



## The Forsyte Saga

*John Galsworthy*

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The three novels which make up *The Forsyte Saga* chronicle the ebbing social power of the commercial upper-middle class Forsyte family between 1886 and 1920. Soames Forsyte is the brilliantly portrayed central figure, a Victorian who outlives the age, and whose baffled passion for his beautiful but unresponsive wife Irene reverberates throughout the saga.

Written with both compassion and ironic detachment, Galsworthy's masterly narrative examines not only their fortunes but also the wider developments within society, particularly the changing position of women in an intensely competitive male world. Above all, Galsworthy is concerned with the conflict at the heart of English culture between the soulless materialism of wealth and property and the humane instincts of love beauty and art.

--from the back cover

## The Forsyte Saga Details

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Author : John Galsworthy

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## From Reader Review The Forsyte Saga for online ebook

### Suvi says

The family saga of Forsytes, who at the beginning smell an intruder amongst them (Bosinney the architect, engaged to June), examines how the far-reaching consequences of a certain love affair molds each person and generation in its own way.

The solicitor Soames considers his wife Irene as his property, the way you do with beautiful paintings that you parade in front of others. The couple's marriage suffers from Irene's indifference, which Soames of course doesn't understand, because he doesn't see the desire to be free lurking behind her eyes. The elder Jolyon feels lonely and tries to patch things up with his son with the same name, who separated himself from the Forsyte family by leaving his wife and marrying another woman. The younger Jolyon seems different from the rest of the Forsytes, since he doesn't consider life as a matter of business.

People are mostly cold and selfish, but nature continues its peaceful existence. London and its surroundings are mostly described through nature: lovers embraced by the stunning fragrance of flowers, starry sky spread above the buildings on an evening of dancing, Robin Hill's lush environment etc. The eternal essence of nature makes you hope that the Forsytes would finally realise what's really important in life, but of course their practical blindness cannot be cured with beauty.

The atmosphere of the novels is delicate and lingering. Galsworthy describes perceptively the family's intertwining to the changes of the society, from the Victorian era to the energetic and modern 1920s. Old-fashioned ideals are dusted, but certain people persistently grab into the narrow-minded perception of the priorities of humanity. At first you want to feel sorry for Soames, but after a certain event it's impossible. He has been brought up in a certain kind of way in a certain kind of society, but you still want to slap him, real hard, and shake him up so that he would wake up into the reality.

In a long saga like this, some members of the family are naturally lost, but the desire to possess and taking care of own interests remain. Forgiveness, blindness, aging, women's rights... There are a lot of themes, but they form into a balanced bigger picture. A few years ago I saw the newer 21st century miniseries, but after reading this I'm no longer entirely sure that it was actually as good as I remember it to be. How can anyone capture Galsworthy's melancholic family saga into the frames of television or film?

I could endlessly try to define the effect this had on me, but I still wouldn't be able to put my feelings into words. After the last page I feel distressed, sad, relieved, wistful. Despite the many flaws the characters had it's extremely difficult to say goodbye after so many weeks of spending time with them. I can always read the whole thing again, but it will not be like it was the first time.

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### Petra X says

The first time I read this book I was going up the Amazon. I had just crossed the Atlantic with three friends on a yacht and got off in Fortaleza, Brazil. I thought this would be my one and only chance to see the Amazon so I stuffed a backpack full of the necessities, abandoned the rest and got a bus to Belem at the mouth of the Amazon. A month later having explored Belem, Santarem and a few other small places I found myself in Manaus, 1,000 miles up the Amazon. It took me a few weeks to sort out a guide I could afford as I

didn't want to join a tourist party and although previously my travels had been on my own, I wanted to leave the towns, the river boats, roads and really penetrate the jungle and obviously I couldn't do that on my own. I was lucky enough to find an Indian who had been a tour guide but was now returning to his village on a lake several hundred miles away. He spoke English, Portuguese and Xingu and was happy, for a smallish fee, to take me along.

And this is where the Forsyte Saga comes in. Travelling by small boat, bus, river boats and sometimes walking miles to reach another place on the red laterite road to get to another tributary and another boat, several days later we reached the village. During that journey there had been long periods of just waiting while trees were chopped down to bypass huge potholes - ones big enough to have 6' Victoria Regina water lilies floating in them - and I read the only book I brought, the 800+ page Forsyte Saga. Despite it being a big book, it wasn't really heavy as the pages were tissue thin. Which was good, because as I read them I ripped them out and used them. Tissue indeed!

