

WORDSWORTH CLASSICS

JOHN
GALSWORTHY

In Chancery



♦ COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED ♦

IN CHANCERY

John Galsworthy

BOOK TWO
OF
The Forsyte Saga



WORDSWORTH CLASSICS



The paper in this book is produced from pure wood pulp, without the use of chlorine or any other substance harmful to the environment. The energy used in its production consists almost entirely of hydroelectricity and heat generated from waste material, thereby conserving fossil fuels and contributing little to the greenhouse effect.

This edition published 1994 by
Wordsworth Editions Limited
Cumberland House, Crib Street
Ware, Hertfordshire SG12 9ET

ISBN 1 85326 222 6

© Wordsworth Editions Limited 1994

All rights reserved. This publication may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

*Printed and bound in Denmark by Nørhaven
Typeset in the UK by Antony Gray*

INTRODUCTION

In Chancery (1920) is the second volume of the first of the three Forsyte trilogies which established John Galsworthy as a famous writer. *In Chancery* records the feud between the archetypal Forsyte and successful solicitor, Soames, and his cousin, the sensitive 'Young' Jolyon, who is a renegade from Forsyte beliefs. Soames's wife, the beautiful Irene, divorces her husband following her affair with Jolyon whom she marries and with whom she has a son, Jon. Soames himself marries a French woman, Annette Lamotte, and they have a daughter, Fleur. This family and personal drama takes place against the background of the Boer War in South Africa and the rising threat it presents to international stability and the ascendancy of the British Empire. *The Forsyte Saga* is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand late-Victorian and Edwardian society and its acquisitively successful but beleaguered upper middle class.

The Forsyte Saga was made into a hugely popular television serial in 1967.

John Galsworthy (1867–1933) was the son of a solicitor. He was educated at Harrow and New College, Oxford, and was called to the bar in 1890. Strongly influenced by his wife and Joseph Conrad, he began writing and in 1897 had a collection of short stories published entitled From the Four Winds, under an assumed name; this he followed up with two novels. The Forsyte family was first mentioned in Man of Devon (1901) and The Man of Property – the initial title in the first Forsyte trilogy – appeared in 1906; however, the subsequent volumes In Chancery and To Let did not appear until 1920 and 1921 respectively. The immense success of The Forsyte Saga, which was first published in a collected edition in 1922, encouraged Galsworthy to write a second Forsyte trilogy – A Modern Comedy (1929) – containing The White Monkey (1924), The Silver Spoon (1926) and Swan Song (1928), and a collection of stories entitled On Forsyte Change (1931). A final Forsyte trilogy – End of the Chapter (1934) – containing Maid in Waiting (1931), The Flowering Wilderness (1932) and Over the River (1933), was published post-

humously. He also wrote many widely acclaimed plays with moral, scientific and criminological themes. Galsworthy was the first president of the PEN Club, received the Order of Merit in 1929 (having previously refused a knighthood) and won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1932. He lived for many years on Dartmoor in Devon and subsequently made his home at Bury on the Sussex Downs.

FURTHER READING

C. Dupré: *John Galsworthy – A Life* 1976

CONTENTS

PART ONE

ONE	<i>At Timothy's</i>	3
TWO	<i>Exit a Man of the World</i>	10
THREE	<i>Soames Prepares to Take Steps</i>	19
FOUR	<i>Soho</i>	23
FIVE	<i>James Sees Visions</i>	28
SIX	<i>No-Longer-Young Jolyon at Home</i>	33
SEVEN	<i>The Colt and the Filly</i>	40
EIGHT	<i>Jolyon Prosecutes Trusteeship</i>	44
NINE	<i>Val Hears the News</i>	50
TEN	<i>Soames Entertains the Future</i>	57
ELEVEN	<i>And Visits the Past</i>	60
TWELVE	<i>On Forsyte 'Change</i>	64
THIRTEEN	<i>Jolyon Finds Out Where He Is</i>	73
FOURTEEN	<i>Soames Discovers What He Wants</i>	78

