50 Essential Historical Fiction Books. by Lily King. The books listed below include examples of historical fiction by the strictest of definitions, as well as those that fudge the rules a bit or a lot. Written over the last 200+ years, with settings that range from ancient Rome in Robert Graves’ I, Claudius, to 19th century Egypt and an imaginary relationship between Gustav Flaubert and Florence Nightingale in Enid Shomer’s The Twelve Rooms of the Nile, to 15th Century Florence in George Eliot’s study of the Italian Renaissance, Romola. The family of a Baptist missionary adjusts to life in the Congolese jungle in the early 1960s. Memoirs of a Geisha. Arthur Golden. The fictional memoir of a geisha, from age nine to adulthood, in pre- and post WWII Japan. The Night Watch. Sarah Waters. Historical fiction can be used to reinforce topics a student is studying in school or as entertainment for a child interested in historical events. There are many books that can be used in this manner. The book is for upper level secondary students in 11th or 12th grade because the language can be challenging to read, even translated. The book has a rating of four out of five stars on Google. Paul of the Timber Mill. Paul of the Timber Mill is an online book by Robin Robilliard. The book is set in the 1960s in New Zealand. The story follows a young boy living in a timber mill town.