

The Years

Virginia Woolf

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2013 Reprint of 1947 Edition. Full facsimile of the original edition, not reproduced with Optical Recognition Software. "The Years" was published in 1937 and is the last book she published in her lifetime. It traces the history of the genteel Pargiter family from the 1880s to the "present day" of the mid-1930s. "Mrs. Woolf's novel, her first since "The Waves" of 1931, is rich and lovely with the poetry of life. It might be called a chronicle novel, since it begins in 1880 and ends in the present day, or a "family" novel, since it narrates the fortunes of the large and representative Pargiter family. But it eludes both classifications. Though the founder of the present family, old Colonel Pargiter, who lost two fingers in the Indian Mutiny--is, in habit and class, a bit of a Forsyte, there is nothing of the careful solidity of Galsworthy's saga, with its verifiable genealogy, interludes and corroborative detail. "The Years" neither retreat into history nor knock at the future. They are there as something done, and something still existing, as Martin picking up his cousin Sally from St. Paul's and carrying her off to lunch at a City chop house, and then to a famous walk to the Serpentine; or Eleanor, the best prototype of Mrs. Woolf's Betty Flanders, Mrs. Dalloway and Mrs. Ramsay, picking out absent-mindedly her sisters and cousins, her nieces and nephews, taking her pleasure from them as human beings of bright and various discrepancies and compensations; or Peggy wondering if they are all they are said to be; or Nicholas, who, at the end of the party, makes no peroration, because, as he says, there had been no speech--so there they are, without peroration, or propaganda, or even perspective, exactly and minutely as they lived, a family through fifty-odd years from 1880 to 1930, delighting, in spite of their years and the wars and their attendant worries, in being alive and feeling the new warmth of fresh family life around it. Lovely as "The Waves" was, "The Years" goes far behind and beyond it, giving its characters a local habitation and a name, and expressing Mrs. Woolf's purpose in the novel more richly than it has ever been done before."-- Peter Monro Jack [New York Times, 1937]



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Roberto Garcia:

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