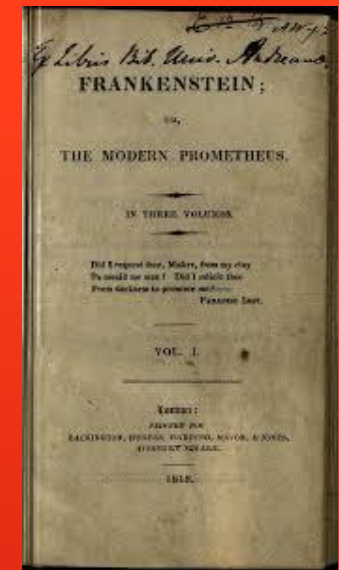
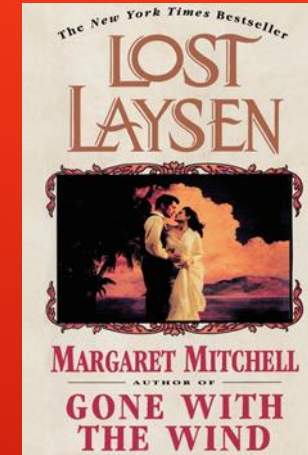
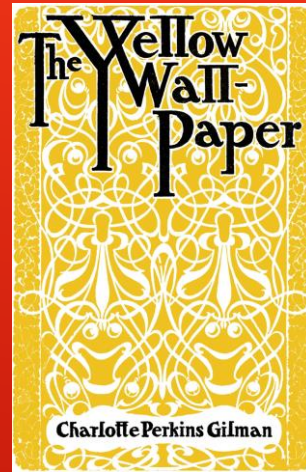
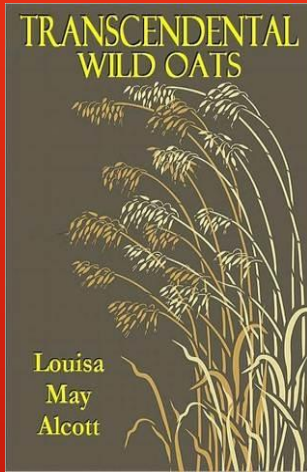
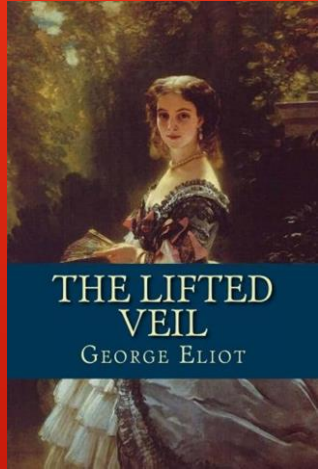
And others

YES, BUT DO THEY HAVE ANYTHING IN COMMON?

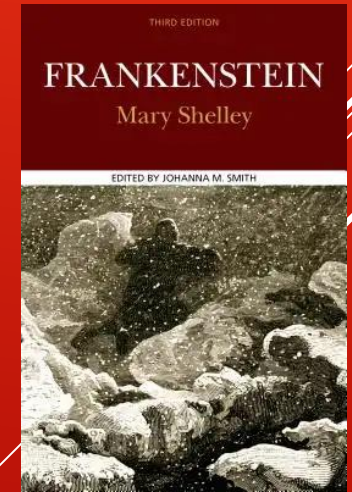
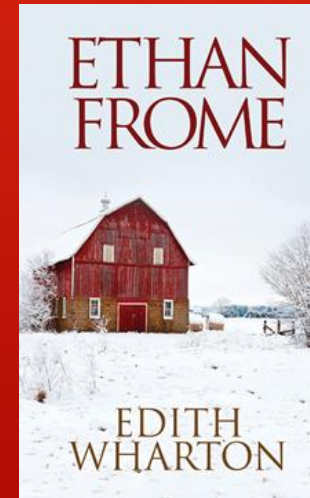
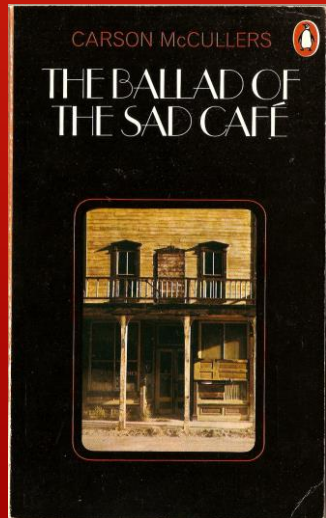


DO WOMEN WRITE NOVELLAS?