PART TWO

ONE	<i>The Third Generation</i>	81
TWO	<i>Soames Puts it to the Touch</i>	88
THREE	<i>Visit to Irene</i>	95
FOUR	<i>Where Forsytes Fear to Tread</i>	99
FIVE	<i>Jolly Sits in Judgement</i>	105
SIX	<i>Jolyon in Two Minds</i>	112
SEVEN	<i>Dartie versus Dartie</i>	115
EIGHT	<i>The Challenge</i>	123

NINE	<i>Dinner at James's</i>	127
TEN	<i>Death of the Dog Balthasar</i>	132
ELEVEN	<i>Timothy Stays the Rot</i>	135
TWELVE	<i>Progress of the Chase</i>	141
THIRTEEN	<i>'Here we are Again!'</i>	145
FOURTEEN	<i>Outlandish Night</i>	153

PART THREE

ONE	<i>Soames in Paris</i>	155
TWO	<i>In the Web</i>	160
THREE	<i>Richmond Park</i>	163
FOUR	<i>Over the River</i>	168
FIVE	<i>Soames Acts</i>	169
SIX	<i>A Summer Day</i>	171
SEVEN	<i>A Summer Night</i>	176
EIGHT	<i>James in Waiting</i>	179
NINE	<i>Out of the Web</i>	182
TEN	<i>Passing of an Age</i>	188
ELEVEN	<i>Suspended Animation</i>	196
TWELVE	<i>Birth of a Forsyte</i>	201
THIRTEEN	<i>James is Told</i>	206
FOURTEEN	<i>His</i>	210

INTERLUDE

<i>Awakening</i>	213
------------------	-----

*To Jessie
and to Joseph Conrad*

*Two households both alike in dignity . . .
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny.*

ROMEO AND JULIET

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

At Timothy's

THE POSSESSIVE INSTINCT never stands still. Through florescence and feud, frosts and fires, it followed the laws of progression even in the Forsyte family which had believed it fixed for ever. Nor can it be dissociated from environment any more than the quality of potato from the soil.

The historian of the English eighties and nineties will, in his good time, depict the somewhat rapid progression from self-contented and contained provincialism to still more self-contented if less contained imperialism – in other words, the 'possessive' instinct of the nation on the move. And so, as if in conformity, was it with the Forsyte family. They were spreading not merely on the surface, but within.

When, in 1895, Susan Hayman, the married Forsyte sister, followed her husband at the ludicrously low age of seventy-four, and was cremated, it made strangely little stir among the six old Forsytes left. For this apathy there were three causes. First: the almost surreptitious burial of old Jolyon in 1892 down at Robin Hill – first of the Forsytes to desert the family grave at Highgate. That burial, coming a year after Swithin's entirely proper funeral, had occasioned a great deal of talk on Forsyte 'Change, the abode of Timothy Forsyte on the Bayswater Road, London, which still collected and radiated family gossip. Opinions ranged from the lamentation of Aunt Juley to the outspoken assertion of Francie that it was 'a jolly good thing to stop all that stuffy Highgate business'. Uncle Jolyon in his later years – indeed, ever since the strange and lamentable affair between his granddaughter June's lover, young Bosinney, and Irene, his nephew Soames Forsyte's wife – had noticeably rapped the family's knuckles; and that way of his own which he had always taken had begun to seem to them a little wayward. The philosophic vein in him, of course, had always been too liable to crop out of the strata of pure Forsyteism, so they were in a way prepared for his interment in a strange spot. But the whole thing was an odd business, and when the contents of his will became current coin on Forsyte 'Change, a shiver had gone round the clan. Out of his estate (£145,304 gross, with liabilities £35 7s. 4d.) he had actually left fifteen

thousand pounds to 'whomever do you think, my dear? To *Irene!*' that runaway wife of his nephew Soames; Irene, a woman who had almost disgraced the family, and – still more amazing – was to him no blood relation. Not out and out, of course; only a life interest – only the income from it! Still there it was; and old Jolyon's claim to be the perfect Forsyte was ended once for all. That, then, was the first reason why the burial of Susan Hayman – at Woking – made little stir.

