

Look Homeward, Angel: a story of a buried life

By Thomas Wolfe

Look Homeward, Angel is the coming-of-age story of Eugene Gant, whose restlessness and yearning to experience life to the fullest take him from his rural home in North Carolina to Harvard. Through his rich, ornate prose and meticulous attention to detail, Wolfe evokes the peculiarities of small-town life and the pain and upheaval of leaving home. Heavily autobiographical, *Look Homeward, Angel* is Wolfe's most turbulent and passionate work, and a brilliant novel of lasting impact.

Available at Wayne & Preakness in Fiction



An Only Child

By Frank O'Connor

The story of Frank O'Connor is that of a shy child from a Cork slum who becomes aware that there is something beyond the confines of his life and the lives around him, something grander. And with resolve and labor, he makes his way toward it. From his childhood to the time of his release from imprisonment as a revolutionary, O'Connor conveys the moral fortune and the tragic elements of life, that sparked his storytelling - a life he describes as a "celebration of those who for me represented all I should ever know of God."

Available at Wayne in Biography

Back Roads: a novel

By Tawni O'Dell

Harley Altmeyer's mother is in prison for killing his father. So Harley is bringing up his younger sisters and working two jobs to pay the bills-and that doesn't leave a lot of time for distractions. But lately, he's getting distracted by Callie Mercer, an older woman who fills him with such desire he fears he might explode. And as he struggles to keep it together while things begin to spin out of control, Harley finds that as shattered as his family is, there are still more shattering surprises in store...

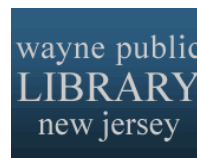
Available at Wayne in Fiction & on Audio Cassette

Wish You Well

By David Baldacci

A car trip turns tragic for 12-year-old New Yorker Louisa Mae Cardinal (Lou) and her younger brother Oscar (Oz) when their idolized father Jack is killed and their mother is badly injured. As there seems to be no hope for her recovery, the children are sent to their father's grandmother, their great-grandmother Louisa, in rural Virginia. It's 1940, but the Civil War is still being fought in the town and on the schoolyard. Louisa's farmhouse is old-fashioned, with no electricity or indoor plumbing, and the farm holds almost nothing to interest the city children. What it means for them, at least at the beginning, is hard work. Lou disagrees with everyone about everything. Oz talks to their comatose mother for hours, feeling that some time she will come back to them—she *must*. When Lou realizes what he's doing, she fears for his sanity. She is sure her mother won't recover, but she exercises her mother's muscles every day anyway. Gradually she begins to make friends and gets more used to the work. When she manages to learn to plow a field with the mule, and Louisa gives her a horse of her own to ride, she begins to see the land as her heritage. Just in time, too, as a gas company has discovered that there is gas buried in a deserted coal mine on the farm. Lou knows a lot of cheating has been going on, and, with the help of a lawyer who was in love with her mother, determines to do something about it. An excellent portrait of race and class distinction of the time and place, and of a young woman growing up.

Available at Wayne & Preakness in Fiction,
Large-Type & on Audio Cassette



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Bildungsroman

Pronunciation:

'bil-du[ng](k)s-rO-"män, -du[ng]z-

Definition:

A novel whose principal subject is the moral, psychological, and intellectual development of a main character, charting their actual or metaphorical journey from youth to maturity.



If you enjoyed reading
Jodi Picoult's
My Sister's Keeper or
Sue Monk Kidd's
The Secret Life of Bees,
check out these other
coming-of-age stories.



A Tree Grows in Brooklyn

By Betty Smith

The beloved American classic about a young girl's coming-of-age at the turn of the century, Betty Smith's *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* is a poignant and moving tale filled with compassion and cruelty, laughter and heartache, crowded with life and people and incident. The story of young, sensitive, and idealistic Francie Nolan and her bittersweet formative years in the slums of Williamsburg has enchanted and inspired millions of readers for more than sixty years. By turns overwhelming, sublime, heartbreaking, and uplifting, the daily experiences of the unforgettable Nolans are raw with honesty and tenderly threaded with family connectedness -- in a work of literary art that brilliantly captures a unique time and place as well as incredibly rich moments of universal experience.