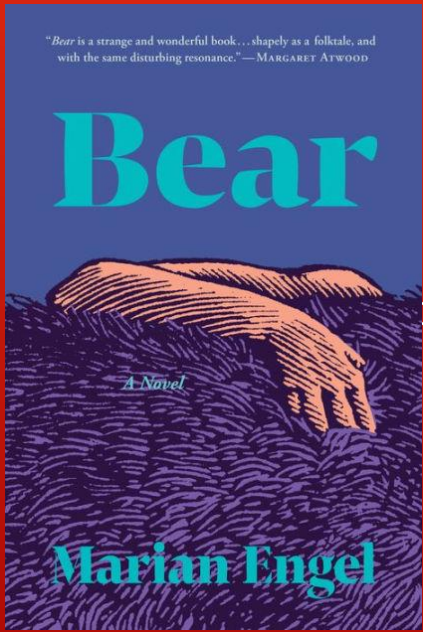
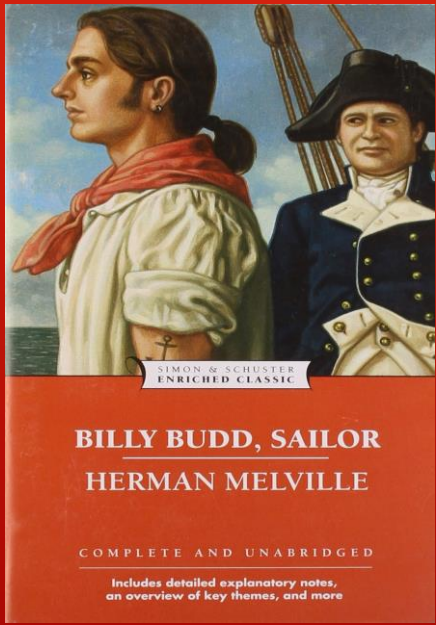
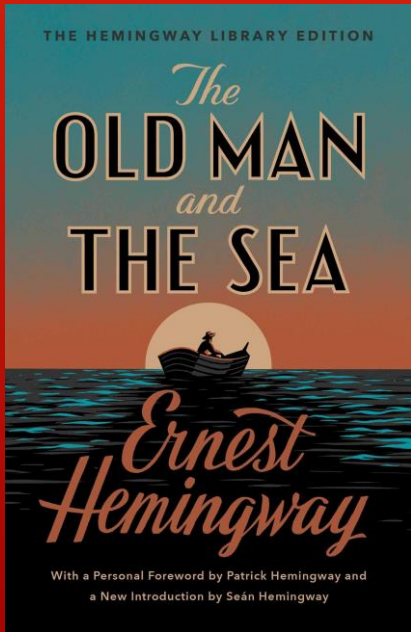
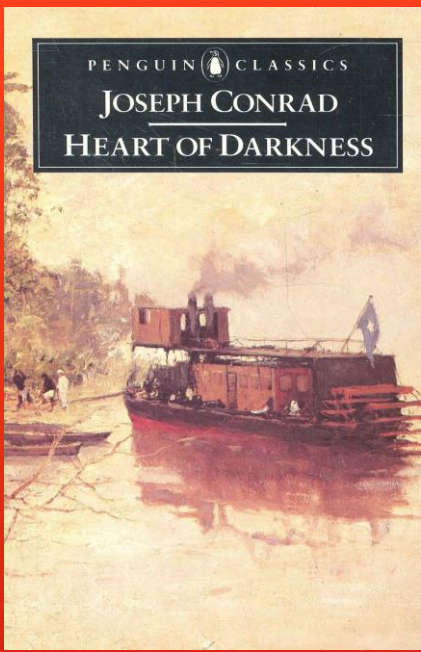
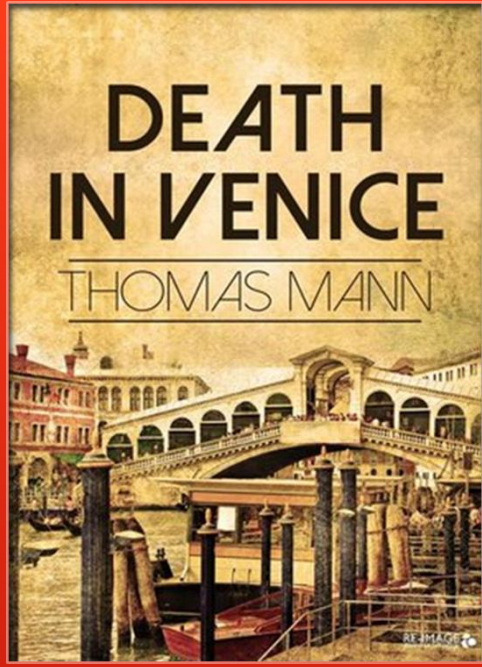
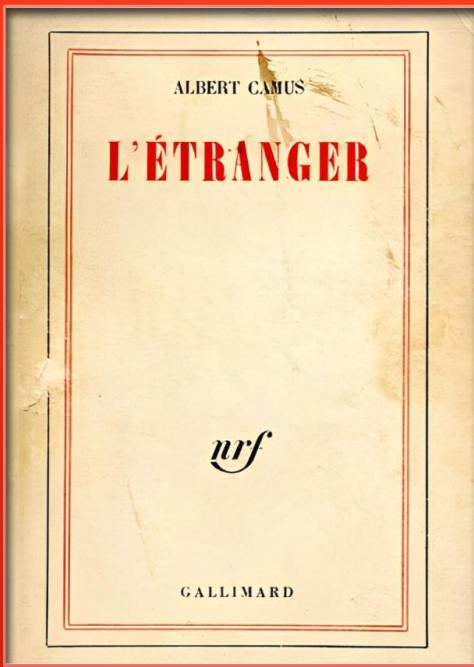
WHAT A QUESTION...



