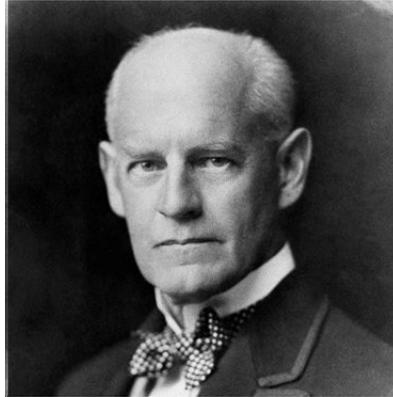


THE FORSYTE SAGA

by John Galsworthy



THE AUTHOR

John Galsworthy (1867-1933), British playwright and novelist, was born to wealthy parents in Surrey, England. He studied law at Oxford, but soon left the practice to travel with his family's shipping business. While in Australia he met Joseph Conrad, who at the time was still a sailor, and the two became close friends. His first published work was a book of short stories entitled *From the Four Winds* (1897), but his reputation was established through his plays, the first of which was *The Silver Box* (1906), followed later by *Strife* (1909) and *The Skin Game* (1920). In 1906 he also published the first of the novels on which his fame today is largely based, *The Man of Property*, the first of three novels and two interludes that make up *The Forsyte Saga*. This was eventually followed by *Indian Summer of a Forsyte* (1918), *In Chancery* (1920), *Awakening* (1920), and *To Let* (1921). He continued the tale of the Forsyte clan in two more trilogies, *A Modern Comedy* (1924-28) and *End of the Chapter* (1931-33). He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1932, weeks before his death from a brain tumor, largely on the strength of *The Forsyte Saga*.

Galsworthy was a liberal in his politics and social views. In 1895, he began a ten-year affair with Ada Cooper, the wife of his cousin, and married her in 1905 after her divorce. They lived happily together until his death in 1933. In politics, Galsworthy championed social reform, including the rights of women, prisoners, and animals. Like contemporary George Bernard Shaw, he despised the values of the Victorian Age and was sharply critical of the materialism of the British upper middle class.

The Forsyte Saga is, according to the author, a work intended to “embalm the upper-middle class” of Victorian and Edwardian England - the class into which he was born. He particularly targets their acquisitiveness, materialism, and certainty of the superiority of their own social class. The trilogy in reality has no villains or heroes. While some might be inclined to view Soames as a villain, Galsworthy generates enough sympathy for him in his readers to humanize the man, especially in his undying love for Irene and complete devotion to Fleur. Nor is Irene, clearly based on Ada Cooper, a heroine; after all, she does carry on two affairs while still married to Soames. Furthermore, she is by far the most passive character in the story, seen only through the eyes of others and more a symbol of Beauty than a real person. An important thing to remember about *The*

Forsyte Saga is that Galsworthy was to a large extent writing about his contemporaries - the story takes place between 1886 and 1920, while the books were written between 1906 and 1921.

PLOT SUMMARY

BOOK ONE - THE MAN OF PROPERTY

PART I

The story begins on June 15, 1886, with the Forsyte clan gathering at the home of Old Jolyon to celebrate the engagement of his granddaughter June to Philip Bosinney, an architect. The family is not fond of Philip, not so much because he lacks fortune, but because he had the temerity to wear an unfashionable hat when calling upon June's maiden aunts. The rest of the chapter is devoted to introducing the most prominent members of the family. As Old Jolyon's brothers Nicholas and Roger walk to the train station after the party, they discuss the beauty of their nephew Soames' wife Irene and note that the two reputedly are not getting along.

The next day Old Jolyon is sitting in his study bemoaning the poor choice of husband made by his favorite granddaughter. In his anger he had told her that he would not allow her to marry until her husband was earning at least four hundred pounds a year, and now she had left him alone to visit Philip's family in Wales. He thinks of years past, of friends and days at the zoo with June when she was young, of how much better cigars used to be, and of his days making his fortune in the tea business. He goes to his club for dinner despite the fact that he despises the place, largely because it had such low standards that it had accepted him, a man "in trade," into membership, and hates the politics for which it stands. As he orders dinner, he thinks of his estranged son, Young Jolyon, who had deserted June's mother to run off with the family governess. The two had married, and now had a young son "Jolly," for whom Old Jolyon had put money aside in trust, and a daughter Holly. After dinner he went to the opera, but like everything else it seemed far worse than it used to be. He continues to muse about his relationship with his son, whom he dearly loves but felt obliged to cut off. Why had his life not descended into ruin and sorrow, as any self-respecting novel indicated that it should? The more he thought, the more he missed his son. On the way home from the opera he stops at Young Jolyon's club and invites him home for a cup of tea. The two talk for the first time in fourteen years, and the son leaves with the conviction of his father's profound loneliness.

Swithin Forsyte later hosts a dinner party for family and friends in honor of June's engagement to Philip. June spends her time at dinner trying to convince her uncles to build country houses in order to give Philip employment. Underneath, most of the members of the family are thinking about Soames and Irene's unhappy marriage, unable to understand her dissatisfaction because Soames is clearly prosperous and is constantly giving her expensive presents. Sadly, she has befriended June, who appears to have rebelled against Forsyte family values and is trying to convince her to leave her husband. She is also developing a mind of her own. What need could she possibly have for that?

Three days later Soames leaves his house in the morning, as usual, profoundly disturbed at the fact of his wife's aversion to him. He knows that she does not love him, that she has tried to do so and failed, but sees that as no excuse for dissatisfaction in a marriage. The fault therefore must be hers entirely. He determines that the ideal solution is to build a country house on a plot of land at Robin Hill. This would get Irene away from her friends and admirers, especially June, and would

occupy her time decorating the place. Besides, it would be a good investment, and he could probably get a good price if he hired Bosinney to build it. A few days later the two men visit the site and Soames agrees to purchase it as the location of his new country house. One week later Soames tells Irene about his decision to move to the country, but finds that June had already excitedly shared the secret with her.

Any hope Soames had of keeping his plans a secret turns out to be futile, as the news spreads like wildfire through the family. It finally reaches his father, who is less than pleased. James goes to their home for dinner that night, but Soames is delayed by business matters, leaving his father to have dinner with Irene. He is charmed by her beauty but appalled at her willingness to express her own opinions about the decision to hire Bosinney to build the new house.

Old Jolyon is terribly lonely because June is spending all her time with Philip. He therefore decides to visit his son and his family, though they live in a neighborhood in which he has never set foot. The shabbiness of their home is an embarrassment to him - to think that a Forsyte should live in such a place! There he meets his two grandchildren for the first time, and the strangeness between them soon evaporates as they melt his heart and are soon climbing into his lap, but their mother runs into the house in tears. Old Jolyon then leaves, thinking of his huge house with all its empty rooms, and returns home to eat his dinner alone.

The Forsyte family still finds Philip Bosinney hard to comprehend - he simply is not one of them and clearly does not share their values concerning wealth and property. He is a good architect, however, and when he shows his plans for the new house to Soames, the latter is inordinately pleased. Irene, too, seems prepared to accept a move that was not originally to her liking.

Near the end of September, Ann, Old Jolyon's oldest sister, dies in her sleep at the age of 87. Soames, as the executor of her will, arranges the funeral. Most of the family gathers to mourn, but are largely struck by the anomaly of death; after all, Forsytes are not supposed to die. After the funeral they retire for luncheon, and Soames goes off with Philip to discuss details of the new house.

PART II

That winter, work begins on the house at Robin Hill. Bosinney encounters cost overruns, which put Soames in a bad temper. The basic problem is that Soames is a cheapskate and Bosinney values quality in his workmanship. The beauty of the countryside reminds Soames of his courtship of Irene. They had met at a party and he had courted her for over a year, proposing to her many times before she finally accepted him, though she never explained the reasons for her multiple refusals or her ultimate acceptance. He is becoming increasingly aware, however, that Bosinney and Irene are growing closer; he appreciates her artistic sense and she enjoys his company more than she does that of her husband.

That night June arrives at Soames' house for dinner prior to going to the theater with Philip and finds him with Irene talking about the house, but doing so in a manner that sparks jealousy in her breast. Dinner is a sumptuous affair, but conversation is awkward, as June is clearly in a foul mood and eats little of what is placed before her. She and Philip leave for the theater, but June is still angry with her fiancé. When they get there, all she can think of is how much better her seats used to be when she went with her grandfather. During intermission, she asks Philip to take her to see the house on Sunday, knowing that he had already arranged to take Irene there, but he refuses, saying only that he has a prior engagement. This makes her furious. Her anger is observed by relatives in attendance, who are convinced that her engagement to the unsuitable architect will never

last. When June gets home, her grandfather sees that some problem has arisen and suspects it has something to do with the amount of time Philip spends at Soames' home.