The second reason was altogether more expansive and imperial. Besides the house on Campden Hill, Susan had a place (left her by Hayman when he died) just over the border in Hants, where the Hayman boys had learned to be such good shots and riders, as it was believed, which was of course nice for them and creditable to everybody; and the face of owning something really countrified seemed somehow to excuse the dispersion of her remains – though what could have put cremation into her head they could not think! The usual invitations, however, had been issued, and Soames had gone down and young Nicholas, and the will had been quite satisfactory so far as it went, for she had only had a life interest; and everything had gone quite smoothly to the children in equal shares.

The third reason why Susan's burial made little stir was the most expansive of all. It was summed up daringly by Euphemia, the pale, the thin: 'Well, *I* think people have a right to their own bodies, even when they're dead.' Coming from a daughter of Nicholas, a Liberal of the old school and most tyrannical, it was a startling remark – showing in a flash what a lot of water had run under bridges since the death of Aunt Ann in '88, just when the proprietorship of Soames over his wife's body was acquiring the uncertainty which had led to such disaster. Euphemia, of course, spoke like a child, and had no experience; for though well over thirty by now, her name was still Forsyte. But, making all allowances, her remark did undoubtedly show expansion of the principle of liberty, decentralization and shift in the central point of possession from others to oneself. When Nicholas heard his daughter's remark from Aunt Hester he had rapped out 'Wives and daughters! There's no end to their liberty in these days. I knew that "Jackson" case would lead to things – lugging in Habeas Corpus like that!' He had, of course, never really forgiven the Married Woman's Property Act, which would so have interfered with him if he had not mercifully married before it was passed. But, in truth, there was no denying the revolt among the younger Forsytes against being owned by others; that, as it were, Colonial disposition to own oneself, which is the paradoxical forerunner of Imperialism, was making progress all the time. They were all now married, except George, confirmed to the Turf and the Iseum Club;

Francie, pursuing her musical career in a studio off the King's Road, Chelsea, and still taking 'lovers' to dances; Euphemia, living at home and complaining of Nicholas; and those two Dromios, Giles and Jesse Hayman. Of the third generation there were not very many – young Jolyon had three, Winifred Dartie four, young Nicholas six already, young Roger had one, Marian Tweetyman one; St John Hayman two. But the rest of the sixteen married – Soames, Rachel, and Cicely of James's family, Eustace and Thomas of Roger's; Ernest, Archibald, and Florence of Nicholas's; Augustus and Annabel Spender of the Haymans' were going down the years unreproduced.

Thus, of the ten old Forsytes twenty-one young Forsytes had been born; but of the twenty-one young Forsytes there were as yet only seventeen descendants; and it already seemed likely that there would be more than a further unconsidered trifle or so. A student of statistics must have noticed that the birth rate had varied in accordance with the rate of interest for your money. Grandfather 'Superior Dosset' Forsyte in the early nineteenth century had been getting ten per cent for his, hence ten children. Those ten, leaving out the four who had not married, and Juley, whose husband Septimus Small had, of course, died almost at once, had averaged from four to five per cent of theirs, and produced accordingly. The twenty-one whom they produced were now getting barely three per cent in the Consols to which their fathers had mostly tied the Settlements they made to avoid death duties, and the six of them who had been reproduced had seventeen children, or just the proper two and five-sixths per stem.

There were other reasons, too, for this mild reproduction. A distrust of their earning powers, natural where a sufficiency is guaranteed together with the knowledge that their fathers did not die, kept them cautious. If one had children and not much income, the standard of taste and comfort must of necessity go down; what was enough for two was not enough for four, and so on – it would be better to wait and see what Father did. Besides, it was nice to be able to take holidays unhampered. Sooner in fact than own children, they preferred to concentrate on the ownership of themselves, conforming to the growing tendency – *fin de siècle*, as it was called. In this way, little risk was run, and one would be able to have a motor-car. Indeed, Eustace already had one, but it had shaken him horribly, and broken one of his eye teeth; so that it would be better to wait till they were a little safer. In the meantime, no more children! Even young Nicholas was drawing in his horns, and had made no addition to his six for quite three years.

