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The Sorrows of Young Werther (Penguin Classics)

Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

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A key work in the German 'Sturm und Drang' movement, Johann Goethe's autobiographical epistolary novel The Sorrows of Young Werther is a defining moment in early Romanticism, which has influenced writers from Mary Shelley to Thomas Mann. This Penguin Classics edition is translated from with an introduction by Michael Hulse. Visiting an idyllic German village, Werther, a sensitive young man, meets and falls in love with sweet-natured Charlotte. Although he realises that she is to marry Albert, he is unable to subdue his passion and his infatuation torments him to the point of despair. The first great 'confessional' novel, The Sorrows of Young Werther draws both on Goethe's own unrequited love for Charlotte Buff and on the death of his friend Karl Wilhelm Jerusalem. The book was an immediate success, and a cult rapidly grew up around it, resulting in numerous imitations as well as violent criticism and suppression on the grounds of its apparent support of suicide. Goethe's sensitive exploration of the mind of an artist at odds with society and ill-equipped to cope with life is now considered the first great tragic novel of European literature. This edition includes notes and an introduction by Michael Hulse, who explores the origins of the novel in the author's life and examines its impact on European culture. Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749-1832) was born in Frankfurt, Germany. Although he directed the German State Theatre, dabbled in the occult and worked on scientific theories in evolutionary botany, Goethe is best remembered for his great works The Sorrows of Young Werther and Faust, and his part in the 18th century 'Sturm and Drang' movement. If you enjoyed The Sorrows of Young Werther, you might like Stendhal's Love, also published in Penguin Classics.

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