That Sunday Irene goes for a carriage ride in the park with Soames' Uncle Swithin and she asks him to take her to Robin Hill. After Philip gives them a tour of the unfinished house, Swithin falls asleep while Philip and Irene go off into the woods by themselves. While their chaperon naps, Philip professes his love for Irene, which she clearly reciprocates. When Swithin nearly causes an accident on the way home, Irene cries out that she doesn't care if she ever goes home again. Little time passes before word spreads through the family and June is told of Irene's mysterious comment; gossip quickly links Philip and Irene. James is shocked that a breath of scandal should be associated with his family - especially his son's wife - and decides to visit the house himself to see if he can glean some information. Philip meets him there and gives him the complete tour, but says nothing to enlighten James about the matter that concerns him. The gossip continues to spread, however.

Soon Soames receives a letter from Philip inquiring about whether he wants him to undertake the task of decorating the house now that the building phase has been completed. Philip bluntly tells him that, if he is to be in charge of the decoration, he must be able to do so without interference from Soames, James, or anyone else; otherwise he will cease his involvement with the project. Soames seeks out Old Jolyon for advice but receives no satisfaction. He then writes to Philip, indicating that he has a free hand within stated financial limits. Philip responds that he can't possibly predict the final cost precisely, and agrees to undertake the project if Soames removes his stated limitation.

Old Jolyon is increasingly worried about the changes he sees in June; she is getting thinner, is constantly in a bad mood, and never communicates anymore. On the other hand, his relationship with his son and grandchildren continues to improve. One day he meets them at the zoo and tries to get Young Jolyon's opinion of the changes in June's deportment and the rumors surrounding Philip and Irene, but the son, having deserted his daughter long ago to run off with the governess, was hardly one to address either June's temperament or the love lives of other members of the family. As they are leaving the zoo, James and other family members pass in a carriage and they see Old Jolyon with his son and grandchildren. Old Jolyon then goes to his brother Timothy's home to put a stop to the gossip about Philip and Irene, but leaves having accomplished nothing except to convince himself that the rumor must be true.

Roger Forsyte hosts a dance to which most of the family and their friends come. Soames dances with no one, but Irene dances with everyone, but especially with Philip. June, determined to win Philip back, begs her grandfather to take her to the dance, but as soon as she arrives she sees Philip with Irene on his arm; soon she is feeling ill and asks Old Jolyon to take her home. Family members take notice, but say little, and June is soon spirited off to the seaside by her grandfather. Everyone wonders whether anything will come of Irene's little fling, but most doubt that it is of any moment. While Soames is away, Winifred, Soames' sister, and her husband Montague Dartie invite Irene and Philip to dinner at Richmond. Dartie is a gambler, a spendthrift, and a drunkard, but is accustomed to having his father-in-law James cover his perpetual shortages. During and after dinner Dartie pays inappropriate attention to Irene, who remains mysterious while Philip is sullen and silent. Later Irene complains to Philip of Dartie's behavior and he tells off Winifred's husband and goes off in a carriage with Irene, to whom he professes his profound affection. She gives him little in the way of response, but he later returns to stand outside her house and give his heart free rein as he thinks of his one true love.

Old Jolyon, unable to rouse June from her depression, writes to his son asking him to speak to Philip, whom he knows from his club, and ascertain his intentions. Young Jolyon reluctantly

undertakes the task. He meets Philip at the club and goes on at some length describing the characteristics of his family, and by extension the entire British upper middle class. He warns Philip about crossing them, especially Soames, who is tenacious, but Philip responds that he too can hold on to what he wants. After he leaves, Jolyon ponders the young man's situation. He can sympathize with both Philip and Soames and wonders what the outcome will be. Will passion win out over property and respectability?

When Soames returns from a business trip, Irene asks him to release her from their marriage, reminding him that he had promised to do so if the union was not a success. He will hear nothing of it and asks her how she could survive since she has no money. They go to the park, and Soames remembers how proud he was after their marriage to show off his beautiful wife to passersby as they sat together on a bench. There they encounter Philip, who has obviously been looking for Irene. Soames invites him home to dinner, and by the time the evening is over he is convinced that Bosinney is in love with Irene. That night he is unable to sleep.

Old Jolyon, still at the shore with June, receives an unsatisfactory letter from his son, who refuses to take sides on the budding love triangle. Old Jolyon then takes his granddaughter into London, where she is determined to find the truth once and for all. She begins by visiting Philip's aunt, but gains nothing useful from her. She then goes to Philip's flat, but he is not home. She descends the stairs and sees him passing on the other side of the street. He tips his hat and keeps walking without a pause.

Soames has dinner at a restaurant with his father and the two decide to go to Robin Hill to see how the work is progressing. Soames takes the train, while James takes his carriage and picks up Irene on the way. In the carriage he tells Irene that she should show more affection to her husband, but she replies that she cannot show what she does not feel. The house looks wonderful, but Soames is livid because Bosinney has again exceeded the cost limits he had established. He threatens to make the architect pay the difference - money that he does not have. When he and Irene get home, he asks her directly if she is carrying on a flirtation with Philip. She denies it, but he cries out that what she really needs is a good beating. That night she locks him out of the bedroom; he tries to break the door down, but fails. The following afternoon Irene comes home flushed and happy, but refuses to let Soames touch her. He is sure that she has been with Bosinney.

PART III

Soames did not beat his wife, but instead did nothing. The house at Robin Hill, though finished, remained empty while he filed suit against Bosinney for the difference in building costs. Lawyers contribute nothing other than to say that the bone of contention is "a nice point." Meanwhile Irene continues to lock her bedroom at night and meet secretly with Philip, though their meetings do not remain secret for long and soon become the subject of family gossip. Soames has no idea what to do; divorce is out of the question, and even separation would create a scandal of unthinkable proportions.

Young Jolyon, despite a fair amount of talent, is having trouble selling his watercolors. A critic advises him to do a series so his work is more recognizable and predictable. Though he despises the very idea of such a conventional approach, he takes the advice and makes a fair amount of money from the resulting works. One day while he is painting in Regents Park he sees Philip and Irene together, and with his artist's eye perceives the depths of their love. June, meanwhile, is forgetting her sorrows by taking under her wing a French girl who is dying of consumption. She

soon dies, however, and Old Jolyon takes her home again, where she soon falls into the old state of depression after she hears of the lawsuit filed against Bosinney by Soames. Old Jolyon then goes to the lawyer's and changes his will, leaving fifty thousand to June and the rest to his son and removing James and Soames from their roles as executors.

One night Soames can stand no more and, finding Irene's bedroom door unlocked and her asleep, he forces himself upon her, then proceeds to assuage his guilt by convincing himself that this is the first step in their reconciliation. Nevertheless, he is unable to purge from his mind the picture of his wife's sobbing face. He assumes that she will tell no one, but that afternoon she tells Bosinney, who is stunned and wanders off in the fog to find Soames, without success.

The next day is the day of the trial. The lawyers argue over the nature of the "free hand" given to Bosinney in decorating the house. Soames testifies briefly, but the architect fails to make an appearance. The judge rules against Bosinney, who is likely to go bankrupt because he doesn't have the 350 pounds needed to repay Soames for the overage. Soames is willing to make an arrangement for payments with him, and is determined to leave London and move to Robin Hill with Irene, to whom he intends to apologize for "being rough with her." When he finds out that Irene and Philip have been seen together in the park, he is overcome with jealousy and rushes home, only to find that his wife has left him without saying where she is going. His parents urge him to pursue her and bring her back, but when he looks into her jewelry box, he finds a brief note: "I think I have taken nothing that you or your people have given me."

After Philip loses his case to Soames, June, who had attended the trial, goes immediately to his flat, lets herself in with a key under the mat, and waits for him to return. As she looks around, she sees signs of desperate poverty, which she thinks will play into her hands. She hears a sound, and to her surprise Irene walks in. The two former friends confront one another; June is angry, but Irene is merely sad. She tells June that she has left Soames, then turns and leaves the apartment. June waits for several hours, but Philip does not return. When she gets home, her grandfather informs her that he intends to sell his big London house and buy one in the country where he, she, and Young Jolyon and his family can all live together. Surprisingly, June agrees, but on the condition that the house he purchases should be the new one at Robin Hill; she is convinced that Soames will never live in it now that Irene has left him, and she desperately wants Philip's debts to be settled. Old Jolyon tells her he will consider her proposal, but is intrigued with the opportunity to get the best of his brother James by acquiring the house into which Soames has poured so much time and energy.