The corporate decay, however, of the Forsytes, their dispersion rather, of which all this was symptomatic, had not advanced so far as to

prevent a rally when Roger Forsyte died in 1899. It had been a glorious summer, and after holidays abroad and at the sea they were practically all back in London, when Roger with a touch of his old originality had suddenly breathed his last at his own house in Princes Gardens. At Timothy's it was whispered sadly that poor Roger had always been eccentric about his digestion – had he not, for instance, preferred German mutton to all the other brands?

Be that as it may, his funeral at Highgate had been perfect, and coming away from it Soames Forsyte made almost mechanically for his Uncle Timothy's in the Bayswater Road. The 'Old Things' – Aunt Juley and Aunt Hester – would like to hear about it. His father – James – at eighty-eight had not felt up to the fatigue of the funeral; and Timothy himself, of course, had not gone; so that Nicholas had been the only brother present. Still, there had been a fair gathering; and it would cheer Aunts Juley and Hester up to know. The kindly thought was not unmixed with the inevitable longing to get something out of everything you do, which is the chief characteristic of Forsytes, and indeed of the saner elements in every nation. In this practice of taking family matters to Timothy's in the Bayswater Road, Soames was but following in the footsteps of his father, who had been in the habit of going at least once a week to see his sisters at Timothy's, and had only given it up when he lost his nerve at eighty-six, and could not go out without Emily. To go with Emily was of no use, for who could really talk to anyone in the presence of his own wife? Like James in the old days, Soames found time to go there nearly every Sunday, and sit in the little drawing-room into which, with his undoubted taste, he had introduced a good deal of change and china not quite up to his own fastidious mark, and at least two rather doubtful Barbizon pictures, at Christmas-tides. He himself, who had done extremely well with the Barbizons, had for some years past moved towards the Marises, Israels, and Mauve, and was hoping to do better. In the riverside house which he now inhabited near Mapledurham he had a gallery, beautifully hung and lighted, to which few London dealers were strangers. It served, too, as a Sunday afternoon attraction in those week-end parties which his sisters, Winifred or Rachel, occasionally organised for him. For though he was but a taciturn showman, his quiet collected determinism seldom failed to influence his guests, who knew that his reputation was grounded not on mere aesthetic fancy, but on his power of gauging the future of market values. When he went to Timothy's he almost always had some little tale of triumph over a deal to unfold, and dearly he loved that coo of pride with which his aunts would greet it. This afternoon, however, he was differently animated, coming from Roger's funeral in his neat dark

clothes – not quite black, for after all an uncle was but an uncle, and his soul abhorred excessive display of feeling. Leaning back in a marqueterie chair and gazing down his uplifted nose at the sky-blue walls plastered with gold frames, he was noticeably silent. Whether because he had been to a funeral or not, the peculiar Forsyte build of his face was seen to the best advantage this afternoon – a face concave and long, with a jaw which divested of flesh would have seemed extravagant: altogether a chinny face, though not at all ill-looking. He was feeling more strongly than ever that Timothy's was hopelessly 'rum-ti-too', and the souls of his aunts dismally mid Victorian. The subject on which alone he wanted to talk – his own undivorced position – was unspeakable. And yet it occupied his mind to the exclusion of all else. It was only since the spring that this had been so, and a new feeling grown up which was egging him on towards what he knew might well be folly in a Forsyte of forty-five. More and more of late he had been conscious that he was 'getting on'. The fortune, already considerable when he conceived the house at Robin Hill which had finally wrecked his marriage with Irene, had mounted with surprising vigour in the twelve lonely years during which he had devoted himself to little else. He was worth today well over a hundred thousand pounds, and had no one to leave it to – no real object for going on with what was his religion. Even if he were to relax his efforts, money made money, and he felt that he would have a hundred and fifty thousand before he knew where he was. There had always been a strongly domestic, philoprogenitive side to Soames; balked and frustrated, it had hidden itself away, but now had crept out again in this his 'prime of life'. Concreted and focused of late by the attraction of a girl's undoubted beauty, it had become a veritable prepossession.

