

# Bildungsroman

(IPA: bil-doongz-roh-man)

German: "[A] novel of self-cultivation"

--from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



## Coming of Age Novels

**The Adventures of Augie March** by *Saul Bellow* A young man driven by failure finally succeeds in Depression-era Chicago.

**Atlas Shrugged** by *Ayn Rand* A man lives consistent with his libertarian beliefs.

**The Bell Jar** by *Sylvia Plath* A beautiful, talented, successful young woman descends into madness.

**Black Boy** by *Richard Wright* The author experiences racism and poverty growing up in the South.

**Bless Me, Ultima** by *Rudolfo Anaya* A young Latino forced to deal with difficult issues is guided by a Shamanic healer.

**Candide** by *Voltaire* A young optimist becomes disillusioned after experiencing many extraordinary hardships.

**The Catcher in the Rye** by *J. D. Salinger* A depressed teenager's funny, candid struggles with life, love, and sex.

**The Chosen** by *Chaim Potok* Two teenage Jewish boys form a lifelong friendship.

**Citizen of the Galaxy** by *Robert A. Heinlein* An orphan sold into slavery is really heir to an interstellar business empire.

**David Copperfield** by *Charles Dickens* An orphan boy left with a cruel stepfather is sent off to make his way in the world.

**Demian** by *Herman Hesse* A young man is led into a life of crime and debauchery by a schoolmate.

**The Education of Little Tree** by *Forrest Carter* An orphaned boy is adopted by his Cherokee grandparents in the 1930s.

**Emma** by *Jane Austen* A young woman's attempts at matchmaking backfire.

**Empire of the Sun** by *J. G. Ballard* A young English boy lives with his parents in Shanghai before its capture by the Japanese.

**The Fortress of Solitude** by *Jonathan Lethem* Motherless teenaged boys, one black, one white, cope with growing up in Brooklyn.

**The Go-Between** by *L. P. Hartley* An elderly man finds his old diary and relives devastating events from his youth.

**The God of Small Things** by *Arundhati Roy* Fraternal twins are separated by tragic circumstance, then reunited as adults.

**Great Expectations** by *Charles Dickens* An act of kindness changes an orphan's life from poverty to riches.

**Grendel** by *John Gardner* The epic *Beowulf*, told from the monster's perspective.

**The House on Mango Street** by *Sandra Cisneros* A young Latina in Chicago writes about her depressed environment.

**Invisible Man** by *Ralph Ellison* A black man's quest for personal identity and social visibility.

**Jane Eyre** by *Charlotte Brontë* A plain, lonely, courageous English orphan goes to work as a governess for a mysterious man.

**The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby** by *Charles Dickens* After his father's death, a young man must support the family.

**Lives of Girls and Women** by *Alice Munro* A Canadian farm girl journeys away from home and family, into womanhood.

**The Lovely Bones** by *Alice Sebold* A teenager relates the events of her death and watches her family's grief and healing.

**My Name is Asher Lev** by *Chaim Potok* A gifted Hasid artist struggles to balance creative expression with religious obligation.

**Of Human Bondage** by *W. Somerset Maugham* An impressionable orphan with dreams has an appetite for adventure.

**Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit** by *Jeanette Winterson* A young girl adopted by evangelists is subjected to exorcisms because of her lesbian tendencies.

**Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood** by *Marjane Satrapi* The author recounts personal and political repression growing up in Tehran during the Islamic Revolution.

**Portnoy's Complaint** by *Philip Roth* An American Jewish adolescent confesses all to his analyst.

**Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man** by *James Joyce* A university student struggles to decide between a religious vocation and an artistic one.

**The Power of One** by *Bryce Courtenay* An English boy's lonely childhood in South Africa is filled with dreams, and apartheid.

**Red Sky At Morning** by *Richard Bradford* A young man's family relocates from Alabama to Mexico to avoid WWII.

**The Secret Life of Bees** by *Sue Monk Kidd* After her mother's death, a girl is taken in by eccentric beekeeping sisters.

**A Separate Peace** by *John Knowles* Two friends form a complex bond at a New England boy's boarding school during WWII.

**Siddhartha** by *Hermann Hesse* A young man embarks on a contemplative life and finds suffering, rejection, peace and wisdom.

**Spies** by *Michael Frayn* A old man is drawn back to his boyhood home where he faces a troubling event from childhood.

**This Side of Paradise** by *F. Scott Fitzgerald* The lives and moral behavior of Princeton University socialites are influenced by greed and status-seeking during the Jazz Age.

**The Time Traveler's Wife** by *Audrey Niffenegger* A woman maintains a lifelong love affair with an adventuresome, time-traveling librarian.

**The Tin Drum** by *Günter Grass* A young man falsely convicted of murder writes his autobiography while in a sanatorium.

**To Kill a Mockingbird** by *Harper Lee* A lawyer's children learn about prejudice in the American South in the 1930s.

**A Tree Grows in Brooklyn** by *Betty Smith* A young girl and her family show strength and character living in the slums of Brooklyn in the early 1900s.

**Vanity Fair** by *William Makepeace Thackeray* A young English woman is determined to make her way in society.

**What Maisie Knew** by *Henry James* A young woman observes irresponsible behavior in the adults around her.

**Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship** by *J. W. Goethe* A man attempts to escape an empty life by joining a mysterious society.

**Winesburg, Ohio** by *Sherwood Anderson* Secretive townspeople hope a young writer will give meaning and dignity to their experiences.

**A Yellow Raft in Blue Water** by *Michael Dorris* Three generations of Native American women are bonded by secrets.

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