1818 version
A novel



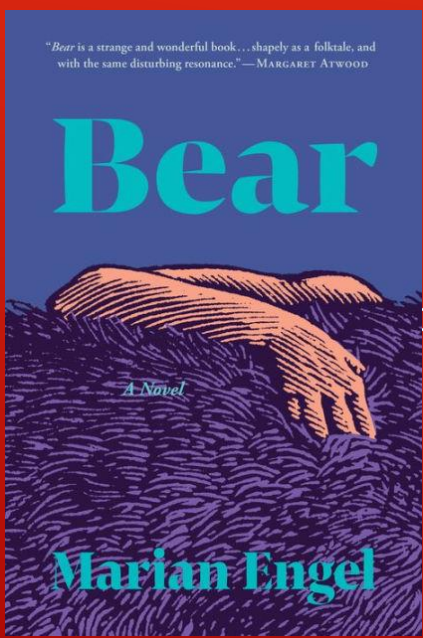
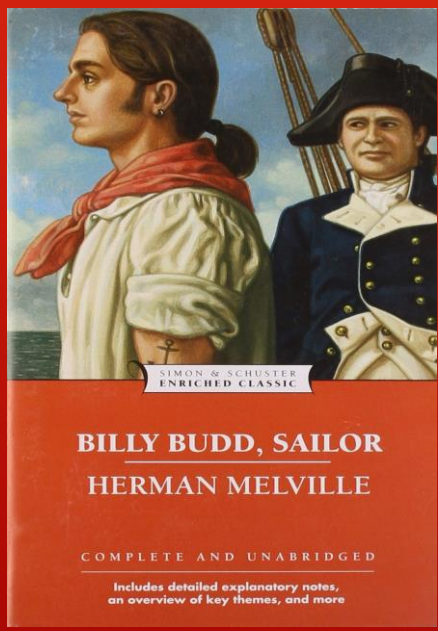
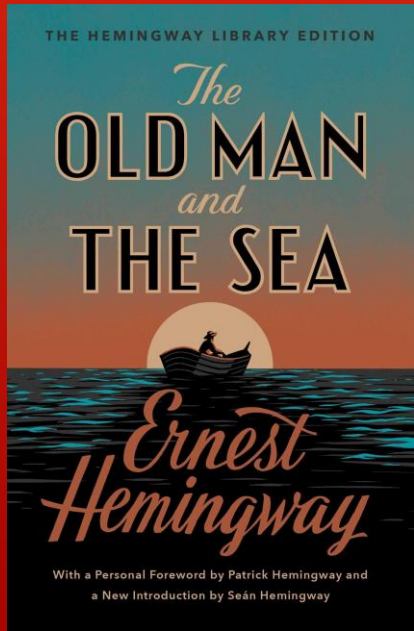
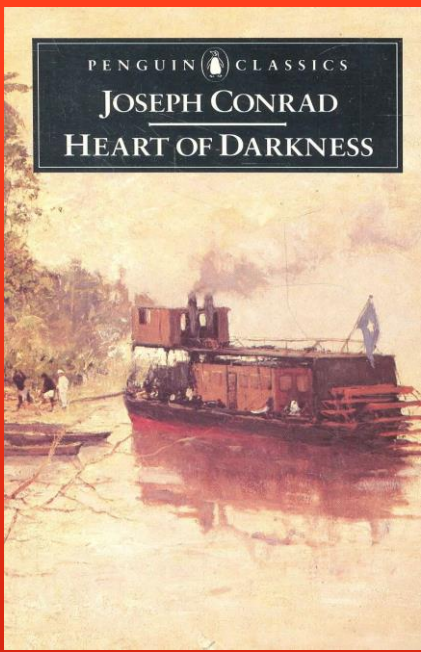
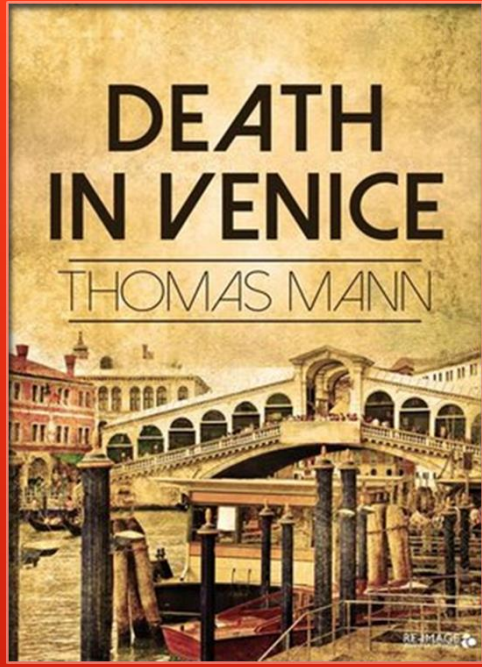
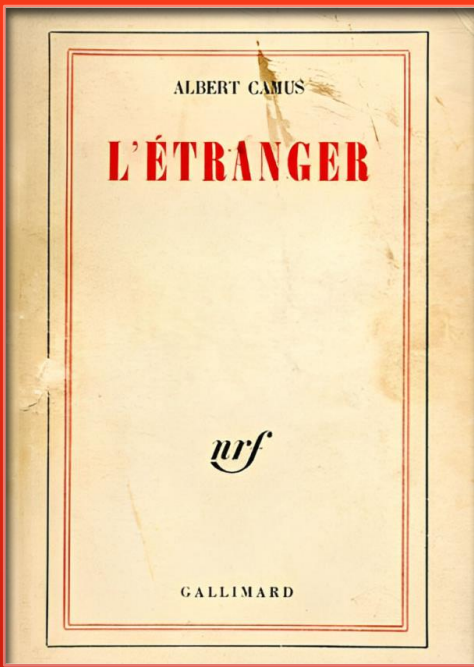
1831 version
A novella



THE LENGTH

15 000 WORDS TO 50 00 WORDS, 60 PAGES TO 150 PAGES

- ▶ *l'étranger/the outsider* by Albert Camus, at **30,750 words**, 120 pages.
- ▶ *Death in Venice* by Thomas Mann at **42,458 words**, 73 pages.
- ▶ *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad at **40,664 words**, 97 pages.
- ▶ *The old man and the sea* by Ernest Hemingway at **28,704 words** 125 pages.
- ▶ *Billy Budd* by Herman Melville at **49,634 words**, 100 pages.
- ▶ *Bear* written by Marian Engel at **35,000 words**, 115 pages.