Later in the village, which was about 40 houseboats and Indian houses on stilts spread out around a lake that took a motorboat over two hours to go around, I was shown the local variant of toilet tissue. It was a largish, quite thick leaf whose furriness made it very soft and when crushed it released a very soothing, slightly scented liquid, a natural body lotion. I did learn the name in Xingu but never in English. I wish I could remember what it was because it was so much nicer than any toilet tissue I have ever used and I would grow it in pots in the bathroom.

So 5-stars to the Forsyte Saga for a brilliant story and being so damn useful in a time of great need.

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### **Paula says**

Finally finished! Took a year of picking it up, putting it down, etc. but with my new work-out routine finally finished this care of my Kindle. This was recommended to me by Mike, and considering the number of books he recommends, I had to get it and at least attempt it!

The book tells the tale of several generations of Forsytes; their failures, their successes, their families, their relationships, their thoughts, their worries and dreams. The saga contains multiple love relationships, some doomed, others a tremendous success, still others, happily, never come to fruition.

Although the character of Soames Forsyte is the easiest to dislike, by the end of the book I felt a strange sadness for him; he never realized what he did wrong, or why it was wrong. He continues to go through life bitter, feeling victimized, and jealous of others, yet saddened at how the women in his life treated him.

He deserved to have someone come up to him, smack him upside the head, explain what he did and why it was wrong, then set him straight, not live in ignorance of his wrong. As he said, however, it was the life into which he was born, the way he was taught to think, the person he was raised to be. Sad, ultimately, that he did as he was born to do, and no better.

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### **Tea Jovanovi? says**

Ako ste u prilici odgledajte novu verziju BBC-jeve serije snimljene po ovom romanu, pre nekoliko godina...

sjajno je ura?enja...

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### ~Geektastic~ says

I found *The Forsyte Saga* on the shelf of my local library a couple of years ago and it has been a decided favorite of mine ever since. While “saga” is not the first word to come to mind when thinking about the British upper middle class in the later days of Victoria, it is apt. The story is a multigenerational examination of family and tradition in a time of transition, and it examines the various institutions and ideas that were under the most pressure to change as the British Empire declined from its former glory. As a microcosm of the English nouveau riche at the turn of the century, the Forsytes are affected by the great changes ushered in at that time: shifting attitudes about marriage, new concepts in art and literature, the breakdown of strict class distinctions, the impact of the first World War, and new ideas concerning the importance of ownership and acquisition, to name a few.

Starting at the end of my list, the Forsytes are nothing if not acquisitive; there is a reason the first of the three volumes is called “A Man of Property.” Ownership is a defining feature of the upper middle class, since it is their money and property rather than blood and birth that has established their niche in society. The Forsytes, though representative of their kind, are not homogeneous and there are dissenters within the ranks.

Old Jolyon, the patriarch of the clan, appears as stolid and respectable as any English gentleman behind his cloud of cigar smoke, but beneath the surface is a restlessness and love of beauty that is belied by his club dinners, calling cards and investments in the four-percents. His son is also called Jolyon (known as Young Jolyon or Jo) and he is a variation of his father, only stripped of his respectability and bared to the derision of the world after leaving his first wife for love and the life of an artist. The third generation of Old Jolyon’s direct line, his granddaughter June, is even further separated from the priorities of her grandfather’s generation. The contrast of the generations operates throughout the various branches of the family, from Old Jolyon’s brothers and sisters on down the line to their grandchildren, but it is definitely the Jolyon branch of the family that encouraged my interest and sympathy the most.

On the opposite side of the family is James, a bit of a sad-sack miser, and his son Soames. While Soames is set up in contrast to the soft-hearted Jolyon and his side of the family, he still manages to attract a sympathetic glance from time to time, if only because he seems to be blind to the fact that owning something does not preclude happiness. Unfortunately, it is Soames’ beautiful wife Irene that must be subjected to Soames’ most extreme quest to possess and causes him to act in ways that make him, in simpler terms than it deserves, the villain.

