

Skokie Public Library's Book Discussion Guide

Forsyte Saga by John Galsworthy

- What is the importance of 'family' to Galsworthy?
- What was the danger in the air at Old Jolyon's 'at home'?
- What is represented by Bosinney's hat? (p.4)
- Why are the older Forsytes so concerned about health? (p. 9)
 "secret self importance" (p.10, 15)
- How is Old Jolyon different from his siblings? (p. 12, 41)
 susceptibility to the nobler sides of life
 "power of enjoyment"(p.21)
 as board chairman, payment to suicide (p. 114-115)
 What was Old J's business? (p. 18)
- What is the background of the family? (p. 11-12)
- What is the nature of their religion? (p.12)
 'afterlife' (p.15)
- Who in the book is described as 'foreign'?
 Young Jolyon's second wife, Bosinney, Irene (p.56)
- Which characters in the book genuinely love art?
 The effect of art on a Forsyte (p.140)
- Who is the Man of Property? Who names him and why? (p.17)
- Characterize the friendship between June and Irene. (p.67)
- Would June and Bosinney have been happy together?
- What causes Old Jolyon to reconcile with his son? (p.58+)
- What is Soames' vital mistake?
 He wishes to own another human being (p.48) "jettisoning of property"
 (p.215)
- Is Soames at all sympathetic? Why?
 Could he act differently? (p.153+, 157, 171)
 In distress (p.217,221)
 What does his art collection say about him? (p.39-40)
 Visits to St. Paul's (p.42)
 Reaction to nature (p.45)
 His duel reaction to Bosinney's death (p.234), Irene's return (p. 237)
- Why do we never see the action through Irene's eyes?
 What does she symbolize? (p. 160) What is significant about the colors she wears? (p.174, 270)
- How does Galsworthy characterize love as it relates to the Forsyte society?
 (p.100,140,254,270)
- How would you sum up the philosophy of the Forsytes?
 Property most important, the core of it all (p.154)



Skokie Public Library

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- How do the Forsytes personify Britain? (p.60)
- Does the book contain humor? (p. 25, 27, 33, 38, 54, 69, 126+, 134, 184,250)
irony? (p.30)
- Characterize Bosinney. (p. 33)
Who caused Bosinney's death? (p.231,233)
Does George sincerely try to help Bosinney? (p.203)
- Why did Irene marry Soames and why did she stay?(p.36-39, 82)
Is she at fault? (p.155)
- Other than her physical beauty, what do the Forsyte men find so appealing about Irene? (p.160,190)
- Why is so much attention given to Mrs. McAnder? (p.180)
- What is the function of gossip in the Forsyte family? (p.10, 99+, 184)
- Would Soames have brought the action against Bosinney had he not been jealous?
Who, legally, had the best case? (p.194)
- How does the weather correlate to the action?
Irene and Bosinney in the spring
Irene's rape followed by the fog
Indian Summer of a Forsyte
- Galsworthy uses flowers repeatedly in his description of situations.
What do they signify? (p.48, 83, 100)
What do the parks signify? (p.53, 186)
- How does Old J changed in his 3 years at Robin Hill?
What 3 things does he revere? (p.240)
Why has he retained his "balance and symmetry"? (p.254)
What do you think about D. H. Lawrence's criticism that Galsworthy's sentimental treatment of Old J "fatally blemished" the novel?
- Did Old J's meeting with Irene hasten his death? (p.256, 258, 266)
"double consciousness" (p.271)
- Why does Young Jolyon feel that Bosinney's death "would break up the Forsyte family"? p.233
- Do you think marriage between Bosinney and June would have been a happy one?