CHARACTERS

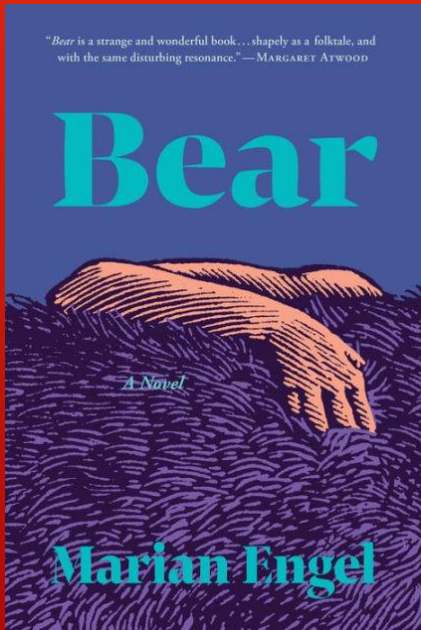
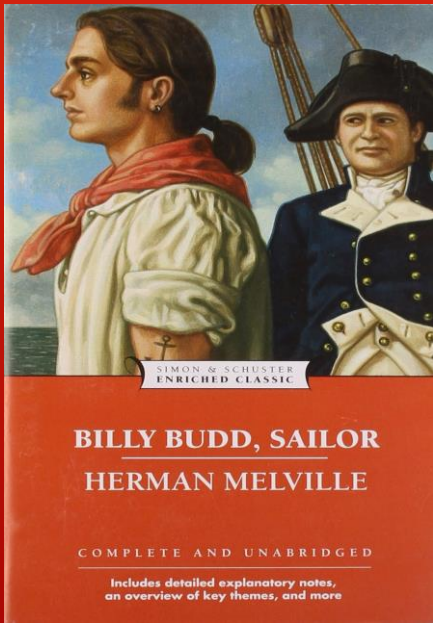
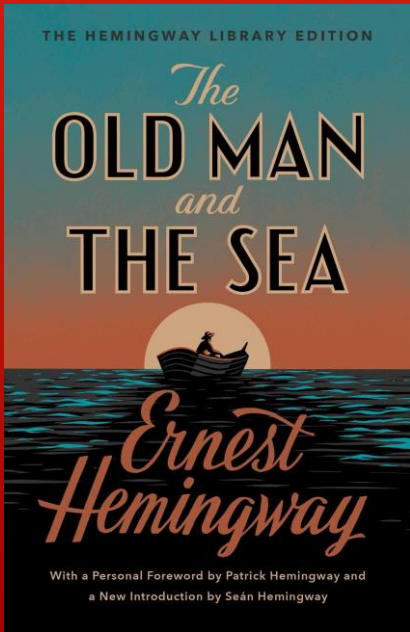
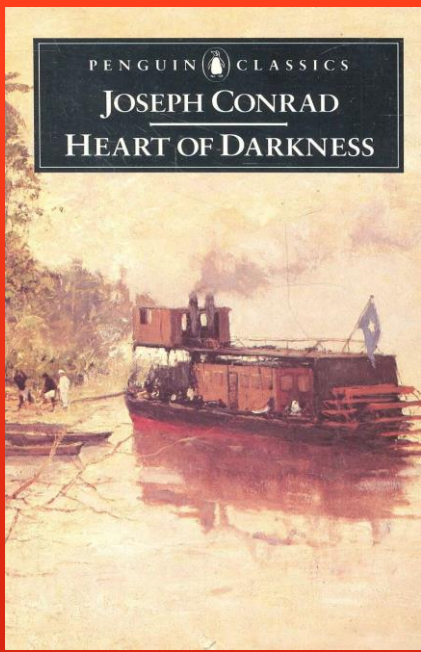
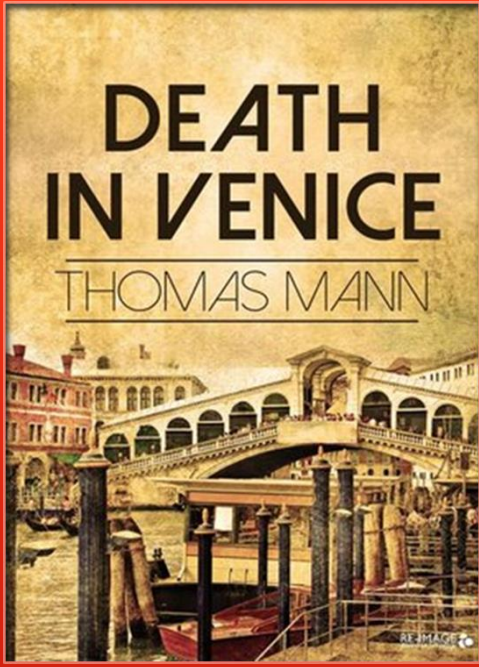
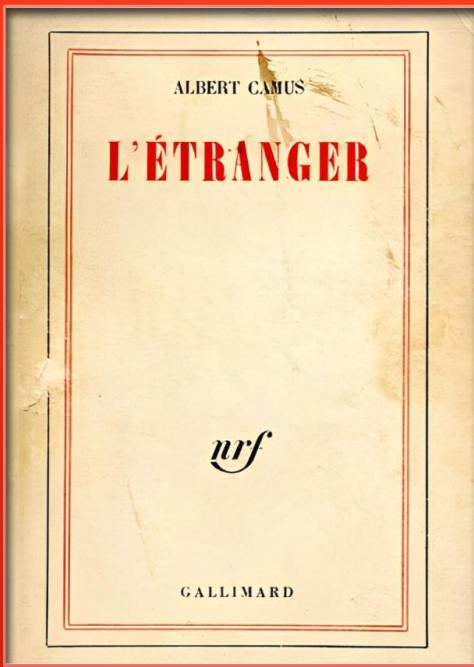
ONE OR TWO

- ▶ Meursault in *l'étranger/the outsider*
- ▶ Aschenbach in *Death in Venice*
- ▶ Marlow and Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*
- ▶ Santiago and Manolin in *The old man and the sea*
- ▶ Billy in *Billy Budd*
- ▶ Lou and bear in *Bear*



