

Unconventional Love Stories

What is an unconventional love story? I've chosen 10 books that reflect a variety of kinds of love. Some of these stories are (quite literally) universal, while some are highly specific. No matter what kind of love you're celebrating this holiday, there's something here that will make you fall in love with stories.

Created by BKLYNJessH

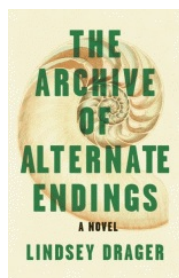


The argonauts

Maggie Nelson.

This book is a complex interweaving of theory and memoir that's written like poetry. It's a love letter to (queer) partnership, to motherhood, to desire, to language itself. It's approachable in its style but challenging in its thought process, and it has stayed with me long

beyond the turning of...



The archive of alternate endings / Stories

Drager, Lindsey, author.

Every time I try to recommend this book, I find myself at a loss. It defies a simple explanation. The love that Drager focuses on spans definitions - from family (particularly sibling) love to queer desire to love of storytelling, she examines what it

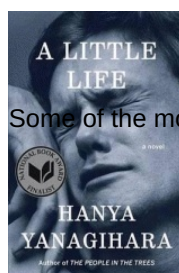
means to choose to love one another in the face o...



Space opera

Valente, Catherynne M., 1979- author.

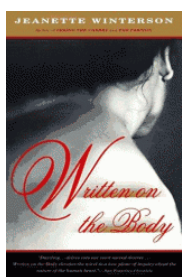
Space Opera isn't a love story as much as a thoughtful consideration of what it means to be human and whether we're, on the whole, worth saving. The reason I included it on this list is because it tells the greatest love story of all - one of humanity. Seeing our human foibles through the eyes of th...



A little life

Hanya Yanagihara.

Some of the most profound relationships I've had over the course of my life have been not with romantic partners but with my friends. Yanagihara explores this love as she tells the story of four college friends and the love that they have for one another. This book moved me to tears multiple times o...

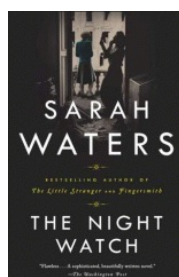


Written on the body

Winterson, Jeanette, 1959-

What if love were about desire itself rather than a single person? That's what Winterson examines in this book that tells an entire love story without using pronouns for the narrator. Love here is not about a particular sexuality as much as it is a consideration of what it means to

desire, to be fa...



The night watch

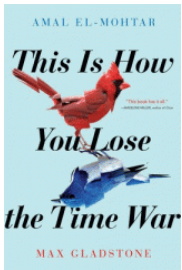
Waters, Sarah, 1966-

The Night Watch is the story of four people whose love is all "unconventional" for 1947. In addition, you can always count on Sarah Waters to provide a narrative twist that changes how you approach the story. Here the story starts with the ending and then progresses back to its beginning in 1941. Ev...

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This is how you lose the time war

El-Mohtar, Amal, author.

This highly imaginative enemies-to-lovers story imagines two separate utopias for humankind - one highly technological and one that's back to nature. Told in letters that Red and Blue exchange, it is a celebration of finding someone to love, even if you shouldn't. The language is almost painfully be...

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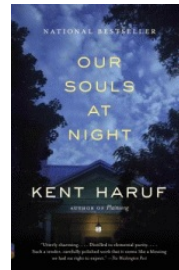


The sun is also a star

Nicola Yoon.

It seems almost ridiculous to call a love story between two teens "unconventional." YA publishing is inundated with books that examine what it means to fall in love for the very first time. Somehow, though, Yoon manages to take this tale and make it feel fresh and exciting again. Most of that is in...

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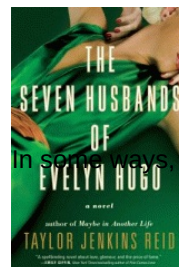


Our souls at night

Kent Haruf.

We do not get enough stories about what it means to age gracefully and come to the end of our lives, at least not in mainstream US publishing. Our Souls at Night is a rare exception to that rule. Haruf meditates on what it means to have a second chance at love late in life and how we can connect

wit...



The seven husbands of Evelyn Hugo

Taylor Jenkins Reid.

In some ways, this is an all-too-conventional love story. Our protagonist, the titular Evelyn Hugo, has to choose between her career as an emerging Hollywood star and the love of her life. This story examines what it means to choose life over love and then change

your mind. Plus, if you're anything...