The next day Old Jolyon goes to visit his brother James to propose the idea of buying the house at Robin Hill from Soames. Their conversation is interrupted by a police inspector who informs them that Philip Bosinney is dead - run over by a carriage in the fog; suicide in the face of bankruptcy is suspected, though the family prefers not to think of such a shameful thing. The men go to the mortuary to identify the body and part, each thinking his own thoughts. When Soames gets home he finds Irene sitting quietly in her usual place. She is obviously distraught, but he can find no words for her so the two remain speechless. He rushes out the door in great confusion. When he returns, Young Jolyon is there asking to speak to Irene. Soames haughtily tells him that she can see no one, then slams the door in his face.

INTERLUDE - INDIAN SUMMER OF A FORSYTE

The Interlude, written ten years after the completion of Book One, jumps forward six years to the year 1892. Old Jolyon now owns Robin Hill and lives there with June and Young Jolyon and his family. He delights in the beauty all around him and loves living with his family. The only thing he fears is that it all will be taken away from him too soon. Irene left Soames after Bosinney's death, and he had moved to Brighton after selling Robin Hill. One day Old Jolyon takes his dog for a walk in the woods and is surprised to encounter Irene sitting quietly on a log. He invites her to dinner and there discovers that she is living alone in Chelsea, teaching music and seeking to help unwed mothers. He shows her around the house, and after dinner she plays the piano for him. He is entranced with her, especially when she weeps with sorrow over her memories of her departed love. Before she leaves, he gives her a check for fifty pounds for her work with unwed mothers.

For the next week Old Jolyon looks every day for Irene, but she does not return. One day he decides to visit her flat in Chelsea. They take a walk in Kensington Gardens and he invites her to lunch the following Sunday. She arrives early to sit on the log where she had first realized that she loved Philip, then they enjoy lunch with Young Jolyon's daughter Holly. After lunch he gives her a tour of the grounds, then she plays the piano for him again. He asks if she would like to give lessons to Holly, but she is certain that June would never approve. After she leaves, Old Jolyon alters his will, leaving her fifteen thousand pounds.

The next day he realizes that only a few weeks remain in which he can see Irene, since June and the rest of Young Jolyon's family would soon return from their trip to Spain. He decides to make the most of whatever time remains and invites Irene to accompany him to dinner and the opera the next evening. In London, however, he begins to feel increasingly ill and weak. Irene attends to him, but they never make it to the opera. He goes to bed early, then counts the days until she comes again the following Sunday. Soon he was scheduling much of his time in order to spend it with her; over the next month he saw her five times a week in one way or another, he was renewed in spirit - he now had something to live for, something to anticipate. At the same time, his health declined more and more, though he determined to ignore the obvious signs.

Finally the dreaded letter arrives; Young Jolyon, June, and Jolly are on their way home from Spain. Old Jolyon realizes that this will force him to reduce his time with Irene, though he anticipates continuing to use the pretext of Holly's music lessons. Once he tells her that June is returning, however, she decides not to see him anymore, fearing that it might give June too much pain. He begs her to come one more time, but as he waits outside on the bench for her to arrive, he dozes off to wake no more.

BOOK TWO - IN CHANCERY

PART I

Book Two was written in the two years following the preceding Interlude. The author picks up the story in 1899, seven years after Old Jolyon's death. He had been preceded to the grave by his sister Ann and his brother Swithin, and later followed by his sister Susan and his brother Roger. The new generation of Forsytes is reproducing at a lower rate than their forebears, largely out of a desire to maintain the lifestyle to which they had become accustomed and assure that their offspring are able to do the same. Soames, now forty-five, has fared well financially in the twelve years since his

separation from Irene, but the two never divorced, so he has no means of producing an heir for the fortune he has accumulated. He has been devoting his attention to a French girl named Annette who keeps books in her mother's restaurant. He would like to marry her, but can't do so until he rids himself of his first marriage. How can this be accomplished without scandal?

Soames' sister Winifred is married to Montague Dartie, a handsome but worthless man who lives on his father-in-law's money and constantly tries his wife's patience with his drinking, gambling, and skirt-chasing. One day he puts all the money available to him on a horse that loses badly. Needing money to maintain the affections of a Spanish ballet dancer, he steals his wife's pearls and gives them to her. He then decides to run off with her to Buenos Aires. Winifred summons her oldest son Val home from school. The boy is a wastrel like his father and immediately goes off with his young tutor to dinner and the ballet. There he sees his father, clearly drunk, and his tutor wonders aloud who the bounder is who is making such a scene. Val, embarrassed beyond words, realizes that his father is indeed a bounder, and that he will never be able to show his face at school again after the tutor tells others what he has witnessed.

The next morning Winifred receives a letter from Dartie announcing that he is leaving for good and blaming his miseries on her family. Not sure whether she should wish him good riddance or be upset at the loss of her property, she summons Soames, who is both her brother and her lawyer, and he is dismayed to find his sister in the same predicament he is forced to endure - that of being separated but not divorced. Soames confirms that Dartie has indeed left, then advises Winifred to seek a divorce on the grounds of cruelty or desertion. He also offers to take Val to Oxford to meet his cousin, Young Jolyon's son Jolly.

Soames cannot take his mind off Annette. He had met her when he visited her mother's restaurant, in a property leased from his father. He was immediately impressed by both her beauty and her obvious business sense, and his visits became more frequent. After talking to Winifred he sees her again, and leaves determined to get a divorce and marry her so he can bear a son. His only question is, on what grounds can he divorce Irene?

Young Jolyon is no longer young; he has reached the ripe old age of fifty-two. Robin Hill is his now, and he loves to paint under the old oak where his father breathed his last. He is now one of the foremost watercolor artists in England. His wife has now been dead for five years, and June has moved in to become the mistress of her father's house, allowing him to travel frequently to pursue his art. One day Soames visits him at Robin Hill and asks him to talk to Irene about granting a divorce, since Jolyon is the executor of his father's estate and Irene is living on Old Jolyon's bequest. As they talk, Val Dartie, who is with Soames, and Jolyon's daughter Holly take a walk around the grounds. The two immediately take to one another and agree to meet for a ride in the park the next day.

The next day Jolyon visits Irene and passes on Soames' request for a divorce. She is quite willing for him to be free, but can supply no assistance as far as grounds are concerned; she has had no affairs since their separation. Jolyon, as seems to be the case with all men, is impressed with Irene's beauty. When he tells Soames what she said to him, the latter is frustrated, but Jolyon tells him that the only way out is for him to give grounds by having an affair himself.

By the time Val and Holly finish their two-hour ride in the park, he is completely smitten. He must leave for Oxford to begin college, but the two promise to write to one another. When he gets home, Soames and his mother tell him about his father's behavior - that he had stolen his mother's pearls and run off to Buenos Aires with a dancer. She tells him that she is planning to get a divorce. This is too much for Val to process, and he leaves the house and goes to the home of

James, his grandfather, where he is warmly received and sent away with the promise of an allowance while he is at Oxford.

Later Soames invites Annette and her mother to his home. After a short punt trip on the river, he shows them his art collection and quickly realizes that they have no knowledge of art. He does succeed, however, in impressing them with his wealth and setting the stage for a proposal in the future. He is now more than ever determined to obtain his freedom from Irene. Despite the fact that he has not seen her in twelve years, he goes to her flat to present his request for a divorce directly; he has no more success than Jolyon had, but he is startled by the extent to which he is still attracted by her beauty. He even entertains thoughts of getting back together with her and trying again for a son that way, but his reveries are interrupted by newsboys crying out the beginning of the Boer War. The entire family debates how the war might affect them - some think it will last only a matter of months, others, wonder if younger members of the clan might be drawn into the fighting, but most concern themselves with how it might affect their investments.

Later Irene goes to Robin Hill and tells Jolyon about Soames' strange visit, which clearly upset her. Jolyon tells her that she should not continue to live alone in such a vulnerable position. He escorts her home, and as he leaves he sees Soames approaching her flat. He abruptly turns back, but when he does so he sees Jolyon. The two take a cab together, and Soames tells Jolyon that he is thinking of forcing Irene to return and live with him. Jolyon is appalled by Soames' overwhelming sense of property and determines to do all he can to protect Irene from her husband. That night Soames eats dinner at Annette's restaurant, but after seeing her decides once and for all that he will pursue reunion with his wife.