Canada Council
for the Arts

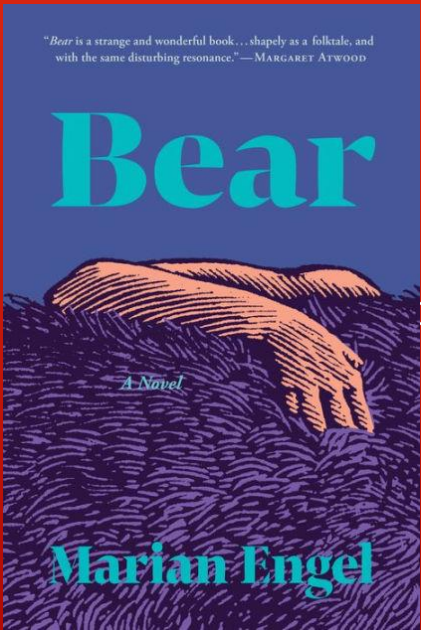
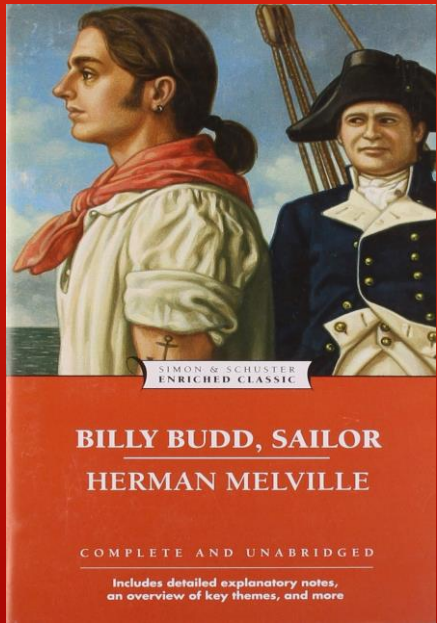
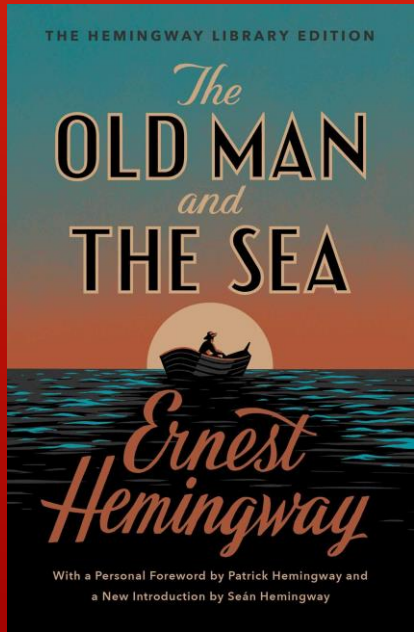
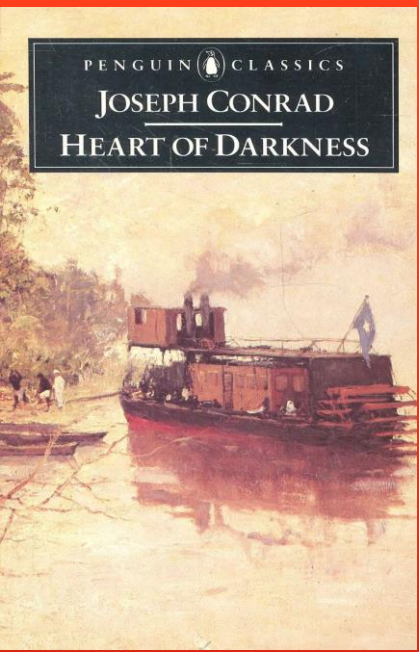
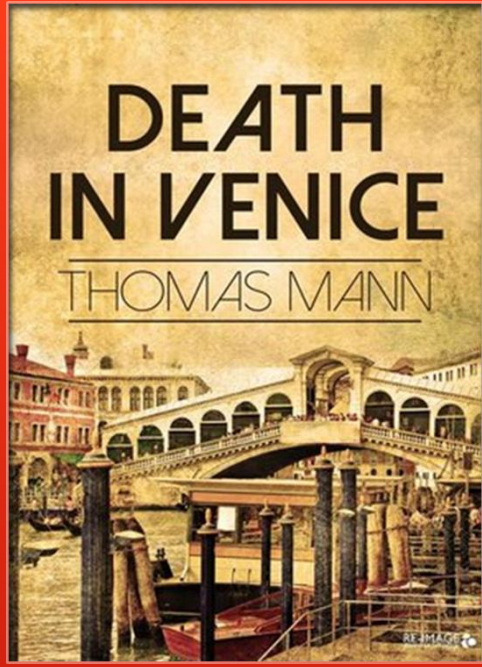
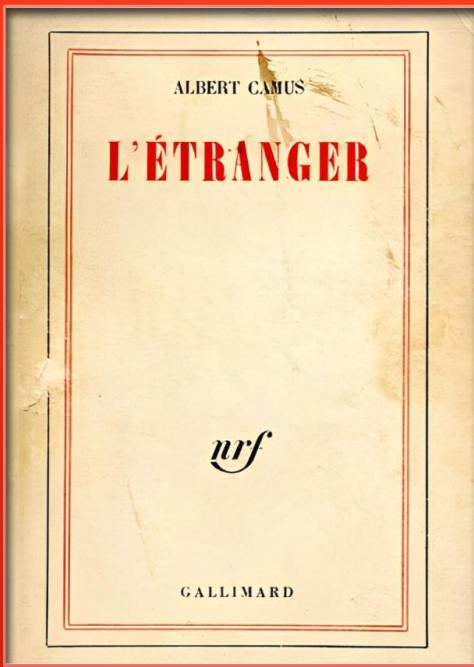
Conseil des arts
du Canada