Available at Wayne & Preakness in Fiction and on Audio CD

Painted Bird

By Jerzy Kosinski

Originally published in 1965, *The Painted Bird* established Jerzy Kosinski as a major literary figure. Called by the Los Angeles Times "one of the most imposing novels of the decade," it was eventually translated into more than thirty languages. A harrowing story that follows the wanderings of a boy abandoned by his parents during World War II, *The Painted Bird* is a dark masterpiece that examines the proximity of terror and savagery to innocence and love. It is the first, and the most famous, novel by one of the most important and original writers of this century.

Available at Wayne in Fiction

She's Come Undone

By Wally Lamb

An award-winning creative writing teacher has created a compelling first novel whose heroine reflects on her troubled journey from childhood to middle age. Bruised by her parents' divorce, her mother's breakdown, and brutal betrayal by a neighbor, Dolores Price tries to retreat from life. Overwhelming anger and defiance frequently blind her to the needs of others, yet even in despair she battles for love and acceptance, supported by some delightfully unconventional friends. There are no simple solutions, but from the shattered remains of her dysfunctional family, she binds together a new beginning. Her struggles to understand pain and achieve forgiveness resonate with a sense of life's complexities. Dolores is not always likable, but her story combines sorrow and wonder in a remarkable way.

Available at Wayne & Preakness in Fiction, Large-Type, and on Audio Cassette

A Painted House

By John Grisham

It's September 1952 in rural Arkansas when young narrator Luke Chandler notes that "the hill people and the Mexicans arrived on the same day." These folk are in Black Oak for the annual harvest of the cotton grown on the 80 acres that the Chandlers rent. The three generations of the Chandler family treat their workers more kindly than most farmers do, including engaging in the local obsession—playing baseball—with them, but serious trouble arises among the harvesters nonetheless. Most of it centers around Hank Spruill, a giant hillbilly with an equally massive temper, who one night in town beats a man dead and who throughout the book rubs up against a knife-wielding Mexican who is dating Hank's 17-year-old sister on the sly, leading to another murder. In fact, there's a mess of trouble in Luke's life, from worries about his uncle Ricky fighting in Korea to concerns about the nearby Latcher family and its illegitimate newborn baby, who may be Ricky's son. And then there are the constant fears about the weather, as much a character in this novel as any human, from the tornado that storms past the farm to the downpours that eventually flood the fields, ruining the crop and washing Luke and his family into a new life.

Available at Wayne & Preakness in Fiction and on Audio Cassette

The Romance Reader: a novel

By Pearl Abraham

Abraham shows strong talent in her debut novel, the story of a young girl's coming-of-age in an ultra orthodox Hasidic home. The reader soon cares deeply about narrator Rachel, the eldest of six children, who yearns for some of the forbidden fruits of the secular world. Her rebbe father is another endearing character; he dreams of establishing a major synagogue and learning center even while he desperately looks for a 10th man for a minyan for his sparse congregation. Most of the story takes place in a suburban community that receives an influx of Hasidim in the summer months; for the rest of the year, the rebbe's family is the neighborhood curiosity. Rachel is a dutiful child who tries hard to please her mother, an angry woman who belittles her husband's dreams and wants to be part of one of Brooklyn's larger Hasidic enclaves. Rachel's glimpses of the larger world come from casual and often uncomfortable encounters with non-Jews and secular Jews in her town, but especially from romance novels, which she reads secretly. Her seemingly flagrant behavior brings shame to her family and endangers a marital opportunity for her brilliant younger brother. Despite her resolve to establish a more independent life, Rachel agrees to an arranged marriage, both to make her family happy and as a first step toward a new existence. When this match goes awry, Rachel's solution is both funny and bittersweet. Abraham's intense, sensitive prose and her ability to create vivid scenes and memorable characters augment this authentic, often disturbing, look at Hasidic home life and beliefs.

Available at Wayne & Preakness in Fiction