PART II

Jolly and Val are now both at Oxford. Neither one is using his time and money wisely, but they are devoting themselves to different forms of aristocratic snobbery, and thus rather dislike one another. One day Jolyon and Holly visit Jolly to see him in a rowing competition, and they invite Val to join them for dinner, much to the delight of both him and Holly. When the two are alone they speak of doing things together during vacation, but when Jolyon and Jolly join them they must hide their feelings. As they dine, Jolyon receives a letter from Irene letting him know that Soames had visited her again to try to persuade her to return to him. He had bought a diamond brooch for her thirty-seventh birthday, but she had refused it and insisted that she would rather die than go back to him, especially since his reason for wanting her is to produce a son. He had forced a kiss on her and stalked out of the flat.

Jolyon and his daughter June meet, and each has an agenda. She wants him to buy an art gallery for her so she can promote the works of the artists she is seeking to patronize and he wants her to go with him to visit Irene and figure out some way of protecting her from Soames. June kindly grants Irene full forgiveness for past offenses and Jolyon offers to let her live at Robin Hill, but she refuses and says she will travel on the Continent instead. After they leave, Jolyon, like so many other men, is unable to get Irene out of his mind.

Soames, meanwhile, is convinced that the only reason Irene rejected his generous offer is because she has a lover, despite her denials. He proceeds to hire a private detective agency to keep an eye on her and obtain the evidence he needs to get a divorce. At the same time he takes Winifred to a lawyer who is willing to help her obtain a divorce from the wayward Montague Dartie.

As the Boer War drags on, the Forsyte family is divided. The older members of the clan are largely concerned with its impact on their investments while some of the younger ones are drilling with their regiments. At Oxford, Val Dartie identifies with the radical faction that believes the Boers should be granted autonomy, while Jolly, after a period of some uncertainty, decides that the war must be won whether the British are right or wrong. After a dinner in which both boys get somewhat drunk, they have a fistfight of indecisive outcome. During the summer vacation, Jolly catches Holly riding with Val in the park. He confronts her when she gets home, but she ignores him, and he realizes that for the first time in his life his younger sister is no longer under his control.

Jolyon, meanwhile, has gone to Paris, purportedly to pursue his artistic endeavors but in reality with the hope of seeing Irene. He writes to her after his arrival, and they soon begin meeting every day. After a month during which they are rarely apart, he realizes that what had begun as impersonal admiration of beauty had become a deep infatuation as their friendship had grown. All this is interrupted by a telegram indicating that Jolly had enlisted in the army. Jolyon reluctantly leaves Irene without telling her of his feelings and returns to London.

Val continues to see Holly through the Fall months, and in January Winifred's divorce case reaches the courts. The judge grants an order for Dartie to return to his wife, which she sincerely hopes he will ignore so that the actual divorce may be obtained later in the year. Val goes immediately from the court to his usual rendezvous with Holly, but finds she is not there. He goes up to the house and, fearful that she might hear of his family scandal from someone else, tells her of the pending divorce and proposes marriage. She agrees, but Jolly catches them in the act and is furious that Val has not asked his permission first. He then tells them that he intends to enlist in the army and challenges Val to do the same. Unwilling to lose face before Holly but dreading separation from her, he accepts. The two agree to go together to the recruiting office the next day. Val lies about his age when he enlists and later that day tells his family. His mother is upset, his sister thinks he is a hero, and his uncle and grandfather are pleased that he is not allowing Jolly to get ahead of him. Soames, however, is displeased to discover that Jolyon is in Paris with Irene.

When Jolyon returns home from Paris, he is greeted by his old dog Balthasar, who collapses and dies as he runs to meet him. As Jolyon and Jolly bury the dog, they discuss God, in whom both only vaguely believe, and Jolly admits that he enlisted only to get the better of Val Dartie. June joins the competition by signing up to serve as a Red Cross nurse. The clan gathers at Timothy's, and for the first time anyone can remember, the old man actually puts in an appearance. They discuss how the war is going, and after the men leave, the women gossip about Irene.

The detective hired by Soames confirms that she has been seeing Jolyon in Paris, but insists that nothing untoward has occurred that could be used as evidence in a divorce case. Soames decides to meet with Jolyon to find out what is going on. He asks him not to oppose his efforts to restore the marriage, but Jolyon tells him that, as her trustee, he must do whatever is most conducive to her happiness. Soames begins to feel pangs of jealousy about Jolyon's influence over Irene.

Some days later Winifred spends a long day shopping for dresses for her daughter Imogen's coming-out and is astonished to find her husband waiting for her when she gets home. She is furious with him for coming back in response to the court order; surely he realized that its only real purpose was to justify the divorce. She knows he wants nothing but money, but realizes that she has to take him back because she had requested the court order. She goes to consult Soames, but is already resigned to the fact that she must allow him to stay; after all, she will never stoop to the level of revealing his theft of her pearls! When she returns home, she threatens Dartie, insisting that she will tell Imogen what he has done if he doesn't behave himself in the future.

Spring arrives, and Val and Jolly have gone off to war, Dartie is behaving himself, and the detective still has found nothing that Soames can use against Irene. Meanwhile, he keeps his distance from Annette lest she interfere with his plans to get Irene back. One May evening he walks the streets and encounters a boisterous mob celebrating an important victory in the Boer War. He is astounded by the disorderliness of the mob, particularly because of their obvious lack of respect for him and his position in society. He fears that someday just such a mob will try to overthrow the social order, attacking the backbone of society - the men of property.

PART III

Soames finally decides to go to Paris and confront Irene face to face. He waits outside her hotel and follows her to the Bois de Boulogne, where he asks her to return with him, promising anything, even a separate house, if she will comply. She utterly refuses, and he stalks off wondering what to do next. He writes a note, threatening to make life miserable for Jolyon unless she resumes her place as his wife, takes it to her room, and is told that she has checked out and departed for parts unknown. When he gets back to London, the private detective he hired to shadow Irene reports that he may have conclusive evidence against her at last; one of his spies saw a man leaving her bedroom at ten o'clock at night. When he describes the man, however, Soames recognizes the visitor as none other than himself - hardly useful evidence for his purposes. He tells the detective to leave Irene alone for the moment and concentrate his attention on Jolyon. He then goes to Annette's restaurant, where he meets her mother and tells her that he intends to divorce his wife and that he is very rich, knowing the impact these words will have on her.

While Soames is in France, Jolyon receives a note indicating that his son Jolly has contracted an intestinal disorder in Capetown. At the same time June is preparing to leave for her Red Cross work and Holly is training as a nurse. That day she confesses that Jolly's enlistment was her fault because of her engagement to Val Dartie and begs to be allowed to go to the front with June. Jolyon consents and the two girls leave the next day. The girls are too late, however; Jolly dies before they can arrive to nurse him. Jolyon is on the verge of following them to South Africa when he gets a letter from Irene, who is now nearby in England, asking if they can meet. He goes to see her the next day and the two talk companionably. His feelings for her are becoming increasingly obvious to him, and he suspects to her as well. The detective observes Jolyon's meetings with Irene and reports them to Soames. He believes that the meetings should satisfy the court and justify the divorce, so Soames promptly hires a lawyer to take the case for him since he can hardly do it himself.

The next day Jolyon receives notice that he is being taken to court as a participant with Irene in Soames' divorce proceedings. His first thought is that he should not fight the case; after all, wouldn't everyone involved be better off if the divorce were granted? Meanwhile Soames is having second thoughts; he realizes that if the divorce goes through, he will be delivering Irene into the arms of Jolyon, who had gained her love while Soames himself had failed. He goes to visit Jolyon and finds Irene with him. They tell him they will not contest the court case and he threatens to cause them all the pain and misery he can. They seem unmoved, and he grows so angry that he is, uncharacteristically, on the verge of violence. He storms out and takes a Turkish bath to calm himself down. Afterward Jolyon muses on his good fortune, but wonders if he is capable of possessing such great beauty without imprisoning it as Soames had done. As he thinks on these things, the maid brings him a telegram informing him of Jolly's death. Irene comforts him, and he realizes that she now has become the sole center of his life. Soames dreads the thought of telling his

father, but steels himself for the ordeal. He is astounded when the first words out of James' mouth are an exhortation to get a divorce, remarry, and produce a grandchild! He seems not to care about possible scandal or what the newspapers might say.

Despite all attempts to keep the approaching scandal from the rest of the family, the word gets out, though no one speaks of the matter in Soames' presence. At this point he decides to retire from the law; after all, what client would trust a man who could not even handle his own affairs satisfactorily? He determines now to devote the rest of his life to collecting fine art, making a profit in the process, of course. He would also buy the restaurant from Annette's mother, allowing her to retire to Paris while he put the restaurant under new management to make it profitable and married Annette. As the court date approaches, Soames regrets the damage to his good name, decides that to ask for monetary damages would seem petty, and decides to give the money to a society for the blind. The family then gets word that Val Dartie, still in South Africa, has married Holly, Jolyon's daughter, much to his mother Winifred's distress. Soames advises her to tell them to stay in Africa after the war and take up farming there. The next day he receives an uncontested divorce from Irene and immediately writes to Annette's mother asking for the girl's hand in marriage, but notes that such a union cannot occur until six months after the divorce decree.

