

# BARTON

## LIBRARY

*Dare to Know*

### Coming-of-Age Fiction

*Fiction depicting the development of a character from youth to adulthood.*

Beginning as a literary form in Germany, this genre depicts a protagonist's psychological, emotional, and moral growth from lost youth to mature adult. Plots focus on the trials and misfortunes that influence the characters' maturation, as they experience emotional changes, overcome obstacles, and come to understand the world. These character-focused stories explore serious themes, typically over the course of several years. Readers can relate to the protagonist's struggles and successes, as the plot emphasizes dialogue or internal monologue over action, providing insights into the character's thoughts and emotions. Coming-of-age novels are generally written in the first-person, and an early tradition was to feature the name of the protagonist directly in the title. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1796), Jane Austen's *Emma* (1815), Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1834), Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), Charles Dicken's *Great Expectations* (1861), F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920), J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), S. E. Hinton's *The Outsiders* (1967), and Catherine Marshall's *Christy* (1967) are classic examples.

#### Common Elements

Emotional loss
Physical or metaphorical journey
Conflict
Self-discovery
Friendship
Personal growth
Maturity

Challenges
Beliefs and values
Limitations
Wicked authority figure
Orphans
Misfit
Unrequited love

#### Benefits of Reading

Allows readers to become emotionally involved in the protagonist's journey
Affirms to the reader that human relationships are fraught

Encourages the reader to reflect on their own growth and maturation
Provides the reader with another perspective

#### Modern Literary Examples

<i>The Age of Miracles</i> (2013) by Karen Thompson Walker
<i>Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress</i> (2000) by Dai Sijie
<i>Black Swan Green</i> (2006) by David

Mitchell
<i>The Color Purple</i> (1982) by Alice Walker
<i>Demon Copperhead</i> (2022) by Barbara Kingsolver
<i>The Double Life of Liliane</i> (2015) by Lilly

Tuck
<i>The Family</i> (2021) by Naomi Krupitsky
<i>The Fever</i> (2014) by Megan Abbott
<i>The Fortress of Solitude</i> (2003) by Jonathan Lethem
<i>The Goldfinch</i> (2013) by Donna Tartt
<i>The House on Mango Street</i> (1983) by Sandra Cisneros
<i>Extremely Loud &amp; Incredibly Close</i> (2005) by Jonathan Safran Foer
<i>Indian Horse</i> (2018) by Richard Wagamese
<i>The Island of Missing Trees</i> (2021) by Elif Shafak
<i>The Kite Runner</i> (2003) by Khaled Hosseini

<i>Norwegian Wood</i> (1987) by Haruki Murakami
<i>Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit</i> (1987) by Jeanette Winterson
<i>Ordinary Grace</i> (2013) by William Kent Krueger
<i>The Russian Debutante's Handbook</i> (2002) by Gary Shteyngart
<i>The Stars Beneath Our Feet</i> (2017) by David Barclay Moore
<i>Stories from the Sheriff's Daughter</i> (2023) by Lareida Buckley
<i>What the Fireflies Knew</i> (2022) by Kai Harris
<i>Who Will Run the Frog Hospital</i> (1994) by Lorie Moore