The spirit of conflict that threads its way through the three volumes is embodied by Irene. She is the wild beauty that sweeps through the ordered, somewhat stifled existence of the Forsytes and changes everything. Looking at Irene, it would not seem possible that she could be the tempest that uproots so many; she is quiet and reserved, rarely revealing what is roiling beneath her cool exterior. At first, I was tempted to dislike Irene as much as I disliked Soames, (view spoiler). But some things cannot be controlled, and love is first among them- something Galsworthy takes pains to show. According to Wikipedia, Galsworthy had an affair with a married woman, which contributed to his portrayal of Irene, who is both a representative of the new ideas emerging in the Edwardian era, and of Beauty with a capital “B,” which fascinates Old Jolyon and Jo as much as it does the obsessive Soames. Irene eventually wins her freedom from Soames, at great cost, but her effect on the family never truly dissipates, but rather becomes the foundation of further conflict in the

next generation. The sins of the father are visited upon the son (or daughter, as the case may be).

The grand themes of social change and class consciousness are interesting in themselves, but it is the characters that make *The Forsyte Saga* live and breathe. The maiden Aunts that preside over the affairs of the family are funny and sad, as is the reclusive Timothy. Jo is the picture of the black sheep, with his notions of happiness for its own sake, in stark contrast to his family's overall philosophy. His daughter June is enthusiastic and intractable in her pursuit of justice and equality, which manages to make her alternately admirable and frustrating. There are a host of other characters: Winifred and her good-for-nothing husband Dartie; Swithin, the determined bachelor; the romantic and tragic Bosinney; the younger generation of Forsytes, Holly and Jolly, who are made to rethink the world in the advent of WWI; the honorable but unfortunate Jon. My favorite, in all honesty, is Old Jolyon. Despite his initial rejection of his son's life choices, he proves himself to have a big, warm heart and the ability to see past the surface concerns that interest his brothers and sisters so much. (view spoiler)

*The Forsyte Saga* is a story of family, of love and loss, of change and the amazing ability for some things to stay the same. There are multiple love stories, some no more than brief entanglements, others that shake the foundation of the family (and even some intermarriage amongst the cousins). Galsworthy presents this family epic with a combination of laughter and compassion, and while it can be said that the Forsytes are representatives of a type, they are also fantastically idiosyncratic as individuals. The drama is tempered by the everyday actions of meals, board meetings and various discussions of finance, but they enrich the tale rather than oppress it.

I have read this immense novel, or collection of three novels and two "interludes," twice now. I'm sure, if I pick it up again anytime soon, that there will be even more to see and enjoy. The beauty of the story is that it is so rich with detail, both of its time and of the individuals that populate it.

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### **Koeeoaddi says**

One of those books you want to back up, turn around and read again. Loved it!

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### **Jemidar says**

Because of the ridiculously small font in my copy of this I actually read it on my Kindle in the three separate volumes (*The Man of Property*, *In Chancery* & *The Forsyte Saga: To Let*) it was originally published in. For me, the sum of the three books taken together adds up to way more than if you consider each book individually. I would definitely recommend reading them as one book.

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### **Captain Sir Roddy, R.N. (Ret.) says**

This is a titanic masterpiece of a multi-generational story of a fictional English family that spans the Victorian, Edwardian, and post-World War I eras. For the first one-hundred pages or so, I found myself having to frequently refer to the Forsyte family genealogical chart; however, by the end of the book I knew

all of the characters and their place in the family intimately. Like all families, Galsworthy has created a world of very real and human characters in the Forsyte family; a family bound as much by their name, and at times even their dysfunction. Many of the novel's characters exhibit the full range of emotion and feeling, including: love, greed, hatred, passion, jealousy, lust, truth, honesty, betrayal, and so forth; it is all there within this family - The Forsytes. Once started, I could not put this book down easily; it is that compelling. I fully understand why John Galsworthy was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1932. For those who love novels of and about England, *The Forsyte Saga* is a must read.

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### **Cphe says**

Took quite a while to come to terms with all of the characters and their relationship with one another in this epic tome. The three novels primarily centre around Soames Forsyte, his wife Irene and the house he contracts to build for her that would ultimately have such far reaching repercussions.

This novel has it all, memorable characters, loves lost and gained, drama, and yes melodrama. It's a novel of family ties, respectability and money.

Enjoyed the first novel very much but it was the final novel that was particularly poignant and bittersweet. Well worth a look at.

