**Compare and Contrast a Historical Novel and a Fantasy**

Like the short story or the poem, the **historical novel** is a category of literature. A historical novel tells a story that is set in the past. Although such stories might contain some actual historical figures and describe some real events and periods in history, they are still works of fiction with mostly fictional main characters.

Another category of literature is the **fantasy** story. A fantasy is a highly imaginative story about characters, places, and events that seem believable but do not exist. Stories about time travel or journeys to other galaxies are examples of fantasies.

**A Tale of New York**

In so many ways New York was a rough and dirty city. It was nothing like Munich, with its hulking stone buildings and beautiful city squares. New York was a city of voyagers. It was still young when we moved here, so most people had come from somewhere else. And even though they were happy to be in a new land, many people felt a great longing for the pleasures of the countries they had left.

So it was often the case that when people made a bit of money, they spent it on the luxury goods that they had used—or had always wanted—when they lived in places such as Manchester and Rotterdam. Tea, pepper, woolen goods, books of philosophy—all these things were available for those who could pay. Mr. Lasko understood this perfectly.

Two days after we told him of our troubles, he burst through our door like a comet and said, “I really think I’ve done something wonderful here!”  
He sat down, out of breath. Then he explained what he was doing. “Everyone likes music,” he said. “All these people from Europe especially. The old sailors and the working men are happy singing funny songs they learned aboard ship or while working in mines and in mills. But our rich friends, the people who seem to be cropping up left and right these days, want something a little better!

So I’ve obtained use of the large meeting room of a shipping company, and I’ve been spreading the word that we’re going to have a concert. For money. A shilling a ticket! If we fill the room, we’ll make more than enough to pay what you owe. If we can fill it two nights in a row, then my goodness, won’t we have some money then!”

“Will people really come?” my father asked. At this point Mr. Lasko became serious. “My friend,” he said, “your daughter is one of the most gifted violinists I’ve ever heard. She has an amazing gift. Her playing is more profound than any I’ve ever heard. Whether these money-pinchers will pay to hear it, I don’t know. They’d certainly never pay to hear me play. But your daughter … she’s special. And that’s what I’m going to make sure people know.”

“I’m so excited!” said Heidi. “I will go get my violin and play now!” She left the room to fetch the violin.

**The Problem of Xyvo**

One day, Jacob woke up early. He looked through the wall of his bedroom. He could see the city clock up in the sky. The numbers said it was six o’clock. He sat up and pushed a button on the table next to his bed. A glass of cold orange juice appeared on the table. He drank the orange juice and thought about his problem.

Jacob’s best friend was an alien. That wasn’t the problem, though. Xyvo was a great best friend. The problem was getting Xyvo a birthday present.  
Xyvo had powers. That was very good, sometimes. Xyvo could see tribullons in the creek better than anybody. He could take Jacob anywhere without a Zenon transporter. He could make Saturn slushes without a materializer. That was the problem. He could make anything he wanted.

Jacob put his transporter on his belt. He started to push the code for his school. Then he remembered it was too early. He pushed the code for the creek instead. A second later he was standing next to it.

Jacob sat and watched the tribullons swimming. Their hundreds of legs were purple and green and gold. There were milicons too. You could see right through them. There were a lot of animals on earth from other planets. Xyvo knew almost all their names.

Jacob reached into his vest pocket. He took out a wooden puzzle. His grandfather had made it for him. He liked to play with it when he was thinking. He slipped the wooden pieces in and out.

Xyvo could make Saturn slushes, but he couldn’t make milicons. He could not make anything that was alive. Maybe Jacob could give him a whole can of milicons. No, that wasn’t any good. Xyvo could catch milicons for himself.

Jacob looked down at his puzzle. Xyvo could make the puzzle if he saw it just once. Of course, it wouldn’t be the same.

Suddenly Jacob stood up. It wouldn’t be the same! Jacob loved the puzzle because his grandfather made it. Xyvo would love something Jacob made. It was a whole week until Xyvo’s birthday. Jacob could make something really good in a week. He wouldn’t use the materializer, either. Maybe he would make a puzzle. Maybe he would make a toy. He would think of something. Then he would make it with his own hands.

Jacob put the puzzle back in his pocket. He pushed the code on his transporter. “Hi, Xyvo,” he said as he walked into school.