SETTING

A MINIMUM NUMBER OF SETTINGS OR A CONFINED SPACE, AND A SHORT TIME FRAME

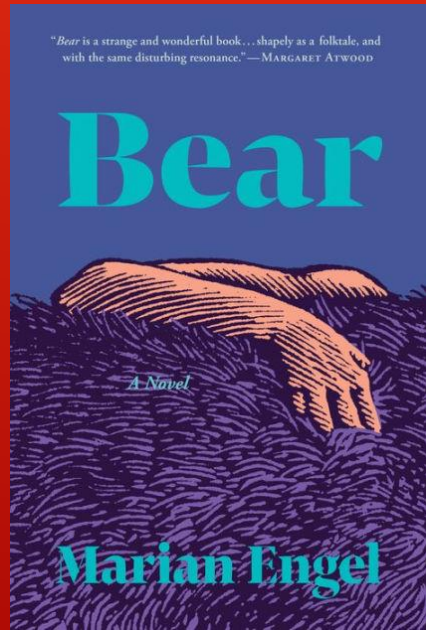
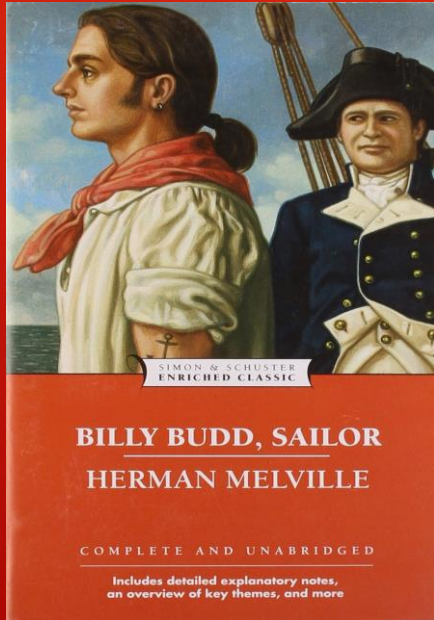
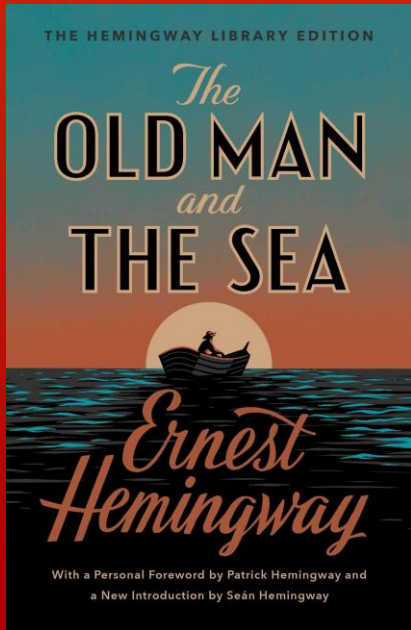
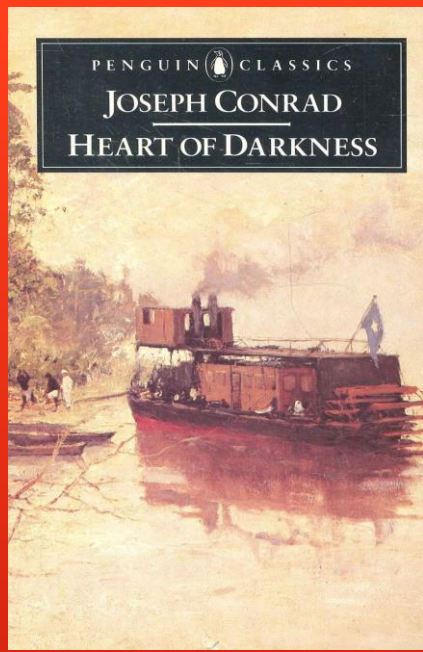
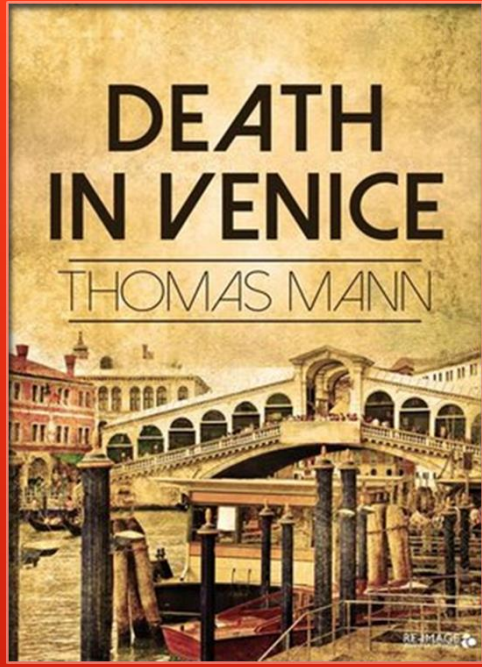
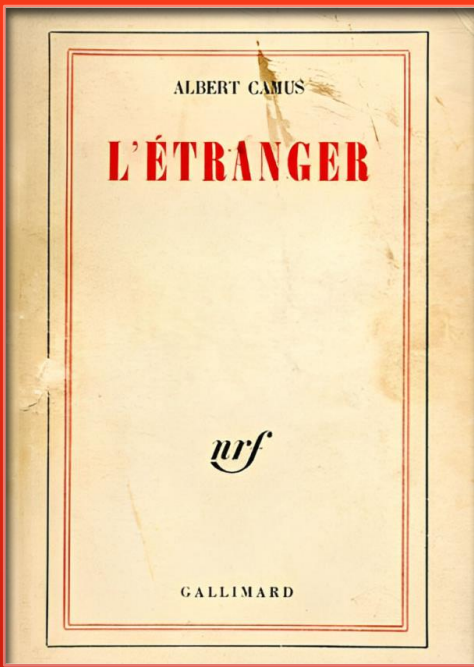
- ▶ Algiers' beach and jailhouse, in one year in *l'étranger*.
- ▶ The beach and Venice, in one summer month in *Death in Venice*.
- ▶ A riverboat, and the Congo Jungle within months in *Heart of Darkness*.
- ▶ *The Old man and the Sea*, a small fishing boat in 2 or 3 days.
- ▶ Set on a large ship and a matter of weeks in *Billy Budd*.
- ▶ A house on a deserted island in Northern Ontario, also on a summer in *Bear*.



PLOT AND THEMES

ONE PLOT AND SERIOUS THEMES

- ▶ Social morality, truth, and man's existential alienation.
- ▶ The passionate and decadent pursuit of beauty in life and in art.
- ▶ The nature of sanity and madness within a devastating colonial environment.
- ▶ Man's eternal struggle with nature, and with life itself.
- ▶ Innocence, sexuality and the injustice of military justice.
- ▶ A sexual encounter with a bear forces a woman to come to terms with herself.



The primary feature of the novella is “*Its unique ability to combine the economy of the short story,*” which she calls intensity, “*with the openness of the novel*” which she calls expansion.

“*The novella’s flexibility, amenability to innovation and ability to accommodate dramatic development with compactness,*” is its strength.