And this girl was French, not likely to lose her head, or accept any unlegalised position. Moreover, Soames himself disliked the thought of that. He had tasted of the sordid side of sex during those long years of forced celibacy, secretly, and always with disgust, for he was fastidious, and his sense of law and order innate. He wanted no hole-and-corner liaison. A marriage at the Embassy in Paris, a few months' travel, and he could bring Annette back quite separated from a past which in truth was not too distinguished, for she only kept the accounts in her mother's Soho restaurant; he could bring her back as something very new and chic with her French taste and self-possession, to reign at 'The Shelter' near Mapledurham. On Forsyte 'Change and among his riverside friends it would be current that he had met a charming French girl on his travels and married her. There would be the flavour of romance, and a certain *cachet* about a French wife. No! He was not at all afraid of that; it was only this cursed undivorced condition of his, and – and the

question whether Annette would take him, which he dared not put to the touch until he had a clear and even dazzling future to offer her.

In his aunts' drawing-room he heard with but muffled ears those usual questions: How was his dear father? Not going out, of course, now that the weather was turning chilly? Would Soames be sure to tell him that Hester had found boiled holly leaves most comforting for that pain in her side; a poultice every three hours, with red flannel afterwards. And could he relish just a little pot of their very best prune preserve – it was so delicious this year, and had such a wonderful effect. Oh! and about the Darties – *bad* Soames heard that dear Winifred was having a most distressing time with Montague? Timothy thought she really ought to have protection. It was said – but Soames mustn't take this for certain – that he had given some of Winifred's jewellery to a dreadful dancer. It was such a bad example for dear Val just as he was going to college. Soames had not heard? Oh, but he must go and see his sister and look into it at once! And did he think these Boers were really going to resist? Timothy was in quite a stew about it. The price of Consols was so high, and he had such a lot of money in them. Did Soames think they must go down if there was a war? Soames nodded. But it would be over very quickly. It would be so bad for Timothy if it wasn't. And of course Soames's dear father would feel it very much at his age. Luckily poor dear Roger had been spared this dreadful anxiety. And Aunt Juley with a little handkerchief wiped away the large tear trying to climb the permanent pout on her now quite withered left cheek; she was remembering dear Roger, and all his originality, and how he used to stick pins into her when they were little together. Aunt Hester, with her instinct for avoiding the unpleasant, here chimed in: Did Soames think they would make Mr Chamberlain Prime Minister at once? He would settle it all so quickly. She would like to see that old Kruger sent to St Helena. She could remember so well the news of Napoleon's death, and what a relief it had been to his grandfather. Of course she and Juley – 'We were in pantalettes then, my dear' – had not felt it much at the time.

Soames took a cup of tea from her, drank it quickly, and ate three of those macaroons for which Timothy's was famous. His faint, pale, supercilious smile had deepened just a little. Really, his family remained hopelessly provincial, however much of London they might possess between them. In these go-ahead days their provincialism stared out even more than it used to. Why, old Nicholas was still a Free Trader and a member of that antediluvian home of Liberalism, the Remove Club – though, to be sure, the members were pretty well all Conservative now, or he himself could not have joined; and Timothy, they said, still wore a night-cap. Aunt Juley spoke again. Dear Soames was looking

so well, hardly a day older than he did when dear Ann died, and they were all there together, dear Jolyon, and dear Swithin, and dear Roger. She paused and caught the tear which had climbed the pout on her right cheek. Did he – did he ever hear anything of Irene nowadays? Aunt Hester visibly interposed her shoulder. Really, Juley was always saying something! The smile left Soames's face, and he put his cup down. Here was his subject broached for him, and for all his desire to expand, he could not take advantage.