Soames and Annette marry at the end of January 1901 in a private ceremony. They do not love one another, but both see practical benefit in the match. She receives wealth and position, and he hopes for children, and in particular a son to carry on the family name and fortune, along with a lovely ornament to show off in public. Shortly thereafter Queen Victoria dies, bringing an end to the long era graced with her name. Soames and Annette witness the funeral procession in Hyde Park, and there see Jolyon and Irene in the distance. Annette notices them, but does not know who they are. They then go to dinner at James' house, where Soames introduces his new bride to his father and the rest of the family.

The Boer War drags on, and Val is wounded and discharged. Not surprisingly, he asks his grandfather for money to buy a farm to raise horses. Soon Jolyon and Irene marry, and some members of the family begin to lay bets as to who will have a son first, Soames or Jolyon. Jolyon and Irene win the race, with a son, Jon, conceived months before their marriage. Soames and Annette are expecting in November. In August, the clan gathers to celebrate James' ninetieth birthday - a new record among the Forsytes.

Annette's pregnancy is a hard one, and as the time for her delivery approaches, the doctor informs Soames that he faces a hard decision - if the doctor performs a cesarian, Annette will survive but the baby will die, but if he allows the pregnancy to take its course, the baby will survive, but Annette might not, and in either case they will never be able to have another child. Soames agonizes over the decision, realizing that he would have chosen the surgery in a moment had Irene been lying in that bed. He finally decides to forego the operation and take his chances in order to ensure an heir. The gamble pays off, as both survive the delivery, though Soames is mightily disappointed to learn that Annette has borne him a daughter. That night he receives a telegram from his mother telling him that his father is dying. James is taken off by a cold, of all things, but before he dies, Soames tells him about Annette and the baby. When Soames returns home he finally and with considerable uncertainty goes in to see Annette and the little girl. When he sets eyes on the child, however, he feels a sudden rush of possessiveness - this tiny thing is *his*. They decide to name her Fleur.

INTERLUDE - AWAKENING

The year is now 1909, and the children of Soames and Jolyon have reached the age of eight. Jon is largely raised by his nurse and the groom and rarely has contact with his parents, but is nonetheless sheltered without being spoiled. He was rarely punished, and his first experience of death - a calf on the estate - shocked him. When he became ill for the first time, his Aunt June brought him books that awakened his imagination and gave him a thirst for adventure. For months thereafter he played pirates, sailors, and soldiers, both in his room and outside. His parents worry that he has cultivated no sense of beauty, but one day after they return home from a three-day journey, he suddenly discovers that his mother is beautiful. He tells her that, when he grows up, he wants to be her lover.

BOOK THREE - TO LET

PART I

The narrative now moves forward to 1920. The Great War is over. Soames Forsyte is doing very well with his art collection, though he despises the new income tax and considers absurd the radical idea of taxing capital. Fleur is now a spirited girl of nineteen who can twist her father around her little finger. Of the old Forsytes, only the reclusive Timothy remained, still hanging onto life at the age of 101. Val and Holly have sold their farm in South Africa and returned to England where he intends to train racehorses. Soames visits an art gallery where he is to meet Fleur and there encounters a young aficionado of beauty named Michael Mont; on the spur of the moment he invites him to visit his house someday to see his art collection. Later he spots Irene and her son Jon, but the two avoid speaking to one another. Then June comes and sits next to him - he hasn't seen her in twenty years - and informs him that the art gallery belongs to her. Fleur finally arrives and the two leave the gallery, but as they are eating in a café, June, Irene, and Jon come in. Despite Soames' efforts to the contrary, Fleur and Jon meet, and she leaves asking whether he is some sort of cousin. Fleur persists in asking questions, and she is sharp enough to realize that some family feud must be behind the coldness displayed by her father. He tells her as little as possible in an attempt to deflect her interest, but that only piques her curiosity further.

Jolyon Forsyte, now seventy-two years of age, has a bad heart, though he is keeping the knowledge of it from Irene and Jon, who is now nineteen and has no idea what he wants to do with his life. When he suggests to his father that he might enjoy farming, Jolyon arranges for him to live with Val and Holly and work for a nearby farmer. When Irene returns from town, she tells Jolyon about their encounter with Soames and the meeting of Jon and Fleur. Jon, like Fleur, knows nothing of family history and his parents are determined to keep it that way, going so far as to send a letter to Holly warning her to tell Jon nothing of the past. Jon, however, is smitten - love at first sight - by his distant cousin.

Val and Holly have now been happily married for nineteen years. They chose to have no children because they were first cousins. They are expecting Jon and Fleur momentarily and are keenly aware of the need to keep them in ignorance of the issues that separate their parents. Val goes to Newcastle to buy breeding stock for his farm and meets Prosper Profond, a Belgian friend of his mother Winifred. He outbids Val for a horse he wants, then offers to give it to him. Val is suspicious and agrees only to take care of the horse for the Belgian. Holly drives Jon home from the

station and is impressed by his amiable personality and poetic soul. Fleur comes back with Val, and the two young people are introduced with no hint of their previous contact, about which they quickly decide to keep silent. The two walk in the garden after dinner and decide to meet early the next morning. That night, Fleur writes a letter to her girlfriend confessing that she is in love. During their morning walk she offers her cheek for him to kiss and they decide to pretend before Val and Holly that they don't like each other.

Fleur delays her departure from the farm for as long as possible while her father impatiently waits for her at home. One day after lunch Winifred tells Soames that Jon is living with Val and Holly while he learns farming, and Soames is understandably alarmed. Winifred tells Soames that he should let Fleur know about the history of the feud and even offers to do it herself if it makes him uncomfortable. Later that afternoon Michael Mont arrives in response to Soames' offhand invitation. Soames shows him his art collection, about which he shows considerable knowledge; he seems particularly taken by a copy of a Goya that looks a little like Fleur.

Fleur and Jon plot to see one another when Fleur returns home, though Jon objects to the secrecy Fleur thinks essential. Irene, who can read her son like a book, knows something is going on between them, as does Jolyon. That night Jon asks his mother to tell him about the family quarrel, but she declines. She then proposes a trip to Italy for two months, just the two of them. Earlier Jon would have leaped at the chance, but now all he can think of is two months without Fleur. When told of Jon's reluctance, Jolyon advises telling him the whole story, but Irene demurs and asks for more time to convince him to agree to the trip.

On the train trip together, Jon tells Fleur about the Italy journey and she insists that he must accept the offer because the separation might convince their parents that nothing is going on between them; she also suggests he ask to go to Spain instead. They agree to meet in the National Gallery on the day he returns, and Fleur promises to find out about the family scandal everyone is so intent on keeping from them. They share three kisses before parting, Jon heavy of heart and Fleur blithe and carefree.

As she rushes toward home, Fleur is met by Michael Mont, who has come to row her downriver. On the trip home he talks incessantly about art, the state of England, and everything else imaginable, flirting all the time. As she walks toward the house, she overhears part of a conversation between her mother and Profond; it sounds to her like they are planning a tryst. When she goes upstairs to see her father he bitterly complains that she has ignored his wishes to have nothing to do with the other branch of the family. She asks for an explanation, which he refuses to give, and she asks if he would be satisfied if she promised not to see him for six weeks. He is adamant, telling her that sixty years would not be sufficient. After all go to bed, Soames wonders what he is to do with his capricious daughter.

PART II

Jon accompanies his mother to Spain and tries hard to give no hint of his preoccupation with Fleur. At one point Jon gets sunstroke, which provides an excellent excuse to return to England. During the entire six weeks of their absence, they never speak of family matters, nor of the connection he is so anxious to renew and she is so anxious to break. While they are gone Jolyon misses them terribly, though June, having discovered that he is seriously ill, wants to bring in a natural healer to cure him and insists that the dentist should take out all his teeth and replace them with dentures. He refuses on both counts. One day he tells her the reason for the trip to Spain and

she declares that Jon should be told the truth forthwith. She decides she should meet Fleur for herself. She goes to Soames' home and encounters Fleur, who immediately demands to know the source of the family quarrel. June tells her nothing, but warns her to stay away from Jon. Fleur nonetheless impresses her, and she tells her that in her opinion she and Jon should be told the truth and invites her to visit the next time she is in London. When June returns she again tries to convince her father to stop interfering with the young people's romance, but he simply cannot abide the idea of joining Irene's son to the daughter of the man who had held her in bondage against her will. That night Fleur goes to fetch a handkerchief for her father and sees a picture of Irene in his drawer. She now thinks she has solved the mystery - Soames hates Jolyon because he married the woman Soames loved. She doesn't realize how close she is to the truth, and yet how far.

