



This is Not a Novel and Other Novels

By David Markson

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David Markson was a writer like no other. In his novels, which have been called “hypnotic,” “stunning,” and “exhilarating” and earned him praise from the likes of Kurt Vonnegut and David Foster Wallace, Ann Beattie and Zadie Smith. Markson created his own personal genre. With crackling wit distilled into incantatory streams of thought on art, life, and death, Markson’s work has delighted and astonished readers for decades.

Now for the first time, three of Markson’s masterpieces are compiled into one page-turning volume: *This Is Not a Novel*, *Vanishing Point*, and *The Last Novel*. In *This Is Not a Novel*, readers meet an author, called only “Writer,” who is weary unto death of making up stories, and yet is determined to seduce the reader into turning pages and getting somewhere. *Vanishing Point* introduces us to “Author,” who sets out to transform shoeboxes crammed with note cards into a novel. In *The Last Novel*, we find an elderly author (referred to only as “Novelist”) who announces that, since this will be his final effort, he possesses “carte blanche to do anything he damn well pleases.”

United by their focus on the trials, calamities, absurdities and even tragedies of the creative life, these novels demonstrate David Markson’s extraordinary intellectual richness—leaving readers, time after time, with the most indisputably original of reading experiences.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Over the course of his career, Markson (*Wittgenstein's Mistress*; *Reader's Block*; etc.) has garnered high praise for his erudite, complex texts that challenge notions of genre. He continues to push against the boundaries of fiction with his latest, which echoes the titles of both Magritte's well-known painting of a pipe and a story by Diderot. Lacking plot or characters, this darkly humorous assemblage resembles a commonplace book or a notebook, such as Coleridge's or Emerson's, with entries noting odd facts, quotes and ideas. These entries averaging around 10 per page have the air of memoranda pointing to some future, more fully realized passage that might never materialize. Occasional appearances by someone called Writer ("Not being a character but the author, here") add a note of self-consciousness, reminding us of the performative nature of any work of art. Themes soon emerge: illness, art, fame and hygiene are obvious preoccupations. The entries lead us down the page, maintaining a brisk momentum. There are deaths (Pound of a blocked intestine, Manet of tertiary syphilis), quotations and seemingly out-of-context questions although it is apparent that context is rather beside the point. These references imply some ad hoc, interior encyclopedia: "The legend that as a young man Leonardo was so strong he could straighten a horseshoe with his bare hands." It is best to take Markson at his word and read this not as a novel but as some jester cousin to Pound's Cantos notations that gradually cohere in an underlying progress, a drift toward the momentary reconciliation of art, intellect and mortality. (Apr. 1) Forecast: Markson is at once unpredictable and reliable, to which the inclusion of blurbs from Ann Beattie and David Foster Wallace attests. This book won't appeal for most general fiction readers, but admirers of the author will seek out and savor his latest.

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From [Booklist](#)

Of course novelist Markson's latest book is a novel. What else could this rueful combination of fact and fictionalized self-portraiture, this book-length list of odd bits of trivia about artists' lives, most of which perversely focuses on their deaths, be called? The "Writer," as the compulsive, hypochondriac narrator refers to himself, has amassed this quirky collection of seemingly random yet wittily connected data in lieu of writing, an activity he's finding difficult, if not repugnant, what with all his headaches and general malaise. Terse and stoic, he's all over the map, tossing off bulletins about Sappho, Fitzgerald, Blake, Picasso, Flaubert, Emerson, and Mahler; relishing snide remarks artists make about each other; and periodically alluding to his desire to write a novel with no characters, plot, or setting, a mission he slyly accomplishes. Mischievous, funny, and smart, Markson will greatly amuse readers who share his fascination with art and the clash between the sublime and the ridiculous that fractures every artist's life. *Donna Seaman*
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About the Author

David Markson is the author of five novels, including *Springer's Progress*, *Wittgenstein's Mistress*, and *Reader's Block*. He is the recipient of several awards and fellowships, including a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and a Salon Book Award. He lives in New York City.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

John Buckner:

Do you have favorite book? Should you have, what is your favorite's book? Reserve is very important thing for us to find out everything in the world. Each reserve has different aim or even goal; it means that publication has different type. Some people experience enjoy to spend their time to read a book. They are reading whatever they take because their hobby will be reading a book. Why not the person who don't like reading a book? Sometime, person feel need book after they found difficult problem or exercise. Well, probably you will need this This is Not a Novel and Other Novels.

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