

Howards End (Barnes & Noble Classics)

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Howards End, by E. M. Forster, is part of the Barnes & Noble Classics series, which offers quality editions at affordable prices to the student and the general reader, including new scholarship, thoughtful design, and pages of carefully crafted extras. Here are some of the remarkable features of Barnes & Noble Classics:

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

Margaret Schlegel, engaged to the much older, widowed Henry Wilcox, meets her intended the morning after accepting his proposal and realizes that he is a man who has lived without introspection or true self-knowledge. As she contemplates the state of Wilcox's soul, her remedy for what ails him has become one of the most oft-quoted passages in

literature: <blockquote>Only connect! That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its height. Live in fragments no longer.</blockquote> Like all of Forster's work, *Howards End* concerns itself with class, nationality, economic status, and how each of these affects personal relationships. It follows the intertwined fortunes of the Schlegel sisters, Margaret and Helen, and the Wilcox family over the course of several years. The Schlegels are intellectuals, devotees of art and literature. The Wilcoxes, on the other hand, can't be bothered with the life of the mind or the heart, leading, instead, outer lives of "telegrams and anger" that foster "such virtues as neatness, decision, and obedience, virtues of the second rank, no doubt, but they have formed our civilization." Helen, after a brief flirtation with one of the Wilcox sons, has developed an antipathy for the family; Margaret, however, forms a brief but intense friendship with Mrs. Wilcox, which is cut short by the older woman's death. When her family discovers a scrap of paper requesting that Henry give their home, *Howards End*, to Margaret, it precipitates a spiritual crisis among them that will take years to resolve.

Forster's 1910 novel begins as a collection of seemingly unrelated events--Helen's impulsive engagement to Paul Wilcox; a chance meeting between the Schlegel sisters and an impoverished clerk named Leonard Bast at a concert; a casual conversation between the sisters and Henry Wilcox in London one night. But as it moves along, these disparate threads gradually knit into a tightly woven fabric of tragic misunderstandings, impulsive actions, and irreparable consequences, and, eventually, connection. Though set in the early years of the 20th century, *Howards End* seems even more suited to our own fragmented era of e-mails and anger. For readers living in such an age, the exhortation to "only connect" resonates ever more profoundly. --Alix Wilber

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Other Books

The Fiftieth Division: 1914-1919, The 50th (Northumbrian) Division was a pre-war Territorial (TF) division which recruited from Northumberland, Durham and the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire. The infantry battalions came from the Northumberland Fusiliers, East Yorks, Green Howards and Durham Light Infantry. The division crossed to France on 16 April 1915 and by 23 April it had completed its concentration in the area of Steenvoorde, about 14 miles west of Ypres; the next day it was in action at St Julien during the German gas attacks and by the end of 4 May, the day after the battle of St Julien ended, it had suffered 3746 casualties. The division had been given no period of acclimatisation which was given to all other divisions on arrival on the Western Front. The division remained in the Ypres area till August 1916 when it moved down to the Somme, to III Corps, where it took part in the battles of Flers-Courcelette, Morval and the Transloy Ridges with losses of just over 4,000. The Somme offensive ended on 18 November 1916, but the division remained in that area till March 1917 when it moved up to the Arras sector where preparations were underway for a new offensive by Allenby's Third Army, which 50 Division now joined. It took part in First and Second Scarpe and the capture of Wancourt Ridge at a cost of 2750 casualties during the two weeks 11 to 24 April. The division did not enter the Third Ypres campaign till late in October 1917, in time to fight the Second Battle of Passchendaele from 26 October to the end of the offensive on 10 November. When the Germans launched their final offensive on 21 March 1918, 50th Division was back on the Somme, this time in Fifth Army and in that first week its casualties numbered nearly 3,500. In April it was with First

Army at the Lys where it incurred further losses of 4,265. It was then one of the divisions sent down to the Aisne, in the French sector, with IX Corps, 'for a rest;' it arrived in time for another major German attack on 27 May, and by 6 June the division had lost almost 7,600 men. It was pulled right back, to the coast in the Dieppe area, and completely reorganized. This history was the last of the Great War divisional histories to be published, written by the most prolific of all the Great War historians - eight regimental and four divisional histories. Wyrrall died just as he completed his task. In this book he relies considerably on the war diaries and histories of various units, on personal diaries, letters, experiences and anecdotes which together provide a history of the division's activities seen very much at unit level and in detail. Appendices list all divisional and brigade commanders and the order of battle of units with changes.

???. Colonel F. Walton, 6th Durham Light Infantry, the other by Major A. C. Barnes, of the 4th Green Howards ... Infantry Battalion, commanded by Major Barnes, 4th Green Howards, and 151st Infantry Battalion under the command of Lieut."