

KINGS, QUEENS, AND CASTLES

THE 10 BEST Fictional Chess Books to Read

By Devadeep Gupta

Chess is a game that has captured the imagination of writers and readers for centuries. Its complex strategies and intellectual appeal make it the perfect subject for fiction books. Two notable examples of chess in fiction include *The Royal Game* by Stefan Zweig and *The Defense* by Vladimir Nabokov. Both of these works demonstrate the power of chess to illuminate deeper truths about the human condition.

In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in the representation of chess in modern literature. Many contemporary authors have begun to explore the game's rich symbolic possibilities in their work. To find out more about the current state of chess in literature, we reached out to Devadeep Gupta, author of one of the most notable books based on chess published in 2022.

From time immemorial, the game of chess has fascinated people of every age. Eight black and eight white pieces on a board of sixty four squares can lead to an infinite permutation of cerebral battles.

Over the years, there have been a lot of books written on the strategy for improving your game about the minds of grandmasters who have made their name as champions of their era.

While we are familiar with works of fiction such as *The Queen's Gambit* by Walter Tevis, there has also been a steady stream of more recent fictional works inspired by the game. Here is a set of fiction novels from the past couple of decades that you could enjoy regardless of your level of chess knowledge.

Some books actively include chess as part of the plot, with players needing to outwit each other in a high stakes situation. Others feature chess in a metaphorical sense, where characters follow the hierarchy and structure we see on the board of the game we all love.



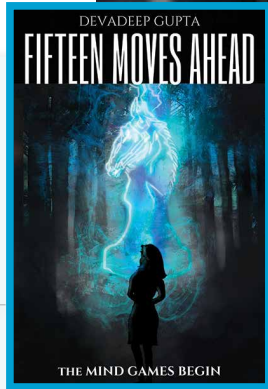


1. **Fifteen Moves Ahead**

by Devadeep Gupta
2022

An unstoppable creative mind faces an unmatched logical genius... Neither is going to back down. If “She” wins, She will finally be free of the life that society has trapped Her into. If “He” wins, He will have peace after a lifetime of agony, replaying what had happened in His childhood. Who will emerge victorious in the ultimate battle of wits?

This is a story with the game of chess at its core, with a focus on how two players with contrasting styles handle the nervousness before a game, the thrill of victory and devastation from a single defeat.



DEVADEEP GUPTA

Devadeep is an author of psychological thriller books and graphic novels.

A professionally trained actuary with over 15 years of experience in finance, Devadeep was always interested in understanding the human mind. His novel *Fifteen Moves Ahead* follows two chess players with contrasting styles, competing for the top chess title.

His murder mystery *Strands of Guilt* reached the #1 spot for International Crime & Mystery on Amazon in November 2022, while his psychological thriller *War with the Self* reached #1 for Metaphysical and Technothriller categories on Amazon in December 2022.

In his spare time, Devadeep enjoys playing chess, reading and travelling – with his latest destination being Antarctica! Travelling around the world often inspires the backdrop for his writing.

In the first half of 2023, he will be working on his next book in South America – a graphic novel set in the world of artificial intelligence.

ISBN 9781250063014

2. **Grandmaster**

by David Klass
2015



Daniel Prutzer embarks on the chess tournament of a lifetime when the freshman is offered a spot on the chess team’s parent-child tournament. Mystified by his teammates’ eager encouragement, Daniel soon discovers the reason behind their enthusiasm: his father was a renowned prodigy in the game of chess thirty years ago, and it is this very game that almost broke him. Now, Mr. Prutzer and his son are about to compete together, and in doing so, face the lingering demons of the cold strategy of chess. It will be an amazing experience for the Prutzers – and an insightful journey into the power of the game.



ISBN 9780345500687

3.