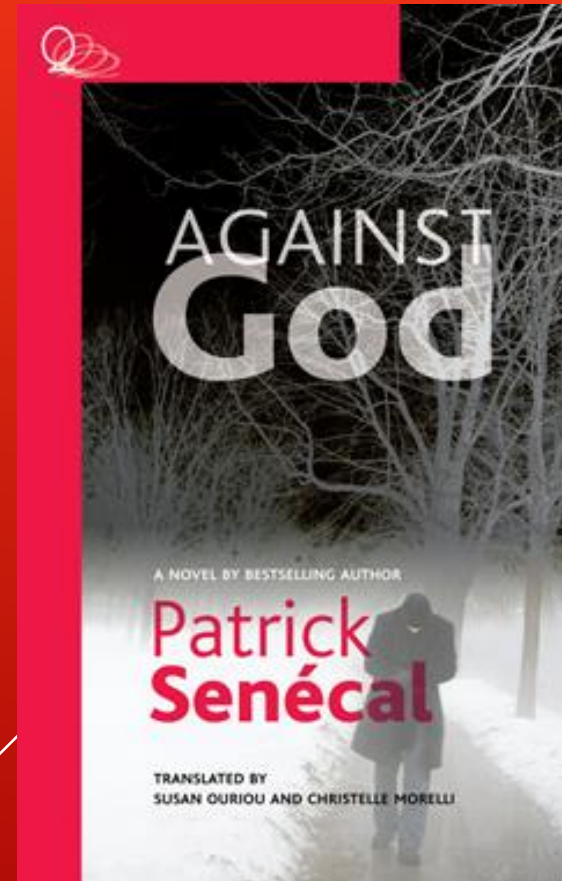
WHY WRITE A NOVELLA, BECAUSE IT IS PERFECT FOR...

THE READER

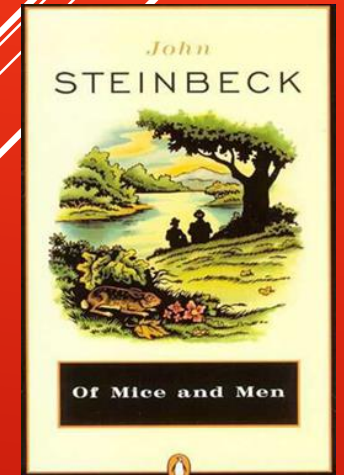
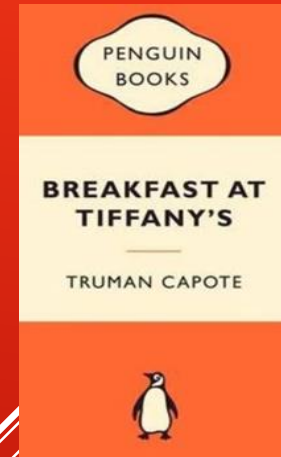
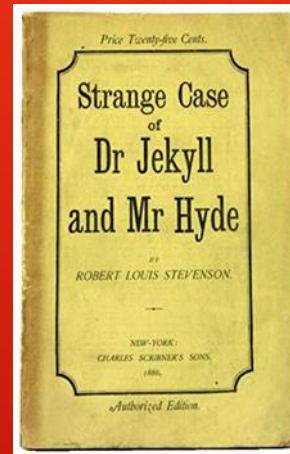
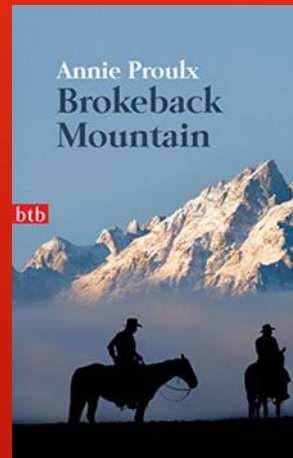
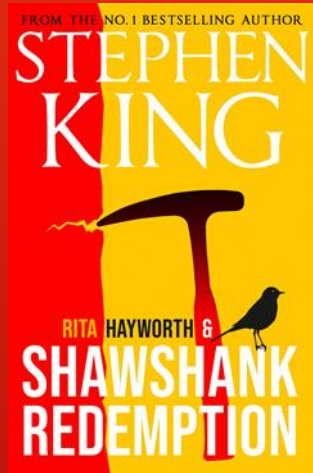


BECAUSE IT IS PERFECT FOR...

THE AUTHOR



BECAUSE IT IS PERFECT FOR...



THE PUBLISHER

**BUT IF YOU WRITE IT, WILL IT GET
PUBLISHED?????**

YES, NO, MAYBE !!!



MELVILLE HOUSE

THE ART OF THE NOVELLA

“Melville House celebrates this renegade art form and its practitioners...”

The screenshot shows the Melville House website with a navigation bar including 'BOOKS', 'GIFTS', 'ABOUT', 'SEARCH', and a 'CART' icon. The main heading is 'THE ART OF THE NOVELLA'. Below it, a grid of book covers is displayed, each with its title and author. A 'BUY ALL \$200.00' button is visible. To the right of the grid, a paragraph explains the collection: 'Melville House celebrates this renegade art form and its practitioners with titles that are, in many instances, presented in book form for the first time. Twenty-four novellas are currently available—and can be yours for only \$200.' Below this, a list of novellas is provided, including 'The Awakening' by Kate Chopin, 'Lady Susan' by Jane Austen, 'The Duel' by Alexander Kuprin, 'A Simple Heart' by Gustave Flaubert, 'Bartleby the Scrivener' by Herman Melville, 'Mathilda' by Mary Shelley, 'The Lesson of the Master' by Henry James, 'The Abbe of Castro' by Marie-Henri Beyle, and 'The Awakening' by Kate Chopin.

