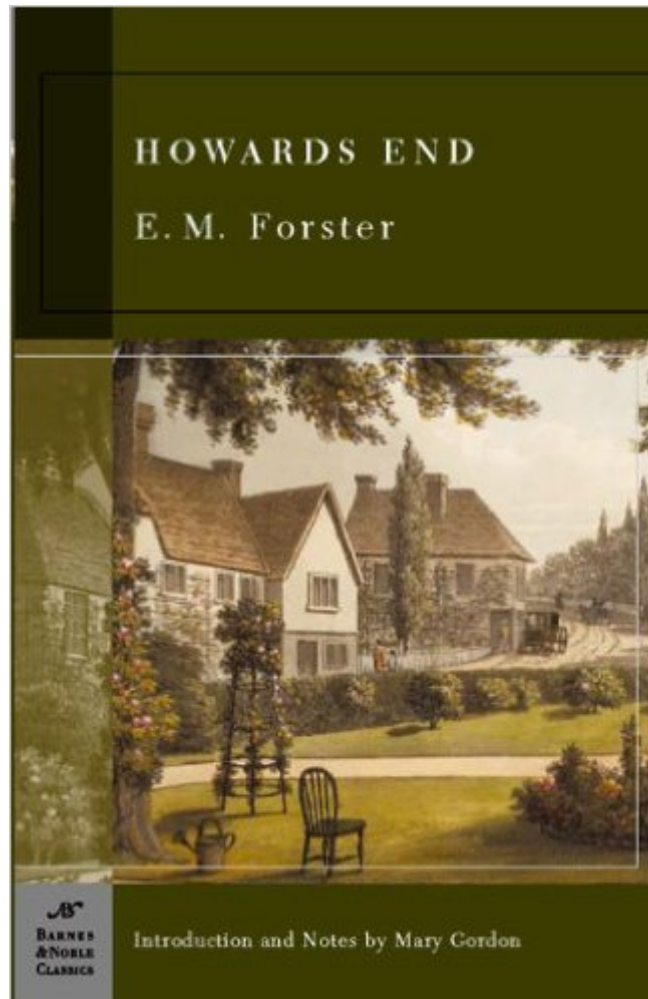


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Howards End (Barnes & Noble Classics)



Synopsis

Howards End, by E. M. Forster, is part of the Barnes & Noble Classics® series, which offers quality editions at affordable prices to the student and the general reader, including new scholarship, thoughtful design, and pages of carefully crafted extras. Here are some of the remarkable features of Barnes & Noble Classics: New introductions commissioned from today's top writers and scholars; Biographies of the authors; Chronologies of contemporary historical, biographical, and cultural events; Footnotes and endnotes; Selective discussions of imitations, parodies, poems, books, plays, paintings, operas, statuary, and films inspired by the work; Comments by other famous authors; Study questions to challenge the reader's viewpoints and expectations; Bibliographies for further reading; Indices & Glossaries, when appropriate. All editions are beautifully designed and are printed to superior specifications; some include illustrations of historical interest. Barnes & Noble Classics pulls together a constellation of influences—biographical, historical, and literary—to enrich each reader's understanding of these enduring works.

Considered by many to be E. M. Forster's greatest novel, *Howards End* is a beautifully subtle tale of two very different families brought together by an unusual event. The Schlegels are intellectuals, devotees of art and literature. The Wilcoxes are practical and materialistic, leading lives of "telegrams and anger." When the elder Mrs. Wilcox dies and her family discovers she has left their country home—*Howards End*—to one of the Schlegel sisters, a crisis between the two families is precipitated that takes years to resolve. Written in 1910, *Howards End* is a symbolic exploration of the social, economic, and intellectual forces at work in England in the years preceding World War I, a time when vast social changes were occurring. In the Schlegels and the Wilcoxes, Forster perfectly embodies the competing idealism and materialism of the upper classes, while the conflict over the ownership of *Howards End* represents the struggle for possession of the country's future. As critic Lionel Trilling once noted, the novel asks, "Who shall inherit England?" Forster refuses to take sides in this conflict. Instead he poses one of the book's central questions: In a changing modern society, what should be the relation between the inner and outer life, between the world of the intellect and the world of business? Can they ever, as Forster urges, "only connect?"

Mary Gordon is a McIntosh Professor of English at Barnard College. Her best-selling novels include *Final Payments*, *The Company of Women*, and *Spending*. She has also published a memoir, a book of novellas, a collection of stories, and two books of essays. Her most recent work is a biography of Joan of Arc.

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Customer Reviews

I first read *Howards End* during the final year of my Undergraduate degree, and it quickly became my favourite book (displacing *Wuthering Heights*). There is something within it that really speaks to some people --- I say 'some,' because I have recommended it to many friends, and their responses have run the gamut from a fascination similar to my own, to outright boredom and frustration with the book. Personally, I felt I connected with Forster's lament regarding the loss of a sense of place and permanence in the modern world. I must disagree with some of the reviewers here, when they say that the issues Forster tackles have little relevance today. I think what attracted me to this book was Forster's examination of those very issues --- most specifically, the quandry that still plagues us today: how can we live an examined, meaningful life in the entropic modern world? I would argue that *Howards End* is still very relevant. Forster depicts a society in change, but also a society that is a direct relative of our own. He shows the conflicts of modern VS rural, city VS nature, business/sport VS intellect/art, and smug patriarchy VS proto-feminism. If you identified with the second choice in those four sets, then it is likely that you will very much appreciate the social commentary woven into *Howards End*, and you will find its sermon of "Only Connect!" something of a mission statement --- I certainly did. Really, *Howards End* almost reads like an allegory. The different families (Schlegel, Wilcox, and Bast) each represent aspects of a society in transition, each one lacking some vital component to make it viable.

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