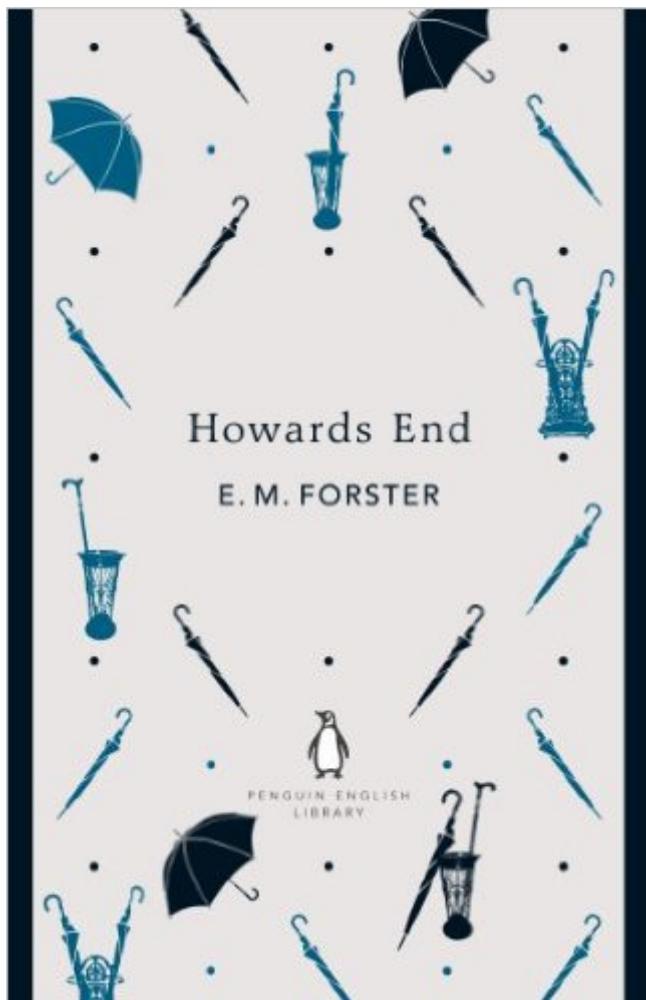


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Penguin English Library Howards End (The Penguin English Library)



Synopsis

The Penguin English Library Edition of Howards End by E. M. Forster 'The poor cannot always reach those whom they want to love, and they can hardly ever escape from those whom they love no longer. We rich can' 'Only connect.' is the idea at the heart of this book, a heartbreakingly provocative tale of three families at the beginning of the twentieth century: the rich Wilcoxes, the gentle, idealistic Schlegels and the lower-middle class Basts. As the Schlegel sisters try desperately to help the Basts and educate the close-minded Wilcoxes, the families are drawn together in love, lies and death. Frequently cited as E. M. Forster's finest work, Howards End brilliantly explores class warfare, conflict and the English character. The Penguin English Library - 100 editions of the best fiction in English, from the eighteenth century and the very first novels to the beginning of the First World War.

Book Information

Series: The Penguin English Library

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Penguin Classic; 1St Edition edition (August 28, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0141199407

ISBN-13: 978-0141199405

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.7 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars See all reviews (238 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #4,420,053 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #89 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Antiques & Collectibles > Buttons #62556 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Literature #79805 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Classics

Customer Reviews

I first read Howards End during the final year of my Undergraduate degree, and it quickly became my favourite book (displacing Wuthering Heights). There is something within it that really speaks to some people --- I say 'some,' because I have recommended it to many friends, and their responses have run the gamut from a fascination similar to my own, to outright boredom and frustration with the book. Personally, I felt I connected with Forster's lament regarding the loss of a sense of place and permanence in the modern world. I must disagree with some of the reviewers here, when they say that the issues Forster tackles have little relevance today. I think what attracted me to this book

was Forster's examination of those very issues --- most specifically, the quandry that still plagues us today: how can we live an examined, meaningful life in the entropic modern world? I would argue that *Howards End* is still very relevant. Forster depicts a society in change, but also a society that is a direct relative of our own. He shows the conflicts of modern VS rural, city VS nature, business/sport VS intellect/art, and smug patriarchy VS proto-feminism. If you identified with the second choice in those four sets, then it is likely that you will very much appreciate the social commentary woven into *Howards End*, and you will find its sermon of "Only Connect!" something of a mission statement --- I certainly did. Really, *Howards End* almost reads like an allegory. The different families (Schlegel, Wilcox, and Bast) each represent aspects of a society in transition, each one lacking some vital component to make it viable.

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