Paulo Coelho de Souza is a Brazilian lyricist and novelist. He is the recipient of numerous international awards, amongst them the Crystal Award by the World Economic Forum. His novel *The Alchemist* has been translated into 80 languages. Coelho has sold over 200 million copies worldwide and is the all-time bestselling Portuguese language author.

Writer Paulo Coelho was born on August 24, 1947, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Coelho attended Jesuit schools and was raised by devout Catholic parents. He determined early on that he wanted to be a writer but was discouraged by his parents, who saw no future in that profession in Brazil. Coelho's rebellious adolescence spurred his parents to commit him to a mental asylum three times, starting when he was 17.

Coelho eventually got out of institutional care and enrolled in law school, but dropped out to indulge in the "sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll" of hippie life in the 1970s. He wrote song lyrics for Brazilian musicians protesting the country's military rule. He was jailed three times for his political activism and subjected to torture in prison.

"Hell Archives" was Coelho’s initial book which was published in 1982 and was not well received. The Pilgrimage was released in 1987 which is a reminiscence of the spiritual awakening he went through. Later, *The Alchemist* was made available which turned out to be becoming one of the best-selling books in history, selling over 65 million copies.

Coelho has been married to his wife, the artist Christina Oiticica, since 1980. Together the couple spends half the year in Rio de Janeiro and the other half in a country house in the Pyrenees Mountains of France. In 1996, Coelho founded the Paulo Coelho Institute, which provides support to children and the elderly. He continues to write, following his own version of The Alchemist's "Language of the World."

He has received numerous prestigious international awards. He is member of the Academy of Letters of Brazil since 2002 and Messenger of Peace by the United Nations since 2007. In 2009 he received the Guinness World Record for the most translated author for The Alchemist.

The novel itself, Brida, is a journey story of a beautiful young Irish girl and her quest for knowledge. She finds a hermit mage who teaches her to overcome fear and a witch who teaches her how to dance to the hidden music of the world. They see in her a gift, but must let her make her own voyage of discovery. As Brida seeks her destiny, she struggles to find a balance between her relationships and her desire to transform herself. The story is neatly woven around marrying the ancient art of witchcraft to contemporary life.