Several days later Jon goes to London to order clothes from his tailor, hoping to see Fleur while he is there, and encounters Val Dartie. Val takes him to his club for lunch, and despite Jon's efforts refuses to enlighten him about the family history. Later Jon meets Fleur in Green Park. She tells him what she thinks she knows about the feud. They decide on the spur of the moment to go to Robin Hill so Fleur can see where Jon lives. They intend only to walk the grounds, but they unexpectedly encounter Irene, who invites Fleur in for tea. Jon is embarrassed for creating this awkward situation, but both Jolyon and Irene handle it with grace. After Fleur leaves Jon expects a dressing down, but no one says anything at all to him.

Fleur goes to her Aunt Winifred's house, where she encounters Prosper Profond, who continues to hand around the family. He offhandedly mentions to her something about her father's first wife and she suddenly realizes that the deep dark secret is about to be revealed. Once she discovers that Soames' first wife was Irene, she understands all the secrecy and the anger and bitterness that must be behind it. She is determined, however, to marry Jon at all costs, so she decides not to tell anyone but Winifred that she knows, meanwhile keeping the knowledge from Jon.

Soames, meanwhile, alters his will so that Fleur's inheritance can't be touched by anyone else or by changing circumstances. When he gets home, he opens an anonymous letter warning him that his wife has been seeing a foreigner - clearly Prosper Profond. He is determined not to involve the family in another scandal, but at the same time something must be done. As he thinks on the matter, Michael Mont arrives at the door. He immediately asks Soames for Fleur's hand in marriage, but Soames tells him they are both too young to consider such a thing. After Mont leaves he goes down to see Annette and confronts her with the letter. She admits nothing and denies nothing, but when Soames insists that she break off the relationship, she refuses, but promises that she will not cause a scandal.

Fleur then goes to see June, tells her that she knows all, and informs her that she has no further interest in Jon. She asks June to tell Jolyon and Irene that they have nothing to fear, and therefore need not inform Jon of the family scandal. She also asks June to arrange for her and Jon to meet in the near future so she can break off their relationship. This is all part of Fleur's plan, however, to get Jon to agree to a secret marriage before anyone knows what has happened. She does some research and discovers that Scotland has no age requirement for marriages, so she proposes to him a visit to a friend of hers in Scotland, where they can get married. He hesitates because he does not want to hurt his parents and cannot abide the thought of deceiving them.

When Fleur gets home she tells her father what she knows and confesses that she loves Jon with a passion equal to what Soames once felt years ago. He tells her he must think about it. Meanwhile, Annette gets a letter from Prosper Profond telling her that he is sailing to the South Seas in his yacht, essentially ending their affair. After dinner Soames tells Fleur how much she means

to him and reminds her that Jon means just as much to his mother; sadly, thirty-five years of hurt and animosity cannot easily be overcome. After their conversation she takes a walk on the lawn and finds Mont waiting for her. He professes his love, but she is no mood to listen to him and sends him away. Jon, meanwhile, decides to tell his parents that he intends to marry Fleur.

A few days later Soames and his family go to the Eton-Harrow cricket match, not because they care about cricket, but because Soames wants to show off his top hat and the dresses worn by his wife and daughter. Profond unexpectedly shows up - he has not yet left on his voyage - as do Jolyon and Irene, leaving Soames in a foul mood. He leaves abruptly and goes to see Timothy, who is no longer thinking at all clearly. When he gets home, Annette announces that she is going to see her mother in Paris, which doesn't bother Soames in the least.

PART III

After seeing Soames and Fleur at the cricket match, Jolyon and Irene leave immediately. After dinner he goes to his study and has a dream in which his father implores him to tell Jon the truth. He then writes a long letter setting forth the whole story and begging Jon not to marry Fleur because of the terrible pain it would cause his mother. He shows the letter to Irene, who agrees that he must send it to Jon as soon as possible. Before he can send the letter, Jon arrives to tell him that he and Fleur are engaged. With great pain Jolyon gives him the letter. Jon then rushes out the door to read it alone. Jolyon follows him but cannot find him, and when he returns to the study he collapses in his chair and dies. Jon goes to his room to read the letter, and soon his mother joins him. She tells him that he should think of himself, not of her, but he can't ignore the pain his decision would cause her. Then she discovers that Jolyon has died of a heart attack in his study.

When Soames reads Jolyon's obituary, he fears that Jon will now inherit both wealth and the house at Robin Hill. He wonders if he should encourage Mont's attempt to court Fleur. When he gets home he finds Fleur and Mont playing billiards. The men discuss the state of business, and Mont tells Soames that, in this new day, human values are more important than property values in order to ensure success. Soames thinks such an idea foolish. After Mont leaves, he tells Fleur about Jolyon's death; she now understands why she has not heard from Jon in the last week. When Jon does write, he tells her that they can never be together because of the pain it would cause his mother. Fleur decides to visit Robin Hill unannounced a few days hence. When she arrives, things between her and Jon somehow are not the same. She stays only a short time, and that night Irene talks to Jon, both expressing doubts about Fleur's character - calling her a "taker" - and assuring him that nothing between them will change if he decides to pursue Fleur regardless of the past.

Fleur arrives home from Robin Hill very late, so much so that Soames worries that she has gotten into an accident with the car. After dinner she begs him to reassure Irene that an alliance between her and Jon need not mean any contact between the former spouses. He fears that the marriage would not be a happy one, but he can deny his daughter nothing. The next day he goes to Robin Hill and has an awkward meeting with Irene. Both oppose the marriage, but neither is willing to stand in the way of their children's happiness. They summon Jon, explain the situation, and ask for his decision. Clearly in great distress, he tells them that he intends to break off the relationship. When Soames tells Fleur of Jon's decision, she unfairly blames her father for not trying hard enough. Jon suggests to his mother that the two of them travel to Italy, but she refuses, insisting that he spend at least a year abroad on his own. He winds up in British Columbia, buys some land, and sends for Irene to join him. The Robin Hill house is then put up for sale.

That October Fleur marries Michael Mont, uniting the houses of a great business family and an aristocrat, for Mont would eventually be a baronet. Holly and Val, who successfully married for love, worry that this marriage on the rebound would not be a happy one. Prosper Profond has returned from the South Seas, and Holly wonders what that may mean for Soames. The reception is held in Winifred's home, and when Fleur goes upstairs to change out of her wedding gown, she collapses in tears on June's lap. The couple then leave for their honeymoon in Spain.

The trilogy ends with the death of Timothy, the last of the old Forsytes. Soames plans his funeral, which hardly anyone attends, and sees to the liquidation of the estate. Later he visits a gallery displaying Jolyon's watercolors. He finds them surprisingly gratifying, but chooses not to purchase one. As he leaves, he encounters Irene, who has not yet gone to British Columbia, and she gives him a slight farewell wave of the hand. Soames then goes to the cemetery where most of the family members are buried and thinks of all that has gone before and the great changes that have interred the Victorian era along with the Forsytes who controlled it.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

- “Old Jolyon” Forsyte - An eighty-year-old former tea merchant, he is estranged from his son “Young Jolyon” but dotes on his granddaughter June. He lives in the past and regrets that nothing is as good as it used to be in the old days.
- Swithin Forsyte - Old Jolyon's younger brother, he is a bachelor and a former land agent who loves the pretensions of aristocracy.
- James Forsyte - Swithin's twin brother, he is a solicitor whose god is money. Soames is his son.
- “Young Jolyon” Forsyte - He became estranged from his family when he deserted his wife and young daughter June to run off with the family governess, with whom he has two children, Jolly and Holly. He is a watercolor artist. Eventually he marries Irene after she leaves Soames.
- June Forsyte - Young Jolyon's daughter, she is initially engaged to Philip Bosinney, but he leaves her for Irene, then dies. She eventually purchases a gallery and becomes a patron of young artists, whom she takes under her wing.
- Jolyon “Jolly” Forsyte - Young Jolyon's son by the governess, he goes to Oxford where he wastes his time and money. He dies of an intestinal virus in South Africa during the Boer War.
- Val Dartie - The son of Soames' sister Winifred, he is a ne'er-do-well who marries Jolly's sister Holly.

