

Saul Bellow: Novels 1944-1953: Dangling Man, The Victim, and The Adventures of Augie March (Library of America)

By Saul Bellow



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Saul Bellow's rare talent has not only earned critical accolades, including the Nobel Prize, it has also made his books perennial bestsellers. Now, in a historic collector's edition celebrating the 50th anniversary of the classic "The Adventures of Augie March," readers will rediscover the novels that laid the foundation for Bellow's towering career.

The comic tour-de-force "The Adventures of Augie March" (1953) introduced to American literature a startlingly original expressiveness-uninhibited, jazzy, infused with Yiddishisms and Depression-era voices. Ebullient irony bears Bellow's prose aloft. March comes of age in a Chicago bustling with characters as large and vital as the city itself, and his travels abroad lead him through love's byways and the disappointments of vanishing youth. Martin Amis calls it "the Great American Novel" for its "fantastic inclusiveness, its pluralism, its qualmless promiscuity. . . . Everything is in here."

Bellow's sparer first two novels possess a more Flaubertian precision. "Dangling Man" (1944) penetrates the psychology of a jobless man's anxiousness as he awaits draft orders. "The Victim" (1947), an increasingly nightmarish story of one man's extraordinary claims on a casual acquaintance, explores our obligations to others and the unfathomable workings of chance. After a half century, Bellow's earliest novels remain as fresh, incisive, and entertaining as ever. Included in this edition are helpful notes and a chronology of the author's life.



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About the Author

James Wood, editor, is senior editor at *The New Republic*. He is the author of *The Broken Estate: Essays on Literature and Belief* (1999) and the novel *The Book Against God* (2003).

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