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### **David Lentz says**

The writing evident in this epic is masterful and engaging: it is even and substantive and elegant. The rich irony about the lengths that men strive to acquire property in all its forms and then find their acquisitions useless, meaningless and certainly not worth the price. Galworthy was focused upon property in so many different varieties: the sense of possession that men had of their wives in his time amid archaic laws about divorce; the building of a home that ends in unexpected expense in chancery; the elusive value of works of art; the subtleties of property from family crests, clubs, colleges and occupational status and cuts of mutton to the blatant futility of fighting over land in South Africa during the Boer War -- it's all shallow and empty materialism in the end. The property is never worth the cost of the trouble to acquire it. Young people slave to gather possessions only to regret in old age that they have traded so much of life away to gain them and must undergo the painful rigors of its redistribution through wills after death. Galsworthy seemed to me like a sort of British Tolstoy writing in England for property reform. Because when property is involved, men tend to objectify about it and in the course of things they tend to lose their sense of humanity. This troublesome pattern of life seems to repeat itself often like a lesson men never learn -- as the objectifying I-It relationship of Martin Buber replaces the humane I-Thou. Yes, it's a long novel but when the writing is this compelling in its style and substance, you can luxuriate in the beauty and wisdom of the words. Every character is finely and individually drawn like a character in a Velasquez portrait of a large family. You may regret that this edition isn't longer when it ends but fortunately there is more of his work in which to indulge. Galsworthy's work earned him a Nobel Prize -- it's easy to see the astonishing depth and range and virtuosity that the Nobel judges found in his writing. Don't pass up the chance to bask in this epic saga of Galsworthy. It's easily one of the top ten novels ever written in the English language -- it's really that good.

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## **Donna says**

Drat. I see I lost the slip of paper where I write page numbers and the little notes for the book report. There are a few numbers scrawled on the inside back cover; page 785 has cricket, 808 the fixed idea, and there's a giant dog-ear folded from the bottom of the page. That would be a chapter I want to read again. I put off finishing it too. The book was left untouched at page 830 for an entire month. Didn't want to finish it. I had been through too much with them, especially the unloveable Soames, and the houses; Robin Hill and Timothy's.

"His heart made a faint demonstration within him while he stood in full south sunlight on the newly whitened doorstep of that little houses where four Forsytes had once lived, and now but one dwelt on like a winter fly; the house into which Soames had come and out of which he had gone times without number, divested of, or burdened with, fardels of family gossip; the house of the 'old people' of another century, another age."

That house.

The passage of time is strong in this book and Galsworthy's precision and wit so timeless, I can recognize in Soame's misgivings about motor cars my own dizzy suspicions cellphones. Whether it's the 19th or 20th century that's turning, things only seem to go faster. This is not going back on the shelf. I'm tucking this dogeared beast under the bedside table so I can reread all my favourite parts.

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## **Siria says**

### **The Man of Property**

The Man of Property is the first book in what would eventually turn out to be the nine volume Forsyte Saga, the work for which Galsworthy is chiefly remembered. It was made into a TV series not so long ago, which is how I'd heard of it, but I hadn't read it until I picked it up to read in an airport recently in order to pass the time thanks to interminable flight delays. It really did quite nicely.

The writing is very much of its time - 1906 - and for those who are not used to late Victorian or early Edwardian prose, I think it could prove a little tough going at times. I grew up devouring books from that period, so as far as I was concerned, it was a very comfortable read. Galsworthy does veer a little towards what would be considered sentimentalism nowadays, but he avoids the overt mawkishness which now makes quite a substantial amount of the literature of that period nigh on unreadable - for me, at any rate.

The double focus of the book - on the Forsyte family, and on the marriage between Soames and Irene Forsyte - is interesting, and I think helps to reinforce what Galsworthy was trying to get at: the futility of acquiring money and material goods while neglecting the things which truly matter in life. The Forsyte family is drawn well, though at times it felt as if he was using too many examples for the reader to follow easily. The fact that there are ten Forsyte siblings, many of whom have children of their own, means that you really have to get the genealogy straight in your head before you can read on very far.

His depiction of the marriage of Soames and Irene was, I think, the most successful part of the novel. The

levels of complexity he displays here are very impressive - both of them possess sympathetic qualities and repulsive ones. Despite Soames' rape of his wife, he shows such a complete inability to understand her, try as he might, that all my revulsion was mixed with pity; while Irene's state, though saddening, was tempered by her inability to break out of that wall of stone which seems to surround her personality.