- Philip Bosinney - An architect who is June's fiancé, he builds a house for Soames and Irene at Robin Hill. The Forsytes, somewhat uncomfortable with his background and status, refer to him as the Buccaneer. He falls deeply in love with Irene, thus he never marries June, but is run over by a carriage and killed after losing a lawsuit over the house to Soames.
- Soames Forsyte - The son of James, he is married to the beautiful Irene, though their marriage is not a happy one. He is a solicitor, and the central figure in the trilogy.
- Irene Forsyte - Soames' lovely wife, she has a flirtation with Philip Bosinney and ultimately leaves her husband and marries his cousin Young Jolyon.
- Jolyon "Jon" Forsyte - The son of Young Jolyon and Irene, he falls in love with Fleur at first sight but refuses to marry her in order to avoid hurting his mother.
- Annette Lamotte - A French girl who keeps the books in her mother's restaurant in London, she becomes Soames' second wife though she is twenty-five years his junior. The marriage is a loveless one, and she has an affair with Prosper Profond.
- Fleur Forsyte - Soames and Annette's vivacious and strong-willed daughter, she falls in love with Jon Forsyte but eventually marries Michael Mont.
- Prosper Profond - A Frenchman of Armenian heritage who becomes a hanger-on of the Forsyte family, frequently visiting Winifred Dartie and having an affair with Annette.

NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

“Human nature, under its changing pretensions and clothes, is and ever will be very much a Forsyte, and might, after all, be a much worse animal.” (Preface, p.viii)

“But this long tale is no scientific study of a period; it is rather an intimate incarnation of the disturbance that Beauty effects in the lives of men.” (Preface, p.viii)

“When a Forsyte was engaged, married, or born, the Forsytes were present; when a Forsyte died - but no Forsyte had as yet died; they did not die; death being contrary to their principles, they took precautions against it, the instinctive precautions of highly vitalized persons who resent encroachments on their property.” (Book One, Part I, ch.1, p.4)

“To have doubted their Christianity would have caused them both pain and surprise. Some of them paid for pews, thus expressing in the most practical form their sympathy with the teachings of Christ.” (Book One, Part I, ch.1, p.16)

“It was pleasant to think that in the after life he could get more for things than he had given.” (Book One, Part I, ch.2, p.20)

“His mind, where very little took place from morning till night, was the junction of two curiously opposite emotions, a lingering and sturdy satisfaction that he had made his own way and his own fortune, and a sense that a man of distinction should never have been allowed to soil his mind with work.” (Book One, Part I, ch.3, p.35)

“In this world people couldn’t look for affection unless they paid for it.” (Book One, Part I, ch.7, p.81)

“‘Pride comes before a fall!’ In accordance with this, the greatest of Nature’s ironies, the Forsyte family had gathered for a last proud pageant before they fell.” (Book One, Part I, ch.9, p.97)

“On just such a day as this Soames has got from Irene the promise he had asked her for so often. Seated on the fallen trunk of a tree, he had promised for the twentieth time that if their marriage were not a success, she should be as free as if she had never married him!” (Book One, Part II, ch.1, p.102)

“Love is no hot-house flower, but a wild plant, born of a wet night, born of an hour of sunshine; sprung from wild seed, blown along the road by a wild wind.” (Book One, Part II, ch.4, p.126)

“Properties and qualities of a Forsyte: This little animal, disturbed by the ridicule of his own sort, is unaffected in his motions by the laughter of strange creatures (you or I). Hereditarily disposed to myopia, he recognises only the persons and habitats of his own species, amongst which he passes an existence of competitive tranquillity.” (Young Jolyon, Book One, Part II, ch.10, p.189)

“My people are not very extreme, and they have their own private peculiarities, like every other family, but they possess in a remarkable degree those two qualities which are the real tests of a Forsyte - the power of never being able to give yourself up to anything soul and body, and the ‘sense of property.’” (Young Jolyon, Book One, Part II, ch.10, p.190)

“She possessed in a remarkable degree that ‘sense of property,’ which, as we know, is the touchstone of Forsyteism, and the foundation of good morality.” (Book One, Part II, ch.12, p.202)

“George understood from those mutterings that Soames had exercised his rights over an estranged and unwilling wife in the greatest - the supreme act of property.” (Book One, Part III, ch.4, p.252)

“I think I have taken nothing that you or your people have given me.” (Irene, Book One, Part III, ch.6, p.273)

“Soames, like all Forsytes and the great majority of their countrymen, was a born empiricist.” (Book Two, Part I, ch.4, p.372-373)

“If she were plain I shouldn’t be thinking twice about it. Beauty is the devil, when you’re sensitive to it!” (Young Jolyon, Book Two, Part I, ch.13, p.436)

“Here was orthodoxy scientifically explained at last! The sublime poem of the Christ life was man’s attempt to join those two irreconcilable conceptions of God. And since the Sum of human altruism was as much a part of the Unknowable Creative Principle as anything else in Nature and the Universe, a worse link might have been chosen after all!” (Young Jolyon, Book Two, Part II, ch.10, p.505)

“Dogs are not pure Forsytes, they love something outside themselves.” (Young Jolyon, Book Two, Part II, ch.10, p.505)

“Nothing annoyed Soames so much as cheerfulness - an indecent, extravagant sort of quality, which had no relation to facts.” (Book Two, Part III, ch.1, p.532)

“A man’s life was what he possessed and sought to possess. Only fools thought otherwise - fools, and socialists, and libertines!” (Soames, Book Two, Part III, ch.6, p.556)

“The name was a possession, a concrete, unstained piece of property, the value of which would be reduced some twenty percent at least.” (Soames, Book Two, Part III, ch.9, p.568)

“He knew that Jon would never be a painter, and inclined to the conclusion that his aversion from everything else meant that he was going to be a writer.” (Book Three, Part I, ch.3, p.654)

“They wouldn’t let you live, these old people! They made mistakes, committed crimes, and wanted their children to go on paying!” (Fleur, Book Three, Part II, ch.9, p.788)

“The present is linked with the past, the future with both. There’s no getting away from that.” (Soames, Book Three, Part II, ch.9, p.789)

“There he was at sixty-five and no more in command of things than if he had not spent forty years in building up security - always something one couldn’t get on terms with!” (Soames, Book Three, Part III, ch.7, p.845)

“Nobody can spoil a life, my dear. Things happen, but we bob up.” (June, Book Three, Part III, ch.10, p.867)

“Soames came nearer than he had ever been to realisation of that truth - passing the understanding of a Forsyte pure - that the body of Beauty has a spiritual essence, uncapturable save by a devotion which thinks not of self.” (Book Three, Part III, ch.11, p.874)

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. I Timothy 6:10 says that “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils.” How does John Galsworthy’s *The Forsyte Saga* illustrate the truth of this verse? Choose three characters from the novel and discuss how their love of money was at the heart of the trials and tribulations from which they suffered.
2. Mr. Scoles, the Anglican rector in John Galsworthy’s *The Forsyte Saga*, said in one of his sermons that the motto of the English middle class was “What shall it profit a man if he gain his own soul, but lose all his property?” Despite the fact that he was speaking sarcastically, how accurate was his assessment according to the author? How does the novel illustrate this point? How does it also illustrate the truth of the actual biblical quotation, “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world but lose his own soul”?
3. In John Galsworthy’s *The Forsyte Saga*, the obsession of the Forsytes with money and possessions often lead them to treat the people in their lives as property. Cite examples of this and discuss the consequences of it in the relationships of the characters, especially their marriages.
4. John Galsworthy, the author of *The Forsyte Saga*, was an outspoken champion of women’s rights. How does the trilogy illustrate his views? Focus particularly on the characters of Irene, June, and Fleur in answering the question.
5. In the preface to John Galsworthy’s *The Forsyte Saga*, the author describes his work as “an intimate incarnation of the disturbance that Beauty effects in the lives of men.” In what ways does the trilogy accomplish this? Be sure to go beyond the impact of Irene on every man who sees her and consider other aspects of the story as well in your analysis.
6. John Galsworthy’s *The Forsyte Saga* has sometimes been pictured as a tale of the conflict between Property and Passion. To what extent is this an accurate portrayal? Give particular attention to the internal struggles faced by Soames Forsyte in your analysis.
7. One of the central themes in John Galsworthy’s *The Forsyte Saga* is the impossibility of moving beyond the past. While the relationship of Jon and Fleur is the clearest illustration of this, other characters struggle with the problem just as strongly. Choose three relationships in the trilogy and discuss how the grip of the past in their lives shapes their actions in the present and determines their futures.
8. In the preface to John Galsworthy’s *The Forsyte Saga*, the author says that his work is intended to “embalm the upper-middle class” of Victorian and Edwardian England. To what extent does he succeed in doing this? Does he see any virtues in the class into which he himself was born? If so, what are they?