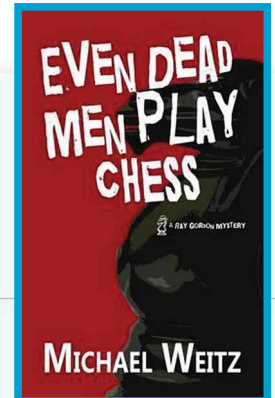
The Fireby Katherine Neville
2009

Set in a time of suspense, 2003's Colorado and 1822's Albania have collided in Alexandra Solarin's latest novel, *Montglane Service*, a stunning read that requires a mental investment that pays off in spades. With the chess pieces central to the novel's plot – a mysterious relic rumored to hold the secret power of ruling the world – Alexandra's parents, Cat Velis and Alexander Solarin, had scattered the pieces around the world before her arrival. But when Alexandra arrives, she soon learns her mother is missing and the game has started again. Along with it is Haidee, the young daughter of an influential Ottoman ruler, who had the dangerous task of transporting the relic from Albania in order to save it from unfathomable disaster.

A thrilling story with an addictive plot, *Montglane Service* is sure to leave readers wanting more. Through the vivid and suspenseful writing, Alexandra Solarin has crafted a captivating world that begs to be explored and experienced. Filled with moments of thrilling escapades, twists and turns, this novel is one that will have readers glued to the page.

ISBN 9780692430613

4.

Even Dead Men Play Chessby Michael Weitz
2015

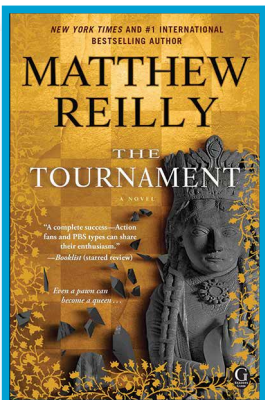
Ray Gordon may not have a medical degree, but he is highly revered as a chess teacher. Little did he know when a student, Walter Kelly, died suddenly – that's when he would put his skill to the test.

Ray soon finds himself entrenched in a mystery spanning beyond Walter's death, one that's riddled with questions. How did a 65 year old man with no addictions other than woodworking and chess, die so suddenly? Why was the neighbor glad Walter is dead? All the while, a nagging thought lingers in the back of his mind: how do dead men play chess?

Discover the answers, and unravel a web of deception in this thrilling come to life mystery. Fast-paced and intensely captivating, there's never a dull moment in *Dead Men Play Chess* – an unmissable read for any whodunit fan.

ISBN 9781476749563

5.

The Tournamentby Matthew Reilly
2016

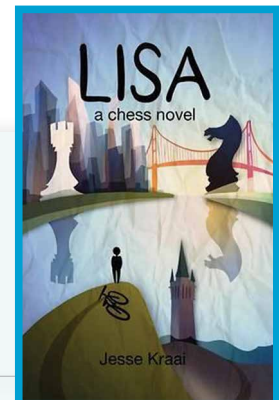
This book is a journey through a tumultuous chapter in international history, peopled by renowned chess masters and leaders of 16th century Europe.

The Sultan's Game explores the intersection of politics, power, and emotions in what was a critically important chapter of history. D.B. John provides insights into the clash between four Christian rulers and the powerful Muslim sultan, with each vying for control.

This novel is full of suspense and intrigue and reveals the psychological complexities and hidden tensions in the race for supremacy. An intense political drama and complex characters make *The Sultan's Game* an unforgettable read. It is sure to leave readers on the edge of their seats and craving for more from D.B. John.

ISBN 9780976848905

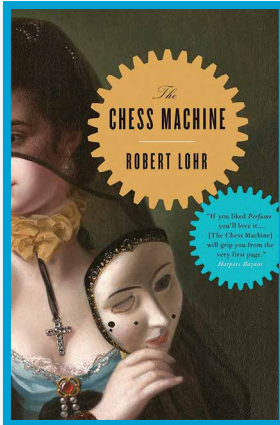
6.

