



# Broadsheet



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We announce for publication in May, 1949,  
OUR HUNDREDTH CHOICE

## THE FORSYTE SAGA

the world-famous epic of English family life by

### JOHN GALSWORTHY

720 pages, crown 8vo, bound in special "Galsworthy" green  
buckram with title blocked in real gold on black soft leather panel

Since it was first published as a complete work in one volume under the title of "The Forsyte Saga" in May, 1922, this volume has unquestionably become a "modern classic." It was certainly the best-read work of fiction between the two World Wars, not only in the form of a trilogy bound in one volume, but under its three separate titles, whose various editions are now too numerous to compute. The work was also translated, it scarcely need be added, into every European language and became to millions of foreign readers a kind of symbol and guide to English family life. It has also been repeatedly broadcast, and has proved to be one of the favourite serialisations done by the B.B.C. A film is now in active preparation by M.G.M.—THE EDITOR.

I HAD no voice in the selection of the 100th volume. And if I had been invited to make a suggestion I doubt whether *The Forsyte Saga* would have leapt to my mind. But now that the choice has been made I instantly applaud it. No other book I can now think of has the importance, the dignity and the historical significance that Galsworthy's masterpiece has acquired. And rightly acquired.

It is a modern classic. That phrase is usually little more than a piece of publishers' sales talk. Applied to *The Forsyte Saga* it is no exaggeration—if by classic we mean a book which has been acclaimed as a work of literature and has established itself in the cultural heritage of the country of its origin. In the case of *The Forsyte Saga* we can add that it has achieved world-wide fame.

What is its particular quality? If you want it in one word I should say that one word is its *Englishness*. True, the English people in it are mostly members of the upper-middle class. Here, in Galsworthy's phrase, you will find, "preserved in its own juice, The Sense of Property." When he calls it a Saga he does so, he admits, with a suitable irony, because a Saga is usually a tale of

warriors performing heroic deeds on a national scale. The members of the Forsyte family are no warriors, but some of them fought in their own way, strengthened by the possessive instinct, against youth and beauty and passion, against any encroachment upon their rights as Victorian dictators. It is family life, the family as an institution—now tending to decay as a force—which really makes *The Forsyte Saga*.

*The Forsyte Saga* is a large book. It is, in fact, more than three books in one. It consists of *The Man of Property*, *In Chancery*, and *To Let*—three separate substantial novels. Linking them are the interludes called *Indian Summer of a Forsyte* and *Awakening*. Together they form a history celebrating the rise and decline of the Forsyte family. Any attempt to render that history down to a synopsis would be foolhardy because it could not possibly do justice to Galsworthy either as a storyteller or as a creator of character. How can one convey in cramped words the magnificent presence of Old Jolyon, or, for that matter, his brothers James, Swithin, Nicholas and Roger, as they assemble in Stanhope Gate on June 15th, 1886?

No, I am not going to attempt it. If from that date, at which the book begins, you are not immediately and continuously "at home" with the Forsytes; if you are not caught up in the romance and tragedy of Soames, Irene and Bosinney; if, later, Jon and Fleur fail to engage your interest—if none of these things happen to you, then either *The Forsyte Saga* has mysteriously lost its potency, or . . . But I find it impossible to believe that any reader can be so unfortunate as to meet with disappointment here.

You have read it before? You must read it again. Few modern novels, I imagine, have been so frequently re-read. If you are re-reading it, keep an eye on Galsworthy this time. See if you can detect a change in his attitude to the Forsytes. I



JOHN GALSWORTHY AT THE STUDY WINDOW  
An illustration in H. V. Marrot's *Life and Letters of John Galsworthy* (Heinemann).

*The Forsyte Saga* carries the following dedication:

To  
MY WIFE  
I DEDICATE THE FORSYTE SAGA  
IN ITS ENTIRETY  
BELIEVING IT TO BE OF ALL MY WORK  
THE LEAST UNWORTHY OF ONE  
WITHOUT WHOSE ENCOURAGEMENT,  
SYMPATHY, AND CRITICISM  
I COULD NEVER HAVE BECOME  
SUCH A WRITER AS I AM

We have therefore great pleasure in publishing for World Books Members

### A Special Message from Mrs. Galsworthy

It is good news that The Reprint Society have decided to make the 100th issue of their very attractive volumes be a reprint of *The Forsyte Saga*. This vital and unexaggerated study of a section of the middle classes in the last years of the 19th and the first years of the 20th century will provide a landmark in the history of the British of the period.

It is a fine work that The Reprint Society are doing, and doing so well. Owing to war and other dislocations, books have had a rough time, and all good readers now owe appreciation and gratitude to The Reprint Society for their support of good literature. Certainly *The Forsyte Saga* is honoured in appearing in so charming a guise; it supplies, as it were, a punctuation mark of considerable weight to the 100th Selection.

*Ada Galsworthy*

think he began by treating them satirically, and then found there was much to be said for them—so he said it. Anyhow, there it is—unquestionably a classic English novel which no one should have the slightest difficulty in enjoying and which everyone should feel proud to possess. DANIEL GEORGE



"THE MAN OF PROPERTY"  
from a drawing by  
Anthony Gross for  
a forthcoming illus-  
trated edition of  
*The Forsyte Saga*  
(Heinemann).