9. Soames Forsyte is the central character in John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*. To what extent does he change throughout the course of the three books of the trilogy? Is he the same man at the end as he was at the beginning? Why or why not? If he changes, is the change for the better or for the worse?
10. John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* has no heroes or villains. Some readers consider Soames Forsyte to be a villain, but find that, while they might not exactly sympathize with him, they do pity him by the end of the story. The author insisted that he felt the same way. What about the character of Soames keeps him from being the cardboard villain that everybody loves to hate?
11. In John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, the author obviously has a soft spot in his heart for Art. How does this influence the plot of the story? Choose three characters who are most deeply affected by art and evaluate its impact in their lives.
12. Compare and contrast the relationship between Fleur and Jon in John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* to that of Romeo and Juliet in William Shakespeare's play of the same name. Consider the reasons for the animosities between the two families, the characters of the lovers, and the consequences of their romances.
13. In your opinion, would the two young lovers in John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, Jon and Fleur, have had a happy marriage had they decided to pursue their romance? Why or why not? Be sure to support your conclusion with specifics from the novel.
14. Analyze the character of Jon Forsyte in John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*. Is Fleur correct when she accuses him of being tied to his mother's apron strings? Is his decision to end his relationship with Fleur the right one? Why or why not?
15. Genesis 2:24 says, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." In John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, Jon Forsyte's inability to "leave father and mother" destroys his relationship with his beloved Fleur. What does this say about his readiness for marriage? Was the real problem the family feud, or was it really an unhealthy and immature attachment between Jon and his mother?
16. In Book Three, Part II, chapter 9 of John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* is the inability of, Soames says, "The present is linked with the past, the future with both. There's no getting away from that." One of the themes of the trilogy is that it is impossible for people to loosen the grip of the past on their lives. Choose three characters in the story who are bound by the past in harmful ways, being sure to consider both those who are controlled by their own past histories as well as those who are influenced in negative ways by the actions of others in the past.

17. Compare and contrast the view of marriage portrayed by the author in John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* and that held by the characters in the trilogy. What does Galsworthy consider essential for a successful marriage? How does this differ from the ideas espoused by many of his characters?
18. In John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, do you consider Irene to be an admirable character? Why or why not? Evaluate her social interactions, moral standards, and values. Does your conclusion differ from that of the author? In what ways?
19. Given the negative view of capitalism presented in John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, how would you evaluate the economic views of the author? Would you consider him to be a socialist? Why or why not? Cite specific quotations from the trilogy to support your assessment of his ideas about how a just society should operate in the economic realm.
20. Analyze the theme of freedom versus structure in John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*. According to the author, are the Forsytes, in the sense in which he uses the term generically, enslaved by their social position? Concentrate on three characters in the story who rebel against this enslavement and choose freedom instead. Do their choices make them happy? Why or why not?
21. The main criticism of the upper middle class in John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* concerns their sense of property - the materialism that drives every decision in their lives and their assessment of themselves and all around them. Does the accumulation of possessions make them happy in the end? Why or why not? Are Galsworthy's reasons for arguing that wealth does not bring happiness the same as those found in Scripture? If not, how are they different?
22. In John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, Soames believes he can save his marriage by moving to a house in the country and getting his wife away from London and its baneful influences. How realistic is this idea? Was the problem Irene's environment, or were other deeper factors involved in their unhappiness? Be sure to consider the assumption behind the whole idea that life may be improved by a simple change of environment. What does such a way of thinking ignore?
23. Discuss the role of the Boer War in John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*. How does the war affect the plot and the characters? What is the author's view of the morality of the war? Be sure to support your arguments with specifics from the trilogy.
24. Analyze the author's moral perspective in John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*. Given that neither he nor the characters in the trilogy have any strong grounding in religion, on what basis are right and wrong to be determined? Sketch out the novel's moral code and evaluate it on the basis of Scripture.

25. Compare and contrast the ruinous consequences of marital unfaithfulness in John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* and Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. How do the affairs of Irene and Anna have consequences that extend far beyond their own personal lives? Which of the stories portrays the devastating results of adultery in a more biblical fashion? Why do you think so?
26. Compare and contrast the adulteries of Irene in John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* and Edna in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*. Consider the motives of the two women as well as the consequences, both for themselves and for others, of their unfaithfulness. Why do you think both authors approve of these clearly sinful choices?
27. Compare and contrast the adulteries of Irene in John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* and Emma in Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. Consider the motives of the two women as well as the consequences, both for themselves and for others, of their unfaithfulness. Why do you think both authors approve of these clearly sinful choices?
28. Compare and contrast the consequences of the rapes that play central roles in John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* and Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. In your analysis consider the extent to which the perpetrators are punished, the extent to which the victims suffer, and the consequences for other characters in the stories.
29. Both John Galsworthy in *The Forsyte Saga* and George Bernard Shaw in *Pygmalion* are critics of "middle-class morality," though in very different ways. What aspects of Victorian morality do the authors reject? How do they go about conducting their critiques? Be sure to cite incidents and quotations from both works in your analysis.
30. In the preface to John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, the author says, "Human nature, under its changing pretensions and clothes, is and ever will be very much a Forsyte, and might, after all, be a much worse animal." To what extent does the Forsyte clan represent, not just the upper middle class of Victorian England, but humanity as a whole? What does this tell us about the author's view of human nature in general? Evaluate his understanding of humanity in the light of the teachings of Scripture.
31. In Book One, Part I, chapter 1 of John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, the narrator observes, "To have doubted their Christianity would have caused them both pain and surprise. Some of them paid for pews, thus expressing in the most practical form their sympathy with the teachings of Christ." What does this quotation suggest about the Forsyte understanding of the teachings of Christ? To what extent is this an accurate view of nominal or cultural Christianity wherever it is found? Support your arguments with details from the book to flesh out your points.
32. In Book One, Part I, chapter 7 of John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, Old Jolyon thinks to himself, "In this world people couldn't look for affection unless they paid for it." To what extent to Forsytes, understood generically, treat human relationships as a commodity? What are the consequences of such an attitude?

33. In Book Two, Part I, chapter 4 of John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, Soames Forsyte is described as "a born empiricist" like most of his countrymen. To what extent is this an accurate description of Soames in particular and Forsytes in general? How is empiricism related to the possessiveness and materialism that characterize the clan?
34. In John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, Soames promises Irene that if she marries him, she will be free to leave the marriage if it doesn't work out. Clearly, he reneges on his promise, though she takes it seriously. Discuss the foolishness of such a promise. To what extent would entering marriage under such circumstances actively contribute to the failure of the marriage? In what ways do we see marriages today doomed before they start by the same attitude?
35. In Book Two, Part II, chapter 10 of John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, Young Jolyon says, "Here was orthodoxy scientifically explained at last! The sublime poem of the Christ life was man's attempt to join those two irreconcilable conceptions of God. And since the Sum of human altruism was as much a part of the Unknowable Creative Principle as anything else in Nature and the Universe, a worse link might have been chosen after all!" Is the meaning of Christ's life to be found in the union of the Unknowable Creative Principle and the Sum of human altruism? Evaluate the orthodoxy of Young Jolyon's assertion on the basis of Scripture. How does the author's misunderstanding of Christian orthodoxy affect the novel and its characters?
36. In Book Three, Part III, chapter 7 of John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, Soames thinks to himself, "There he was at sixty-five and no more in command of things than if he had not spent forty years in building up security - always something one couldn't get on terms with!" Soames finally appears to have learned the lesson that he cannot control his own life let alone the lives of others, and that security can never be assured by the accumulation of wealth and possessions. How did he learn these things, which Jesus taught very clearly in the Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:13-21)?
37. Near the end of the last chapter of John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, the narrator says, "Soames came nearer than he had ever been to realisation of that truth - passing the understanding of a Forsyte pure - that the body of Beauty has a spiritual essence, uncapturable save by a devotion which thinks not of self." To what extent is selfishness really at the heart of "Forsyteism," thus making everyone who comes into this world a "born Forsyte"? Is Galsworthy right in suggesting that the proper object of devotion is Beauty in its spiritual essence? Why or why not?
38. In John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, Soames and Annette on the one hand and Young Jolyon and Irene on the other avoid telling Fleur and Jon about their past relationships. Is this a wise decision? Would the two ever have fallen in love had they known the truth beforehand? Was the decision of the parents made more to protect themselves or to protect their children?

39. In Exodus 20:5, God speaks of “visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.” In what ways does the sprawling family tale told in John Galsworthy’s *The Forsyte Saga* illustrate the truth of the impact of the sins of one generation affecting the lives of those who follow?