There's really enough of a hook in this that I've got the next two volumes in the series lined up to read soon. If you've got any sort of interest in this period of history, I really would recommend these books.

### **In Chancery**

Perhaps a little slower moving than the first book, and the plot moves in a way which is familiar and predictable in its Victorian-ness in a way which is very reassuring to me; especially since nineteenth century novels are my version of comfort reading. Although the resolution - Irene marrying young Jolyon; Soames marrying Annette - is obvious from very near the beginning of the novel, Galsworthy sketches out the movements of the novel with assurance and elegance. Thematically, the novel hangs well with the rest of the series, and is a wonderful sketch of a particular strata of English society around the turn of the last century.

### **To Let**

I didn't like this one quite so much as the preceding two. Galsworthy follows the same formula as in the first two books - the tragedy of an unsuitable relationship, and how it can damage an entire family - with an added Romeo and Juliet style twist. However, I never really came to feel for Fleur and Jon the way I did for the characters of the preceding generations of Forsytes. Soames, Irene, and Young Jolyon still continued to be the characters I wanted to see more of. Still the same rambling, elegant Victorian-stye prose that I love, though.

I don't know if I would particularly recommend this as a book on its own; still, as a part of the series as a whole, its probably a good idea to read it, if only because it rounds out the characters' stories for you to a large extent.

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### **Bekka says**

One of the greatest works of literature, there's a reason why Mr. Galsworthy won the Nobel Prize for Literature for this work. An epic saga of a single extended family which spans several generations, Galsworthy creates characters that are human and fallible, noble, kind and cruel. The story is deeply moving, funny, infuriating and completely compelling. This is a huge work, but, as with all great novels, the better it is, the more you want it to continue on and on. This one does! The Saga comprises of three novels and two "interludes" or short stories between the novels. The first interlude of the saga, "Indian Summer of a Forsyte," is one of the most beautiful and poignant works I have ever read.

In addition to this first work, Galsworthy continued the story of the Forsytes for another two complete epics, creating nine novels in all. He also created a series of short stories to fill in elements of the characters backstories.

If you intend to embark on this wonderful journey into the heart of middle class Brits at turn of the 20th century, I recommend the Oxford University Press edition, which has an extensive glossary included. Galsworthy includes a large amount of slang of the period, and this edition explains those terms. Its available

at the Madison Library District for patron use.

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## **Laura says**

What a splendid family saga written by John Galsworthy.

The book covers the period between 1886 and 1920 and tells the story of the Forsytes and their struggle to have the most successful life at that time.

This volume is composed by three books: *The Man of Property*, *In Chancery* and *To Let*.

The first book describes the life of Soames Forsyte and his wife Irene. However, this marriage will have a lot of troublesome issues along the whole narrative. This will lead to dramatic consequences for all Forsytes.

It's a pity that this big fat family saga ended even if this book has more than 700 pages.

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## **Abby says**

*"He had long forgotten the small house in the purlieus of Mayfair, where he had spent the early days of his married life, or rather, he had long forgotten the early days, not the small house, – a Forsyte never forgot a house – he had afterwards sold it at a clear profit of four hundred pounds."*

There you have it. Nine hundred pages of delicious soap opera wrapped around sly commentary on the acquisitiveness and striving of the British upper-middle classes around the turn of the twentieth century. The Forsytes aren't landed aristocracy like Lord Grantham of Downton Abbey. They're only a couple of generations removed from farmers. But they've been successful in trade, in publishing, at the bar, and they live in ongepotchket Victorian splendor, faithfully served by retainers and housemaids, in London and its environs.

Galsworthy was himself the product of a wealthy family and trained as a barrister before traveling abroad, meeting Joseph Conrad and envisioning a different life. He fell in love with the wife of his cousin, an army major, and married her after a ten-year affair and her eventual divorce. He was among the first writers to deal with social class in his work and to challenge the mores and ideals reinforced by the Victorian writers who preceded him. Notably, but not surprisingly given his personal life, he defied the standard view of women as property and defended their right to leave unhappy marriages.