MELVILLE HOUSE

BOOKS GIFTS ABOUT SEARCH

CART

THE ART OF THE NOVELLA

LADY SUSAN
Jane Austen

THE HORLA
Guy de Maupassant

THE DEATH OF IVAN ILYCH
Leo Tolstoy

BUY ALL \$200.00

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Novellas included:

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Lady Susan by Jane Austen

The Duel by Alexander Kuprin

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Bartleby the Scrivener by Herman Melville

Mathilda by Mary Shelley

Parnassus on Wheels by Christopher Morley

Mathilda by Mary Shelley

The Beach of Falesá by Robert Louis Stevenson

Oroonoko by Aphra Behn

The Lifted Veil by George Eliot

NOUVELLA

“...helping launch the career of new writers specifically utilizing the novella format.”

The screenshot shows the NOUVELLA website with a navigation bar including 'Authors', 'Books', 'News', 'About', and 'Store'. The main heading is 'NOUVELLA'. Below it, a grid of book covers is displayed, each with its title and author. The covers are diverse in design, including abstract art, text-based designs, and illustrations.

NOUVELLA

Authors Books News About Store

The White Death: An Illusion
Gabriel Urza

ONE DAY SOON TIME WILL HAVE NO PLACE LEFT TO HIDE
Christian Kiefer

Ciao, Suerte by Annie McGreevy

On The Island At The Center Of The World
Elizabeth Kadetsky

HOW TO SHAKE THE OTHER MAN
Derek Palacio

A FAMILIAR BEAST
Panio Giannopoulos

THE SENSUALIST
A NOVELLA BY DANIEL TORDAY

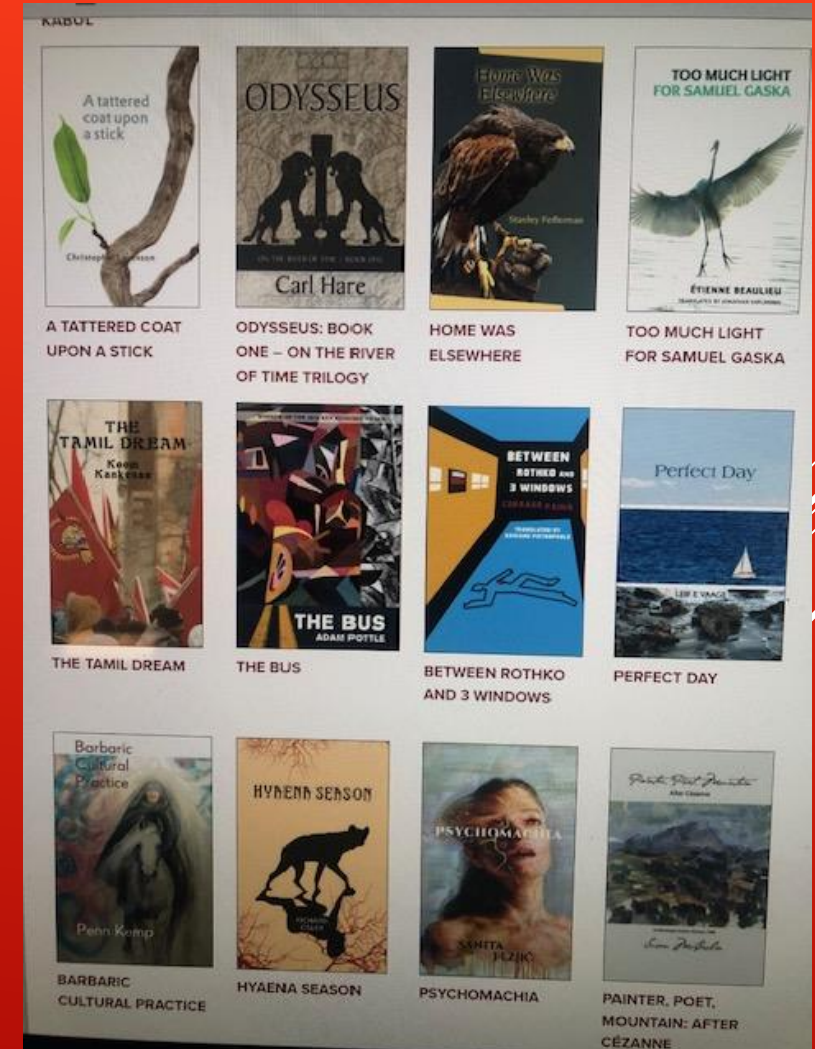
THE LAST REPATRIATE
MATTHEW SALETTES

IF YOU'RE NOT YET LIKE ME
EDAN LEPUCKI



HOME OF THE NOVELLA

Quattro Books' publications reflect the unique cultural character and dynamism of Canada today: what it has been, and what it is in the process of becoming. The Canadian literary scene is international; our national experience is informed and enriched through literatures brought by immigrants and newcomers. We are the home of the Novella.



SEARCH, AND YOU WILL FIND A HOME FOR YOUR NOVELLA

**1888 CENTER
ALASKA QUARTERLY REVIEW
A PUBLIC SPACE
BIG FICTION MAGAZINE
THE COLLAGIST
DRUE HEINZ LITERATURE PRIZE
FAILBETTER
FAIRLIGHT BOOKS
FANTASIST
GETTYSBURG REVIEW
GLIMMER TRAIN
GOLD LINE PRESS
IDAHO REVIEW
MCSWEENEY'S
MIAMI UNIVERSITY PRESS NOVELLA
CONTEST**

**MALAHAT REVIEW
MASSACHUSETTS REVIEW
NARRATIVE
NEW ENGLAND REVIEW
NOVELLA
PARIS REVIEW
PLOUGHSHARES SOLOS
QUARTERLY WEST
QUATTRO BOOKS
SEATTLE REVIEWS
SOUTHERN HUMANITIES REVIEW
SUBTROPICS
STRAYLIGHT MAGAZINE
TOR.COM
TWELFTH PLANET PRESS
VIVA LA NOVELLA BY SEIZURE**

***“NOVELLAS REQUIRE AN
INTELLIGENT AUTHOR AND
AN INTELLIGENT READER TO
APPRECIATE THE POWER OF
BREVITY.”***



WRITING A CANADIAN LITERARY NOVELLA

WHY NOT?



JOHN CALABRÒ



Canada Council
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