Lisa: A Chess Novelby Jesse Kraai and Zugzwang Press
2013

This unique and wonderful book details the experience of Lisa, after she finds Igor Ivanov, a master of chess. In the world of adult influence and peer pressure, finding a game she is able to understand and control is a great relief. Ivanov both teaches her the strategies of chess, while also imparting life lessons. For example, she quickly learns that while the pieces may know how they move and may want something, the "real world" is a great deal more complex. This book pairs themes of empowerment with a beloved game, making it an excellent choice for readers of all ages. Highly recommended.



ISBN 9780143114369



7.

The Chess Machine

by Robert Lohr (Author) and
Anthea Bell (Translator)

2008

This debut novel is a thrilling tale of scandal, espionage, and deception, based on a true story – that of Baron

Wolfgang von Kempelen's Mechanical Turk. Unbeknownst to the astonished Europeans, the Turk is nothing more than an illusion, manned by a God-fearing dwarf named Tibor, whose size and chess-playing abilities make him the ideal hoaxer. However, when a seductive Countess dies mysteriously in the Turk's presence, suspicion quickly falls on both the machine and its creator. Skillfully weaving together past and present, action and intrigue, this book is an engaging, suspense-filled page-turner.



ISBN 9781452156491



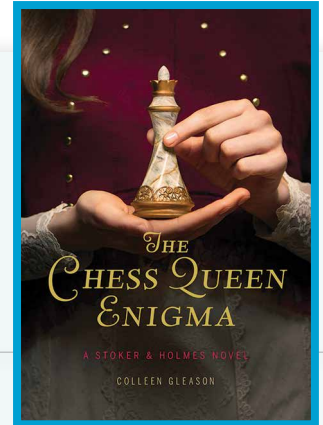
8.

The Chess Queen Enigma: A Stoker and Holmes Novel

by Colleen Gleason

2016

In their latest installment, Evaline Stoker and Mina Holmes have taken on the task of a lifetime – acting as bodyguards and chaperones for the Retrovian Princess Lurelia on her mission to London. Upon her arrival, the Princess carries a letter that reveals the mysterious location of a centuries-old chess queen, a mission of utmost importance to both Retrovia and England. However, when the precious letter is stolen, Evaline and Mina are left to their own devices – racing against time to locate the chess queen before it falls into the wrong hands. A thrilling and engaging historical fiction novel, Evaline and Mina's latest venture is sure to excite readers for hours. This is a must-read for anyone looking for action, intrigue, and a story that engrosses from start to finish.



ON HER MAJESTY'S SUPERNATURAL SECRET SERVICE

THE ROOK

"Bristly convincing and engrossing—
truly thought-through and frequently hilarious!" —*Fine*



DANIEL O'MALLEY

ISBN 9780316098809



9.

The Rook

by Daniel O'Malley

2012

The phenomenal suspense novel *The Rook* by Daniel O'Malley is a must read for anyone looking for a thrilling read. The novel follows protagonist Myfanwy Thomas, an amnesiac Rook, as she desperately attempts to unravel her past and the assassins that have been sent to take her out. With an unpredictable plot and delightful characters, *The Rook* is an entertaining read that will have you at the edge of your seat until the final page is turned. A delightful combination of mystery, suspense and fantasy, this novel is full of secrets just waiting to be unearthed. *The Rook* is an exhilarating choice for anyone looking for an unforgettable read.

ISBN 9798513845669



10.

The Chess Board Murders: A 1920's Historical Murder Mystery

by Jack Murray

2021

An expertly crafted novel that takes readers on a thrilling journey through 1920s Britain.

The story begins with the murders of a trade unionist, a knight, and a bishop, and the blame seems to point to Russia. As the body count rises, the protagonist, Kit Aston, is pulled into a dangerous game of chess with a Russian grandmaster, where the stakes are nothing less than life or death. The plot is well-crafted, full of twists and turns, and the historical setting is brought to life with vivid detail. The author's writing style is engaging, and the characters are well-developed, making for a highly enjoyable read. The addition of hilarious one-liners adds a unique touch to the story and blends the traditional murder mystery with the spy novel genre. Overall, this is a must-read for fans of historical crime thrillers.