*"I don't know what makes you think I have any influence,' said Jolyon; 'but if I have I'm bound to use it in the direction of what I think is her happiness. I am what they call a "feminist," I believe...I'm against any woman living with any man whom she definitely dislikes. It appears to me rotten."*

It is the unhappily married woman referred to here around whom much of The Forsyte Saga revolves. Irene (I-reen-ee), disastrously married to a "man of property," is the antithesis of a Forsyte. She represents beauty and art and passion and free will. Before reluctantly marrying Soames Forsyte, she extracted a promise that he would let her go if it didn't work out. His failure to do so drives the story and a multi-generational family

estrangement. While Galsworthy thoroughly develops the other primary characters, Irene is a beautiful cipher at the center of the novel. We never get her point of view; we see her through the eyes of others and can only infer her thoughts and feelings.

The Forsyte Saga features a huge cast of characters but the family tree that accompanies most editions is needed only at the beginning. To Galsworthy's credit, we quickly get to know the main characters and the chorus of peripheral relatives that swirl around them. There are births, deaths, betrayals, couplings, uncouplings, recouplings, and generational upheaval, all conveyed in deft, eminently readable prose, a short 900 pages. This is a sumptuous wallow of a book with redeeming social value.

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### **Bethany says**

This volume contains 3 full novels and 2 short stories that chronicle the lives of the upper middle-class Forsyte Family. It begins in 1886 at the height of Victorian England and takes us through the Boer War and World War I to 1920. It is the subtle way Nobel Prize winner Mr. Galsworthy brings us through this rough, transitional time that makes this saga (and it is a saga) great instead of just good or interesting. The larger scope shows us the changing status of women from possessions to fully participating, land owning, voting, independent members of society. On a smaller scale, we see the transition from carriages to automobiles and bicycles; and it takes us through different phases of art and culture. At the heart of the story is a scandalous incident that happens at the very beginning and affects generations. The central figure is the complex, tragic and generally unlikable antagonist which I found fascinating and different from other books I've been reading. It also came with a well-researched appendix which helped a ton with the casual references to what was then common cultural knowledge. Ultimately this book is about family and home. Definitely worth the effort and time.

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### **Libros Prestados says**

Videoreseña del libro: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DpoAr...>

Si hay que darle 5 estrellas a una novela se le dan y punto. Se las merece. Y eso que argumentalmente no es nada del otro mundo, incluso podríamos decir que es un culebrón, con varios clichés y giros de guión que te puedes esperar. Pero no importa, porque lo importante es cómo se cuenta, no tanto el qué.

En cierto sentido me recuerda a la serie "Downton Abbey", que es un culebrón disfrazado de serie de época, pero se diferencian en que si bien ambas hablan de una familia pudiente y los cambios suscitados en Gran Bretaña a principios del siglo XX (aunque "La saga de los Forsyte" es más victoriana, añadiendo el final del siglo XIX), "La saga de los Forsyte" es mucho más un comentario social de la época y una crítica a ciertos aspectos de la misma. Por ejemplo, a la idea de la mujer, y en concreto de la mujer casada, como propiedad de su marido. Galbraith es feminista en su visión de las relaciones de pareja: tu mujer no es tu propiedad, las personas no son propiedad de nadie. Y fijarse en eso, en el sentido y derecho de la propiedad inglesa y su transformación a finales del siglo XIX, principios del XX, le permite hablar sobre la burguesía y su función como base del Imperio británico.

Es más, utiliza a una familia en concreto, los Forsyte, para hablar de esa clase social que sería motor del comercio británico y del capitalismo tal y como lo conocemos. De hecho, es irónico ver cómo tras las luchas sociales del siglo XX, las opiniones de los neoliberales actuales tienen más que ver con las de dueños capitalistas del siglo XIX que con los de mediados del XX. Y el gran acierto de Galbraith es precisamente esa familia y su descripción. Es increíble el talento del autor para dar todo ese volúmen de información, nombrar a tantos miembros de la familia, y que nunca te pierdas. Y la verdadera maestría de Galbraith se muestra en cómo puede describir tan bien las dinámicas familiares: los pequeños roces, costumbres y cotilleos dentro de una misma familia. Esa es la gran fuerza de esta novela (que consta de cinco libros, en realidad), junto con la perspicacia del autor para describir las emociones de las personas y su desarrollo psicológico. Sin mencionar, por supuesto, la capacidad para describir paisajes y utilizarlos como una forma más de ambientar las emociones de dichos personajes. Personajes, por cierto, que pese a su numerosidad, son memorables, como James "a mí nadie me cuenta nada" Forsyte, Jolyon Padre "el Filósofo", June "la de las causas perdidas" Forsyte, Irene "la que hizo una vez una mala elección y lo paga por el resto de su vida" Forsyte o el personaje que más detesté: Soames Forsyte. Soames es el retrato perfecto del "nice guy", del tipo imposible de amar por su egoísmo que se pregunta siempre por qué no le aman. Y lo más fascinante es que Galbraith ni siquiera lo describe o lo utiliza como un villano, incluso a veces parece tenerle compasión, pero es que Soames es detestable.

