

Optimist's Daughter By Eudora Welty

Pulitzer Prize-winning short novel by Eudora Welty, published in 1972. This partially autobiographical story explores the subtle bonds between parent and child and the complexities of love and grief. The optimist in question is 71-year-old Judge McKelva, who has come to a New Orleans hospital from Mount Salus, Mississippi, complaining of a "disturbance" in his vision. To his daughter, Laurel, it's as rare for him to admit "self-concern" as it is for him to be sick, and she immediately flies down from Chicago to be by his side. The subsequent operation on the judge's eye goes well, but the recovery does not. He lies still with both eyes heavily bandaged, growing ever more passive until finally—with some help from the shockingly vulgar Fay, his wife of two years--he simply dies. Together Fay and Laurel travel to Mount Salus to bury him, and the novel begins the inward spiral that leads Laurel to the moment when "all she had found had found her," when the "deepest spring in her heart had uncovered itself" and begins to flow again.

Available at Wayne in Fiction



Soldiers' Pay By William Faulkner

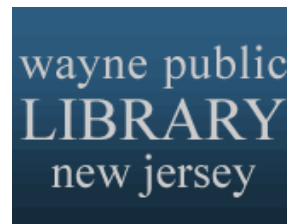
William Faulkner's first novel, *Soldiers' Pay*, brings "the lost generation" to Faulkner's native ground. In describing the impact upon a small Southern town of the return and slow death of an aviator horribly wounded in World War I, the novel re-creates the mood of disillusionment, deflation, and spiritual malaise which was prevalent in postwar American society and art.

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Look Homeward, Angel By Thomas Wolfe

Thomas Wolfe published *Look Homeward, Angel*, his first novel, about a young man's burning desire to leave his small town and tumultuous family in search of a better life, in 1929. It gave the world proof of his genius and launched a powerful legacy. The novel follows the trajectory of Eugene Gant, a brilliant and restless young man whose wanderlust and passion shape his adolescent years in rural North Carolina. Wolfe said that *Look Homeward, Angel* is "a book made out of my life," and his largely autobiographical story about the quest for a greater intellectual life has resonated with and influenced generations of readers, including some of today's most important novelists. Rich with lyrical prose and vivid characterizations, this twentieth-century American classic will capture the hearts and imaginations of every reader.

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Writers of the South



"Whenever I'm asked why Southern writers particularly have a penchant for writing about freaks, I say it is because we are still able to recognize one."

~Flannery O'Connor

"My mother, Southern to the bone, once told me, 'All Southern literature can be summed up in these words: 'On the night the hogs ate Willie, Mama died when she heard what Daddy did to sister.'"

~Pat Conroy

"In the South, perhaps more than any other region, we go back to our home in dreams and memories, hoping it remains what it was on a lazy, still summer's day twenty years ago"

~Willie Morris



COURTESY: WOODFORD RESERVE

All the King's Men

By Robert Penn Warren

Set in the 1930s, this Pulitzer Prize-winning novel traces the rise and fall of Willie Stark, who resembles the real-life Huey "Kingfish" Long of Louisiana. Stark begins his political career as an idealistic man of the people but soon becomes corrupted by success. This novel is one of the most famous and widely read works in American literature, and as relevant today as it was fifty years ago.

Available at Wayne & Preakness in Fiction

A Good Man is Hard to Find and Other Stories

By Flannery O'Connor

Flannery O'Connor, a 1972 National Book Award winner, reminds us that none of the roles in our lives is stagnant and that wearing blinders takes away more than just a view. With a keen eye for the dark side of human nature, an amazing ear for dialogue, and a necessary sense of irony, Flannery O'Connor exposes the underside of life in the rural south of the United States. One of the powers in her writing lies in her ability to make the vulnerability of one into that of many; another is her mastery of shifting "control" from character to character, making the outcome uncertain. Sexual and racial attitudes, poverty and riches, adolescence, old age, and being thirty-four which "wasn't any age at all" are only some of the issues touched on in this collection.

Available at Wayne in Fiction

The Heart is a Lonely Hunter

By Carson McCullers

Published in 1940, *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* is considered McCullers' finest work. The focus of the work is on John Singer, a deaf-mute in a Georgia mill town during the 1930s, and on his effect on the people who confide in him. When Singer's mute Greek companion of 10 years goes insane, Singer is left alone and isolated. He takes a room with the Kelly family, where he is visited by the town's misfits, who turn to him for understanding but have no knowledge of his inner life. The book's emphasis on individuals who are considered outcasts because of race, politics, disability, or sensibility placed it squarely within the Southern gothic tradition of American literature.

Available at Wayne & Preakness in Fiction;
at Wayne on Audio-CD



The Color Purple

By Alice Walker

Celie is a poor black woman whose letters tell the story of 20 years of her life, beginning at age 14 when she is being abused and raped by her father and attempting to protect her sister from the same fate, and continuing over the course of her marriage to "Mister," a brutal man who terrorizes her. Celie eventually learns that her abusive husband has been keeping her sister's letters from her and the rage she feels, combined with an example of love and independence provided by her close friend Shug, pushes her finally toward an awakening of her creative and loving self.

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God's Little Acre

By Erskine Caldwell

This novel chronicles the final decline of a poor white family in rural Georgia. Exhorted by their patriarch Ty Ty, the Waldens ruin their land by digging it up in search of gold. Complex sexual entanglements and betrayals lead to a murder within the family that completes its dissolution. Juxtaposed against the Waldens' obsessive search is the story of Ty Ty's son-in-law, a cotton mill worker in a nearby town who is killed during a strike. First published in 1933, *God's Little Acre* was censured by the Georgia Literary Commission, banned in Boston, and once led the all-time best-seller list, with more than ten million copies in print.

Available at Wayne in Fiction

Breakfast at Tiffany's: a short novel and three other stories

By Truman Capote

This novel is Truman Capote's best-loved work of fiction and arguably one of the finest American novellas. Set in Manhattan's Upper East Side, during the final years of World War II, it documents the story of a young writer's fascination with, and affection for, his charming and troubled neighbor, the unorthodox Holly Golightly. The simple, linear narrative of *Breakfast at Tiffany's* provided Capote with the perfect vehicle to refine his characteristically minimal, naturalistic prose style, marking the novella as a transition phase between the author's more elaborate earlier writings and the documentary-style realism of his next major work, the non-fiction masterpiece *In Cold Blood*.

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