Aunt Juley went on rather hastily:

'They say dear Jolyon first left her that fifteen thousand out and out; then of course he saw it would not be right, and made it for her life only.'

Had Soames heard that?

Soames nodded.

'Your cousin Jolyon is a widower now. He is her trustee; you know that, of course?'

Soames shook his head. He did know, but wished to show no interest. Young Jolyon and he had not met since the day of Bosinney's death.

'He must be quite middle-aged by now,' went on Aunt Juley dreamily. 'Let me see, he was born when your dear uncle lived in Mount Street; long before they went to Stanhope Gate – in December '47, just before the Commune. He's over fifty! Fancy that! Such a pretty baby, and we were all so proud of him; the very first of you all.' Aunt Juley sighed, and a lock of not quite her own hair came loose and straggled, so that Aunt Hester gave a little shiver. Soames rose, he was experiencing a curious piece of self-discovery. That old wound to his pride and self-esteem was not yet closed. He had come thinking he could talk of it, even wanting to talk of his fettered condition, and – behold! he was shrinking away from this reminder by Aunt Juley, renowned for her Malapropisms.

Oh, Soames was not going already!

Soames smiled a little vindictively, and said:

'Yes, good-bye. Remember me to Uncle Timothy!' And, leaving a cold kiss on each forehead, whose wrinkles seemed to try and cling to his lips as if longing to be kissed away, he left them looking brightly after him – dear Soames, it had been so good of him to come today, when they were not feeling very – !

With compunction tweaking at his chest Soames descended the stairs, where was always that rather pleasant smell of camphor and port wine, and house where draughts are not permitted. The poor old things – he had not meant to be unkind! And in the street he instantly forgot them, repossessed by the image of Annette and the thought of the cursed coil around him. Why had he not pushed the thing through and obtained

divorce when that wretched Bosinney was run over, and there was evidence galore for the asking! And he turned towards his sister Winifred Dartie's residence in Green Street, Mayfair.

CHAPTER TWO

Exit a Man of the World

THAT A MAN OF THE WORLD so subject to the vicissitudes of fortune as Montague Dartie should still be living in a house he had inhabited twenty years at least would have been more noticeable if the rent, rates, taxes, and repairs of that house had not been defrayed by his father-in-law. By that simple if wholesale device James Forsyte had secured a certain stability in the lives of his daughter and his grandchildren. After all, there is something invaluable about a safe roof over the head of a sportsman so dashing as Dartie. Until the events of the last few days he had been almost supernaturally steady all this year. The fact was he had acquired a half share in a filly of George Forsyte's, who had gone irreparably on the Turf, to the horror of Roger, now stilled by the grave. Sleeve-links, by Martyr, out of Shirt-on-fire, by Suspender, was a bay filly, three years old, who for a variety of reasons had never shown her true form. With half ownership of this hopeful animal, all the idealism latent somewhere in Dartie, as in every other man, had put up its head and kept him quietly ardent for months past. When a man has something good to live for, it is astonishing how sober he becomes, and what Dartie had was really good – a three to one chance for an autumn handicap, publicly assessed at twenty-five to one. The old-fashioned heaven was a poor thing beside it, and his shirt was on the daughter of Shirt-on-fire. But how much more than his shirt depended on this granddaughter of Suspender! At that roving age of forty-five, trying to Forsytes – and, though perhaps less distinguishable from any other age, trying even to Darties – Montague had fixed his current fancy on a dancer. It was no mean passion, but without money, and a good deal of it, likely to remain a love as airy as her skirts; and Dartie never had any money, subsisting miserably on what he could beg or borrow from Winifred – a woman of character, who kept him because he was the father of her children, and from a lingering admiration for those now-dying Wardour Street good looks which in their youth had fascinated her. She, together with anyone else who would lend him anything, and his losses at cards and on the Turf (extraordinary how some men make a good thing out of losses), were his whole means of subsistence; for James was now too old and nervous to approach, and