En resumen, un culebrón de época brillantemente escrito que, si bien puede no sorprender por su trama, sí lo hará por describir con exactitud y humanidad una época y una clase social claves para entender el mundo moderno.

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## **Antigone says**

Galsworthy's classic is probably best approached in mid-life, when the truth begins to dawn that an Age, like Keats' joy, is only really sighted as it's waving good-bye. When youth is something we begin to refer to as an attribute we once possessed. When loss begins to carry as much outraging weight as the pursuit of an aim, or a dream, or a station. There is a quality of consciousness we enter into as we mature that is informed by resignation and grief, and it is this perspective to which Galsworthy's tale will resonate. His issues are safety and fortification, ownership and identification, the remorseless march of Time and the amorphous nature of achievement. That life is what one makes of it and can be nothing more is not, I think, a view that can be fully appreciated by those who are new to the struggle with acceptance. All this to say *The Forsyte Saga* will prove a passable book to one who has yet to encounter his first grey hair. And to one who has stumbled across a few? May prove to be a good deal more.

Composed as a trilogy connected by two short stories, the saga of the Forsyte family is a lengthy work taking place in Britain at the tail end of the Victorian Age. Central as a tent post here is the character of Soames Forsyte, a man of property, whose restricted vision of life imbues him with the rock-hard stability his extended family requires to keep their affairs in order. Such resolute capitalistic practicality will not, however, assist him in understanding his distant and devastatingly beautiful wife, Irene. Her restlessness in their union is becoming so pronounced that he's decided to build her a magnificent house, conveniently located far from town, where she may, like his artwork, be more privately and fittingly displayed. This works out about as well as one imagines it might, and produces the conflict in which Galsworthy's larger themes are ground.

The first hundred pages are a slog; there's no way around that. But the story blossoms in both drama and depth as the stakes mount and reputations writhe. There's none of Austen's light touch here, or Woolf's

magnetic stream-of-consciousness. This is a traditional voice cached in a traditional structure...and thoroughly appropriate for its *fin de siècle* explorations, to my eye. If you've got a little time, and perhaps more than a little existential fatigue, here's a solid choice of treatment.

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### **Magrat Ajostiernos says**

Esta familia y cada uno de sus miembros se van a quedar conmigo durante mucho tiempo...

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### **Sara says**

I am so blown away by this book that I am almost speechless. What wonderful writing, and what a deft balance of plot line and character portrayal. Few authors get both perfect, but I think Galsworthy has. I was intimidated by the size of this novel, but it reads so well that the pages fly by you and the read is done before you ever want to let go.

Soames Forsyte is one of the least likable yet most pitiable characters I have ever encountered. He is smug and arrogant and driven by money and property, and yet he is so a victim of who he is, who he has been raised to be, and in the end it is himself he hurts the most. I have seldom felt more genuine affection and admiration for any character as that I felt for Old and Young Jolyon. Each so remarkable in his own way and able to make me smile as if I were sitting in his presence and knew him. And then there is Irene. What a complicated and interesting woman! I swung across the pendulum on my feelings for Irene. At moments I blamed her, chastised her, cried for her and loved her. What makes the book so meaningful, to me, is the depth of the souls Galsworthy presents for our dissection and how beautifully human and flawed they all are.

I want to drone on about this book, but I do not want to give away anything for those who might decide to read it, and it would be so hard to discuss anything salient without divulging the secrets that lurk at the heart of the novel. Suffice it to say, I would recommend this highly to anyone who enjoys reading about people who might have lived, indeed might still live dressed up in different garb and lured by money more than by love.

If I were to compare Galsworthy's writing to anyone, it would be Edith Wharton. Both understood what it was to be in the upper-class and what it was to want to be there, the sacrifices sometimes extracted for that climb, and the hollowness of money when it comes to possess you more than you possess it.

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